Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

Council Meeting

Monday, August 22nd, 2016
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1.0 Call to Order

2.0 Acceptance of the Agenda

3.0 Approval of Minutes from the Council meeting of July 27th, 2016

4.0 Reports from the Board
   4.1 President’s Report
      4.1.1 Board of Directors
      4.1.2 Bylaws Committee
   4.2 Senate Report
   4.3 Board of Governor’s Report

5.0 Vice President (VP) and Faculty Representatives to Council (FRC) Reports
   5.1 VP Administration Reports
      5.1.1 Finance Committee
      5.1.2 Phoenix Executive Committee
   5.2 VP External Reports
      5.2.1 Events and Trips Planning Committee
      5.2.2 Students Issues Action Committee
   5.3 VP Internal Reports
      5.3.1 Academic Affairs Committee
   5.4 VP Services Reports
      5.4.1 Graduate Student Services Review Committee (Co-Chaired with President)
      5.4.2 GSA Summer Leagues Committee
      5.4.3 Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)
   5.5 FRC reports
      5.5.1 International
      5.5.2 Business
      5.5.3 Engineering
      5.5.4 Health Sciences
      5.5.5 Science
      5.5.6 Humanities
      5.5.7 Social Sciences

6.0 New Business

7.0 Adjournment
Graduate Students Association of McMaster University  
*Council Meeting*  
Monday, August 22nd, 2016  
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory  
6:00 p.m.

**Minutes**

**Attendees:** Natalie D’Silva (President), Lucia Lee (VP External), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Vi Dang (International Representative), Sara King Dowling (FRC Science), Emma Mckenna (FRC Humanities), Clorinde Peters (FRC Humanities), Mohamed Zaher (FRC Engineering), Hanie Yousefi (FRC Engineering), Jonathan Tran (FRC Science), Angela Orasch (VP Internal), Marguerite Martin (FRC Social Science), Alexander Nielsen (Senator Science)

**Call In:** Megan Murphy (VP Administration)

**Regrets:** Firat Sayin (FRC Business), Maleeha Qazi (FRC Health Science), Samira Farivar (FRC Business), Philip Tominac (Senator Engineering), Jitka Bartosova (International Representative), Rodrigo Narro (BoG), Colette Nyirakamana (VP Services)

**Absent:** David Bakhshinyan (FRC Health Science), Dan Irvine (FRC Social Science), Mariam Munawar (Senator Business), Sid Nath (Senator Health Science)

1.0  **Call to Order** at 6:05 PM

2.0  **Acceptance of the Agenda**

Motion to accept the agenda first by Marguerite, seconded by Zaher, all in favour, motion carried.

3.0  **Approval of Minutes from the Council meeting of July 27th, 2016.**

  Amendments:
  - Clorinde last name spelled incorrect  
  - Johnathan was available and not absent

Motion to approve the minutes with the aforementioned amendments first by Lucia seconded by Sara, all in favour, 1 abstention, motion carried.

4.0  **Reports from the Board**  
4.1  **President’s Report**

Natalie mentioned the following:

- **Payroll and Tuition**- she and Ashley met with Doug Welch, Dean of Graduate Studies, last week to discuss payroll. As discussed earlier, scholarship payments will be made at the start of the term, and students will be responsible for paying their own tuition fees, also at the start of the term. Tuition will be divided equally for all three terms, however, supplementary fees and UHIP (for international students only) must
be paid in September. Additionally, some students do not receive any scholarship pay and are dependent on TA pay which will continue to be paid out on a biweekly basis. For these reasons, they have asked SGS to continue to give out interest free loans to students who are in financial need; they are still awaiting confirmation about the loans.

- Additionally, if students were checking their account balance on mosaic, and had a credit or debit on their account, this will not affect their first payment. However, if they had a credit on their account, this will not automatically be refunded to them, but they will have to request a refund. Refunds can be requested by visiting the student accounts and cashiers office (GH 209) or by emailing refunds@mcmaster.ca. If students are emailing, in the Subject line they have to type REFUND, your name and 9-digit ID number, i.e. Subject: REFUND - John Smith #001111111. Any credit they do not claim will be applied to their tuition. This information will be added to the GSA Facebook and twitter account.

- Ashley added that after discussions with the GSA health and dental insurance provider, studentcare, the company agreed to reimburse TA/RA students with 130 hours per academic year, in the amount of $170 for the dental premium they paid in their supplemental fees. She noted that they should receive the cheques by late November and or early December, instead of waiting till August of next year.

**HSR**

Natalie mentioned the following:

- Bus passes can now be picked up at the campus bookstore. The GSA will be going into negotiations with the HSR in October for the 2017/18 academic year regarding bus passes.

