Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

Council Meeting

November 23rd 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), Anita Acai (Senator Science), Sam Peter (FRC Engineering), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Simon Mcnamee (FRC Engineering), Roqibul Hasan (VP Internal), Kara Tsang (GSA CRO), Nick Yelle (FRC Health Science), Sara Oikawa (FRC Science), Robert Alex Ballagh (VP Services)

Regrets: Taylor Mackenzie (Senator Social Science), Allison Leanage (FRC Social Science), Aaron Roberts (Senator Humanities), Nitka Sanger (FRC Health Science), Tsz Wing Cheng (FRC International), Curran Egan (FRC Humanities)

Absent: Rodrigo Narro (BoG), Sid Nath (Senator Health Science), Mariam Munawar (Senator Business), Maryam Alizadeh (FRC International Representative), Alexander Qian (FRC Health Science), Derek Stouth (FRC Science)

Call to Order 5:03

Motion to approve the agenda of November 23rd, moved by Sam, seconded by Sara, all in favour motion carried.

Motion to accept the minutes from October Council moved by Sam, seconded by Sara, all in favour, motion carried.

Presidents Report:

- Tim noted that he and Shawn attended CAGS (Canadian Association of Gard Studies). Deans and Associate Deans attended this conference. There were many informative talks, but there were not many actions items that were given out for execution. It seemed like more information was given out; however, there was nothing constructive from that. The pillars of the discussion were about:
  - International Students (how they should be welcomed – scholarship opportunities),
  - Supervision Support (for instance, Windsor has an online resource for supervisors, it’s a mandatory course that supervisor has to take every 5 years),
  - Mental Health (Discussing that grad students are stressed and how they can help),
  - Grad student’s finances (funding for students),
  - Rethinking the PhD (I.E- sandwich thesis)
Tim noted that the value added from this conference was speaking with other associations.

Notice for Meetings:
- There will be no December meeting. Next meeting will be in January.

Executive reports

Vp Services
- GSSRC has met in November
- Three clubs have applied to get ratified by the GSA.
- Met with the leagues and closed the season;
  - Soccer is doing really well, and the commissioners would like to be compensated for the previous years in which they weren’t compensated.
  - Softball concluded the season and they discussed additional advertisement for the league and also potentially giving graduate students a discount of their fees. This will be discussed before the start of next season.

VP Administration
- Jodie noted that the GSA is transitioning to new accountant, he is currently out of the country but will be back next week, however, the bookkeeper working under is supervision is taking care of the details. The process has been a bit slow; however, it has been positive.
- She and Tim now have access to all the financials via online access to QuickBooks
- She also noted she will be looking for bids for three new insurances and auditing firms, to ensure we are saving the constituents money.

VP Internal
- Smoke free campus initiative meeting and the panel discussion. Medical Marijuana users showed concerned about not being able to smoke on campus and potential alienation. He noted that this was all captured online using Facebook live.
- Igsa is hoping to launch a live stream (or webinar) regarding being an international student, and introduce them to Hamilton/McMaster community. The webinar will be recorded in the sense to send it to other students.
- Ashley and Roqibul discussed planning Welcome Week in January, there will be promotions, Roqibul will pass this to the larger group to help planning Welcome Week.

VP External
- December 6th is the bowling event for the GSA.
- He has met with the Social Events committee they discussed future events. They will meet again next month.
- Student Issues action committee: Will discuss the $15.00 minimum pay rate.
Ratification of new Social Science Council Rep:

Motion to appoint the new Social Science representative (Spencer Williams) pending bi-election, which could be on the AGM, first by Shawn, seconded by Alex, 1 abstention, 9 in favour, motion carried.

Ratification of new student clubs:

Three clubs applied for ratification, documents for this clubs have been circulated.

- Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)
- McMaster Bangladesh Students
- The Life in Computing and Software (LCS)

- Ashley requested from Alex to ask McMaster Bangladesh Students club if they are open to every one to join, and not only Bangladesh students. In addition, how were they unique to the McMaster as there is an MSU club with the same name. Roqibul explained that the undergrad students didn’t want to cooperate with them regarding this, this is why grad students planned to have separate club.

- Ashley highlighted that council member should be reviewing the materials presented for ratification of clubs as they will be held to that standard. Jodie commented that the primary responsibility should be the approval system. Ashley explained that from the liability standpoint all members are the same, this is why the ratification go through the correct channels, which is, club admin, VP services, DoO review, then documents circulated to council for approval.

Motion to ratify WISE moved by Alex, seconded by Simon, all in favor, motion carried.

