



Graduate Students Association of McMaster University  
***Council Meeting***

Monday, October 26, 2015  
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory  
6:00 p.m.



**Attendees:** Talena Rambarran (President), Lucia Lee (VP External), Natalie D'Silva (VP Services), Farhad Sadeh (FRC Business), Manraj Kaur (VP Internal), Maleeha Qazi (FRC Health Sciences), Neha Dewan (FRC Health Science), Theo Nazy (FRC Social Science), Tarushika Vasamtham (FRC Science), Naby Nikookaran (FRC Engineering), Mai Yamamoto (International Representative)

**Absent:** Ayush Ranawade

**Regrets:** Maleeha Qazi (FRC Health Sciences)

- 1.0 Call to Order- 6:05 pm
- 2.0 Acceptance of the Agenda- Motioned by Natalie, Second by Megan, all in favor, motion carries.
- 3.0 Approval of Minutes from the meeting of September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015- Item tabled as the Minutes were missing the names of all attendees.
- 4.0 Reports from the Board
  - 4.1 President's Report
    - Discussion of Payroll for Graduate Students
      - Talena announced that members of the GSA, EGS and SAM met with SGS to discuss the payroll related issues facing graduate students. They have come up with several action items that should help graduate students with the new system. These were detailed in an email she sent out to graduate students.
      - The solutions included things like workshops to help students and having a detailed breakdown of pay in the coming years.
    - Update on Office Staff
      - Talena noted that Ashley, Director of Operations, is back full time from maternity leave. She has volunteered a lot over the last year and we are very excited to have her back.
      - Also indicating that Debbie is no longer with the GSA. Her contract expired and was not renewed. The secretarial position was changed to include more responsibility. The position was posted and interviews were held last week. The hiring panel selected the successful candidate – our new secretary is Mona Mohamed. Mona has a BSc and has 6 years of administrative experience in Egypt. Since in Canada, Mona has volunteered in many administrative positions and will be starting next week on a part time basis with the GSA.

- The office was closed last week, and Ashley, Talena and the VPs have been doing the secretarial duties (checking emails, order food for meeting, minutes etc) in the absence of an office administrator.

#### Board of Directors

- The BOD met with the Auditors last week. The GSA operations have turned around substantially. Last year, revenues over expenses for all operations were at a loss \$240,000 and this year we have a positive value of \$147,000. This turn around is because of improvements in the Phoenix operations (last year at a loss of \$189k this year a surplus of \$11k).
- An increase in the league commissioner stipend was also approved at the board level, and an additional \$75 honorarium will be given to the President and the VPs for giving extra hours to the secretarial duties last week and this week (which is far less then we would have had to pay a secretary). Talena noted that Ashley's extra hours will be taken into consideration when it comes time for her performance review.

#### Campus planning meeting

- There is a campus planning committee to review the future of the campus (what changes do stakeholders want? future developments and changes etc). Talena is currently sitting on the committee to represent grad students; however, consultants will be on campus next week soliciting feedback from students if anyone is interested – they will be out front of ETB.

#### SGS and GSA awards

- SGS is considering changing the awards (adding a new one? Maybe for research excellence?) Nothing has been finalized, so any suggestions should be provided to Natalie, VP Services.

#### CAGS

- Canadian Association of Graduate Studies meeting will be help this weekend. Talena will be attending on behalf of the McMaster GSA. There will be meetings with students, the Deans of Graduate Studies and announcements from the tri-councils.

#### 4.2 Senate Report

- No report at this time.

#### 4.3 Board of Governor's Report

- The representative was not present; however, research at the meeting indicated the rep was Anna D'angela. The council will reach out to her to encourage her to attend.

### 5.0 Committee Reports

#### 5.1 Finance Committee (VP Administration)

- Megan noted that the Finance meeting is scheduled for early November at which time they will review updated financial statements. They will also be looking at several quotes for auditors to do our due diligence.

#### 5.2 Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration)

- Megan announced this committee will also be meeting next week and the only update to date was that the Phoenix is going to purchase Touch Bistro for their new in house POS.
- 5.3 Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)
- The website master and Lucia are meeting on Wednesday regarding upgrading the website.
  - Lucia noted that the October event was trip to Hanes Maze, which was successful with 34 participants.
  - The November trip is to Escape, November 27<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - Also in November will be the screening of the PhD movie. Lucia plans to book a room in MDCL for the event.
- 5.4 Student Action Committee
- Currently has no members; as such Lucia will be calling for new members.
- 5.5 Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)
- There is currently no report, as this committee has not met.
- 5.6 International Student Representative Report (International Reps)
- Mai reported that last Friday they had a hiking event at Cootes in collaboration with CUPE. Twenty-one students came to the event, and there was an opportunity for questions. It was a great opportunity to ask questions about the different Benefit plans.
- 5.7 GSA Summer Leagues Committee (VP Services)
- Natalie informed the council that the stipend has been increased (approved by the board) from 2k to 4k on the condition that SOP are generated for the league.
- 5.8 Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/President)
- Natalie noted a few things have been discussed with the University regarding Accessibility, and informed the council that Mac has a new app called Cartographer, where you drop a pin where there is an issue around campus, and someone from maintenance will respond and assess it.
  - Moreover, Natalie noted CUPE/UHIP/GSA have collaborated to have workshops to discuss international students on each benefit plan, as it can be confusing.
  - Natalie also informed council that Graduate Student clubs will be discussed with the MSU in near future regarding recognition of clubs. The GSA has put a proposal together for the MSU to review, so hopefully in the near future recognition will be achieved.
  - Natalie also announced that she will be meeting this week with the students of the GSSRC (and Sean's group) to discuss ancillary fees. The main concern of the GSA at this moment will be proper communication before an AGM, which may be called as early as December of this year.
- Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)
    - Natalie noted that the MBA's have voted via referendum to leave the GSA dental Plan and become a part of the MSU undergraduate plan.
  - VP Positions and Duties
    - Additionally, Debbie overpaid the Executive (a double payment) last month. We have asked Ayush to return the extra pay (\$450) and the other Executive will not get paid for November to amend for the extra payment. Talena has noted she will keep the council posted in regards to the results.

- New Business
- Adjournment- 7:06. First by Neha, Seconded by Natalie, all in favor, unanimous. Motion carried.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Lucia Lee, GSA external	Date	Recorder	Date