



Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting



Wednesday, December 16, 2015
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Talena Rambarran (President), Megan Murphy (Vp, Administration) Manraj Kaur (Vp Internal) Farhad Sadeh (FRC Business), Hadi Eslami (FRC Business), Neha Dewan (FRC Health Science), Tarushika Vasanthan (FRC Science), Shawn Hercules (FRC Science), Andrew Kloiber (FRC Humanities), Vi Dang (International Representative), Maleeha Qazi (FRC Health Sciences), Natalie D'Silva (VP Services) Lucia Lee (VP External), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Naby Nikookaran (FRC Engineering)

Regrets: Theo Nazy (FRC Social Science) Mai Yamamoto (International Representative), Anna D'Angela (Board of Governors), Darko Ljubic (FRC Engineering)

Absent: Azam Shamsi (CRO)

1.0 Call to Order 6:06 pm

2.0 Acceptance of the Agenda- Motioned first by Megan second by Natalie motion carries.

3.0 Approval of Minutes from the meeting of November 26th, 2015- Item pass on the condition of the following amendments:

Item attendees add: Maleeha Qazi and Darko Ljubic names as they were not written in the attendees, fourth line "newly appointed" instead of "newly appointment"

Item 4.3 first line "she attended" instead of "she has attended"

Item 4.3 fourth line has 2 full stops, instead of one.

Item 6.0 second line "he" instead of "she"

Item 5.8 point 2 fourth line i.e. instead of IE

Item 8.0 first line capital P for the Phoenix and insert a space between for and a, second point second line, Diabetes Association should be capitalized

Amended minutes acceptance motioned first by Maleeha second by Naby, unanimous -motion carries

4.0 Report from the Board

4.1 President's Report

4.1.1 Payroll for Graduate Students

- Talena mentioned that there are going to be a lot of changes for payroll. Payroll is going to transition to the administration office (AKA Human Resources) which will take some of the pressure from graduate studies.
- The University is going to hire someone new to handle payroll. Talena asked that students be provided with more information and instruction about what students will be getting paid

through Mosaic at the beginning of the year. The general consensus was that the University is really listening and things are moving forward to improve payroll for graduate students.

- There are going to be a new email address specifically for payroll issues and they will respond between 24 to 48 hours after an inquiry is received.
- Some changes for international students are the new "Electronic Travel Authorization" that many students with existing study permits will need to return to Canada after a trip abroad next year: Study and work permit holders from visa-exempt countries who received their permit on or before July 31, 2015 will have to get an ETA as of March 15, 2016 to return to Canada. Applicants who get their study or work permit on or after August 1, 2015 will automatically be issued an ETA along with their permit. Study permit holders in Canada may gain work experience by working off campus while completing their studies.

4.1.2 Board of Director

- Talena mentioned, Kevin underwent a performance review, she noted the review detailed some performance related issue with HR that he will need to improve. However, overall Kevin has done an excellent job on rejuvenating the Phoenix and making the asset financially successful. As such, Kevin's bonus structure is being reevaluated. Talena noted that there are still some issues surrounding the lease that are being discussed before the Board feels comfortable signing the lease. Currently the board feels that the occupancy rate "discount" is not reflective of the contribution that the GSA provides to the campus. Moreover, the rate of the loan, currently about 7%, is very high, and the Boards position is that this is very high for a student group to pay to the university.
- Lastly, Talena noted that the Phoenix no longer has a union. As of December 11th 2015 the Ministry of Labor formally accepted the position of the Phoenix (and subsequent agreement of the union) that the union abandoned their unionized employees, and as such they no represent any employees of the Phoenix.

4.2 Senate Report

- Natalie stepped down, there is no report
- Natalie researched other graduate students on senate and Maleeha noted she knows Sid Nath and she will invite him for the council next meeting.

