

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting, Wednesday, April 15, 2015
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
5:30pm
Minutes

Present: Talena Rambarran (President), Megan Murphy (VP Admin), Lucia Lee (VP External), Manraj Kaur (VP Internal), Rachel Kelly (VP Services), Debbie Ritskes (Administrator), Naby Nikookaran (Engineering), Sarah Kanji (Health Science), Neha Dewan (Health Science), Mai Yamamoto (Science), Ayush Ranawade (Science), Natalie D'Silva (Science), Marion Jamard (International), Vi Dang (International), Theo Nazy (Observer Incoming FRC)

Regrets: Ali Vaezi (Business)

Absent: Alireza Taibakhsh (Business), Darko Ljubic (Engineering), Igor Osowski (Humanities), Anumeet Toor (Social Science), Zeeshan Ahmed (BoG), Majid Taghavi (Senate/Science), Cassel Busse (Senate/Humanities), Stephanie Marciniak (Senate/Social Sciences), Jeff Price (CRO), Asim Soomro (Senate/Health Science),

1.0 Call to order 5:43 pm

2.0 Acceptance of the agenda – 1st by Naby 2nd by Rachel, **motion carried**

Motion to add new business to the agenda re; sending a letter to support from the GSA for increased funding from the Tri-Councils into Research and Development and to add benefits to the GSA Health Plan.

1st by Rachel, 2nd by Ayush, **motion passed unanimously**

3.0 Approval of Minutes from the meeting of March 4, 2015 – Motion to approve minutes as corrected by removing item 5.8, 1st by Mai, 2nd by Natalie, all in favor, **motion carried**

4.0 Reports from the board
4.1 Presidents Report -

4.1.1 Overview of the AGM on March 31, 2015: There were 190 students in attendance at the AGM. It was a record for attendance and we only had seating for 60-70. Meeting was 1/2 hr behind schedule due to the difficulty in signing the large amount of students in. There were students in attendance for the Ancillary fees vote and additionally many students who attended in support of BDS movement. Many of the motions put forward were approved, the

exception being of the Ancillary fees protocol. The BDS movement motion is null and void. The proper processes set out in our bylaws for approving a policy position were not followed. Policy positions are approved at the council and board level and require two weeks' notice of the substance. This information regarding proper procedures has been sent to Ryan Sparrow (the student who put forward the motion).

4.1.2 Discussion of position policy procedures (Bylaws: Article XXV Section 1 and Section 2) – hand out

The GSA needs to represent all students and help to build an inclusive community on campus. Manraj applauded how the situation was handled. The GSA has been advised to use Roberts' rules as a common practice. The GSA will hold a Roberts rules training on Apr 29 at 5:15pm mandatory for VP's

Lucia and Talena attended the GU15 meeting this past week. This was a meeting of the Graduate Unions from the 15 research-intensive Universities across Canada. 2 to 3 representatives from most schools attended. It was an intense conference and ran from 8am-10pm each day. Topics of discussion were federal funding, international students, government, and pier support systems for students having supervisor issues. Many good ideas have come out of this meeting. Some initiative the GSA is considering is trying to start a peer support system for students who are having issues with their supervisors. The GSA has nothing formal in place at the moment. A person who is trained in dealing with these issues is needed.

They executive met with Allison Sekular and Pete Self (SGS) yesterday to discuss any common initiatives we may have. SGS would like to know what students want in terms of career services. They have a career strategist that is on a limited contract for the next few months. What do students think would be useful? Additionally, payroll may be changing again for students. Major scholarships will still be paid term-by-term basis still but scholarships that come out of a student's supervisor's research funding will be paid bi-weekly pay like TA's.

4.2 Senate Report – Ayush – University Scholar is needed for Supervisor. It is a new position and selections have been made. Admission requirements are changing for MBA's

4.3 Board of Governor's Report – no report

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Finance Committee (VP Administration) – AGM – approved to use KPMG as the GSA auditor for 2015/16. KPMG is coming on May 31 to oversee the inventory audit for The Phoenix. A Finance Audit will occur in mid July 2015.

