

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting

June 28th 2018
GSA Office, East Tower the Refectory
5:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Tim van Boxtel (GSA President), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Sam Peter (FRC Engineering), Simon Mcnamee (FRC Engineering), Mohamed Chowdhury (Incoming FRC Engineering), Julia de Lange (Incoming FRC Engineering), Shawn Hercules (VP External), Sara Oikawa (VP Internal), Anita Acai (Senator Science), Xiaomin Huang (FRC International), Rachel Ho (FRC Science), Anthony Quarshie (Nominated FRC International), Aaron Roberts (Senator Humanities), Kara Tsang (GSA CRO), Julian Yabut (FRC Health Science)

Regrets: Lily Eskin (FRC Social Science), Maleeha Qazi (Senator Health Science),

Absent: Mariam Munawar (Senator Business), Rodrigo Narro (BoG), Tiffany van Lieshout (FRC Science), Taylor McKenzie (Senator Social Science), Cynthia Monaco (FRC Health Science)

Call to order 5:03

1)President remark

- The main focus this month is the international students welcoming. This project is joint between McMaster university, Mohawk college, Columbia International and City of Hamilton. Volunteers will welcome students at Pearson airport terminal 1 and 3, during the month of August and early September. There will be Go bus tickets provided by the GSA, in addition to a phone to call their home.
- Students will be invited to download the iCent app; the app includes information about McMaster, the GSA, and other Hamilton related resources. The app also will help volunteers to know the time and date of students' arrival.
- The GSA is responsible for a portion of the volunteer, SGS and McMaster themselves are the main organizers. Email regarding volunteers shall be directed to Gina Robinson.
- By the end of the summer the GSA will have a webserver on campus and we will be able to host all website for clubs and faculty association at no cost to them, subsidized by the GSA.
- The GSA received a good rate for a community plan at Scotia Bank. The GSA will host the bank accounts for all clubs and faculty associations. A representative from Scotia Bank will be available at the GSA for a specific time, in which representative from clubs and faculty association can sign the necessary documents to open the bank account.

- The GSA is working on having an election platform for everyone.

2) Notice for future meeting

- last Thursday of July

3) Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve agenda of July 28 moved by Sara, seconded by Sam, all in favour, motion carried.

4) Approval of the minutes from last meeting

Amendment to last minutes of meeting

Last point in president remarks need to be clarified

FRC update need adjustments

Motion to accept the amendment of last meeting minutes moved by Sam, seconded by Shawn all in favour, motion carried.

5) FRC update:

EGS:

- Sam mentioned that they had elections last week for the EGS council members, each department has representation of up to 3 representatives however, they still are missing representation from Chemical Engineering.
- The election procedure for executives still need some work.
- One of the engineering department is paying less to students compared to other departments. There is a survey circulated regarding whether or not that department students are being paid similar to other departments. Sam suggested to advertise that students can have other option by switching to different departments and they will still work on the same project.
- Preparing for Python workshop
- Hosting a dodgeball tournament.
- The faculty of engineering requested to have a faculty wide communication challenge. It will be 3MT (3-minute Thesis)
- Arranging for Welcome Week, properly a snapchat scavenger hunt and a potluck.
- EGS can be more effective to welcome students at the GO station downtown.
- The week before the undergrad moves to Mary Keyes, the university are opening 15 rooms to **incoming grad students**, it's going to be \$64.99+tax for one night. This will allow grad students time to look for housing. More information is on the SGS website. The university are planning to build a housing for grad students, however, this is not in the near future.

SAM:

- Rachel mentioned that they met with dean of science; the faculty is expanding the biology green house. The faculty has a pool of money just for grad studies, to help funding SAM. They have not yet approached the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for Science.

IGSA:

- They had a trivia night last week however, there were few number of people. They are planning to announce it differently next time to get more international students.
- Bylaws and constitution is almost done.
- They are planning to have a booth at the Welcome Week.
- There is now a secretary for IGSA, once the Bylaws are finished, the GSA can send any FRC international applications to IGSA as they will have their election separately.

Health science:

No new business.

