



Meeting Minutes

Graduate Students Association Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 22, 2014, 6:00 p.m.
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory



Present: Frances Lasowski (GSA President), Stephen Hanson (VP Administration), Talena Rambarran (VP External), Aaron Maxwell (VP Services), Megan Murphy (FRC Business), Carla Abarca (FRC Engineering), Sarah Kanji (FRC Health Sciences), Spencer Savoie (Senate Rep), Vi Dang (International Student Rep), Ashley Ravenscroft (General Manager), Margaret Jackel (Office Assistant), Lucia Lee, Ming Quan Fu, Rachel Kelly, Ali Vaezi, Neha Dewan, Igor Osowski, Marlena Whinton, Ayush Ranawade

Regrets: Adhithya Ravichandran (FRC Engineering), Jeffrey Wyngaarden (FRC Humanities),

Absent: Maryam Ghasemaghahi (FRC Business), Jennifer Nicholl (FRC Health Sciences), Ashley Marshall (FRC Humanities), Stephanie Jones (FRC Science), Rostyslav Zvanych (FRC Science), Priscilla Medeiros (FRC Social Science), Zack Batist (FRC Social Science), Murray Wilson (BoG Representative), Majid Taghavi (Senate Rep), Ahmed El Ganzouri (Senate Rep), D'Andra Parker (Senate Rep), Cassel Busse (Senate Rep), Stephanie Marciniak (Senate Rep), Geoff Callaghan (CRO), Marion Jamard (International Student Rep),

Item	Motion		
1.	Call to Order	6:03 PM	
2.	Acceptance of the Agenda	The motion to accept the agenda was accepted by Talena Rambarran and seconded by Carla Abarca.	Motion Carried
3.	Introductions	Introductions were made around the room. Frances Lasowski – outgoing president. Ming Quan Fu – Incoming Internal studying computer science. Ashley Ravenscroft – General Manager. Talena Rambarran – outgoing VP External, incoming president, studying chemistry. Lucia Lee – incoming VP External, studying chemistry. Igor Osowski – incoming Humanities candidate, studying philosophy. Ali Vaezi – incoming business FRC. Vi Dang – International representative, studying chembio. Sarah Kanji – returning Health Sciences FRC, studying medical sciences. Megan Murphy – outgoing Business FRC, incoming VP Administration, studying business. Ayush Ranawade – incoming Science FRC. Carla Abarca – returning Engineering FRC. Neha Dewan – incoming Health Science FRC, studying rehabilitation sciences. Stephen Hanson – outgoing VP Administration, med science graduate, currently MBA student. Rachel Kelly – incoming VP Services, studying biology. Spencer Savoie – Science Senate representative, studying kinesiology. Aaron Maxwell – outgoing VP Services, studying astrophysics.	
4.		Frances Lasowski indicated that the AGM did not meet	

	<p>Approval of the AGM of March 25, 2014</p> <p>Approval of the Minutes from meeting of March 26, 2014</p>	<p>quorum, and the AGM defaulted to a council meeting, there was a conflict in the bylaws regarding the fees. Council approved a greater fee increase during the AGM, but did not go through due to the conflict. Council will be reviewing the budget once more during this meeting. Ms. Lasowski clarified that the fees will not increase due to the issue in the bylaws and there are two budgets to review.</p> <p>Edits were made on page 3 and page 7 regarding international student matters as well as the graduate mailing system respectively.</p> <p>The minutes of the AGM of March 25, 2014 were accepted on a motion by Carla Abarca and seconded by Talena Rambarran. None opposed. One abstained. Motion carried.</p> <p>The minutes of the March 26, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Aaron Maxwell and seconded by Sarah Kanji. None opposed. One abstained. Motion carried.</p>	
5.	<p>Reports from Board</p> <p>a. President's Report</p>	<p>Frances Lasowski thanked members of council for their work in the past year and more, a lot of good work was accomplished. Ms. Lasowski indicated to the incoming council members that the GSA has worked on a strategic plan. This plan is on the website and has some pretty broad goals, but each group gets to decide how to achieve them. How those roles get accomplished is at the discretion of the group. This is the first time that the GSA has a full time staff member, the General Manager, and to be sure to utilize her services.</p>	
	<p>b. Senate Report</p>	<p>Spencer Savoie indicated that there is a new scholarship available, the Dr. Collin Weber Scholarship for graduate or doctoral students interested in bone research. Mr. Savoie continued to indicate that Chem Bio will now be recognized as an interdisciplinary program.</p> <p>Mr. Savoie indicated that a major topic that came about was open access journals and signing the Berlin Declaration. There was more discussion at this meeting, and a senate member proposed to sign the document at the meeting, but it was pushed to do more analysis of the cons and benefits. It will recognize people who submit their articles to open access journals, and will be more praised upon. This will not be mandatory, but it is preferable to submit to open access vs. other venues. The problem is that people publish to known magazines for prestige etc. to get it out to more people. This topic is developing and will be discussed further in future meetings.</p>	

