

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting



Monday, March 28, 2016
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
6:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Talena Rambarran (President), Farhad Sadeh (FRC Business), Neha Dewan (FRC Health Science), Vi Dang (International Representative), Natalie D'Silva (VP Services), Megan Murphy (VP Administration), Lucia Lee (VP External), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Shawn Hercules (FRC Science), Naby Nikookaran (FRC Engineering), Mai Yamamoto (International Representative)

Regrets: Anna D'Angela (Board of Governors), Manraj Kaur (VP Internal), Tarushika Vasanthan (FRC Science), Hadi Eslami (FRC Business), Andrew Kloiber (FRC Humanities), Philip Tominac (Senate Rep Engineering), Peter Gardhouse (Senate Rep Humanities), Maleeha Qazi (FRC Health Sciences), Sid Nath (Senate Rep Health Science)

Absent: Maryam Ghasemaghahi (Senate Rep Business), Azam Shamsi (CRO), Darko Ljubic (FRC Engineering), Theo Nazy (FRC Social Science)

1.0 Call to Order 6:02 pm

2.0 Acceptance of the Agenda

Natalie recommended to move item # 9 in the agenda to the top of the agenda, as it was very important to discuss the subject. **Motion** to move item # 9 to the top of the agenda first by Natalie second by Lucia all in favour motion carried.

Motion to accept the amended agenda first by Lucia second by Mai, all in favour motion carried.

3.0 Compulsory Ancillary Fees – decisions moving forward.
Talena mentioned;

- She and Natalie asked Sean (VP Students) and Patrick (President of the University), to request funds from the Universities Fee Committee, to help offset the deficit in student affairs and services which would positively impact graduate students.
- The University will provide \$500,000 towards student' affairs and services from now on and every year thereafter, which will reduce the amount of deficit and amount of fees proposed to students.
- She and Natalie met with Sean and Gina, to discuss the possible questions if a referendum was held what the results would be in terms student service (specifically around the subject of cuts to services)
- Natalie added, if the referendum takes place after May 1st, and or in the event of "No" votes, career services will be stopped by the end of August from SGS, and SWC psychological services cut immediately.
- Talena asked the council members if they want to call a referendum, she added if the referendum is called today, it should not be held less than 30 days after it is called.

- She also noted that according to the Bylaws, the organization has 5 days to announce the referendum; After 12 days students can volunteer to run a campaign, and thereafter for a 2 week period will be campaigning; when campaigning ends students will have three days to vote online.
- Talena added a side note that during the election debate, it was noted that the students voted “No” at last years at AGM; however, at the AGM many students noted they required more information and options regarding the fees and enough time to consider the questions. As such, students wanted to be involved in the talks with the University, so the GSA called a committee (the GSSRC) to do just that.
- The graduate student services review committee, which consists of 12 students from different levels and different departments, met regularly to discuss CAFS and what to do moving forward.
- Since these discussions were ongoing, the University agreed not to reduce services.

Talena asked if anyone wanted to move that the GSA hold a referendum to allow students to decide on what to do with the compulsory and ancillary fees, and council will decide on the referendum question, moved by Natalie second by Naby all in favour motion carried unanimously.

- Neha mentioned that students may be confused from the first question as they could misunderstand and think that UHIP/OHIP services are also included; moreover, some students would prefer to save some money than having access to SWC, which she thought should be considered. Talena added that Sean suggested just that before; meaning students can get refunded \$10 per term and not have access to SWC. However, this option didn’t seem ideal as this meant students may have to wait hours outside campus at the walk-in clinic if they need health services, they would not have access to emergency mental health services on campus, instead of having quick access at SWC which is why this topic wasn’t brought to discussion as it was not a good option for graduate students.
- Neha motioned to change the wording of the first question by adding “students will still have medical service provided by UHIP or OHIP”. Motion not seconded

Natalie moved that we include a sentence in the first question adding the following: students will not receive Mental Health services unless it is a mental health emergency, seconded by Megan all in favour, motion carries unanimously.

The final referendum questions are:

1. Do you want to pay the same amount as the undergrads (\$33.95 per term) and access the same services that they do in SWC, which includes counselors, psychologists, and social workers?
Yes/No
In the event of a ‘No’ vote you choose to continue paying \$10.09 per term in order to access only medical services in the Student Wellness Centre, with emergency mental health services provided.
2. Do you want to pay \$17.50 per term in order to continue the career services provided by the School of Graduate Studies?
Yes/No

In the event of a 'No' vote you choose to not pay this fee and to have the career advisor services eliminated.

