



**The Graduate Students Association
of McMaster University**
Annual General Meeting
April 20th 2016, 10:00 a.m.
The Phoenix Bar and Grill

Chair: Robert Bruce
Recording Secretary: Ashley Ravenscroft, DoO

INTRODUCTIONS

- Talena Rambarran, GSA President 2015-2016, welcomed the members to the 2016 AGM. Rambarran introduced the members of the 2015-2016 executive:
 - GSA VP Administration, Megan Murphy
 - VP External, Lucia Lee
 - VP Internal, Manraj Kaur
 - VP Services, Natalie D'Silva

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

- The chair thanked members for attending the Annual General Meeting.
- The chair advised that in accordance with GSA's Bylaw, quorum for an AGM is 1% of the Members, or 33 Members (excluding Members represented by proxy).
- The chair advised the members of the following housekeeping matters:
 - In keeping with GSA's bylaws, this meeting will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
 - The Rules governing this AGM are as follows:
 - No members may speak until recognized by the chair
 - Anyone wishing to address the floor must line up accordingly
 - All discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question
 - No member can speak more than once to each motion
 - No member can speak for more than two minutes
 - All remarks must be addressed to the chair
 - No cross debate is permitted
 - It is not permissible to speak against one's own motion
 - Debate must address issues not personalities
 - No one is permitted to make personal attacks, or question the motives of other speakers
 - For purposes of the minutes, the chair notes that anyone that speaks during the meeting is to clearly identify themselves by first and last name, and only Members or their appointed proxies or representatives can move or second motions, ask questions, and vote at this meeting.
 - The chair noted as quorum is fluctuating it would be ideal to proceed with items that are for informational purposes until quorum is sustained.

1) REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE/ COMMITTEE PROGRESS AND NEW INITIATIVES

Rambarran presented a brief summary of the Executives progress and initiatives highlighting the following:

- In 2013 the GSA hired Consultants who interviewed stakeholders at the university including Graduate Students to gain a better understanding of what students wanted at McMaster. From this process the consultants generated a Strategic Plan, which The GSA uses as a guideline for their year.
- Rambarran noted some positive outcomes of this year were as follows:
 - A transition from hardcopy applications of Travel Awards, Scholarships, and bursaries to online forms, which allow students to find all financial assistance in one centralized location.
 - The Health and Dental Plan has had changes, which improved the plan, such as but not limited to, adding increased paramedical coverage and vision care. These increases she noted did not increase the premium to graduate students, but lessened the plans reserve contribution.
 - The Phoenix bar and Grill is in a positive position with a profit of \$11,000 last year. In the past two years the Phoenix lost sum of \$190,000.00; however, with proper oversight and management, she noted it is now in a positive position.
 - The GSA has hosted many social events such as Canada wonderland trip, coffee and cookies with the GSA, and Niagara-on-the-lake wine tours.
 - The Association also supported three GSA leagues this year- curling, soccer, and softball, and has successfully begun the development of SOPs to ensure the future of them.
 - The Association has hosted Academic events such as the Bobby Umar branding event, which was an interactive workshop that allowed students to better understand how to brand themselves and their work.
 - The GSA in conjunction with the university and SGS has begun to set up a mechanism for graduate student club recognition, as students have noted this is important to them.
 - International GSA (iGSA) with the assistance of SGS has also continued the buddy program, where a returning student is partnered with an incoming student to help them transition to McMaster
 - The GSA has also made donations to charitable causes on campus, such as Mac Bread Bin, which Graduate Students utilize.
 - The GSA has continuously advocated to graduate students in regards to MOASIC and payroll, as they have had negative effects on students since PEOPLESOFts implementation. The GSA has voiced how the current practices are unacceptable, and we expect the University to provide better communication and warning of future of pay issues, deductions, and so forth.
 - After last years AGM, Rambarran noted, students wanted more information in regards to CAFs (Compulsory Ancillary Fees) and enough time to consider the information presented as last year they felt this was not afforded to them. As such the GSA struck the GSSRC (Graduate Student Service Review Committee), a group of 12 students, that entered into discussions with the University regarding fee information, and more acceptable options for fees, etc..

