Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

***Council Meeting***

June 30, 2021

Teleconference - Zoom

4:00 pm.

**Minutes**

**Attendees- voting members:** Caroline Seiler (GSA President), Spencer Naylor (VP Administration), Wei Zhao (VP Services), Shuwen Qian (VP Internal), Dhanyasri Maddiboina (FRC Engineering), Sarah Elshaht (VP External), Zarwa Saqib (FRC Health Science), Newton Ming (FRC Business), Ce Ji (FRC business), Ana Portillo (FRC Health Science), Sudeshna Dhar (FRC International), Moyo Sogaolu (FRC International)

**Attendees- non-voting members:** Mona Mohamed (Executive Secretary-non voting)

**Guest non-voting:** Carolyn Brendon (OMBUDS Office)

**Regrets:** Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO- non-voting), Nicole Areias (Senator Humanities-non voting), Michelle Ragany (FRC Engineering), Seraphina Vasilodimitrakis (FRC Humanities)

**Absent:** Sahand Sepehrvand (Senator Engineering- non-voting), Alyaa Abdelhalim (Senator Business-non voting), Lucas Klein (FRC Science), Ying Dong (GSA CRO), Ghada Sasa (FRC Social Science), Dina Hansen (FRC Social Science),

**Quorum: 30% of seats (20) – met**

**Call to order 1:06**

1. **MOTION: Approval of Agenda**

**Motion to approve the agenda for June meeting moved by Zarwa, seconded by Ana, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **MOTION**: Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the minutes of May meeting moved by Spencer, seconded by Zarwa, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **OMBUDS introduction:**

* Carolyn gives a brief introduction to the OMBUDS office.
* She highlighted that the university reduced the office's mandate, and she only has jurisdiction over students, not staff or faculty. The university tried to take over the OMBUDS office. However, the student union push back. She suggests increasing graduate students' representation at the OMBUDS office, as it is valuable for grad students to have the OMBUDS office.

**Motion to continue to discuss graduate students' representation at the OMBUDS office at McMaster moved by Sarah seconded by Spencer all in favour motion carried.**

1. **President & VPs remarks:**
   * Continuing discussion for the AR fee with the university. The discussion about reducing the fee is ongoing.
   * Continuing discussion with the university about sustainability, they are looking to give graduate students feedback on implementing different sustainability features on campus. This is still on the focus group. The representative from the sustainability office wants to host a focus group with members of the GSA council.

VP External:

* Sarah mentioned that she is working on the Urgent Statement Policy. This policy is to respond to any social issue promptly. E.g., the residential school issues appeared in BC.
* The places to fall in love contest in the weekly email and social media is working very well.
* She started the Instagram account, and it received many followers.

Vp Internal:

* Shuwen mentioned that TLC designed outdoor space for clubs, and it will be permanent even after the pandemic.
* Campus wireless is almost 85% done. Information on how to use it will be distributed in September.
* Most students' emails are migrated to Microsoft 365 only 200 students remaining.
* AAC was hosted last week. It was focusing on an open letter from the department of psychology and behaviour.
* Meet with welcome week volunteers to arrange for swag bags and swag coupons from restaurants.

VP Administration

* Spencer mentioned that the current structure for the investment strategy was confusing. So we are working to reinstate the GSA investment. We are currently holding off
* The GSA audit has started and will end in August.
* Sarah is sharing a grant support survey. This will be distributed to grad students. It is mainly to know how to direct support during covid.
* Discussing a proposal from the university about the harassment policy will be discussed in detail with the HR Committee.

Vp Services

* Wei is working on the GSA health and dental for their potential members in the divinity college and MBA students because interest is expressed from those students to get the GSA health insurance plan potentially.
* He is continuing to work on the GSA new student handbook. He is contacting different clubs to help welcome new students. For example, after online registration starts on July 6th, he said that he's going to wait until the university sends an email to all new Grad students, and he's going to make an effort to make sure that the university contacts all the GSA clubs and faculty associations to help with disseminating this new information.
  1. Phoenix Update:
* The Phoenix is now open, and so is the patio. This was advertised on social media and the mailer.
  1. Statement on London Attacks
* The statement was circulated to members

**Motion to approve the statement and indorse it from the GSA, posted on the social media and the weekly email moved by Zarwa seconded by Shuwen all in favour motion carried**

* 1. Statement on Indigenous Solidarity
* The statement was circulated to members
* Another 180 graves were found. Suggestion to add this to the statement. The momentum is started to investigate a lot in those residential schools, so the GSA will not keep up with every single discovery. Suggestion to a general response to more discoveries of this nature and put it out as a response.

**Motion to approve the Indigenous statement pending updating the numbers moved by Anna seconded by Spencer all in favour motion carries.**

* 1. Open Letter in light of the recent sexual assault allegations within McMaster's PNB department
* A statement circulated through the council package.
* This letter was drafted by grad students from Neuroscience and Behaviour when a faculty member was accused of sexual harassment misconduct, and the response from McMaster was disappointing.

**Motion to endorse the Open Letter statement by PNB department Moved by Sarah seconded by Zarwa all in favour motion carried.**

1. **FRC Update:**

**Motion to send FRC reports to Mona to post them in the minutes moved by Sarah seconded by Spencer all in favour motion carried**

Social Science

* No new business

Business:

Newton sends the following report:

* The updates for FRC of business have 4 parts.
* First, we need to know the update of the quarantine hotel for international students who do not have find a place to quarantine. Whether the school has decided or not, we need a result instead of waiting for nothing.
* Second, the investment plan still needs to consider about the reflection of students who are not willing to let us to use their money to do financial investment.
* Third, the marketing plan for the Phoenix. (Already discussed with Spencer to find a make a brief to do the advertisement and other activities.
* Fourth, the operation about the social media. What's the plan and what’s the goal.

Engineering

Dhany mentioned:

* New EGS

SciGSA

* No new business

Humanities:

Seraphina sent the following reports:

* Rick Monture, Associate Professor in the English and Cultural Studies Department, Indigenous Studies Program, is the recipient of Mac's 2021 Indigenous Scholar-in-Community Fellowship. Monture is a member of the Mohawk Nation, Turtle Clan, from the Six Nations of the Great River Territory, and will work to interview and document the cultural wisdom and stories of the remaining first language speakers of Cayuga and Onondaga at Six Nations.
* Starting July 7, the Humanities Faculty will begin an "employment engagement survey" for all faculty and staff with questions about workload, communication, resources, etc., in an attempt to improve upon experiences of teaching and administrating in the last year.

Health Science:

Zarwa sent the following:

* There was a career networking event on June 23 where 4 panelists from different fields were invited. One of them was a professor in Public Health, 2 of them were Medical Science Liaisons, and the fourth one was a Bioinformatician working at a research lab in Vancouver. The event was well attended due to the diversity of the panellists. This event was done in collaboration with Industry Link and MMSA.
* The HSGSF, in collaboration with MMSA is also hosting a month-long group wellness series (ReJUNEvenate) for students. The first session was done in the first week of June, and it was on Yoga; the second will be Zumba week and then nutrition.

IGSA

* No new business

1. **Senate / BOG Updates:**

* No new business

1. **New business:**

Urgent Statement Policy

* Caroline asked if members are comfortable moving this policy to the board.

**Motion to move the urgent statement policy to the GSA Board moved by Sarah seconded by Spencer all in favour motion carried**

1. **Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 pm, moved by Sarah, seconded by Anna all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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| **Item** | **Action by** | **Due date** |