4.0 Approval of Minutes from the meeting of February 23th 2016, item passed on the condition of the following amendments:

- Item 1.4, any student interested should email the GSA president; instead it should be general GSA email.

Motion to approve the minutes first by Natalie second by Shawn, all in favour motion carried.

5.0 Reports from the Board

5.1 President's Report

5.1.1 Board of Directors

Talena mentioned;

- She and Natalie have been meeting with Sean and Gina and the GSSRC, to discuss the CAFs proposal and get other potential options for students.
- The University is currently undergoing a campus plan review, and they are in the final stage. The University hired a consultant, who conducted interviews with different faculties and students. Things that were discussed were related to the campus and the next 20+ years. One of the take a ways was that they want to move the campus to pedestrians only and limit vehicle traffic.
- She and Ashley met with SGS regarding the dental reimbursement, currently a TA or RA in lieu of TA students, with 130 hours or more per academic year, are eligible for the CUPE dental plan, these students are refunded \$170 into their students account, but if there is tuition owing, the \$170 will be shown on their account but not refunded until all tuition is paid, which could mean delays until August. The University suggested, students can opt out by themselves from the plan, but this is not recommended as this will be very confusing for a lot of students, especially new ones. Talena and Ashley are currently looking for new ideas and will connect with CUPE in the coming months to try to figure out a solution for next year.
- Students affairs is currently reviewing the Students Code of Conduct, they are mainly changing the wording because the original document was quiet formal. Talena noted; there is an appeals committee, and also a student peer review committee, if students have breached the policy this committee oversees the situation. The committee consists of undergraduate students and other stakeholders at the university, so she recommended that a grad student should be in this committee as they could be reviewing graduate students in addition to undergraduates, which means we need representation. She recommended Student Affairs recruit a volunteer grad student for this position.
- The GSA and Phoenix budget was approved by the board and is available on the GSA website.
- The GSA is hosting the GU15 conference in August, this is a meeting of 15 research intensive universities, the GU15 meets twice a year, as such 3 people are going to the April 12th conference in Vancouver, the past President, incoming President and Director of Operation.
- Talena mentioned that the BOD couldn't agree on the current lease proposal the price in the lease may not be sustainable and as such they are enlisting the help of consultants to ensure the model is sustainable/reasonable and if it is not to help demonstrate this to the university.

5.2 Senate Report

No new updates

5.3 Board of Governor's Report

Anna sent a report mentioning the following:

- The new VP Research has been appointed, and it will be Dr. Rob Baker, the current Dean of Science. Here is the Daily News article discussing his appointment.
- The Board of Governors heard about the last Research Showcase for the Big Ideas Better City event. This event is focused on Climate Change and the Environment. If anyone is interested in attending
- The Board of Governors approved the establishment of a Centre on Advanced Research in Experimental and Applied Linguistics and the Michael G. DeGroote Cochrane Canada Centre at McMaster
- They also heard reports from the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community and HRES. In particular, PACBIC's report identified that without a dedicated person within the senior leadership team focused on creating an equitable and inclusive community and with expertise in this area, many groups operate at the ground level but face challenges escalating issues appropriately and having dedicated resources to address them. This also means that the issues of equity and inclusion are not knowledgeably represented at higher levels of decision-making. HRES presented that they have continued to provide support to students, staff and faculty. They highlighted the recent rollout of McMaster's Sexual Violence Response Protocol.
- Rodrigo Narro-Perez will be assuming the role of Graduate Student Representative beginning in Fall 2016 as he was elected last week.

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Finance Committee (VP Administration)

- The meeting is rescheduled for next week

6.2 Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration)

- The meeting is rescheduled for next week

6.3 Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)

Lucia mentioned;

- She had arranged for 2 ski trips in March; the trip on the 24th was cancelled due to weather conditions (no snow), but the first trip went very well except that she had 2 volunteers and at the last moment one of them dropped out.
- Currently she is arranging for a visit to the reptile expedition at the Royal Botanical Gardens.

6.4 Students Issues Action Committee (VP External)

Lucia mentioned;

- She has a copy of University of Waterloo survey results. Currently the committee is discussing sending another survey out after the AGM, and the results will be published on the website.
- She is arranging a barbeque this semester also at the phoenix for \$2-5 per student or in conjunction with the AGM.
- She is trying to get in contact with a few different Universities she met at the GECON, to see how they send their messages and information out to students; as during the election debate, she noticed that students didn't know very much about the GSA..
- As for the GSA website; she got in touch with Chris (Media Solutions), and currently they are in the process of improving the website, but she noted it will take some time.

