

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting
January 24th, 2019
GSA Office, East Tower the Refectory
5:30 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Tim van Boxtel (GSA President) Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Julia de Lange (FRC Engineering), Sara Oikawa (VP Internal), Anthony Quarshie (FRC International), Mohammed Chowdhury (FRC Engineering), Rachele Ho (FRC Science), Sanyia Mansuri (FRC Health Science), sasha Kovalchuk (FRC Social Science), Shawn Hercules (VP External), Maxwell Lighstone (Senator Engineering), Anita Acai (Senator Science), Xiaomin Huang (FRC International), Yi Wang (FRC Health Science), Tiffany van Lieshout (FRC Science), Aaron Roberts (Senator Humanities),

Regrets: Rodrigo Narro (BoG member), Kara Tsang (GSA CRO), Fran Lasowski (VP Administration)

Absent: Mariam Munawar (Senator Business), Taylor McKenzi (Senator Social Science), Maleeha Qazi (Senator Health Science),

Call to order 5:34

1. **President's Remarks**

- a. Next Meeting – Thursday, February 28th, 2019 5:30pm
- Tim mentioned that the coming month is quiet busy starting with nominations being open on February 5th, and then elections will be in March 12th followed by the AGM in March.
- Currently the GSA is reviewing the financial position of the GSA and Phoenix. The period being reviewed is November 2018 and we are also preparing the new fiscal year budget.
- Tim encouraged FRC to apply for Executive position within the GSA as they are now having some experience regarding how the GSA operates.
- There is a lot of speculation regarding students' association fees as the Doug Ford government has announced that they will mandate some student services fees as essential and other are nonessential. The GSA fee could be deemed nonessential, which will mean that students have the option to opt-out of the GSA fee.
- The GSA is organizing a bus from Mary Kyes resident to support students who want to participate in the march to Queens park in Toronto, the bus will pick up students from Mary Kyes at 12:30 and return back around 5.

2. Call for New Business

a. MOTION: Approval of Agenda

Motion to add the following items which was circulated to council members email moved by Sara seconded by Anita, all in favour motion carried.

- Discussing valedictorian committee
- IGSA constitution
- Hamilton student mobilization network
- Participating in Gore park

Motion to approve the agenda with amendments moved by Sara, seconded by Anita, all in favour, motion carried.

b. MOTION: Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of last meeting moved by Sara, seconded by Rachelle, 14 in favour, 1 abstention, motion carried.

3. Executives update:

- Sara mentioned that the event for GWI initiatives which is the grad wellness initiatives that she and Shawn have been spear heading with SWC and the original GWI founders has the following events for students: exercise/ life style workshop, currently they have 21 registered, however only 6 people showed up. They are scheduling a cooking class event soon and they will try to get the word out to have more people to attend.. Tim suggested to have the event on first come first serve basis; Julia suggested to charge \$10 for the event and when people show up they get it back.
- Grad council was this week and they have discussed some of the provincial changes; 10% reduction in tuition for domestic grad and undergrad students with the exclusion to international students. Engineering students will have a policy regarding how much money are given to students from external scholarship. There is no similar policy in the other faculty, she suggested to follow up with them and have similar policy in each faculty.
- Sara noted that on April 17th we will host 3MT and as McMaster was the winner of the Ontario 3MT McMaster will house the provincial competition, which will be March 14-15th 2019.
- Shawn noted that no new clubs came forward over the break, but a call went out in the mailer, and someone has contacted Shawn.
- Shawn has also communicated with clubs to inquire what kind of training would they like. This will occur next month
- The ski trip will also occur next month. Shawn is looking for cost-effective methods.

- Mohammad had a question about easing the process for clubs and banking, which Tim commented that when the transition occurs this year we will bring the banker here, and people can sign on campus, so they do not have to go Scotiabank.