- The GSA continued their advocacy mission by supporting the Ontario Graduate Student Alliance (OGSA), which is comprised of 8 Ontario graduate student Associations who actively lobby the provincial government for things such as the implementation of post residency fees.
- The GSA also attended the bi-annual GU15 conference, which is a forum for the top 15 research-intensive schools to benchmark, share ideas, and discuss student issues. Rambarran noted one of the topics that the GSA brought to the conference this year was the Petition generated by the iGSA to change the immigration policy regarding the PhD fast track stream. The hope is that by gaining the support of other institutions our voice will be more powerful.
- Rambarran also noted since the near collapse of the organization in 2007 the Association has only now begun to generate policies, standard operating procedures, etc., which should continue to push the organization forward.
- Committee Reports
 - FINANCE- Megan Murphy, VP Administration, noted this is the first full year that the GSA has seen the bookkeeping firm in action. The firm, Grenning & Co., oversees the GSA and Phoenix's financials. Murphy noted that their work has been exceptional and they have properly captured the financial positions of both houses.
 - PHOENIX EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE- Murphy detailed that the committee has had little participation this year; however, it has met monthly to discuss the atmosphere, menu, etc., of the Phoenix Bar and Grill.
 - LEAGUES- Natalie D'Silva, VP Services, noted that both the Soccer and Softball league have generated SOP's and continue to thrive on campus.
 - GSSRC- D'Silva explained that the GSSRC comprised of a group of 12 students from many different faculties and programs who wanted to be more involved in the discussions surrounding CAFs with the university. Following these discussions she noted that the GSA brought the concerns and opinions of the GSSRC to the university. In the winter term an AGM was scheduled to vote on the CAFs; however, the GSSRC cancelled the AGM as a result of the University not providing a comprehensive budget. Since then the University has provided the budget and an additional \$500,000.00 annually to be used towards services, which lowered the proposed fee increase. D'Silva noted that the council decided to now bring the vote to a referendum.
 - HEALTH AND DENTAL- D'Silva reiterated the comments Rambarran made in regards to no increase in premium and added that the plan will continue to use Sunlife for the next year.
 - EVENTS AND TRIP PLANNING- Lucia Lee, VP External, detailed that this committee held many diverse events this year, which were well attended. She hopes in future to gain more interest in the committee to ensure inclusivity of students and the events they want.
 - STUDENT ISSUES ACTION- Lee noted that this committee generated a survey, which 336 graduate students filled out. The survey helped identify what students want from the GSA and the University and what they were displeased with; themes such as improvements to the MOSAIC system were prevalent.
 - ACADEMIC AFFAIRS- Manraj Kaur, VP Internal, noted in her four months in the position the GSA hosted events like the branding workshop previously

mentioned and engaged students through events like meet your GSA at the cookie and coffee social.

- BYLAWS- Rambarran mentioned that this committee met several times this year to alter the bylaws to be more aligned with the memberships needs.

2) ADAPTION OF THE AGENDA

The chair asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

a) Cancellation of Referendum

- Moved by Marguerite Marlin, seconded by Carmina Perez Romero.

MOTION: Add to New Business that her motion regarding cancelling the referendum via votes at the AGM was deemed inadmissible, which she would like to discuss and have put on the record.

Members Present: 35

**In Favour: 15 Opposed: 8 Abstentions: 10
Motion Fails (2/3 required to pass)**

b) Appointment of KPMG reconsideration

- Moved by Liam Midzain-Gobin, seconded by Angela Orasch.

MOTION: Whereas KPMG has been shown of wrong doings by a CBC news investigation in Canada in the past year the General Assembly moves to reconsider the auditing firm for 2016; allowing council to appoint and auditing firm instead of by the members at the AGM.

Members Present: 34

Discussion:

- Midzain-Gobin noted that CBC is currently conducting an investigation on KPMG, as the firm are in legal proceedings with the Canada Revenue Agency as a result of engaging in intentional tax evasion.
- Rambarran noted that the Board was not aware of this information when making their recommendation, and as such believe Council should be given the opportunity to consider such information before making a final decision.

**In Favour: 20 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 8
Motion Carries**

- c) Acceptance of the Agenda
- o Moved by Naby Nikookaran seconded by Carmina Perez Romero.

Members Present: 34

**In Favour: 21 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 8
Motion Carries**

3) BYLAW CHANGES

The chair noted the bylaws are being presented to the Members as an omnibus resolution because the revised document was prepared as a cohesive whole and is best considered as such. To move through the bylaw article by article risks creating a scenario where approved articles are not supported by articles elsewhere in the document.

The Chair noted that the GSA believed in approving the proposed resolution, the Members will enable the GSA to move forward with a set of bylaws that represents the current Memberships needs better, and enables the organization to perform its work more efficiently.