6.5 Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)

- No reports

6.6 International Student Representative Report (International Reps)

Mai mentioned 3 updates;

- In conjunction with CUPE the iGSA wants to petition to have OHIP provided to international students; they have collected about 250 signatures to date.
- IGSA also hosted Craft night; they had high attendance for the craft night- the GSA provided pizza for the event and student were coming and going.
- The Political Action Committee are planning an event for international students for April 11th, it's an all-day event both domestic and international students are invited and they will be talking about immigration issues, medical services and, successful stories from international members- all information is posted on the CUPE website, the registration link will be sent out shortly.
- They are also preparing a petition to bring the fast track PhD stream back for immigrants, as this type of application is no longer available, and it's difficult to get permanent residency if you don't have a job offer. Talena requested to have the information available before April 12, so it can be presented at the GU15 conference and we can ask other Universities if they are interested in signing it also.

6.7 GSA Summer Leagues Committee (VP Services)

- No new updates

6.8 Bylaws Committee (President)

Talena mentioned

- The bylaws committee has met several times this year to review the bylaws and discuss potential changes. The committee felt it was important to have better representation of International Students at Council. As such we are altering the bylaws so International Student Representatives are voting members. The bylaws will have to be presented at the AGM for approval. It has also been proposed to update who can chair meetings and allowing observers speaking rights as well.

6.9 Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/President)

- Discussed in item number # 3

6.10 Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)

- No new updates

Clubs

Natalie mentioned;

- They have requested that the university contribute \$3000 towards clubs; as a one time contribution to help support the initiative. The GSA and SGS will continue to fund it in future; however, the startup costs are high.
- The Executives of grad clubs were invited to attend a training session that is hosted by the MSU and the university jointly on April 1st 2016; we have 6 students from 3 clubs – Women in Science and Engineering (WISE), Health Sciences Graduate Student Federation (HSGSF), and OT/PT students that will be attending.
- She and Ashley met with Allan Fein regarding the GSA partnering with him on the A & T program. There are a number of mental health and wellness initiatives offered that graduate students can be a part of.

7.0 Annual General Meeting

- Meeting at 3:30 room HH 302, the most important item in the agenda is the changes in the Bylaws.

8.0 Elections 2016

- Talena also noted it was a very exciting election period, almost all the positions were contested, and she presented the new incoming executive and FRCs listed. Please see Schedule A

9.0 Nomination and Selection of a Candidate to the Elections and referendum Appeal Board
Talena mentioned;

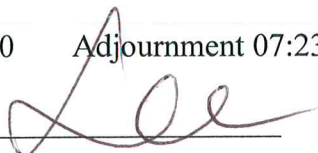
- In the GSA Bylaws state that the appeals board is; the president, CRO, and a member at large, who is impartial, she nominated Naby; however, he is going to defend his thesis shortly and as such he is unable to do that.
- Lucia suggested Alison Stewart as she was the president of the Chemistry graduate society, and she is very responsible, very organized, and she is not directly affiliated at any of the campaigns.

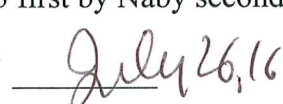
Lucia moved that Alison Stewart become a part of the election and referendum appeals board, second by Natalie, all in favor, motion carried.

10.0 New Business

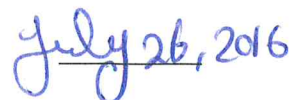
- No new business

11.0 Adjournment 07:23 first by Naby second by Natalie, all in favour unanimous motion carried.



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Schedule A

Executive Members 2016/2017

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|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| President | Natalie D'Silva | gsaserv@mcmaster.ca |
| VP, Administration | Megan Murphy | gsavpadmin@mcmaster.ca |
| VP, External | Lucia Lee | gsaext@mcmaster.ca |
| VP, Internal | Angela Orasch | orascha@mcmaster.ca |
| VP, Services | Colette Nyirakamana | nyirakac@mcmaster.ca |

Faculty Representatives

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Business | Firat Sayin | sayinfk@mcmaster.ca |
| Business | Samira Farivar | farivas@mcmaster.ca |
| Engineering | TBD | |
| Engineering | TBD | |
| Health Science | Maleeha Qazi | qazima@mcmaster.ca |
| Health Science | David Bakhshinyan | bakhshd@mcmaster.ca |
| Humanities | Clorinde Peterse | peterscc@mcmaster.ca |
| Humanities | Emma Mckenna | mckennej@mcmaster.ca |
| Social Sciences | Marguerite Marlin | marlinm@mcmaster.ca |
| Social Sciences | Dan Irvine | irvinedt@mcmaster.ca |
| Science | TBD | |
| Science | TBD | |