
Minutes of GSA Council Meeting held on 1st June 2009 at GSA House
(1st Council Meeting, 2009-10)

Members Present: Mohammad Faisal Uddin (VP - Services)
Altayeb Qasem (VP - Finance)
Zafar Ullah Khan (VP - External)
Svetla Turnin (Director - Arts)
Nadia Hausfather (Director - Arts)
Mathew Tziritas (Director - Science)
Peipei Shi (Director - ENCS)
Shikui Wu (Director - JMSB)
Zachary Kenny (Director - Fine Arts)
Erik Chevrier (Director - IS/SIP)

Members Absent: Mahboubeh Khani (President)
Manu Jain (VP-Advocacy)
Natheer Alatawneh (Director - ENCS)
Roddy Doucet (Director - Arts)
Sussan Dolatshahi (Director - JMSB)

Agenda of the Meeting:

1. Call to Order
 - 1.1. Chair's remarks
 - 1.2. Approval of the Agenda
2. Creation of Budget Committee
3. Nomination of GSA Representative to the Board of Governors and other standing Concordia Committees
4. Brainstorming to come up with new GSA activities
5. Other businesses
6. Adjournment

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 2:15 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Agenda was unanimously approved after adding following additional points: Appointment of CFS representative, Appointment of COI representative, tuition fee increase, RACE funding.

3. Budget Committee

Faisal informed the council about Budget Committee which is usually comprised of the President, VP-Finance, and one director. It is quarterly reviewed. Altayeb added that since council has the last word on the budget, he wants to make the process transparent; budget should be itemized and flexible. Erik suggested that funds should be available immediately for some funding projects during the summer. Mathew suggested that the person on committee should be who has good computer skills and good English in order to publish readable budgets. Faisal asked how many members are willing to be on the committee. Only Nadia wished to be on committee.

MOTION - Erik - BIRT appoint Nadia, Mah and Altayeb to the budget committee. Svetla seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

4. Appointment to Board of Governors

Faisal suggested appointing Mah again. Altayeb asked if it is legal to appoint her without her being here.

MOTION - Faisal - BIRT we appoint Mah to BOG. Erik seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

5. Nomination of CFS & CFS-Q Representative

MOTION - Zachary Kenny - BIRT Erik Chevrier represents the Concordia Graduate Student Association on the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and Canadian Federation of Students of Quebec (CFS-Q) boards of directors for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Zafar seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

MOTION - Zachary Kenny - BIRT Erik Chevrier represents the Concordia Graduate Student Association on every other Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) boards or at every CFS meeting, including the National Graduate Caucus and any special meeting held by the CFS, or CFS-Q. Zafar seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

6. Tuition Fee Increase

Erik informed council that Concordia is doing something that they claim is been forced by the Govt but it's not. At the last BOG meeting they tried to increase the fees for JMSB grads.

They are going to try and get as much money as possible. They claim the government mandates them to take the money but it's just that Govt is allowing universities to take more money. Mathew pointed to another important issue is the fact that they are not allowing student to pay with credit card anymore. Svetla added that Larry English, VP Finance told Senate that the university is doing this in order to save \$850,000 per year. She asked how many students pay with credit card and they didn't even know. He thinks most people pay with credit card in order to get credit card rewards. It was discussed that since school is the beneficiary of the increase; then for sure the government is not going to mandate them. Erik suggested that we should look at what exactly was passed at the national assembly. And informed university is going to argue that they are 10 M\$ in debt. They pay a severance packages to BOG members. They just don't care about students. Faisal suggested making a committee to tackle the situation effectively.

MOTION - Faisal - BIRT we approve the appointment of Erik, Peipei, Zac, Zafar, Nadia to form a tuition fee committee to take care of international student related issues. Mathew seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

7. COI Representative Appointment

Faisal informed that COI is a university's initiative to give some funding to student organization for orientation activities and Manu is already working on the GSA proposal. It was argued that since he was not present so it should be tabled for next meeting. The COI meeting is supposed to take place in June.

MOTION - Erik - BIRT we mandate either Manu or Faisal represents the GSA at COI for the month of June. Mathew seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

8. RACE Conference Presentation

Svetla presented proposal for RACE Conference funding. This is an association that deals with racial and discriminatory topics. These usually included feminist scholarships, first nation issues, etc. There is a conference next week to promote these types of scholarships and issues. RACE is looking for funding and are willing to promote the GSA at the conference. The GSA always supports this conference. The budget is \$15,000. They have a sliding scale for donations. In further discussions it was informed that 30 grad students attend this and we've always allocated money to conference. We can give them money but have to decide whether we should give them SIP of \$350 or a subsidy of \$500. Altayeb said that his only concern is that will we have the money to give since the budget isn't up yet. So, we should wait for the budget to be prepared. Faisal said since there is a time frame, it has to be done in the next few days. Council can pre approve money. Erik said we can justify spending money now and put it into the budget later. Svetla suggested to look at what was allocated in last year.

MOTION - Svetla - BIRT we allocate \$500 to the race conference. Altayeb seconded. 8 in favor, 1 abstain. Motion PASSED.

9. Senate Representative Appointment

Svetla informed that Senate Steering Committee meets once a month to set up the agenda for monthly senate meetings. The number of GSA representatives on Senate was increased to 4. The Senate is the highest academic decision-making body at Concordia. She would like to retain her seat on Senate. Altayeb suggested that the appointments should be tabled until next meeting so that everyone has a chance to run for a seat.

10. Other Businesses

Liability Insurance: Faisal informed that GSA doesn't have any liability insurance for directors.

MOTION - Faisal - BIRT the VP External or VP Services should research and give a report on the possibility to get liability insurance for our directors. Peipei seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

Altayeb queried about how to get information on the health care plan for international students as there is sudden increase. Erik informed that ISO is responsible for it and GSA cannot do anything about it.

Nadia suggested that GSA should remind people that they can come to the meetings 30 minutes before in order to ask questions.

MOTION - Erik - BIRT we should switch to paper coffee cups instead of Styrofoam cups. Zac seconded. Amendment - Svetla - BIRT we add recycling bins to all rooms in GSA house. Nadia seconded. 8 in favor, 1 against. Motion with amendment PASSED.

MOTION - Faisal - BIRT we table brainstorming to come up with new ideas. Erik seconded. All in favor. Motion PASSED.

11. Meeting Adjourned at 5:15pm.