Dear Graduate Students,

The “no” committee for Question 1 would like to respond to the sanctions set out on the GSA website. Firstly, with regard to the hours of service, we have acknowledged that our information came from a GSA document that was a draft document containing a mistake. At the time of that document’s dissemination, those on our campaign had attempted in writing to clarify that number, and were told that it would be explained. This was not done, and the number of hours was not contained in the final, official document on February 28.

We are also happy to clarify that our wording “for every hour of counselling being offered” does not assert that all of the compulsory ancillary fee money is only going into direct counselling. It simply states that this is the counselling-hours-to-fees ratio that students could expect for their money. The rationale for framing things this way is based on an opinion that the services listed by the SWC as not being resourced through OHIP besides mental health are not extensive enough that they should comprise great sums of money.

We have successfully refuted all wrongful accusations of libel. We must always be able to criticize our governing bodies at any level without receiving such frivolous accusations. We see these accusations as unnecessary and unsupportive of freedom of expression and free dialogue. However, we do agree that in other instances separate to the libel accusations we used hyperbolic language conflating the GSA with the university in terms of levying fees, and regret the inaccurate division of powers that this illustrated.

For the compulsory ancillary fees and the proposed Compulsory Ancillary Fee Agreement:

1. The inclusion of the words "would trigger" was contained one of the documents included in our accessible Google Drive database. This was edited by an anonymous user without any of our knowledge of who this anonymous user is. We nevertheless take responsibility for leaving that document open to editing by outside users, and agree that this wording is inaccurate.

2. Our use elsewhere of the words “in connection with” was not meant to have connotations of a direct causal connection between the referendum and that specific agreement. However, to avoid confusion we would like to make it absolutely clear what we had meant by the use of the word “connection” and why we considered the Compulsory Ancillary Fee (CAF) Agreement proposal relevant to discussions around the referendum. We believe that an increase in compulsory ancillary fees in exchange for renewed services should be accompanied by a strengthened contractual commitment by the university to deliver those services specifically. This could be either through a change to our existing CAF Agreement, a new CAF agreement, or in a MOU specifically on mental health counselling services as has occurred at Brock University – which recently had a referendum for a $20 per year increase in graduate student fees to continue delivering those services. Certainly, the language in the existing 2004 CAF Agreement that our compulsory ancillary fees pay for the Student Wellness Centre was not enough to guarantee the mental health counselling portion of services at the SWC last year. We believe that changes such as the strengthening of this language is what would be most pertinent for the GSSRC to look at during this period in time -- instead of a proposal that we argue would allow the university to be less accountable, not more.

After the Town Hall meeting on Friday 12pm in BSB 105, we will be inviting members of the “yes” side for Question 1 who are not antagonistic to our point of view to come together and create a list of priorities we share and that we would like to see realized regardless of the result of the referendum. Certainly, whatever the result of the referendum will be, we will not be well-served by a failure to articulate the common concerns that lie behind the differences in tactical approaches or other views on the matter.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Marlin and sasha kovalchuk,

On behalf of the Q1 No committee.