		<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that there will be a meeting to solicit input regarding open access next Tuesday at 2:00 in Mills library.</p> <p>Carla Abarca inquired how she could find out about this, if it would go out in an email? Ms. Lasowski indicated that the information went out in a mailer from SGS. It is also posted to the GSA website. Mr. Savoie indicated that the open session minutes are available online with a link to the Berlin Document. Aaron Maxwell indicated that for Science, NSERC is a big component of open access, and publishing to open access will be mandatory.</p>	
	c. Board of Governor's Report	Representative was not available to report.	
	d. Fees Committee Report	<p>Representative was not available to report.</p> <p>Carla Abarca indicated that council is to address student issues among faculty. They go to welcome new students to make them feel more connected to their department and provide professional development skills. A committee for this council has been created to determine the goals of the committee. They plan to start things in September, having meetings about communication between councils, FRCs and the GSA. The best way is to have the GSA then the FRC, then council, then the students. They have two representatives in each department in engineering. The idea is for all representatives to be in charge of informing students in their departments about the FRC and GSA roles, events etc.. This way, we can cover all students. There is no easy communication channel currently to pass information back and forth. In every meeting, the FRC report on the GSA happenings. Ms. Abarca requested minutes in advance so that they can tell them about the information the GSA is discussing to answer questions or have input to bring back. Everything is forming currently.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski indicated that Social Sciences is also forming a group. Health Sciences has one, but it is very separate from the GSA. They have a different structure. Others may have one that exist, but these are the only ones that Ms. Lasowski has knowledge of. Igor Osowski indicated that for Humanities, the role is more of a department representative, a position between instructors and faculty in a fashion.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski indicated that all FRCs were meeting with Ivana Postic for biweekly meetings. These were very helpful,</p>	