Motion to ratify The McMaster Bangladesh community club, provided that the name is amended to Graduate students club in the name, first by Shawn, seconded by Sam, all in favour, motion carried.

Motion to ratify LCS, pending inclusive language, first by Sam, seconded by Shawn, 9 in favour, 1 abstention, motion carried.

Athletics and Recreation

- Sarah provided an update noting that she participated in the strategic plan of A&R. She however, felt the questions were very open ended. They discussed the athlete’s role in the university and holding sporting events, nothing was related to grad students though.

- In replying to Sara’s question regarding A&R fee increase, Tim mentioned that there is discussion back and forth, however, there is no firm answer from the university yet.
**The strategic goals**

1. Be a leader on Campus in supporting the wellbeing of students
2. Grow experiential learning opportunities for students outside of the classroom (targeted to student athletic)
3. Enrich the McMaster student athlete experience
4. Enhance the customer experience
5. Build community engagement on and off campus
6. Develop an engaging collaborative and healthier work environment

**EGS**

- Travel awards selection process is finalized (ranked/merit base system, awards ranging from $300-1200)
- Applications for this semester’s travel awards are on the low side
- Board games night is planned for November
- Curling night is planned for January
- Holiday food drive is soon to be underway (donations are going to Hamilton Food Share) starting today till December 14.
- In reply to Sam question, what resources are available for students having conflicts with their supervisors? Tim explained that formal complaints go through OMBUDS (funded by the GSA, and prices will increase by next September) as they deal with student’s supervisory issues, information regarding this is on SGS website. Ashley added that the GSA is hoping to introduce something similar to what University of Toronto did, which is a supervisory peer support group in which grad students can meet with this group to deal and help with conflict management, the hope out of this is to give skills to go through it when students have conflict with their supervisor.
- The province will provide allocated domestic students funding that they did not spend and give it to international students to offset tuition costs. It went from 14 - 41 students. Engineering is looking for better system to select who get cheaper tuition for 1 year, now it is randomize.
- Tim met with Dr. Welch and discussed the same topics, the funds will be merit base and the dean and assistant dean of the faculty will select who will get the cheaper tuition.

**Science**

- A faculty wide graduate open house will be hosted soon.
- Science will also be organizing alumni event (Alumni with a PhD or Masters) give their path outside academy. There is a small cost to students, but science is giving some money along with SGS.
- They are going to host a trivia night, potentially with engineering, either on the January 18th or the 25th. In replying to Sara’s question Ashley mentioned that there is a gentleman in Waterloo cost $70 per trivia night she can link Sara with him.
- Sara also noted that an individual in science wrote a code to access all individual webpages in science to get all the session provided by science that students can attend.
This will be posted on SAM website, so if anyone wants to go to an open seminar can attend.

- Jodie recommended that to increase linkage between faculties, as faculty of business for example is missing SAM events. Ashley explained that the GSA is trying to have a central calendar for all faculties on the GSA website, but not all faculties are filling the calendar. Jodie will connect the grad secretary of DDSA to share the faculty google calendar with the GSA.

Health Science

- Industry link is an organization that helps students get into non-academic ventures, such as; they are also starting a new consulting group.
- Christmas potluck on December 14th
- Gingerbread Competition of December 5th

Senate Science:

- Establishment of a Blended Learning Part-Time MBA at its meeting on October 18, the University Planning Committee approved a proposal for a Blended Learning Part-Time MBA program effective September 2018.
- The proposed program responds to the specific needs of working professionals and provides them with a learning environment that is more relevant to their experience and includes more flexible learning options, such as blended learning.
- The proposal was subsequently recommended to Senate on November 8 and approved.
- Establishment of a Facilitated Indigenous Admissions Program (FIAP) Self-Identification Policy in the Faculty of Health Sciences
- At September 19 and October 17 meetings, Graduate Council approved a proposal for the establishing of a FIAP self-identification policy in the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- With an understanding that Indigenous learners can face specific barriers or challenges when pursuing higher education, schools and programs, McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences have facilitated admissions streams for applicants with Indigenous North American (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis) ancestry. This process is intended to provide equitable access to Indigenous applicants and aligns with the intent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. The FIAP Self-Identification policy is for the Faculty of Health Sciences and applies to current and future programs or schools that have or will engage in a facilitated admission stream for all Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) applicants regardless of program type (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate). The purpose of this policy is to assist schools/programs with the student self-identification component of the facilitated Indigenous admissions process only.
- The proposal was subsequently recommended to Senate on November 8 and approved.
Motion to adjourn moved by Sam, second by Shawn all in favor motion carried.

Action Item:

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Shawn Hercules,
VP External     Date       Recorder     Date