Discussion

- Midzain-Gobin addressed the chair and noted he asked at the previous AGM for the tracked changes to be presented and inquired if they could be displayed on the screen so students could review them as they are making a decision.
- Rambarran noted the tracked were available online previous to the meeting; but also agreed it would be an asset to have them available on screen now.

MOTION: Be it resolved that the bylaws presented to the members be approved omnibus.

- o Moved by Natalie D'Silva, seconded by Tarushika Vasanthan.

Members Present: 35

**In Favour: 24 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 4
Motion Carries**

4) CRO REPORT ON ELECTION

Rambarran noted that the CRO was not able to be present at the AGM; however, she did send a report on the Election Results.

- The Chair noted the following were elected officials for 2016-2017:
 - o President, Natalie D'Silva
 - o VP, Administration, Megan Murphy
 - o VP, External, Lucia Lee
 - o VP, Internal, Angela Orasch
 - o VP, Services, Colette Nyirakamana
 - o Business, Firat Sayin
 - o Business, Samira Farivar
 - o Health Science, Maleeha Qazi

- Health Science, David Bakhshinyan
 - Humanities, Clorinde Peterse
 - Humanities, Emma Mckenna
 - Social Sciences, Marguerite Marlin
 - Social Science, Dan Irvine
- The chair asked the floor for a motion to ratify the election results of the GSA representation for this coming period (commencing May 1st 2016).
 - Moved by Carmina Perez Romero seconded by Liam Midzain-Gobin.

Members Present: 33

In Favour: 30 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 3
Motion Carries

- The chair thanked the nominees for standing for election, and the representatives that have served as volunteers for the last year.

5) CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The chair noted that the Board of Directors has three vacant positions for members at large. Detailing that the Board is comprised of

- The five (5) executive Directors of the Graduate Students Association
- The seven (7) Non-Executive Directors, who shall serve as members of the Board (hereinafter referred to as “Non-Executive Directors”) are responsible for things such as, but not limited to:
 - Making decisions related to the management of the Association’s properties and businesses (i.e. hiring and removal, contractual agreements with managers); and
 - Negotiating contracts of employment with staff of the Association and its properties; and
 - Ensuring the legality of the operations of the Association and its properties; and
 - Administering the day-to-day affairs of the Association in accordance with the policies of the Association

Discussion

- Tarushika Vasanthan nominated Shawn Hercules noting that Shawn is a PhD student in Biology, is currently the FRC Science on the GSA, and an active volunteer for both Let’s Talk Science (LTS) and Scientist Association at Mac (SAM).
- Angela Orasch nominated Sarah Wahab noting that Sarah is a PhD Student in English and Cultural Studies and has a lot of experience sitting on committees and is passionate about the topics addressed at the GSA.
- Marguerite Marlin nominated Carmina Perez Romero noting that Angie (Carmina) is a PhD student in Chemistry and is active in both CUPE and the GSA and is passionate about the bylaws and CAF’s.
- Mai Yamamoto nominate Rodrigo Narro-Perez noting he a PhD student in Science and active in the Science Society and continues to engage in student issues as he always has at McMaster dating back to his time served on the MSU.

Members Present: 33

Results: Hercules- 21; Wahab- 10; Perez Romero- 26; Narro-Perez- 18

- The Chair asked the floor for a motion to ratify the election results of the GSA Directors at Large for May 2016.
 - Moved by Natalie D'Silva seconded by Lucia Lee.

**All in Favour: 30 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 1
Motion Carries**

5) AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Chair gave the floor to Megan Murphy, VP Administration, to present the financial position of both the GSA and the Phoenix.

- Murphy noted the following:
 - The statement of financial position for 2015 notes the GSA as an entity (inclusive of the Phoenix) has \$2.9 million in total assets.
 - The current liabilities are that the Phoenix does owe the GSA money as a result of the Phoenix's previous years of financial losses.
 - P&L statement GSA: bottom line looks as though we have a great amount of money; however, a lot of large expenses are coming in the subsequent months. For instance, insurance which is upwards towards \$15,000.00.
 - P&L Statement Phoenix: It is clear that the Phoenix effectively reduced Cost of Goods Sold (COGS), was efficient in wage management, and their overall success could be directly tied to better oversight and improved management practices.
 - Statement of owner's equity: The organization is valued at 1.8 million, and the forecast for the Phoenix is to increase their profitability, so the GSA should continue to see a positive number in relation to this.

Discussion

- Angela Orasch asked Murphy to explain what efficiency in wages meant?
- Murphy noted that this did not mean people were fired in hopes of keeping costs down, but better management practices regarding staffing. Noting we now staff for seasonal changes and are no longer overstaffing in slow periods at the restaurant.
- The chair asked the floor for a motion to approve the Auditors' report for the 2015 fiscal year as presented.

