Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

***Council Meeting***

December 1st, 2021

Teleconference - Zoom

5:00 pm.

**Minutes**

**Attendees- voting members:** Caroline Seiler (GSA President), Spencer Naylor (VP Administration), Wei Zhao (VP Services), Zarwa Saqib (FRC Health Science), Newton Meng (FRC Business), Ce Ji (FRC business), Ana Portillo (FRC Health Science), Sudeshna Dhar (FRC International), Seraphina Vasilodimitrakis (FRC Humanities), Ying Dong (GSA CRO), Sarah Elshaht (VP External), Shuwen Qian (VP Internal), Lucas Klein (FRC Science), Moyo Sogaolu (FRC International),

**Attendees- non-voting members:** Alyaa Abdelhalim (Senator Business-non voting)

**Guest non-voting:** NA

**Regrets:** Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO- non-voting), Mona Mohamed (Executive Secretary-non voting),

**Absent:** Sahand Sepehrvand (Senator Engineering- non-voting), Dina Hansen (FRC Social Science), Paramita Bhattacharyya (FRC Engineering), Nicole Areias (Senator Humanities-non voting), Dhanyasri Maddiboina (FRC Engineering), Ghada Sasa (FRC Social Science)

**Quorum: 30% of seats (20) – met**

**Call to order 5:05**

1. **MOTION: Approval of Agenda**

Adding to new business:

Add a new club application to the agenda to discuss and approve the Critical Global Health Club. **Motion to approve the amended agenda for November meeting moved Seraphina, seconded by Spencer, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **MOTION**: Approval of Minutes

**Motion to approve the minutes of October 26th meeting moved by Zarwa, seconded by Wei, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **President & VPs remarks:**

* Caroline mentions we’re going to have a COVID relief fund for overtime students. Use of some GSA surplus funds.
* Goal is to have FRCs and GSA members to advertise this. Planning to begin advertising on select Fridays.
* Students can apply for up to 3000 dollars in funding for tuition if they are overtime students and receive no external funding or any funding elsewhere.
* Application form was circulated and going to be researched. Sent out in the GSA emails and posted on social media. Urged to advertise to students in our faculty.
* Joint contribution from the McMaster alumni association.
* Next term next year, in January aiming for increased in person university activity.
* GSA planning in person activities including a ski trip and other initial ideas. As this develops, going to request volunteer assistance, and bring more social activities to campus.
* Noted that there is no Council meeting in December but will have a holiday dinner for all GSA members at the Phoenix.
* Update with the school of Graduate studies, began to see groups for students with disabilities on Monday evenings on zoom. To allow students to meet others on campus with disabilities to encourage building a community for students.
* In talks with Divinity school about adding our dental plan for the next academic year as they already have our health plan.
* News that Graduate students from the pastor referendums are going to be apart of our membership for benefits in September 2022. Details and specific still in progress.

VP Admin

* Spencer expresses the importance of FRCs communicating the COVID relief fund not just to Faculty communications but to also extend to individual departmental communications.
* Emphasizes the key step of communicating the fund exists to get applications before it eventually closes and do the breakdown of funding to each student.
* Update on the Phoenix, nothing in terms of numbers as it’s closed, since the start of reopening in September.
* Only news is the phoenix cannot host any group events exceeding 25 people indoors, as the phoenix runs on the University’s guidelines for indoor gathering.
* Hopes in seeing change come January.
* Phoenix running well, hosting the holiday markets on December 7th 2021. Fundraising for good local causes; St. Michaels a local charity.
* Bigger updates concerning finance in January.

VP Services

* Wei discusses the IGSA meeting and talks about the student in person events can be held but poses difficulty as only a few students might attend. The university must make sure the in-person event is needed, with possibility of high attendance.
* Wei attended the IT committee meeting, in the meeting he talked about the LinkedIn learning.
* LinkedIn learning is a new function like a course to teach and provide a certificate.
* The university has already purchased the relative licence for students to have free access to the course. Can advise students to get it.
* Wei mentions how great it is that IMBA and divinity school are joining our health and dental insurance plan. Expresses how a module should be included to hope the plan does not heavily increase in price.
* Wei begins to talk about propagating the housing insurance to students planning to visit has not made much progress.
* During the past year, he has discussed the need to give the visiting students health insurance, such as reimburse their prescription drugs or some medical services.
* From this year on, they can get a health insurance plan, but a problem is the absence of a waiting list from the university. Only list they have is the full-time list of students.
* Still working on getting the university to provide the proper contact list.
* Better the policy for uncashed cheques for the students who receive CUPE.
* CUPE directly mails the cheques for reimbursement to students which often the student forgets to cash before the expiry date.
* Wei expresses that next week we will have a new policy that allows students to be sent another cheque to replace the expired ones.
* He expresses the importance of welcoming new international students through clubs
* Currently, it is hard to welcome new international students and suggests welcoming them through email as they get the offer from the university.
* Which will lead to more members in clubs and helps them build more community.

**VP Internal**

* Shuwen provides feedback on the service leadership workshop that revolves around crucial conversation strategies. The workshop received a lot of positive feedback from the 10 participants.
* Shuwen had another meeting with Andrew, presenting the idea of having a guest speaker for a panel to promote awareness among faculty and staff concerning students with disabilities. In addition to having a general session for graduate students, to encourage students to reach out for help.
* Shuwen mentions inviting a student who was a graduate student with a disability that was undiagnosed for 15 years to be a guest speaker.
* Which would be scheduled next term in January or February
* Shuwen then mentions working with Sarah for a welcome week event for incoming winter students. The policy update will determine if the event occurs.
* Shuwen brings up the email she received from Wei notifying her of her sudden responsibility for the faculty association event planning. Describes the lack of information given to her prior to being told and that it needs to be sorted.
* Caroline addresses the situation and mentions that a bigger discussion can be arranged because of the lack of time they have.
* Caroline then asks Shuwen of any updates concerning the words of adjudication, Shuwen explains that she had already sent the results to Mona and Ashley in October.

VP External

* Sarah mentioned that the work on the cook book is finalized and communicated to students on the weekly email.
* Next semester planning a peer support program, it is Ontario wide.
* Sarah asked about COVID relief fund, and Caroline mentioned it is approved and Sarah can start communicate the information.

1. **FRC Update:**

Health Science

* Most recent event was publishing workshop about have to navigate tools to identify selection for journal.
* Planning social event in December.

Science

* No new business

Business:

* No new business

Engineering

* No new business

SciGSA

* No new business

Humanities:

* Last week they had humanity meeting were all the new curricula was approved.

IGSA

* No new business

1. **MBDCS club approval**

* Wei mentioned that the application looks good and he is fine with moving forward with approving this clubs.

**Motion to approve the MBDCS club as a GSA club moved by Seraphina seconded by Lucas, all in favor motion carried.**

1. **Senate / BOG Updates:**

* No new business

1. **New business:**

Critical Global Health Club

* Wei went through the application there are some errors, but nothing major to mentioned. They need to include that the GSA provide them with $250 seed money.

**Motion to approve the Critical Global Health Club as a GSA club moved by Spencer, seconded by Ana all in favor motion carried.**

1. **Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 pm, moved by Sarah, seconded by Wei all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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