		<p>but since she stepped down, these meetings did not continue. If the GSA could continue them, it would be very helpful. We can help each other with FRCs to be involved, or at least once a month.</p> <p>Sarah Kanji indicated that regarding the Health Sciences, they have an informal group to get feedback to the GSA. She and Neha Dewan last month and so far mostly they do events. Ms. Kanji had also met with Ms. Abarca last week to discuss further.</p> <p>Ms. Kanji continued to inquire how FRCs could make a claim for events? Ms. Lasowski indicated that the fiscal year end is May 31st. With both budgets, the GSA will keep the funds for FRCs. It wasn't heavily drawn upon this year, and the executives wish to keep it to give the FRCs options. FRCs can also draw upon clubs funding. Perhaps moving forward, the standing agenda could be updated to get updates from faculties. This is something that is missing from the standing agenda. Ms. Abarca thought this would be a good idea.</p> <p>Ms. Dewan indicated that they are having low participation with the monthly get together events that they are trying to arrange. They send out email and reminders, but no one really responds. Ms. Kanji indicated that she was worried regarding permission to address graduate students in a formal setting. Not all health science programs get information to students. Ms. Lasowski indicated that the GSA could try to set the FRCs up with both associate deans of graduate studies and the dean of health sciences to do a lunch or a quick meeting. Associate deans are one offs, all are very supportive, and they want to ensure that student experiences are good. They are very supportive of anything that is across the board that helps with student experience.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski indicated that she recently learned of a graduate council, but no one seems to know what it does. This council votes on what becomes a program, and what goes to senate. Bylaws indicate that every student representative is to be elected from faculty. This has not been happening, and they have tried to set up the election. The GSA has offered to run the election for Health Sciences. These council members are the only ones who can vote on what SGS does and the outcomes of that. 9/10 of SGS is aligned with student interest, and they want to ensure you know who your voice is and they are representing you the way you want them to. This can get complicated for open election.</p>	
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6.	<p>Committee Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Finance Committee (VP Admin) • Approval of revised 2014 budget 	<p>Stephen Hanson indicated that the finance committee was pretty self-explanatory. It tracks the budget and finances. Mr. Hanson passed the discussion regarding the revised budget to Frances Lasowski to speak of.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski indicated that the budget was approved at the AGM, and we had increased the membership fee beyond CPI. This required approval at the AGM, but we did not meet quorum. There is a specific part of the bylaws about setting of fees indicating that it needs to be done at a meeting of the members, and does not permit defaulting to a council meeting. Thus the GSA will not increase its fees. The result is that the operating income will be 197k rather than 208k; a difference of \$10k. One budget currently runs a deficit, reflecting what we wanted to do. The other will be what it will be after adjusting CPI. Some lines that were cut were the joint fund, travel grants, social events and some small changes to meeting expenses. Ms. Lasowski put forward the question as to what is a priority, to run a balanced budget, or run a deficit for a year and maintain the areas we felt were important when we originally made the budget. Something to note is that the Phoenix recovery at the top is built on the premise that the Phoenix makes money and gives funds to the GSA. The finances of the Phoenix are not healthy, though it is not expected to continue to lose money. There have been improvements made, and the loss will be less this year in comparison to last. We aren't certain that will be enough to break even. If it can't break even, then is the GSA to continue supporting it? When it read \$0, the GSA was accused of that being optimistic. It is certainly feasible, but currently hard to tell. The winter was rough this year and was difficult to anticipate. When the Phoenix generates approximately \$1.7m in revenue, the margin of +/- 10% is big when it applies to this large value.</p> <p>Stephen Hanson indicated that something to consider regarding cutting back in the SGS/GSA joint fund is that it would be a cut back in both departments, meaning a double decrease. Our lease ties the \$10k from the university to ours.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski also indicated that something to consider is that the GSA has \$180k in cash reserves. If the decision is to approve the deficit budget, the GSA can sustain it.</p> <p>Mr. Hanson also indicated that it has to cover operating expenses until fees are released in the fall.</p>	
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	b. Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Admin)	Frances Lasowski indicated that this committee looks at issues at the Phoenix. It is the approval body for the Phoenix. The new menu was approved from them. Any changes at the Phoenix go through PEC and it is tied to the GSA due to financial implications.	
	c. Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)	Talena Rambarran reported that the committee has organized a planetarium event for April for next week on Tuesday. It sold out very quickly. For May, the committee is planning to visit the aquarium in Toronto.	
	d. Student Issues Action Committee (VP External)	Talena Rambarran indicated that the committee had a short meeting. The idea was brought up to create a bare bones survey using survey monkey and sending it out via email. Frances Lasowski inquired if we could piggy back the questions onto the ihaveaplan survey. We can add broader questions that way, and the emails would not be sent through SGS.	
	e. Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)	Frances Lasowski indicated that this committee looks after the adjudication of travel grants as well as concerns students have regarding things that are actually related to their program. Ming Quan Fu will be managing this. Those who are applying for travel grants can't be part of the adjudication. The more people who assist, the easier it is as it can be intense.	
	f. International Student Representative Report (International Reps)	Vi Dang Indicated that there is an international advisory committee and that she will be a representative of the GSA and IGSA. Ms. Dang will be responsible for the events, and they will start in May or June, and this will be an open group. There will be a key member who will always show up. More information is available if needed.	
	g. By-laws	Frances Lasowski indicated that the idea is that sections will	

	Committee (President)	be reviewed every three years. The governance structure was just redone this year and some substantial changes were made. The executive will be having a training session on Friday with an individual who will go over key governance points. There will be a video available for those interested afterwards. We will be discussing judiciary responsibilities and student concerns and how they play out. The new structure of the board will be five executives, include three members at large and three community members. The idea is to draw on people who have expertise from community members. These will be two year terms and we will be putting a call out for them shortly. Council will elect the positions. There will be no open election, especially next year. It will be up to council's discretion who ends up in these positions.	
	h. GSA Summer Leagues(VP Services)	Aaron Maxwell indicated that the GSA is still negotiating the MOU for the softball league. Some points that need to be worked on with the university regarding how maintenance and costs will be distributed. There will be a meeting this week to finalize the details. The leagues will be starting up soon.	
	i. Graduate Student Services Review(VP Services)	<p>Aaron Maxwell stated that he attended a meeting with Frances Lasowski, Rachel Kelly, Talena Rambarran, Allison Sekuler, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Shawn Van Koughnett, the Dean of Students, to work out the renegotiation of how our fee should look like. This is not a short endeavour. They are setting up the ground work. There is a lot of work, but a lot of fun. Much of the work is policy related.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski indicated that graduate students are paying approximately \$120 for student services. The university is trying to make this a more sustainable number. As costs are increasing and there is an increase in graduate students, there is not enough to sustain the services we are receiving. We currently don't have much graduate specific career development. We want to make sure that any additional funding we give the university goes towards improved programming for graduates, and we want a way to review if we like the services we're getting. Those discussions take a while to put in place. They are putting in a new structure as there isn't anything pre-existing. It is currently at the discretion of the university as to where they put the \$120. If we give them more, where do we put it? How much will it increase? How do we make sure we're always getting what we want for that money? What are real core needs? The university really wants to work with us and is interested in finding the best solution. This is a true</p>	

