**McMaster GSA VP Admin report: May 2020 to March 2021**

In my role as VP admin, I have been involved with several decision-making processes that have had financial implications for the GSA and its membership. The decisions taken over the past months were mainly in response to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the GSA sought to alleviate the financial burden on its members, through reduction of various fees, while ensuring that students have access to vital services to help cope with the difficult times. Also, steps were taken to minimize losses sustained during the period. The three main areas of impact are the HSR UPass, the Phoenix and the GSA budget. The following paragraphs will provide more information on these three areas of impact.

With regards to the HSR UPass, there have been three major outcomes with the fourth under negotiation. First, the GSA negotiated for a refund for months for which HSR did not charge the public bus riding fees. These refunds, which amounted to about $65, reflected on student accounts in January 2021. Secondly, the GSA obtained a fee reduction for the fall term of the 2020/2021 academic year. Thirdly, the GSA requested for proration of UPass fee for students starting in the winter term. This is the first time that students starting in the winter term have had to pay prorated fees instead of the full fees. Lastly, there is an ongoing negotiation to have students kept out of the Ontario province by the pandemic opted out of the HSR bus pass.

The Phoenix had to rework it menu to carry less inventory early on during the pandemic. To boost sales, Phoenix opened accounts on both UberEats and DoorDash and setup an online ordering platform on its website. Prior to opening these accounts, the Phoenix had to go through an approval process with the university showing compliance with COVID-19 guidelines. These and many other efforts have taken effect and brought about a turnaround in Phoenix’s finances.

With regards to the GSA budget, the budget for 2020/2021 academic year had to undergo two major iterations with the final version approved at the Special General meeting in October 2020. The changes to the budget were driven by the reduction in various revenue streams brought about by the pandemic. The affected revenue streams include dividend from the Phoenix, investment income, donation from SGS, event income and HST rebate. To make up for these revenue losses, the GSA had to apply for wage subsidies from the government, reduce the travel awards budget slightly, take out special student services projects. However, there was increased support towards students through the budget line items of GSA bursaries and graduate awards. It also worth noting that the GSA capital build fee was waived the for the 2020/2021 academic year and now for the 2021/2022 academic year. It is anticipated that the wage subsidy from the government will be discontinued over the 2021/2022 academic year. Thus, for the new budget, the organisational fee is being increase slightly to $65 which is just the pre-SCI fee adjusted for CPI and still one of the lowest GSA fees across Canada. Also, the new budget has increased revenue from endowment trust income and reduction in emergency fund to make up for the wage subsidy loss. Current initiatives being embarked upon to further improve the GSA’s finances include moving our investments to higher interest yielding financial instruments and shopping for cheaper insurance policies.

Below is list of the various activities I have been involved with over the past months:

**May 2020:**

* Contacted several insurance companies for competitive quotes for existing insurance policies.
* Held finance committee meeting to discuss financial reporting on both the GSA and phoenix.
* Reviewed council and board meetings minutes.
* Attended GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, and board)
* Facilitated funding of online workshops proposal by EGS.

**June 2020:**

* Reviewed GSA fees considering pandemic.
* Reviewed budget considering pandemic.
* Reviewed council and board meetings minutes.
* Attended GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, and board)

**July 2020:**

* Attended weekly meetings with HSR on bus pass negotiations.
* Attended weekly meetings with KPMG for updates for GSA audit process.
* Held finance committee meeting to discuss financial reporting on both the GSA and phoenix.
* Worked on policies for both Phoenix and GSA reopening.
* Reviewed council and board meetings minutes.
* Attended GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, and board)

**August 2020:**

* Attended weekly meetings with HSR on bus pass negotiations.
* Worked on updating budget.
* Worked on GSA value proposition document.
* Reviewed council and board meetings minutes.
* Attended GSA meetings. (GSA running, executive, council, and board)
* Liaised with the IGSA in the recruitment of new international FRC.
* Attended grad writing support meeting and initiated the process for collaborating on academic writing workshop.

**September 2020:**

* Drafted investment policy.
* Attended weekly meetings with HSR on bus pass negotiations.
* Held finance committee meeting to discuss financial reporting on both the GSA and phoenix.
* Reviewed council and board meeting minutes.
* GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, board)

October 2020

* Finance committee meeting
* HSR meeting
* Phoenix advisory committee meeting
* HR Committee: meeting
* GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, board)
* GSA SGM
* GSA grad fair table
* Reviewed council and board meeting minutes.

November 2020

* Finance committee meeting
* HSR meeting
* Phoenix advisory committee meeting
* HR Committee meeting
* GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, board)
* Prepared capitalization and depreciation policies
* Reviewed council and board meeting minutes.

December 2020

* Finance committee meeting
* HSR meeting
* Phoenix advisory committee: meeting
* HR Committee meeting
* Reviewed council and board meeting minutes.
* Attended GSA meeting (GSA running, executive, council, board)

January 2021

* HSR meeting and request letter
* Phoenix advisory committee meeting
* HR Committee meeting
* Fee discussion meeting
* Budget discussion meeting
* IGSAG meeting
* Reviewed council and board meeting minutes.
* Initiate process to obtain quote for insurance policies.
* GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, board)

February 2021

* Finance committee meeting
* Worked with insurance broker to obtain necessary information insurance quote.
* HSR meeting
* IGSAG meeting
* Reviewed council and board meeting minutes.
* GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, board)

March 2021

* Finance committee meeting
* Anti-oppression training
* Bylaws committee meeting
* Opened higher interest rate accounts at the bank.
* Worked with insurance broker to obtain necessary information insurance quote.
* GSA meetings (GSA running, executive, council, board)