COUNCIL
5pm, Thursday July 27, 2017
GSA Board Room

Date: 2017-07-17
Rev: 2

A) OPEN SESSION
  1) Presidents Remarks
  2) Notice of Future Meetings
  3) Approval of Agenda
  4) Executive Updates
  5) FRC Updates
  6) New Business
  7) Adjournment
Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

Council Meeting

July 27th 2017
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
5:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Tim Van Boxtel (GSA President), Shawn Hercules (VP External), Jodie Lobana (VP Administration), Roqibul Hasan (VP Internal), Robert Alex Ballagh (VP Services), Derek South (FRC Science), Sara Oikawa (FRC Science), Anita Acai (Senator Science), Curran Egan (FRC Humanities), Tsz Wing Cheng (FRC International), Sam Peter (FRC Engineering), Kara Tsang (GSA CRO)

Regrets: Allison Leanage (FRC Social Science), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Rodrigo Narro (BoG),

Absent: Mohamed Ali (FRC Engineering), Alexander Qian (FRC Health Science), Samira Farivar (FRC Business), Maryam Alizadeh (FRC International Representative), Nitka Sanger (FRC Health Science),

Call to Order 5:03

Motion to approve minutes of last Council meeting moved by Alex, seconded by Sara, all in favour motion carried.

1. Presidents Remarks

President Report

- July is usually a relatively slow month in the GSA year. Progress for this month will be brief and bulleted.
- We are currently in the middle of planning welcome week activities and events.
- A new VP Administration and VP Internal began their first months.
- The GSA organized 2 social events, a brewery tour and a day trip to Canada’s Wonderland; both of them very successful.
- Planning and were underway for the HSR Presto Pass transition in September.
- Negotiations are also underway surrounding the details of the DBAC expansion + SAB build.
- The Phoenix management transition is in progress and initial financial reports from June look extremely promising.
- IT services and internal infrastructure continues to improve. Integration with MacDrive project was accepted and training provided.
- The auditor’s KPMG were hosted and the annual financial audit of the organization was performed.
- Tim mentioned he met with the MSU president. One of the important topics discussed is the child care service. The MSU runs the child care center, this center is subsidized by the undergrads, however, most customers are grad students and local members from Westdale area.
They discussed how to make this more equitable. He added Council members are welcome to send him their suggestions.

- Another important topic is the representation of grad students on the student activity building. The under grad fee was approved for expanding the pulse and athletic center, new building and student activity building. The student activity building will house a multi faith prayer room, and independent grocery store. The current discussion is whether the grad student will buy into this fee.

2. **Notice of Future Meetings**

- Tim mentioned future Council meeting will be last Thursday at 5 pm of each month. Meetings will be on monthly basis.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

4. **Executive Updates**

**Vp Services Report**

- Presto card will be distributed in the Campus store in August. This information is included in the weekly email with warning not to use the presto card before September 1st.

- Gsa clubs committee, the Council approved the AIM as a GSA clubs, they made the amendment requested by Council. There are currently 2 more clubs under the registration process.

- The issue of some students joined the league without signing the waiver Leagues was resolved, as well as the parking.

- In respond to Sam question regarding pulse membership, Alex explained that grad students are not paying a fee to Pulse membership, however, they are paying for the basic membership of the DBAC (indoor/outdoor track, pool, squash courts, saunas, and gym). The current discussion with the university is to lower the current fee. The capital build fee ($35) is scheduled for another 3 or 4 years, the University is currently discussing to keep this fee going forward and add another fee in order for them to pay the operational cost of the building. The current negotiation with the University is to look into different proposals which include just the activity building.

**VP Administration report**

- **Onboarding to GSA** –
  - Started work as the VP-Administration on July 1st, 2017.
  - Prior to starting work on July 1st, held meetings with outgoing VP-Administration, and attended the Finance Committee meeting.
  - Met with the President to understand high-level responsibilities of the new position.
  - Started reviewing existing GSA documents to get acquainted with the workings of the organization.

- **Strategic Planning for GSA** – Met with the Strategic Planning Committee in order to start the process of strategic planning for next 5 years of GSA.
• **HR Compensation update** – Met with the HR Committee to update the compensation matrices of the GSA staff members.

• **McMaster Graduate Writing Club** – In order to provide McMaster University Graduate students a place where they can come together and do their independent study, we (Irena Radisevic and Jodie Lobana) have started the McMaster Graduate Writing Club. Members of this club meet 2-3 days a week in the Mills library to study together all day (10am-5pm). Many of the Graduate students are using the Club as a place to do dedicated work towards their Ph.D. thesis.

• Tim added that the strategic plan is a subcommittee at the board, the GSA strategic plan will expire next year, there are a lot of the point still open and need to be discussed during the subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee task is to create the next 5-year strategic plan, there is information gathering to get all the stake holder, focus group survey point of focus, based on the information gathered, the subcommittee will review it write it up and provide it to the Board for final approval.