4.3 Board of Governor's Report

- Anna sent a report mentioning that the Board of Governors approved the termination of the Department of Medical Physics and Applied Radiation Sciences. This was due in part to the limited and declining enrolment as well as the low number of teaching units per instructor and low number of teaching units per technical and admin staff. The impact on graduate students is limited, but is as follows:
- The various graduate programs offered (M.Sc in Health and Radiation Physics, M.Sc in Radiation Sciences (Medical Physics), M.Sc in Radiation Sciences (Radiation Biology), M.Sc in Radiation Sciences (Medical Radiation Science) and PhD in Radiation Sciences) will continue to be offered as they currently exist.
- The administration of the grad program will follow the model of Interdisciplinary graduate

programs within the Faculty (e.g. Chem. Bio).

- Tenure stream faculty will have their appointments transferred to another unit within the faculty where their research and teaching interests best fit. There is also no expectation of job loss for staff currently associated with the Department.
- The government released a report of their information gathering in advance of proposing a new funding model for undergraduate students. Here is a copy of the [report](#) and this is a [Globe and Mail article](#) on the issue. Though the report focuses primarily on undergraduate rather than graduate students, its finding is particularly problematic for research and research-intensive institutions. It suggests that the balance between teaching and research is skewed and that emphasizing teaching and quality undergraduate education is now the focus. These findings will inform the new funding model proposed by the government. No decisions have been made yet at any level; instead, it is an important piece of information to share.
- There will be a [“Healthy Neighborhoods Research Showcase”](#) on Feb 5-11. There will be various talks, a “Health Crawl” around campus and a special event with the Walrus Foundation featuring a panel discussing how to build healthy cities.
- The next Board of Governors meeting is March 10th. If anyone has any questions or comments, they can contact her at dangea@mcmaster.ca

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Finance Committee (VP Administration)

- Megan mentioned that there is nothing new for finance committee, the financial meeting will be in January,
- Megan reiterated that the Phoenix no longer has a union and Talena mentioned there were three unionized staff; however, their contracts weren't sustainable, because they were exuberant contracts allowing things that the phoenix could not sustain paying.
- Ashley mentioned the GSA entered into negotiation with the one employee that was affected by the abandonment and feels that we found a good balance that meet the needs of the GSA and the employee.

5.2 Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration)

- There is currently no report, as PEC did not meet.
- PEC is scheduled to meet in January and Megan urged individuals to become more active in this committee as previously no one came to the scheduled meetings.

5.3 Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)

- Lucia mentioned the first group who went to the trip to extreme escape event didn't have enough time to finish the event, so they will be offered 50 % off of their next event (this was as a result of the bus driver dropping the participants off late).
- Ashley will reach out to the bus firm to discuss this issue.
- Lucia reported there was a GSA movie night for all graduate students in December.

- The next meeting will be held in January. For future planning, there will be a trip in March, and the trip to a ski resort will be on two separate days, as previously it was difficult to organize the event for 80 participants. 40 individuals per trip will be more manageable.

5.4 Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)

- FRC's are going to hold a meeting, to welcome new students in January. Events will include free coffee and cookies with the GSA, so students can discuss what's going on and if students have any questions. This will take place on January 12 from 10 am to 10:45am in the Phoenix Bar and Grill.
- Another welcoming event will be a guest speaker on how to market yourself on twitter, he will speak about how to tweet and how much to tweet, the date is to be determinate, but the time will be around 1:30 pm. These events will be in conjunction with SGS. There is going to be another guest speaker talking about leadership, this will be a TEDX speaker and, the date is to be determined.
- Question regarding academic affairs: Neha asked about the deadlines for GSA travel grant, Ashley mentioned she had a meeting with Brook Gordon and applying for travel grants will be through Mosaic, Lucia will put instruction for applying for bursaries and GSA travel awards on the GSA website. She noted that applications for travel grants will be open January 2016 and bursary application close on January 9, 2016.

5.5 International Student Representative Report (International Reps)

- Vi mentioned they are working with international schools to organize international social events for the committee.
- In January they have a few events planned for incoming students including a buddy system.