4. **FRC Updates**

a. **SciGSA**

- Rachele mentioned that they have an alumni event on February 8th at 7 pm; they have a room for 70 attendees, currently they have 25 people registered, they will continue advertising for the event. Currently they have 8 people on their panel.
- They are very concerned as the website is no longer working, the reason is that the admin was told that they will have a website with the GSA so they stopped paying for their domain. Tim noted that he will speak with Tyler regarding this issue to solve it.
- Rachele noted that they need a safe way to tie up votes for elections, Tim asked if the GSA have another options. Tim explained that the GSA currently use Simply Voting through MSU for \$150, he added that the GSA can send the list of students to MSU and cover the cost for SciGSA and EGS elections.

b. **Health science,**

- Yi mentioned that they are having trouble getting information regarding registering under the GSA (meaning if the current Health Science Federation has any interest in becoming a faculty society under the GSA), it has been over a month now, she connected with the department secretary regarding if they can register with the GSA, they forward them the documents, however they never heard back.
- Scheduled an event in December, 20 students attended.
- Yi is organizing with Open circle, they do a reflection circle every week and understand yourself series for grad students, they are planning to host more of these events and spend some of their money on this.
- Tim recommended to host events as FRC and the GSA will support them rather than the Federation, who have not responded to our inquiries.

c. **Engineering**

- Julia mentioned that they have a couple of new members on council, however, they still have empty spots.
- AGM on March 14.
- Latic workshop this Saturday, open to Science and other grad students, attendance is usually very high.
- Discussing reconstruction of EGS executives portfolio.

- Two grad students, one from engineering and the other from public health program. They want to take the initiative to run different types of workshops for grad students. They request from GSA to promote their workshops.

d. International

- Bylaws and constitution circulated to Council.
- Board game is tonight.

e. Social Science

- Sasha mentioned that next week he will meet with a few representatives from Faculty of Social Science.

5. Senate / BOG Updates

Anita sent the following report:

1. Federal Update

Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Sport, announced funding of \$275 million over the next five years in Tri-Agency Funding. The fund has three streams: Early Career Research, High-Risk Research, and International Research.

2. Provincial Update

Senators were informed that the provincial government has received the Auditor General's Annual Report for 2018, which examined government spending and procedures including an assessment of the OSAP program, including the previous government's free tuition program. It is likely that the provincial government will use the Auditor General's findings as a basis to find efficiencies across government and the broader public sector. The Council of Ontario Universities, student groups and institutions will continue to advocate for the importance of OSAP.

3. Enrolment Figures for Graduate Students

Dr. Michael Thompson presented the graduate enrolment figures. This year gained 249 full time equivalent students, of which 66 were domestic students. Enrolment was 9% short on the Master's side and 3% short on PhDs.

4. Funding for Graduate Students

Graduate Council approved a proposed change to the minimum remuneration for offers of full time doctoral studies from its current guaranteed value of \$17,500 to tuition plus \$13,500 annually, effective as of September 2019 for incoming students, with the restrictions as set out in the graduate calendar. There is currently no minimum level of funding stipulated by the School of Graduate Studies for Master's programs.

6. Changes to Graduate Programs

During its December and January meetings, Senate, on recommendation from Graduate

Council, approved the following changes to graduate programs:

- Change to program requirements – PhD candidacy examination (PhD – Biochemistry)
- Change to program name and cancellation of streams (MA – International Relations)
- Change to program requirements – addition of a major research paper (MA – Political Science)
- Change to program name (PhD – Materials Science and Materials Engineering)

Additionally, the following new scholarships for graduate students were established:

- Bev Bayus Graduate Scholarship
- Ian Nolet Physiotherapy Academic Grant
- The Social Justice Graduate Scholarship for Labour Studies

7. Committee for Recommending a President

The membership of the Committee for Recommending a President has been established with five members appointed by the Board of Governors and five members appointed by the Senate.

- Maxwell added that he met with Christi Garneau, the university secretary, to see if they could engage students in this process more.

7. New Business

Valedictorian selection committee.