The GSA met with Kevin regarding the short-term debt repayment. Choice Meats and the HST have been paid. We have gone back to the original agreement which is approx. \$1000.00/week repayment. The Union agreement for the Phoenix employees has come up for renegotiations, as the current agreement expires on May 31st. The GSA is reaching out to a lawyer to advise/represent us.

- 5.2 Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration) - no report
- 5.3 Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External) – March's ski trip was well attended with 85 attendees. The GSA subsidized the trip. The next event will possibly be a karaoke night at the end of April at the Phoenix.
- 5.4 Student Issue Action Committee – The group is currently constructing a survey. There have been issues with survey monkey as it will only allow 10 questions. Anything above this, the user must pay and there are a lot of restrictions. A suggestion was made to use google docs or Limesurvey. The Campus Community partnership (Hamilton City Commercial Project) has requested members to help with projects. The GSA spoke to SGS to develop a program to have more engagement in the community which can become part of the volunteers' thesis. There will be more collaboration this summer.
- 5.5 Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal) – Best Practices Lunch was organized by McMaster SGS. An introduction to the GSA and what the GSA is planning for Welcome Week was given. A mentor program was discussed for incoming students this summer. Amy Cuddy a Professor at Harvard University has been invited for Welcome Week.
- 5.6 International Student Representative Report (International Reps) - A 2nd immigration fair was held and 140 students attended. The event was very well supported and successful.
- 5.7 By-Laws Committee (President) - no report
- 5.8 GSA Summer Leagues Committee (VP Services) – The soccer and softball registration has started. There will be Captains meetings next week. A parking agreement has been worked out. The phoenix is paying \$4 per pass so players can park in Q after the games. It will help encourage people to come out to the Phoenix. There are updates needed for softball fields and the costs are being shared with A&R.

Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/President) – Since the ancillary fee motion was opposed by the GSA membership, there needs to be a discussion regarding next steps. The GSA will meet with Sean Van Koughnett to discuss options pertaining to the Ancillary fees and Services moving forward. The GSA will recruit students to the committee so there is broader input from the general membership. Depending on the outcomes of those discussions, there may be a Special Meeting held.

Regarding Student Clubs:

The GSA will be able to officially recognize student groups once a clubs proposal has been drafted and approved. There will be a pilot in effect for September for up to 10 clubs.

Rachel and Debbie attended a Mosaic meeting; the Student centre has been launched.

- 5.9 Health & Dental Committee (VP Services) The GSA had a meeting with Del decided to stay with Sunlife as our insurance provider. Premiums have slightly decreased for this coming year. The allocation of the extra funds for benefits will be discussed in new business.

6.0 New business – added to the agenda

A letter was drafted at the GU15 to send to the Canadian Government regarding an increase in funding for general research to the Tri-Councils funded by the federal government. In past years the Research funding has been decreased. Several schools have signed in support of the letter. Motion to support the letter sent on the behalf of the GSA coordinated with GU15 Universities 1st by Naby, 2nd by Manraj, 1 opposed, 1 abstention **motion carried** with a message not happy with the current wording of the letter.

Health plan additions -

Options are to add counselling services, all contraceptives, vision care (can be broken down into consultation and glasses), enhanced paramedical and coverage of brand name drugs if a doctor prescribes such.

Vote on services;

To add Eye-glasses and contact lenses,


Motion opposed as the benefit is expensive and would not allow for other benefits to be added.

Motion to add coverage of 'no substitution' on name brand drugs, eye exam (cap 50.00), add all contraceptives, and increased paramedical coverage.

1st by Rachel, 2nd by Lucia, all in favor, **motion carried**

- 7.0 Next Meeting - doodle poll for mid May.


- 8.0 Adjournment – 1st by Ayush, 2nd by Natalie, all in favor, **motion carried**



Lucia Lee (VP External)

June 4, 15.

Date



Debbie Ritskes (Recorder)

May 19/15

Date