Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

***Council Meeting***

October 27th, 2022

Teleconference - Zoom

3:00 pm.

**Minutes**

**Attendees- voting members:** Caroline Seiler (GSA President), Letizia Dondi (VP Administration), Wei Zhao (VP Services), Zarwa Saqib (FRC Health Science), Shuwen Qian (VP Internal), Moyo Sogaolu (FRC International), Ghada Sasa (FRC Social Science), Ankit Ranjan (FRC Business), Xiaobing Li (FRC SciGSA), Sarah Elshahat (VP External), Megan Li (FRC SciGSA), Ana Portillo (FRC Health Science),

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

**Guest non-voting:**

**Regrets:**Paramita Bhattacharyya, Dhanyasri Maddiboina, Si Lui

**Absent:**

**Quorum: 30% of seats (20) – met**

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

**MOTION: Adding discussion of The School of Earth, Environment, and Society Graduate Student Collective (SEES-GSC) Club Application moved by Sarah Elshahat, seconded by Letizia Dondi, all in favour, motion carried.**

1. **MOTION: Approval of Agenda**

**Motion to approve the agenda for the October 2022 Council meeting moved Moyo Sogaolu, seconded by Sarah Elshahat, all in favour, motion carried**.

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

**Motion to approve the minutes of the September 2022 Council Meeting moved by Sarah Elshahat, seconded by Zarwa Saqib, all in favour, motion carried**.

1. **President & VPs remarks:**

* Caroline begins her updates by stating that the Board has passed the Graduate student initiative funding. The idea of the initiative is to have a pool of money of up to $10,000 available to students to apply for to put on different initiatives.
* Caroline mentions that the GSA executive team and staff conducted EDI (equity diversity inclusion) training from The Equity and Inclusion office at McMaster.
* Caroline discusses that the GSA has met with the HSR to discuss the increase in the existing transit pass. HSR is pushing a 3.7 percent increase in the transit pass. However, this is only the starting negotiation.
* She explains that they will have another meeting on November 10th with HSR, and the final meeting on December 16th, which will hopefully have an agreement sent.
* Caroline continues her updates by stating that the GSA is meeting with the organizers of the Graduate Residence soon and will be speaking about the proposal and how the GSA can advocate for students to ensure a transparent process.
* Xiaobing asks if students who are accepted for housing can renew in the future.
* Caroline explains that that discussion is not confirmed just yet.
* Xiaobing follows up with another question, asking if there was any discussion around subletting.
* Caroline explains that the organizers have not discussed that, but she will note that at the next meeting.
* Caroline explains that the University is they have not had a public health issue but is urging people to stay home if they are sick. Additionally, there has been no change to the mask policy on campus.
* Caroline states that the GSA has also met with the University administrators to discuss adding new athletics programs for Graduate students.

**VP** **Admin**

* Letizia explains that the GSA has allocated some of the funds approved in the last finance committee meeting, stating that the GSA has opened a few GICs with Scotiabank.
* Letizia also urges the Council to promote the upcoming HSR Surveys to their faculties as it helps the GSA negotiate with HSR.

**VP External**

* Sarah explains that transitioning to the opt-in model for the newsletter has had low numbers and would like to extend the deadline to the end of the semester.

**VP Services**

* + Wei states that he has no updates other than there are a lot of events held by clubs this year.

**MOTION: To approve the creation of the School of Earth, Environment, and Society’s Grad Social Collective (SEES-GSC) club within the GSA moved by Shuwen Qian, seconded by Letizia Dondi, all in favour, motion carried.**

**VP Internal**

* + Shuwen states that the GSA has received more award applications in each category than last year.
  + She mentions that, hopefully, they will be able to get the adjudication results soon.
  + Shuwen explains that the GSA was asked to review the Discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence policy and provide feedback. She sent it to the academic affairs committee and urged the Council to reach out to her if they are interested in reviewing it.

**7. FRC Update:**

Health Science

* Zarwa explains that the FRC has decided to put together a survey to get a sense of student concerns regarding financials such as financial wellness, stipend funding… etc.
* She explains that some of the issues raised so far are that there needs to be more transparency for the tuition and award money, and the faulty health science needs to provide a breakdown of funding sources for their stipend.
* Zarwa explains that another concern was the gas prices and parking costs.
* Ashley expresses that the University has reduced parking costs, but the GSA can still advocate for students by having conversations with the parking services.

Social Science

* No updates

Business:

* No updates

Engineering

* No updates

SciGSA

* Xiaobing explains that the biggest update is The Science Symposium Research Day being hosted on December 6th.
* Ashley reminds the Council that FRC funding exists to hold events available to each faculty.

Humanities:

* No Updates

IGSA

* Moyo explains that they hosted a game night event last month in collaboration with the Graduate International Coordinator. She mentions that they had a great turnout.

**8. Senate / BOG Updates:**

* Hasan states that one of the big updates is that they are looking to appoint a new Associate Vice President for equity and inclusion and a Vice President for University advancement.
* Hasan states that he has been attending meetings about the rent prices for the Graduate Residences.

**9. New Business**

**Motion: To adjourn the October Council Meeting moved by Hasan Siddiqui, seconded by Letizia Dondi, all in favour, motion carried.**

**Action Items:**

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