Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

***Council Meeting***

February 16th , 2023

Teleconference - Zoom

3:00 pm.

**Minutes**

**Attendees- voting members:** Caroline Seiler (GSA President), Letizia Dondi (VP Administration), Wei Zhao (VP Services), Shuwen Qian (VP Internal), Moyo Sogaolu (FRC International), Ghada Sasa (FRC Social Science), Xiaobing Li (FRC Sciences), Sarah Elshahat (VP External), Megan Li (FRC SciGSA), Ana Portillo (FRC Health Science), Paramita Bhattacharyya (FRC Engineering), Zahra Tootonsab (FRC Humanities), Si Lui (FRC Business), Ruchini Abayakoon (FRC Humanities), Ying Dong (CRO), Beyza Hatun (FRC Social Sciences)

**Attendees- Staff:** Samantha Sada (Executive Secretary-non voting), Ashley Ravenscroft (Director of Operations- non voting)

**Guest non-voting:**  Meghan Rego, Carolyn Brendon

**Regrets:**Dhanyasri Maddiboina, Ankit Ranjan

**Absent:**

**Quorum: 30% of seats (20) – met**

**Call to order at 3:06 PM**

1. **MOTION: Approval of Agenda**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the February 2023 Council meeting moved Letizia Dondi, seconded by Moyo Sogaolu, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **MOTION**: **Approval of Minutes**

**Motion to approve the minutes of the January 2022 Council Meeting moved by Letizia Dondi, seconded by Ruchini Abayakoon, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **President & VPs remarks:**

* Caroline begins her updates by stating that the GSA closed their Overtime Relief fund applications last Friday and received 33 applicants.
* Caroline notifies the Council that there have been volunteers to help review applications and urges anyone interested to contact the GSA.
* Caroline states that the GSA just had the HSR referendum, and the preliminary results favour keeping the bus pass. She explains that HSR allows the GSA to charge May students a prorated fee and have the pass available to co-op students.
* Caroline adds that the GSA is preparing for the Annual General Meeting on March 29th, which includes annual executive reports highlighting what’s been done in the past year and the GSA budget.
* Additionally, Caroline highlights that the GSA has been in contact with two students who are parents to help them navigate how we can improve their situations. As a result, she explains that the GSA is trying to create a club for student parents to connect.
* Caroline continues her updates by stating the GSA is holding a snow tubing event. She explains that the trip is sold out, welcoming 56 participants.
* Caroline states that a student has contacted the GSA to hold eco-art displays around the campus and would like people to volunteer for this initiative.
* Caroline states that the GSA is submitting our fees to the University. She explains that the GSA has successfully negotiated with the University to decrease their 6% supplementary fee estimate to 4.5%.
* Caroline adds that the School of Graduate Studies contacted the GSA about a Grad Supervisory Initiative. They want to create a focus group of graduate students' concerns about the student-supervisor relationship.
* Caroline urges people to apply as an FRC through the GSA application if council members want to remain a representative.
* Caroline states that the GSA had a meeting with Studentcare. They notified the GSA that Conversations (mental health program) was utilized tremendously by Grad Students, the fifth highest user in Canada.
* Caroline explains that students have expressed their need for legal services, and the GSA is currently looking for services that can be made available to students.

**VP** **Admin**

* Letizia explains that the GSA is preparing all the material for the AGM.
* Letizia explains that both the GSA and The Phoenix are in a comfortable financial position.
* Letizia states that the GSA hosted a finance meeting where the materials were reviewed.
* Letizia invites the Council members to the GSA International women’s day movie night which will be held on the 9th March at the GSA office

**VP Services**

* + Wei states that he is updating the website.

**VP Internal**

* + Shuwen states that she does not have any updates.

**VP External**

* Sarah explains that the newsletter has been reviewed and edited to be sent to students, along with a statement concerning the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey.

**Ombuds Presentation**

* Meghan explains that the Ombuds office provides free, confidential, impartial, and independent advice and assistance on student-related matters, both academic and non-academic.
* The Ombuds office operates with three principles in mind: independence, confidentiality, and impartiality. The Ombuds office promotes actualized fairness within the University, and the next will quickly discuss the concept of fairness.
* The Ombuds office can provide information on local legal clinics, lawyers, referral services, and other resources.

**7. FRC Update:**

Health Science

* They have had their first meeting, discussing Dr. Steve Hanna, who is setting up a meeting with the entire faculty to discuss grad student funding concerns.
* They are trying to plan an event for March centred around brain awareness and mental health.

Social Science

* Working on a rally for Syria concerning the earthquakes.
* Requested a GSA statement on the Syria/Turkey earthquakes; Letizia and Caroline responded stating that the most recent Friday newsletter included a statement. They also mentioned that the GSA executives were putting forward to their Board a motion to provide a charitable donation to disaster relief.

Business:

* Holding a social at The Phoenix.

Engineering

* Paramita explains that this Friday, they are organizing a board games night, open to all grad students, where they will be collecting donations for earthquake relief through Red Cross. Upcoming, they have a go-karting event as well.

SciGSA

* They are holding events soon; they are waiting for insurance information.

Humanities:

* Involved with Raise the floor and are trying to come up with a professional development session.

IGSA

* Planning to have a photo contest for Easter.

**Annual General Meeting Discussion**

**MOTION: To send the Annual General Meeting documentation to the Board of Directors for consideration before sending it to the general membership moved by Moyo Sogaolu, seconded by Letizia Dondi, all in favour, motion carried.**

**8. Senate / BOG Updates:**

* No updates

**9. New Business**

* **Club Appointments**
* **MOTION: To approve the McMaster EHealth Student Association moved by Ghada Sasa, seconded by Beyza Kiziltepe, all in favour, motion carried.**
* **MOTION: To approve the Global Health Restoration Club moved by Zahra Tootonsab, seconded by Moyo Sogaolu, all in favour, motion carried.**

**Motion: To adjourn the February Council Meeting moved by Ghada Sasa, seconded by Zahra Tootonsab, all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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