Clubs

In the past few months, I try my best to contact each GSA clubs. My purpose is to check if all our clubs are still running. The result is positive, even though there is COVID-19, most of the clubs are still eager to host events with many possible ways, and I will help them to achieve it. During the email communication with them, I let them to finish 2 tasks. One is to write a club introduction, which contains their club logo, description, people, event, and contact. I have setup a page for each club on our website to put their introduction. The other one is to help each club apply a McMaster role-based email address, where format is "GSAXXXX@mcmaster.ca", and "XXXX" will be the short name their club. The reason is that most club contact is a student email address, and students may graduate without notifying us. Then, we will lose connection with that club.

For future plan, I will re-establish the club committee, where each club must assign one person into this committee. This is to maintain the connection between GSA and clubs. It will be easier for us to inform all the clubs the new policy, and clubs can tell us their request more conveniently.

Health and Dental

1. Change-of-Coverage Options for International Students who cannot come to Canada at the Fall

We know a lot of new students taking online courses out of Canada for Fall 2020. We have contacted StudentCare about if we can waive some cost of Health & Dental Insurance from them. But StudentCare can only give us two options:

- Normal opt-out in September (with regular POC requirements for everyone)
- Retroactive opt-out in July 2021 for international students who were not in Canada and did not claim

Now, the winter term will be online, we will continue talking to them about if we can get more options.

2. Enrolling visiting students to the Health Plan

Currently, the visiting students in McMaster University do not automatically have insurance expect UHIP. In the before, we do not even allow manually enrolment. But many of them stay in McMaster for at least 1 year or even 2 years. Thus, we consider about the possibility to enroll them. We know there are some of them staying McMaster for just half a year, and we are going to set some restrictions. Here are our ideas:

- We restrict to those students who will stay in McMaster for at least 1 year.
- For now, we only provide GSA Health Insurance Plan to them.
- They need to contact GSA to enroll in GSA Health Insurance Plan by themselves.
- In the first academic year, the length is from the beginning of the term he/she comes to McMaster to the end of the August.
- They will be automatically charged for the following academic year(s) if they are still in McMaster.

3. Keeping dental insurance plan while holding CUPE Dental Plan

We got some emails from our TA students, that they want to keep GSA Dental insurance plan while holding CUPE Dental plan. The current policy is that if a graduate student working on a TA position, they will automatically opt-out GSA Dental insurance plan. But some students are heavy dental users. Thus, we consider that if we can keep both insurances to them. Our idea is:

- During the Change-of-Coverage period, usually the first month of each term, students who would like to keep both insurances, must contact GSA to keep GSA Dental Insurance Plan.

MFin Program Deferral

Due to the COVID-19, all the courses in the Fall term have been moved to the online. As for MFin Program, most of students are from China and India, where there is 12-hour time lapse between those countries and Canada. It will be very hard to adjust time schedule from both instructors and students. Then, I have worked out a new plan, which is to defer new MFin students to Winter 2021. The university finally gave students a poll to let them choose if they still want to start program in Fall 2020 or delay to Winter 2021. I believe, at that time, most students can get their Visa to come to Canada. Even if courses are still given online, students can take them in Canada.

Server and Website

The GSA website has been finally finished and put online at July 2020. We host this website on our own server, and we have the full control of it. All the documents and resources in the old website have been moved to the new one. For this website, we preserve almost everything as before, and we design a new homepage, which shows the news, events, and GSA Twitter. The content is rendered by WordPress, which also allow us to setup new account for faculty associations and GSA clubs to let them publish their events. We have deployed a Wikipedia on the server, which will be filled with new student handbook later.