**McMaster GSA VP External Updates (May 1st, 2020 to March 12th 2021)**

As GSA VP External, I have focused on three objectives: 1) creating consistent and engaging communications on behalf of the GSA, 2) developing an engaged Student Issues Action Committee, and 3) connecting with Graduate Student Leaders across Canada to hold unique events and create a community throughout a uniquely virtual year.

See below for a general overview of the monthly activities:

**May 2020**

* Learning about the GSA and role of VP External
* Change format of GSA newsletter
* GSA Website discussion and update assistance
* Streamline timing of newsletter and communications from the GSA
* Help organize Mental Health Seminar with EGS and begin collaborating with Waterloo’s Graduate Students Association on workshops for students from both campuses.
* Organize online format of Taps & Tales
* Coordinate GSA Introduction Series for GSA Executives and Clubs for the upcoming year
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**June 2020**

* Host first Taps and Tales Virtual
* Coordinate Taps and Tales takeovers with IGSA and EGS for future months
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** first meeting
* **GSA Clubs Committee meeting:** first meeting. After this meeting it was decided that this committee would best be organized and Chaired by the VP Services. All future Club initiations would involve VP External; however, the process is led by VP Services.
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**July 2020**

* Connected with other VP Students GSA leaders across Canada to coordinate future events and discuss best practices
* **Social Events and Trips committee meeting: first** meeting
* Facilitate development of new club: McMaster Institute of Research on Aging Trainee Network via meeting and communications
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Draft Policy on Anti-Oppression
* Coordinate GSA Clubs Introduction Series via email
* Organize Taps and Tales regular event with graduate student consultation
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**August 2020**

* Wrote script and coordinated development of GSA Value Proposition video
* Conducted survey on GSA Political Involvement
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Draft Policy on Anti-Oppression
* Organize Taps and Tales virtual event - EGS Takeover
* Weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**September 2020**

* Create Board of Directors and Council report for updates on Policy on Anti-Oppression
* Organize virtual trivia for Welcome Month
* Organize Taps and Tales IGSA Takeover
* **Cross-Canada VP External/Events Committee:** First meeting of **beginning to organize** Canada-Wide Trivia Event to occur in December (Meetings biweekly)
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**October 2020**

* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Connect with Graduate Student Library Liaison to discuss the Graduate Student Study Space and requested more space and hour. Conducted the Graduate Student Study Space Survey
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Finalize Policy on Anti-Oppression, review of the McMaster Political Science GSA Black Lives Matter Statement, ThinkGrad Discussion, discussion on sharing of petitions amongst McMaster GSA community
* **Virtual Task Force**: Representation of graduate students on this group that was developed in October 2020 to bring forward ideas for the upcoming virtual Winter semester. Biweekly meetings over the span of October to December 2020.
* Organize Taps and Tales October event
* **President’s Advisory Board on Building an Inclusive Committee (PACBIC):** Obtained a seat on the committee to a three year term on behalf of graduate students on campus
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**November 2020**

* U15 GSS Committee: First meeting to discuss potential Federal advocacy for students across Canada
* Organize Taps and Tales November Event
* Initiate streamlined procedure for GSA Event Funding Approval for the GSA Executives
* **President’s Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Committee:** First meeting, initiated contact list amongst the committee to connect with other student leaders
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Multiple meetings on the GSA IHRA Definition letter presented by the McMaster Political Science Student Association
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Discuss regarding McMaster GSA’s potential federal advocacy priorities
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Discussion regarding engagement with the Student Housing Collaboration Research Survey in Quebec.
* **Bylaws Committee** to finalize the Policy on Anti-Oppression
* **Events & Trips Committee Meeting:** Discuss and plan potential virtual events
* **Canada-wide Trivia Event (December)** Hosted more than 50 McMaster graduate students as part of the first Cross-Canada virtual graduate student event
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**December & January 2021**

* **Events & Trips Committee Meeting:** One meeting December and one meeting January to plan and organize the Winter Welcome Week event
* **Winter Welcome Social Event:** Organization of multi-channel event with GSA Q&A, Yoga, and virtual games
* **Virtual Trivia Event:** Development of graphics and organization of the Welcome Trivia event
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Brought forward ideas and suggestions for a better response to Orange Shirt Day 2021. Indigenous, First Nations, and Metis Group under the President’s Advisory Committee for Building an Inclusive Community was receptive to the suggestions and shared they are in the process of developing an Orange Shirt Day Resource Toolkit.
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Development of the Student Issues Action Committee Communication Document for the purpose of guiding future student issues
* **Meeting with Cross-Canada VP External**/**Events** **Collaboration** to discuss successful practices for virtual events and ideas for future collaboration
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**February 2021**

* **President’s Advisory Board on Building an Inclusive Committee (PACBIC):** Meeting to discuss initiatives on campus. Discussion of the upcoming April meeting open to wider McMaster community.
* Organize Taps and Tales Event with two students (Kinesiology and Engineering)
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Finalize Communications Standard Operations Procedure
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Discuss the ideas for the survey for Student Engagement and GSA Review
* **Think Grad Meetings 2021:** Attended and re-engaged with Think Grad, a cross-Canada group of graduate student associations
* **U15 GSS Committee:** Meeting in February that has led to the development of the first Federal Advocacy letter ahead of the federal budget plan.
* **U15 GSS Committee:** A second letter was drafted on behalf of the international students to advocate for the exemption of travelling students from the expense of $2000 hotel and 14-day quarantine period.
* **Campus Wireless and MS 365 Student Email Steering Committee:** Representation of graduate students on this Working group for the transition from McMaster graduate students in the transition from Google to Microsoft Outlook platform.
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media

**March 2021**

* **Cross-Canada VP External/Events Committee:** Met biweekly to organize second Canada-Wide Trivia in April
* **Bylaws Committee** Meeting
* **U15 GSS Committee:** Liaise with UBC and McMaster to ensure Council is aligned with the federal advocacy priorities put forward by the committee.
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Finalize Communications Standard Operating Procedure
* **Student Issues Action Committee**: Implemented feedback on eliminating barriers for the Faculty Representative of the Council (FRC) when hosting Faculty events.
* **Campus Wireless and MS 365 Student Email Steering Committee:** Representation of graduate students on this Working group for the transition from McMaster graduate students in the transition from Google to Microsoft Outlook platform.
* GSA Representation on the **MSU** **Rudy Heinzl Award Selection Committee**
* **Student Issues Action Committee:** Organize year-in-review survey questions
* **GSA Executive Anti-Oppression Training**
* **Development of the White Allies Seminar Series led by PACBIC members, Khadijeh Rakie and Rodrigo Narro Perez**
* Development of interesting and relevant content in weekly newsletter via email and daily communications via social media