

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

Council Meeting

June 18th, 2020

Teleconference - Zoom

3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Shawn Hercules (GSA President), Caroline Seiler (VP Internal), Sydney Valentino (VP External) Anthony Quarshie (VP Administration), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Tiffany van Lieshout (FRC Science), Wei Zhao (VP Services), Maxwell Lighstone (FRC Engineering), Ghada Sasa (BoG), Pritpal Matharu (FRC Science), Hebe Hu (FRC Business), Shuwen Qian (FRC Health Science), Anita Acai (Senator Science), Manisha Pahwa (Senator Health Science)

Regrets: Mohammed Chowdhury (FRC Engineering)

Absent: Mariam Munawar (Senator Business), Sahand Sepehrvand (Senator Engineering)

Call to order 3:04

1. Call for New Business

a. **MOTION:** Approval of Agenda

- Shawn requested the addition of the following to new business:
 - Letter from McMaster Political students 'association
 - Nomination for FRC Health Science
 - Discussing Fees and HSR update
- Shawn proposed moving the VP reports and update after his remarks

Motion to approve the agenda with amendments moved by Wei, seconded by Caroline, all in favour, motion carried.

b. **MOTION:** Approval of Minutes - summary of the last meeting

- The last meeting minutes summary will be circulated next meeting.

2. President remark:

a- Next Meeting – tentative date 27th of July 2020 at 3:00 pm.

Shawn mentioned the following updates:

- He is meeting with the university president & the Dean of grad studies by the end of June. Council members are welcome to send any concerns or questions by June 25th.
- One of the previous grad students passed away suddenly last week—a minute of silence.

3. Executives update:

a. Vp Internal:

Caroline mentioned the following:

- The GSA is collaborating with EGS, and University of Waterloo to plan workshop series for the different workshops including Latex, academic skills, mental health, and several other topics.
- The Latex workshop started today with 45 people attending.
- Progress on the website working with Wei & Sydney
- Working on getting FRC from Humanities, Health Science and Business
- Meeting next week with current FRC to discuss how they can serve their faculty
- Scheduling academic affairs soon to talk about academic issues.

b. VP External:

Sydney mentioned the following:

- Met with the GSA clubs through the clubs' committee and reviewed the past year's club list
- Had a virtual tap and tales' event the past 2 weeks and plan to have it every 2 weeks online
- The student action committee is meeting soon.
- If anyone has any comments about the mailer or social media they can connect with Sydney.

c. VP Services:

Wei Mentioned the following:

- He advocated for the new Master of Finance Students. Most of the students in that program are from China or India where there is time lapse between their country and Canada. As the next term is going to be online, it will be challenging for them to attend lectures online. To address this, he spoke with Dr. Doug Welch, and the decision was made to postpone the whole program for the fall, allowing the students to start in January 2021.

- The GSA website is done on our part and communicated with the UTS to make the website public.
- He contacted all clubs to give him a short description to be posted on our website.
- FRCs can get in touch with Wei for feedback on the website.

d. VP Admin:

Anthony had been away for 4 weeks doing his comp exams and recently just returned to post. However, he mentioned the following:

- Pick up from where he left off with work on both depreciation and investment policies;
- Shawn added Anthony will have to join the conversations with HSR and discussions on GSA fees.

4. Board of Director Nomination:

- Brandon Rodrigues – has law experience
- Ethan Zhang – has finance experience

Motion to approve the nomination of Brandon Rodrigues and Ethan Zhang for Board of Director External position, moved by Tiffany seconded by Wei, all in favour motion carried.

5.FRC reports:

SCIGSA

Tiffany mentioned the following:

- Finished the AGM meeting today.
- Will host summer activities such as the Pythagoras cup tournament.
- At the last meeting, it was discussed if departments were communicating with their students about COVID19 – only 3 departments in science were communicating through a virtual sessions, with the rest communicating through emails.

EGS:

- Latex workshop held earlier today and it was very successful. The next workshop will be on mental health.
- Had their AGM and 2 new engineering FRCs will be joining for future council meetings.
- No president was elected so the 2 VPS will be co-president.

HS

- Applied to be an association in January, the hope is to have everything set in July.

Business

Hebe mentioned the following:

- School sent an online survey about online courses for winter term and feedback about online courses.

6. Senate / BOG Updates:

- Anita mentioned that most of the discussion at the senates' meeting is around communications around COVID 19. Most of it is faculty-specific and they encouraged grad students to be in touch with their supervisors as needed.
- McMaster has a new president, new provost, and new VP finance.

7. New business:

a. Letter from McMaster political science

- Ghada mentioned that she is part of the McMaster Political Science association. The letter disseminated speaks to 5 steps the university should take to tackle anti-blackness. They have asked other departments to put out a statement also. They sent an email to the university on behalf of the association and she is part of the board of governors. She also suggested that the GSA also send endorse the statement.
- In reply to Ghada's suggestion, Ashley mentioned that there are few policies for the GSA (on the website) that must be considered before the council could proceed with the suggestion. The policies speak to anti-discrimination and neutrality.
- Manisha suggested going over the policies.
- Ashley suggested to have an ad hoc committee to discuss the letter and potentially put forward a letter from the GSA, as this will allow time for due diligence. As well, it will speed up the momentum and will not require waiting for 1 month to get the letter signed.

b. HSR/Fee Update

- Shawn mentioned that with the fall term fully online, the GSA is continuing communication with HSR. The current agreement of HSR is for a full year, however, the GSA requested from HSR a reduction for the fall term and waiting to hear back from HSR.
- Ashley added that the university has asked the GSA to review our fees and assess where changes can be made to services due to the COVID-19 impact. The GSA run lean on items such as events and club funding, however, after evaluation it was noticed that students are still interfacing with some of these. However, the GSA has put on hold collection of the capital build

fees out of supplementary fees for 1 year. Council will be updated on further reductions that will not affect delivery of services to students.

- In reply to Wei’s questions waiving club fees, Shawn explained that if the council decided on waiving the club fee, clubs will not be able to get funds from the GSA.
- Council members agreed to leave fee as was earlier represented to the university.

c. FRC Health Science nomination:

- Zarwa Saqib – previous FRC HS.

Motion to approve the appointment Zarwa Saqib moved by Max seconded by Sydney, all in favour motion carried.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 4:08 pm moved by Caroline, seconded by Tiffany, all in favour, motion carried.

Action Items:

Item	Action by	Due date
May minutes summary	Ashley	Next meeting