		negotiation, and we will be meeting in the middle to get good services, but not create a huge uproar. Currently we are underpaying.	
	j. Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)	<p>Aaron Maxwell reviewed that the cap for the drug plan, as people are drawing way more than our plan can currently sustain. The GSA can offer an exception by doing a 7% decrease in premiums and use the surplus to spend on those who require more than the \$3,000 cap.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski indicated that the cap only applies to pharmaceuticals. If you are drawing from it, you can spend as much money on it as long as the drugs are on the drug registry. There are key drugs that are not on the registry. If you have arthritis and are using a biologic, the plan likely does not cover it. This is a nation-wide problem, not just with our drug plan. This problem amounts to \$30,000 for our plan resulting from three individuals.</p> <p>Mr. Maxwell indicated that the cost of \$30k is the sole cause for increases to our drug plan in the past five years. They make our plan bankrupt-able if our plan goes from covering 3 people to 10 individuals. This \$3,000 cap protects us from bankruptcy. With standard drugs, you will only draw about \$1,000/year. For these people, these drugs can make the difference between them being able to walk around, to not being able to move. If we do not implement this cap, then our fees will go up.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski indicated if you get five students, you take the plan away from everyone. We will grandfather the people on the plan right now and will not change their coverage.</p> <p>Mr. Maxwell indicated that we won't see a decrease in premiums; another problem is that if they increase their dosage, they will bankrupt our plan. By setting the cap, there will be a 7% decrease in our premium that will result in a \$30k surplus after this fiscal year. If we chose to, we can take that surplus and split it among however many people there are. At most you can only withdraw 5k above the 3k cap. These people will have at least one year to get ready for the cap.</p> <p>Megan Murphy inquired as to how we would let these individuals know? Mr. Maxwell indicated that the insurance company would let them know. Everyone will be notified.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski indicated that in addition to the 7%, the GSA does have some cash reserves associated to the H&D to</p>	

		<p>draw upon as well. The H&D committee would get to decide for that.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski also indicated that the insurance company will let us know if anyone has an issue with the cap. They will pay them the extra money. They will have to pay more than they have this year. There are other organizations that the individuals can petition for funding, but there is not guarantee. The person has to be refused by their health plan in order to qualify for this other funding. The insurance company will inform them of this. Our plan only pays for 80% of the cost, the individuals already pay 20%, and may already be going to Trillium.</p> <p>Ayush Ranawade inquired about the 7%. Mr. Maxwell indicated that the fee is currently for \$189, with the drug cap, it will be \$180. That \$9 will go into the surplus to offset the biologics.</p> <p>Aaron Maxwell put forth the motion to implement a \$3,000 cap on pharmaceuticals. The motion was accepted by Spencer Savoie and seconded by Carla Abarca. None opposed. None abstained. Motion Carried.</p> <p>Mr. Ranawade inquired what the average costs are per person for pharmaceuticals for each person. Mr. Maxwell responded that it is around \$400 - \$600 each year.</p> <p>Aaron Maxwell put forth the motion that the surplus from instituting the cap can be given back to the three individuals who are negatively affected by the cap for one year given back on claims. The motion was accepted by Spencer Savoie and seconded by Carla Abarca. None opposed. None abstained. Motion Carried.</p> <p>Ms. Abarca inquired if this \$3,000 cap was permanent. Mr. Maxwell indicated that council could choose a new cap for next year. The insurance company will let the GSA know how the cap is working and if it requires adjustment.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Business a) Summer meeting dates 	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that it was up to incoming council members to choose the meeting dates for May & June and determine what the best methodology would be moving forward to determine the meeting dates. As was voted on by incoming council members, the next meetings will be on Tuesday, May 27th, and Tuesday, June 24th.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanities FRC 	<p>Igor Osowski introduced himself indicating that he was in his second year of his Masters in Philosophy and that he would like to be a FRC for Humanities. Mr. Osowski left the room</p>	

		and council voted to appoint him for this role. Eight in favour. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRO Report 	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that the CRO report was circulated for the AGM outlining the election and the results.</p> <p>The motion was put forward to accept the CRO Report. The motion was accepted by Talena Rambarran and seconded by Sarah Kanji. Eight in favour. None opposed. None abstained. Motion Carried.</p>	
8.	Adjournment	7:56 PM. Talena Aaron.	

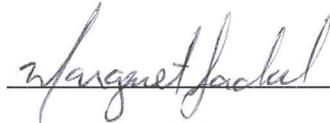
Person	Action Item	Due Date
	Members' side of website for minutes	
	Open access document to website	
	Deans' to meet with FRCs	



Lucia Lee
VP External

May 27, 14

Date



Margaret Jackel
Office Assistant

May 27/14

Date