5.6 GSA Summer Leagues Committee (VP Services)

- Natalie mentioned they are hoping to meet early in the New Year to discuss SOP's.

5.7 Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/President)

- The GSSRC in conjunction with student affairs decided to have information sessions for the proposed increased ancillary fee. Natalie mentioned that there wasn't too many attendees' for the workshops in December; she expects that January will have better attendance. They will also be setting up tables outside the Phoenix and MUSC to hand out informational fliers and answer any question regarding the fee.
- Ashley mentioned they will be broadcasting information all the information sessions via the campus televisions screens and also online.
- Natalie encourages FRC to be available for this work shop in January. She mentioned that voting will be on January 28th in the afternoon, at least 20 people are needed for vote counting. Natalie and Ashley are currently working with student affairs to book the room for the AGM.
- Talena mentioned that she wants the FRC there to help with any question. Natalie mentioned that there are a lot of departments e.g.; science has 8 departments so sending

information to administrative assistance about the AGM would help to have more students out to vote.

- Talena mentioned the general meeting is structured in such a way that everybody has to vote at the same time. Natalie added that there is going to be a two stage vote. If students vote yes there going to be a second stage a, b, c, or d, and there will be color coded papers for the first stage of voting, so student can clearly pick the option they are in favor of.

5.8 Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)

- Natalie mentioned that the committee has not met; however, there is a new mobile app that students can send claims through. The GSA will be sending an email to our constituents to let them know about this.

5.9 By-Law Committee (President)

5.9.1 Making International Reps a voting position.

- Talena mentioned we have international representatives but they are non-voting members on the council, and the bylaws committee would like it to be a voting position. The International Reps would specifically represent international students, as they will be talking on behalf of them.
- Naby asked if we have some time to make some adjustments for section 2. Ashley mentioned she will review and send her comments to ensure they are uniform with the bylaws document.
- Talena mentioned that Ashley will go through everything in the bylaws and make sure it is consistent.
- Ashley mentioned that the sentence “the members of the association in the international Graduate Association shall belong to only one faculty Association at any given time” in the Eligibility section is a little confusing so she recommends changing the wording. Talena added we can remove that line.
- Neha asked about the time expectation, Talena mentioned that time commitments are in a separate document, standing resolution, as it’s easier to change. International students elections will be in March with the regular elections; the plan is to have an election before the bylaws change, and if the terms are not accepted at the AGM in March the position will go back to being non-voting.
- This position will be a volunteer position and have the same commitment of an FRC.
- The council agreed that adding the international representatives to the council as a voting position to the bylaws was an excellent idea and will be put forward at the AGM. First by Naby second by Natalie motion carries.

6.0 General Meeting Date

- Talena mentioned that the SGM will be January 28th; the date is confirmed we just try to find a room. She added they will hire someone who has a lot of experience to chair the meeting.

7.0 New Business

- Talena mentioned that she is thinking of adding a line to the budget to pay incoming executives for the month of April with outgoing executive so there is a greater transition period. The incoming executives can be paid half the executive salary if they are helping and learning during the transitional period. She added that we will need approval from the Board first because it's financial issue.
- Megan mentioned penalties shouldn't be applied for those willing to learn because the exiting VP isn't offering their time to do their job, Talena mentioned that there will be a mandate for each exiting VP to transition the new VP, if the new VP is taking the initiative to learn then they deserve the \$250 and will work with the DoO on the transition if they are not being supported by the outgoing Executive.
- Talena mentioned if the incoming VP is not doing the training they will not get the money unless they come and speak directly with the President regarding the circumstances.
- Ashley mentioned that she would oversee for circumstances where the existing executive does not transition the new VP she would help with it as she is familiar with each position.
- Ashley recommended looking into the formal policy, as this process could be very complex.
- Talena mentioned that other schools have a crossover period and it makes sense to do the same

8.0 Adjournment 7:06 first by Shawn second by Natalie unanimous motion carries.

Lucia Lee, VP External

Date

Recorder

Date