**VP External report**

1) **Communication plan with grad students**

• As per suggestions from the meeting with Bobby and Katrina, some updates were made to the website and weekly emails have continued. Also as per their suggestions, a post in the fb group was made encouraging students to comment with events and activities related to grad students but there was no engagement on this post. Other posts with relevant information will be posted on our social media channels. As also suggested by Bobby and Katrina, GSA weekly emails will be posted on our website for new students to also be kept in the loop.

• Test campaign for MailChimp sign up is still underway as we are trying to format the aesthetics and specifics for group selections. A meeting was set up with the IT summer intern to discuss various strategies surrounding our website and mailing services to improve our communication with students.

• The website is also under current review to also place more emphasis on new graduate students

2) **Events**

• Fairweather Brewery tour executed on July 7th with 32 graduate students in total.

• Canada’s Wonderland trip planned for July 28th.

3) **Student Issues Action Committee & Events and Trips Planning Committee**

• Emails were sent out to interested students and doodle polls were sent out for times that students are available next week. Meetings were schedule for Wednesday June 28th 5:00PM-6:00PM and no students attended the meeting. Another attempt will be made to garner interest from students.

4) **Action items**

   o Roll out pilot test for Mailchimp
   o Update website per Bobby and Katrina’s suggestions
   o Continually update GSA calendar
     ▪ Get updates for events/workshops from SAM and EGS as well
• Plan another meeting for Student Issues Action Committee and Events and Trips committee

• Shawn noted that he is having trouble with committee as students sign up for committees and never show up. Jodie suggested to him to allow committee members to go tips for free if they attended, just to make it more interesting.

**VP Internal report**

• He contacted Conrad and setup a schedule to meet on 25th after 2pm to discuss Options for musical event.
• Working on brochure.
• Contacted Jodie for faculty association with DDSA.
• Collected FRC’s contact list from Mona to be able to communicate regarding attendance of welcome week events.
• Researched on Scavenger hunt ideas.
• Contacted Niki and will meet to prepare the calendar
• Jodie recommended for Welcome Week events that all Council member be available to talk to students. She added in regards to the hunt price it could be food from the Phoenix.
• In response to Jodie’s inquiry about the GSA budget for Welcome Week, it was explained that it is a split budget between SGS and the GSA in the amount of $5000. The breakfast is only open for new students only and SGS budgeted for this event.
• Tim recommend for Roqibul to ask the assistance from FRC during Welcome Week events.

**5. FRC Updates**

Sam sent the following report:

• Elections held for new executive positions
• Removal of FRC from executive position (EGS and GSA by-laws prevent executives from role as faculty representative)
• Engineering travel awards committee has been formed with updated criteria and amount awarded
• Planning of McMaster Engineering, Technology, Research, & Innovation Conference (METRIC) is underway with department representatives securing funds from their respective departments

Sara sent the following report

• Tim attended SAM meeting to explain the GSA role in the faculty of science
  • Provide the faculty associations with services (common problems, elections etc.)
  • Want to make sure that the FRC’s provide an open line of communication to the GSA
• MOLE (funded from a SPICES application)
  • McMaster Open Learning Environment
  • Open interdisciplinary courses for all graduate students
  • Problem- effort and time to explain MOLE to the professor
• Many of the professors are not interested in the extra work
• SAM is proposing 2 workshops upcoming:
  • Teaching Dossier Workshop
  • Postponing until August or September (Dr. Kaijura)
o 25 people, interactive, 1.5 hours
o What is a teaching dossier?

- Have her show SAM graduate students the process of constructing one
- Machine learning workshop
  o Mac Data association- will make a workshop through them
- SAM in good financial standing
- Tim offered financial service help for SAM
- Jodie recommended to open the workshop for all students not only for science students.
- Tim added that he is planning on having a GSA calendar that shows all events in SAM, DeGroote, EGS, and other faculties, as it will be much more helpful if all faculties are under one calendar.
- Sara asked if there is a goal to have an association for each faculty? Tim explained that it will be a successful if grad student engaged in such set up as faculty associations are recognized at the University level.
- Wing mentioned that they met with SGS for preparation of the international committee meeting starting in September, and international grad student fair on September 13. They need members for creating the international committee. She requested from other FRC’s to reach their international students to join the international graduate student’s committee. Jodie suggested that she can make a brochure of though and distribute it. Tim mentioned that there are couple of international students sits on three different committees with the university, he recommended to reach out to them.

6. **New Business**
   - No new business

7. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.; moved by Curran, seconded by Alex, all in favour, motion carried.

**Action Item:**

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Shawn Hercules,  
VP External  
Date  
Recorder  
Date  

Sep 28, 2017