6) Senate update:

Science:

Anita sent the following report;

- A working group of Graduate Council proposed several changes to the thesis defence process, noting that the current process can be overly restrictive and prevents useful correspondence between the supervisor and external examiners. They also noted that the current process is not in line with most other U15 universities. The working group's proposed solution is summarized below:
- Supervisors in consultation with the supervisory committee will select a suitable external examiner while strictly observing clear guidelines of "arm's length". Selected examiner shall be approved by Department Authority.
- Supervisor approaches selected external examiner directly to secure their agreement to serve in this capacity. A standard template for this correspondence will be supplied by SGS. This template will also outline McMaster's "arm's-length" policy. This interaction will also allow the supervisor to negotiate a suitable date and time that allows the examiner to attend either in person or electronically (attendance of the external examiner is required). Supervisors will also have the option to nominate a Chair for the defence while observing arm's-length guidelines.
- Students will initiate the defence process via SGS. Defences require the approval of the supervisory committee and department authority to proceed. The committee will acknowledge that the thesis is ready for defence and the committee and department authority will acknowledge that the external examiner is acceptable and at arm's length.

- SGS will provide access to GH 212/B and available equipment for defences. SGS will continue to pay for \$200 in travel expenses and an additional \$200 in honorariums for examiners and will pay for phone service for defences held in GH 212/B and MUSC. SGS will be responsible for ordering phone service when needed.
- To make the introduction of the new process smoother, the old process will also be maintained for the time being in addition to the new process. Thus, supervisors will make a choice as to which process they would like to use when they initiate a defence.
- The external's report will be received by SGS and is to be shared with supervisory committee and the PhD candidate two weeks in advance. If the report cannot be shared with the student two weeks in advance, the student will have the option to continue with the defence without having the external report in that time frame. If the student does not agree, the defence will be rescheduled.
- PhD candidates will not be allowed to communicate in any way with the external examiner prior to the defence.
- Also, on an unrelated note, if anyone is interested in the changes that were approved to the graduate calendar at the last Senate meeting, they are available here: <http://macdrive.mcmaster.ca/d/ec31e54ff7974dda8074>

Humanities: (As amended by Anita)

- The Senate committee on Bylaws proposed the recommendation on moving the Master of Theological Studies and the Master of Divinity from the jurisdiction of Graduate Council to jurisdiction of undergraduate Council, couple of months ago this was in process, now it is finalized, voted on and approved by Senate.
- The recommendation was based on the results of an external academic audit that had been commissioned earlier, not a failed IQAP review process. It is true that the external auditors felt that the programs did not meet the standards required of a graduate program, but as far as I am aware, the decision to move oversight of the programs was not based on IQAP results. Also, it is important to note that the motion concerns only two programs, the Master of Theological Studies and the Master of Divinity. The Divinity College also offers other programs, and these were not discussed.

7) Ratification of Afro Caribbean GSA:

- Ashley asked about the budget, it has a note of sponsorship of \$1850 and the event revenue is \$600?
- Website, budget is \$400, the GSA can cover that, no need to budget for it.
- Welcome week event \$900, what is this amount for? Anthony explained that they are planning this event for new students, the money will mainly be spent on food.
- Ashley highlighted that clubs receive \$300 seed money and for event funding up to \$600, if the GSA didn't receive sponsorship applications, we could expand the \$600.
- In replying to Ashley's questions Anthony explained that the MSU club is mainly for undergrad, and they are segregated groups. Up till now this club will have 35

members, and waiting for some Egyptian representation. There are faculty professors' representation in the club.

- Side note: in the constitution passage; there are two signing authorities, then later mention all cheques need to be signed by secretary, this need to be changed.

Motion to ratify the ACGSA as a new graduate GSA club, awaiting the amendment towards the constitution, moved by Rachel, seconded by Sam, 1 abstention, 9 in favor motion carried.

8) Update on the team building activity,

- The GSA are planning a team building activity for the council members. The GSA rented Altitude on campus, on July 11, all will meet at 5:15 at DBAC then walk to the location.

9) Welcome week update

- There are a lot of plans for Welcome Week, it's quiet similar to last year. There is BBQ on Friday, an event for LGTBQ, a magician at 5:30 and live music.
- Orientation breakfast only for new students.
- Ashley will send Welcome Week event list with in 2 weeks.
- New menu coming out for the Phoenix. Menu for only grad students, students will hear about Phoenix special in their email.

10) Volunteering for grad student welcome.

- The GSA need volunteers either at Hamilton go and/or Pearson airport. If any member is interested or know anyone interested to email they can send an email to macgsa@mcmaster.ca.

11) FRC International application

New FRC international application:

- Anthony Quarshie, application circulated.
- He sent his statement of interest, he has strong financial background.

Motion to ratify Anthony Quarshie as FRC International pending 5 signature from his peers on his application, moved by Sam seconded by Sara, all in favour motion carried.

12) New business:

13) Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 6:15 p.m. moved by Sam seconded by Aaron, all in favor motion carried.