Members Present: 34

**All in Favour: 24 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 2
Motion Carries**

6) APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

The Chair noted that as decided at the beginning of the meeting the council will appoint the auditing firm upon evaluation of KPMG.

7) APPROVAL OF BUDGET

The Chair asked Murphy to present the budgets for both the Phoenix and The GSA for the fiscal year 2017.

- Murphy noted that very minor changes have occurred to the Phoenix Budget noting the following:
 - The way rebates are tracked is different then past years and as such they are represented in a different line; however, it was worth mentioning they are not gone completely, but rather represented differently.
 - The Phoenix also added a line for consultants, as this might be something we have to use in regards to assessing the cost of rent and the New Budget Model (NBM), so teasing this out was important for transparency.
 - Also entertainment, meals and travel were also given their own lines to increase transparency.
- Murphy noted that only minor changes also occurred for the GSA budget noting the following:
 - Fee's are only being raised by Canadian Price Index (CPI) the GSA does not have the ability to increase any one line item drastically; therefore, many things are staying nearly the same as last year
 - Club funding, for instance, was given an increase in funding, as we are moving to a formal recognition model, which means more funding is required for the start up.
- The chair asked the floor for a motion to approve the Phoenix and the GSA budgets.
 - Moved by Megan Murphy, seconded by Derek Morim.

Members Present: 33

**All in Favour: 28 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 2
Motion Carries**

8) APPROVAL OF GSA FEE'S FOR 2016/2017

- The chair gave the floor to Rambarran who echoed the same statement as Murphy, whereas, all GSA fees are not increasing past CPI for 2016/2017. She noted as such no formal vote was required however, for transparency, the GSA wanted to explain the fee's and field any questions students might have. Rambarran noted the following were the fees for next year:
 - Membership Fees
 - Full-Time Students: \$57.32
 - Part-Time Students: \$34.68
 - Post Degree Students (per half course): \$11.55
 - Full-Time Students (May Start): \$28.65
 - Part-Time Students (May Start): \$17.34
 - EMBA Annual: \$34.68

- Bus Pass Fees
 - Full-Time Students: \$198.66
- Capital Build Fund Fee
 - Full-Time Students (Sept Start): \$60.00
 - Full-Time Students (Jan Start): \$40.00
 - Full-Time Students (May Start): \$20.00
 - Part-Time Students (Sept Start): \$40.00
 - Part-Time Students (Jan Start): \$26.67
 - Part-Time Students (May Start): \$13.33
 - EMBA Annual: \$40.00
- Health Plan Fee
 - Full-Time Students: \$186.00
 - Part-Time Students: \$186.00
- Dental Plan Fee
 - Full-Time Students (Non-CUPE Students): \$ 170.00
 - Part-Time Students (Non-CUPE Students): \$170.00
- Health Plan Fee (Divinity)
 - Full-Time Students: \$196.00

Discussion

- Midzain-Gobin, inquired why graduate students were paying more for the HSR pass than undergraduates?
 - Rambarran explained that the fee is greater for graduate students as they are here all year round, whereas, undergraduates have a significantly decreased presence on campus/in Hamilton during the summer months. Since their utilization is seen as less, they are charged less.
- The Chair asked the floor for a motion to accept the proposed GSA fee's for 2016/2017.
 - Moved by Carmina Perez Romero, seconded by Manraj Kaur

Members Present: 33

**All in Favour: 22 Opposed: 4 Abstentions: 3
Motion Carries**

9) NOMINATION TO THE GSA COMMITTEES

- The Chair called for nominations for the following GSA committees:
 - Finance Committee
 - Phoenix Executive Committee (PEC)
 - Events and Trips Planning Committee
 - Student Issues Action Committee
 - Academic Affairs Committee

- GSA Summer Leagues Committee
- By-Laws Committee
- Graduate Student Services Review Committee (GSSRC)
- Health and Dental Review Committee

- The following individuals put their names forward
 - Jeff Price, GSA Summer Leagues Committee
 - Carmina Perez Romero, GSSRC
 - Liam Midzain-Gobin, Marguerite Marlin, and Sarah Wahab- Bylaws Committee

10) NEW BUISNESS

- The chair called for new business
- None was added

11) ADJOURNMENT

- The Chair asks the floor for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - Moved by Carmina Perez Romero, seconded by Maleeha Qazi

Members Present: 37

All in Favour: 33 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
Motion Carries