Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

 ***Council Meeting***

Sept 28, 2021

Teleconference - Zoom

6:00 pm.

**Minutes**

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

**Attendees- non-voting members:** Mona Mohamed (Executive Secretary-non voting), Ashley van Eck (DoO- non-voting), Alyaa Abdelhalim (Senator Business-non voting)

**Guest non-voting:** NA

**Regrets:** NA

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

**Quorum: 30% of seats (20) – met**

**Call to order 6:05**

1. **MOTION: Approval of Agenda**

Add awards jurisdiction to new business

Add AIM club Application

**Motion to approve the amended agenda for September meeting moved Spencer, seconded by Ana, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **MOTION**: Approval of Minutes

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

1. **President & VPs remarks:**
* Caroline mentioned that updates from the university are that the winter term will be fully in person, and students have to be fully vaccinated or submit a validated exemption.
* Continue working on the bursary and awards budget.
* Continue working on COVID relief funds.
* Regarding the Dialogue service, we will have a referendum in February to determine whether on not to continue the service
* The university is developing a census for students; it will be disseminated to the council once we receive the information.
* Investment policy passed on the Board meeting. The GSA will invest in surplus funds from the previous year.
* Continue the discussion with HSR regarding potential opt outs.

VP Internal

* Shuwen worked on Welcome Week events. Yesterday was the resource fair, and it had good attendance. There was also a GSA Q&A session by the GSA team, a Yoga session, and a trivia night at the Phoenix.
* Started working on the academic workshop servies. The first workshop will be the Leadership series in October.

VP External

* The gardening program and Places to Fall in Love With contest are running very smoothly and successfully.
* The GSA will add discount codes from some grocery stores to our website and social media.

VP Admin

* Spencer is working on a proposal to allow students to access COVID relief funds. The funds will be used from the surplus of the previous year. This proposal will go to the Bylaws and Board meeting for further discussion.
* We will connect with HSR in October to discuss potential opt outs.
* Reached out to alumni and CUPE for funding opportunities to add to COVID relief funds.
* Phoenix is doing well and has started recovering some of the losses during the months it was closed.

VP Services

* Held webinars to speak about health and dental for all grad students.
* The GSA currently has 19 clubs as more clubs have lost connection with the GSA and not responding to emails.
* VP Services changed a little, so now all club registration and events go to the VP Services.
* The GHSSRC will meet to discuss covering medical devices and opting out policy.

**FRC Update:**

Social Science

* No new business

Business:

* There were some issues for students who deferred their term to January, and they weren’t able to enrol in SGS 711 placeholder course to receive the HSR code and affected their GSA H&D coverage. The information disseminated to them was incomplete, and the department administrator didn’t have the full information regarding this. Students had to pay $3300.
* Ashley mentioned that she requested some students’ numbers, and it looks like the student themselves did not enroll correctly and this seems to be an enrollment issue, more so than the university not wanting to assess these fees. Additionally, when students added SGS 700 as a placeholder course, it triggered some supplementary fees. So, then, the student would have been assessed as a full time student, so that the HSR and other supplementary fees would have been assessed, which is probably where some of that $300 balance is coming from. However, it’s possible an administrator communicated incorrect information to students. Ashley asked Newton to send three of his peers, inclusive of himself, and she would pull the data files to determine what happened and resolve the issue.
* Newton explained that he also tried to enroll to SGS 711, but the system rejected him, and he is now unable to access UHIP and GSA insurance.
* Ashely mentioned that Netwon could send her an email to take this conversation offline for confidentiality purposes.

Engineering

* A couple of welcome week events, both academic and social, these events will take place in Sept and Oct.

SciGSA

* Last month discussed different ETA initiatives that different departments are putting forward.
* The monthly meeting is tomorrow.

Humanities:

* Humanity faculty meeting this morning, they had a global nexus and some projects, this will be posted on the website
* The faculty hired 6 new tenure track appointments
* Webinar about the annual Mahatma Gandhi Lecture will be conducted tomorrow by Dr. Dawn Martin Hill and Dr. Rick Muncher, who are members of the Mohawk people of the six nations.

Health Science:

* They had a welcome event for first year grad students last week.
* They started sharing information about the association and sharing some helpful resources for students.
* At the end of welcome events, they gave Amazon gift cards.
* They are preparing a networking event in October.
* The health science mentorship program is running for the second time this year.

IGSA

* Had some Welcome Week event in collaboration with other groups.
* They had a writing contest where they sent out the prompt for essays for three weeks, and then the winners were announced at the end of the following week.
* The second collaboration was with SGS, it was a photo contest for the first day of school, and then the winner was announced last week
* They had token games held on Sept 23, and it had very good attendance.
1. **Senate / BOG Updates:**
* No new business
1. **New business:**

Adjudication Award Committee,

* The GSA will start adjudication of the Keith Leppmann, GSA award for contribution by non academic staff, Theresa Quigley and Mary Keyes.
* The GSA President will chair the committee, and in the event that the president is unavailable, the VP Internal will serve as the chair.
* The committee will meet in the fall term to adjudicate the GSA awards.

**Motion to approve the creation of the graduate award adjudication committee moved by Wei seconded by Seraphina, all in favour motion carried.**

Club Applications received:

* Mira club documents have been circulated to the council.

**Motion to approve the creation of the MIRA club to be a GSA club moved by Zarwa seconded by Wei**

* AIM club documents circulated
* The club is already excited about the GSA. They just missed the deadline to confirm their status

**Motion to approve the reinstatement of the AIM as the GSA club moved by Zarwa seconded by Ana all in favour motion carried.**

1. **Adjournment**

 **Motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 pm, moved by Spencer, seconded by Seraphina all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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