- Maxwell mentioned that he was on the Valedictorian committee last year as an MSU representative for Engineering. The MSU has a policy for Valedictorian committee and mentioned that for each faculty to elect a valedictorian and the committee is made up of MAPS rep, MSU rep and GSA rep and some other faculty members, however, he was informed that the GSA is no longer interested to participate in the Valedictorian committee, nonetheless, grad students can apply for Valedictorian. Historically, there was a grad students representation, and Maxwell felt it was not too much work.
- Sara explained that the rationale for this decision was that GSA representatives waste a lot of time on this committee, especially GSA rep that has to sit on for every faculty and not only the faculty they are in. In addition, there are no grad students nomination, however, the GSA is willing to sit on this committee if there are grad students nomination.
- Shawn added that grad students are only allowed to apply during Fall convocation and they aren't allowed during other times.
- Tim explained that having a GSA rep on this committee is a massive time commitment, usually no one wants to volunteer and it falls on the executives. Nonetheless, the GSA will still send the call around for any one who wants to volunteer and we will forward their names to MSU.

iGSA

- Constitution and Bylaws for iGSA was circulated.
- Funding from the GSA is \$500, the correct amount is \$600

Motion to accept the iGSA Constitution and Bylaws, moved by Sara, seconded by Shawn, all in favor all, motion carried.

Participating in Gore Park Rally:

- Sasha mentioned that there is a rally at Gore Park on Feb 1st. It is spear headed by the undergrad and they are requesting the GSA support and funds.
- He has been in touch with that network and he is liaising between this group and the GSA. He circulated a document regarding what they believe to be there expenditures. The budget is short for \$3000, they are hoping the council members can motion to fund this amount.
- Sara explained that the amount is very large especially because the GSA budget is a modest budget. She doesn't mind to allocate some funds, however, other groups on the list circulated have to share as well, especially because they have a bigger budget.
- Ashley added that the GSA has 4.5k in this budget line, in which it isn't spent yet, historically, this line was used to cover homecoming and light up the night but the GSA stepped away as grad students weren't interested.
- sasha explained that this network is trying to reach out to other groups to fund the rally as well, but they are not standing up.
- Ashley suggested to try and compromise, someone from this network can try to approach Mohawk and MSU saying the GSA is funding this amount and ask them for a matching principle.
- Aaron suggested the GSA can fund \$1500 and the network reach other groups to match this amount.
- sasha suggested that the GSA to do a step commitment and pitches \$1500, however, if no other groups pitches, the GSA can pitch another \$1500.
- Max noted that the large portion of money is for the bus rental to transfer students from Mohawk to Gore park, the bus rental impact Mohawk students. He suggested that the fund shall include funding a bus from McMaster. He added that on the list the speakers aren't students, he suggested to better have students speaking in this event, Ashley noted that that they will try to get the GSA president and MSU president to speak on the rally but that isn't guaranteed yet.
- Sasha highlighted that Mohawk students have a huge accessibility problem, this is the first time that this group is doing a public demonstration in 6 years.
- The council agreed to proceed to have transportation from McMaster to Gore Park, in addition the GSA shall pitch \$1500 and the network shall try and get money match from

other groups, in case this wasn't successful, the GSA can fund the event up to \$3000.

- Max suggested to put the names of the organization who will be involved on the list for transparency.
- Mohammed suggested to reach out to clubs and get all clubs to be involved specially the GSA funds those clubs.
- Tim highlighted that there will be 2 different emails sent out, one to clubs and the other for the rest of grad students.
- Max suggested that the GSA reach out to MSU and MAPS to make a combined statement regarding this rally and distribute it to students.

Motion the GSA will pitch \$1500 for Gore Park rally on Feb 1st this includes the bus invoice from McMaster. Moreover, the network will reach out to other groups and advertise for them to match this amount, in case this wasn't successful, the GSA can fund the event up to \$3000 moved by Shawn, seconded by Julia, all in favor, motion carried.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:59 pm moved by Shawn, seconded by Sanyia, all in favour, motion carried.

Action Item:

Item	Action by	Due date
2 different emails sent out, one to clubs and the other for the rest of grad students.	Ashley & Shawn	ASAP