Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

***Council Meeting***

June 20th 2023

Teleconference - Zoom

3:00 pm.

**Minutes**

**Attendees- voting members:** Letizia Dondi (President), Jing Zheng (VP Admin), Ana Portillo (VP External), Zahra Tootonsab (FRC Humanities), Xiaobing Li (FRC Sciences), Kusum Bhatta (VP Internal), Lory Yang (VP Services), Ghada Sasa (FRC Humanities)

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

**Guest non-voting:**

**Regrets:**

**Absent:** Forough Passyar (FRC Humanities)

**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 June 2023 Council meeting moved by Kusum Bhatta, seconded by Xiaobing Li all in favour, motion carried**.

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

**Motion to approve the minutes of the May 2023 Council Meeting moved by Kusum Bhatta, seconded by Jing Zheng all in favour, motion carried**.

**Remarks**

* Letizia begins her updates by stating that Caroline and herself attended the Budget Model Review for the University that is conducted by internal members.
* Letizia explains that she expressed how the GSA felt concerning how the current budget model was serving students.
* Letizia hopes to get a report of the review to share with Council.
* Letizia continues her updates by stating that she attended an Academics Accommodation review, looking into a SAS system for students who have disabilities and need accommodations for course work as well as other needs.
* Letizia explains that the GSA team will be attending the new Graduate Residence Building walk through in June to get a chance to see the building as well as have some meaningful conversations with the Dean.
* Letizia mentions that the GSA has met with MSU and discussed some ideas to partner on.
* Letizia announces that the GSA has had their first submission for the Student Project Fund by EGS and Health Sciences. She explains that they will be presenting this initiative at the upcoming board meeting.
* Letizia asks the GSA council to sign up as members of two GSA committees to improve participation and engagement with the graduate community.

**VP Internal**

* Kusum states that she met with a representative from Mac Pearson, who are working on a way to navigate AI.
* Kusum mentions that she recently had a meeting with Ashley regarding welcome week to see if the GSA can include two new events.
* Kusum urges everyone in Council to contact her if they have any ideas for Welcome week.

**VP External**

* Ana states that she has been working on the weekly newsletter and started a new initiative where the GSA can highlight different Grad students on the newsletter.
* Ana notifies Council that they can reach out to her if they would like to highlight a Grad student or even themselves.
* She also urges Council to connect with her if they would like to promote anything such as clubs or events.

VP Administration

* Jing explains that the past couple weeks have been attending meetings with Ashley to discuss finance and attending bank appointments.

**The Phoenix Update**

* Ashley explains that the Phoenix has a renovation going on to the right of the restaurant and it has caused a bit of a downturn.
* She explains that because of the renovation, the Phoenix has lost a lot of the patio to noise and debris but are still hopeful for the upcoming months.
* Ashley states that they are going to have a meeting with the University to discuss an interim plan as this renovation is a two-month project.
* Additionally, Ashley confirms that the Phoenix is keeping the Grad Student discount at 20%.

**Persona Non-Grata Policy**

* Letizia explains that the Persona Non-Grata (PNG) policy has been brought up recently by Kusum.
* PNG Policy has been in debate for the past year. The policy allows the administration to punish anyone such as students, professors, or alumni without outlining their decision process.
* PNG action that took place in April, a student was caught putting up posters in a restrictive area. Campus Security tackled the student and held them in the waiting area for an hour and a half. The student was then PNG’d by the University with no investigation.
* Letizia explains that the GSA has been discussing this policy in the context of not having clear appeals process and is concerned about the implications this may have for students.
* She explains that today she is hoping to discuss whether the Council would like to sign on our support as the GSA for the CUPE support letter.
* Letizia mentions that the GSA will be organizing SIAC meetings to discuss this issue.

**FRC Update:**

Humanities

* No updates

Social Science

* No updates

SciGSA

* Xiaobing mentions that the SciGSA is hosting its elections and have sent out the polls.

Business:

* No updates

Engineering

* No updates

Humanities:

* No Updates

IGSA

* No Updates

**8.Senate / BOG Updates:**

* No updates

**9. New Business**

**Motion: To adjourn the June Council Meeting moved by Kusum Bhatta, seconded by Zahra Tootonsab, all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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