**4.1.1 Board of Directors**

Natalie mentioned the following:

- A major challenge for the GSA is making sure students are aware of the presence of GSA on campus, and communicating to students our role and various initiatives. The GSA has been looking into branding for a while, and now has approval from the BOD to use $5000 towards branding, using Bobby Umar's services. The focus of this branding will be to improve our communications to grad students via email and on various social platforms, as this is something students have identified as being a problem area in the past.

- Marguerite asked how does branding resolve communications between the GSA and grad students? Natalie mentioned that the branding will help students to be more aware of what presence the GSA has on campus, and the GSA will have a new communication strategy as part of this initiative.

- Natalie noted that Bobby Umar's relationship with the GSA is informal as he was a student at McMaster, and along with many other qualifications he knows how to attract students on social media, like Facebook and Twitter, to ensure they are more engaged, and aware of the GSA events.

- Ashley mentioned that the communication is going to be around what GSA services we have to offer, for example, there are a lot of students who have misconceptions about what the GSA does and doesn’t do, so the branding campaign is specifically to
address what students don’t know, the misconception of what they thought they did know, and how to get our message out to all grad students correctly.

- Marguerite asked if this is for what the GSA does, or for the BOD only? Ashley mentioned that this is to brand what the GSA does and the connection to the BOD is that the BOD has to sign off on the variations to the budget.
- Marguerite asked if branding would have more detailed messaging for what the GSA does? Natalie mentioned that it will be more effective and ultimately directly inform students where to go to get more detailed information. The plan is to use social media to deliver the message to grad students and use effective communication strategies to get that message across.
- Marguerite suggested to have the GSA website updated and upload minutes of meetings from previous months, Ashley mentioned that this has been done.

Back to BOD report

- Natalie mentioned that the Board approved buying 100 tickets for homecoming. The GSA is also looking into hosting a grad focused homecoming event at the Phoenix for grad students that buy these tickets. And anything that is not sold will go back to the MSU and between the two organizations they will share any losses.
- The current phoenix manager left for personal reasons, and as such the board appointed a hiring committee who after multiple interviews choose Randy Ferguson, who will start tomorrow.

GU15

Natalie mentioned the following:

- The GSA had the GU15 conference this month. Nine schools attended this conference where they decided the future of the GU15. They decided to open up membership to schools outside of the U15 group, and to incorporate as ThinkGRAD (Think-tank for Graduate Research and Development). The executive for this group was also voted on – She is the interim President, the interim Secretary is the Waterloo GSA President, and interim Treasurer is the University of Montreal GSA’s Coordinator for university research.
- Marguerite asked if this has any financial implications. Natalie mentioned not to the GSA directly. The GSA had received donation by the University for the GU15, which will be used to incorporate, but in future if the GSA decided to have a membership with the GU15 (think GRAD), it will have financial implications that the GSA will need to consider. Once the GU15 incorporates, it will need an accountant, and a staff member, which require continuous funding. Marguerite asked if there are other bodies that the GSA will be giving money to. She notes that she feels any money to policy groups warrants more discussion during council because the one in the budget (OGSA) missed the pre-budget submission or follow up. She believes the OGSA isn’t doing very much and as such she wants to discuss this further. Natalie mentioned that if the OGSA asks for a membership fee, this will definitely have to be discussed at the council, and the mechanisms in the bylaws will have to used regarding implementation.
4.1.2 **Bylaws Committee**

Natalie mentioned the following:

- The Bylaws committee met this week and put forward a few suggestions, but no changes have been made yet. Their next meeting is in October.

4.2 **Senate Report**

- No New Business

4.3 **Board of Governor's Report**

- No New Business

5.0 **Vice President (VP) and Faculty Representatives to Council (FRC) Reports**

5.1 **VP Administration Reports**

5.1.1 **Finance Committee**

Megan mentioned the following:

- The Phoenix committee hasn’t meet since July. There was a finance meeting in August where they discussed the progress of the audit; however, this is will be further discussed at the BOD as the auditors will be presenting the report then.
- **Phoenix financial**, she mentioned that since it was a very hot summer it wasn’t really great for the patio business, also the air condition inside the kitchen does not work as it properly should, and the kitchen got extremely hot, which on two occasions made us shut down for business as our staff could not operate at the levels of heat that were emitted.
- There is now a license for 5 IPads inside the phoenix, and they are going to have more when they have more staff, which she hopes will result in increased sales.
- Both PEC and Finance committee are scheduled to meet in September.

5.1.2 **Phoenix Executive Committee**

- No New Business

5.2 **VP External Reports**

5.2.1 **Events and Trips Planning Committee**

Lucia mentioned the following:

- They had a canoe trip last week. For the month of September, she usually doesn’t plan an event, because the Welcome Week is at the beginning of September.