Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

***Council Meeting***

September 30, 2020

Teleconference - Zoom

3:00 pm.

**Minutes**

**Attendees:** Shawn Hercules (GSA President), Caroline Seiler (VP Internal), Sydney Valentino (VP External), Anthony Quarshie (VP Administration), Wei Zhao (VP Services), Dhanyasri Maddiboina (FRC Engineering), Ghada Sasa (BoG), Pritpal Matharu (FRC Science), Shuwen Qian (FRC Health Science), Tiffany van Lieshout (FRC Science), Alyaa Abdelhalim (Sentor Business)

**Regrets:** Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Anita Acai (Senator Science), Zarwa Saqib (FRC Health Science)

**Guest:** Oliver Wearing

**Absent:** Sushil Navin Chander (FRC Engineering), Hebe Hu (FRC Business), Sahand Sepehrvand (Senator Engineering)

**Call to order 3:05**

1. **Call for New Business**
   * **MOTION**: Approval of Agenda

**Motion to approve the agenda with amendments moved by Anthony, seconded by Pip, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **MOTION**: Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting moved by Tiffany, seconded by Anthony, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **President remark:**
   * SGM will be on October 15 to approve the new budget. The budget had some changes due to COVID19. Also, the audit report for 2019/2020 year needed approval of the general membership.
   * The audit report highlighted how our books look clean from a finance point of view.
   * Still disccusing HSR with the city, and we are trying to negotiate a better deal.
   * Resource fair is on Thursday. There is a faculty booth where students can ask regarding faculty-specific questions.

Anthony highlighted the following:

* + GSA Fees decreased as we reduced the GSA operation fees.
  + Staff salary decreased due to CEWS. The organization received money to pay for staff salaries.
  + Endowment increased as some of the travel awards awarded but not paid out, so money stayed in the trust fund.

1. **Approval of WomEng Circle club**

* The application was circulated prior to the council meeting.
* Shawn mentioned this group looks similar to WISE; however, WomENg looks more like a book club.
* Sydney emailed WISE to send their events hosted last year so we can compare both clubs. Also, they did host many events, however, these were not approved through EHOSS.

**Motion to table the discussion until WomEng and WISE send more information regarding their activities, moved by Sydney, seconded by Wei, all in favour, motion carried.**

1. **FRC Social Science nomination**

The GSA received 3 nominations, and only 2 positions are available

Sara Elshahat

Rida Mohsen

Branda Passariello

* All nominees seem very active students and a good fit.
* Anthony suggested having one of the nominees assigned to one of our committees.
* Shawn suggested to give one position to Sara and vote on the other position.

**Motion to approve Sara Elshat for one of the FRC Social Science seats, moved by Tiffany seconded by Ghada, all in favour, motion carried.**

* Wei suggested if any of them is international, we can recommend them to IGSA.
* Ghada & Sydney suggested offering Rida the position as per her statement. She hopes to foster an inclusive environment as she is concerned about online learning and its effect on mental health.
* Council agreed to offer Rida the 2nd position and suggest to Branda to join one of the GSA committees.
* Tiffany highlighted that Rida’s application doesn’t have nominees' signatures; this way, the application is incomplete.
* Members agreed to offer Rida the position pending, sending a complete application with signatures.

**Motion to approve Rida Mohsen pending an amended application with signature for the second FRC Social Science position moved by Ghada, seconded by Tiffany, all in favour, motion carried.**

1. **SIAC Response letter:**

* Sydney mentioned that from the survey she conducted the main interest in SIAC was in creating the anti-oppression policy.
* Going over the comments from the board, the anti-oppression policy document was amended.
* Shawn noted that in addition to what Sedny mentioned, any policy submitted to the GSA had to go through a rigid process and reviewed by the GSA attorney. This policy document has to focus more on an advocacy role for grad students and has to be in alignment with the GSA’s letter of patent.
* The board put forward to have separate bylaws meetings to discuss if we needed to have a separate advocacy group and how the new policy is in agreement with the letter of patent.
* Shawn will call a bylaws committee to discuss the policy then after the final discussion will be sent to the board.
* Tiffany mentioned that faculty of science had issued a document about equity and inclusion regarding BLM, which was disseminated to members and to SciGSA; however, students said that this document is not addressing their needs and the languages is somewhat flowery. She then enquired if there was issue, in relation to GSA’s letter of patent, with SciGSA posting it. Shawn noted that would only be an issue for SciGSA.

1. **FRC Update:**

* Tabled

1. **Senate / BOG Updates:**

* Tabled

1. **New business:**
2. **Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn at 3:57 pm moved by Caroline, seconded by Wei, all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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| **Item** | **Action by** | **Due date** |
| May minutes summary | Ashley | Next meeting |