

March 10, 2011

GSA Council Meeting Minutes

Written by Golam M Aurup

Administrative Coordinator





Attendance

Chair	
	Roddy Doucet
Executives	
President	Adnan Abueid
VP External	Mathew Tziritas
Council Members	
Arts and Science	Matthew Macdonald
	Louise Birdsell Bauer
	Robert Sonin
	Holly Nazar
	Rushdia Mehreen
JMSB	Mahmood Salehi
	Mohammad Sabr
ENCS	Mohammad Nurujjaman Beajon
	Natheer Alatawneh
	Mohammed Khader
Fine Arts	Emily Paige
Interdisciplinary	Nadia Hausfather
Absent	Ali Halawi (Arts and Science)
	Parastoo Naghavi (JMSB)
	Yuhang Luo (ENCS)
	Ajay Pooni (ENCS)
	Nayeem Ninad(ENCS)
Managers	
Manager advocacy	Roddy Doucet
Manager services	Anna Chigogidze
Manager Finance	Andy Yuen
Minute taker	Golam M Aurup



SESSION 1: SPECIAL SESSION WITH CONCORDIA PRESIDENT

The special session to meet Concordia President Dr. Lowy started at 6:30 pm. Dean of Students Dr. Elizabeth Morey and VP Services Mr. Roger Cote accompanied Dr. Lowy during the session.

Dr. Lowy thanked the GSA for inviting him to the GSA council.

He informed the background of his return as the Concordia President and explained the current situation of the university. He mentioned of finding a divided campus- between the board and the internal community- and agreed that the level of antagonism is high and unprecedented.

He described the history of Concordia merger and mentioned the independence of the board by the charter. He mentioned details of the motion to form a three member external committee comprised of experts in university governance and provide feedback on the issue.

He asked for questions from the GSA councilors.

Holly asked for his views regarding tuition hikes. Dr. Lowy expressed his personal views against tuition rise but mentioned that the money needs to come from somewhere as Quebec universities are underfunded by \$ 600 Million a year. Holly described the different options to fund universities and requested Dr. Lowy, as a member of CREPUQ- the council of the presidents of the Quebec universities, to be a strong voice for the other options than tuition increase.

Mathew McDonald asked Dr. Lowy about his plans to maintain transparency in hiring of the three members of the special committee. Dr. Lowy described the composition of the committee and informed that the details of the hiring would be open to all once the hiring is approved by the senate and the board. In another question, Mathew asked for his opinion regarding role of the board to observe the progress of institutional mission. Mathew mentioned that the mission of the university was not benchmarking with other top universities but maintaining accessibility for students- which, in his opinion, is quite changed right now because of the tuition increase and endeavor to be at par with other Canadian universities. Dr. Lowy admitted that the academic mission of Concordia is not the same anymore- as it is giving importance to undergraduate studies and accessibility, and striving to be a research institution as well.

Natheer raised his concerns regarding denial of the university to provide Muslim students with a prayer space in the EV building, denial of renewal of the Friday prayer space, and exploitation of graduate researchers by their supervisors. Dr. Lowy forwarded his questions to Mr. Cote and Mr. Cote informed the GSA about the situation and progress made regarding prayer space. He also requested GSA to spread the word regarding other student services available at Concordia.

Nadia mentioned specific Concordia measures that made international students suffer the most. She mentioned that a petition signed by more than 900 graduate students was sent to the board and, astonishingly, 80% of the board members refrained from voting. She asked if the apathy of the board regarding an extremely important issue indicates something about the composition of the



board. Dr. Lowy informed that the Bill 38 of the Quebec Government would be in place this June which is expected to guide the universities regarding the composition. May be the issue of composition of the board can be reviewed at that time.

Surprising the attendees, Dr. Lowy asked everyone in the meeting to tell their reasons to come to Concordia. International students mainly mentioned of hearing from friends and local students mentioned of accessibility, richness of graduate programs and scope for student activism. Most of the international students mentioned of their feel of betrayal as Concordia breached their faith regarding tuition, funding and fair treatment. Some mentioned that they do not suggest friends at home to come to Concordia anymore.

Dr. Lowy, Dr. Morey and Mr. Cote thanked the GSA and left the meeting at 8:30 pm.

SESSION 2: REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION

1.0 Call to order

The second session or the regular council meeting was called to order at 8:35 pm

2.1 Approval of the agenda

Beajon proposed that the item 7 and 8 should be moved at number 4 as the meeting started late after the first session and have possibility of being finished at a later date.

Motion- Beajon- BIRT we approve the Agenda for the March Council Meeting with above mentioned corrections. 2nd Robert. 9 For, 2 abstain. PASS.

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Motion- Louise- BIRT the minute for February council meeting is approved. 2nd Mohammed Sabr. 9 for 2 abstain.

Aurup informed the minute for January council meeting is pending an approval. It was decided to get the approval on the second part of the meeting next week.



3.0 Setting March 17 meeting

Roddy informed that all the items in the agenda cannot be finished and a new date is required to finish the meeting.

Motion- Holly- BIRT another council meeting is called on the 17th of March at 6:30 pm. 2nd Mathew McDonald. All in favor. PASS.

4. Setting date for 2011 election

There was a discussion and proposal to hold the elections on a day than three days to save money and efforts. Later it was decided to follow the previous trends.

Motion- Louise- BIRT the GSA elections 2011 be held on the 5th, 6th, and 7th April 2011. 2nd Mohammed Sabr. All in favor.

4.1 Hiring committee for CRO and DRO positions

Motion- Mathew McDonald- BIRT the hiring committee to select Chief returning officer (CRO) and Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) for the GSA elections 2011 is comprised of Beajon, Louise, Mohammed Sabr, Emily and Adnan; and Adnan be the Chair of the committee. 2nd Louise. All in favor. PASS.

5. GSA General Assembly

Motion- Louise- BIRT the GSA annual general assembly is scheduled for the 7th of April, 2011. 2nd Mohammad Khader. 9 for, 2 abstain. PASS.

5.1 Committee for general assembly

Motion- Beajon- BIRT the GSA General Assembly Committee is formed with Robert, Mathew, Adnan, Anna and Mohammad Khader. 2nd Robert. 10 for 1 abstain. PASS.

5.2 By-law committee- One year later

Motion- Mathew McDonald- BIRT the by-law committee is formed with Nadia, Beajon, Robert, Holly, Adnan and Mathew to review the by-law. 2nd Nadia. All in favor. PASS.



6. Funding Request

Three funding requests were submitted to the council. Nawrooz party organized by the Iranian Students Association, and a networking diner organized by students of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering faculty were presented to the GSA

Motion: Robert- BIRT the GSA approves \$400 for the Nawrooz party, \$300 for the networking diner and \$300 for housing initiative organized by 2110 center. 2nd Louise.

Amendment- Natheer- BIFRT the voting for the motion be held separately, 2nd Mahmood. All in favor. PASS.

Vote for Nawrooz Party- \$400 sponsorship. 9 for, 1 abstain. PASS

Vote for Networking Diner- \$300 sponsorship. 3 for, 5 against, 2 abstain. FAIL

Vote for Housing Initiative- \$300 sponsorship. 6 for, 1 against, 3 abstain. PASS.

Motion- Mahmood- BIRT the GSA provided the Nawrooz Party with an additional \$300 sponsorship to make the total sponsorship amount \$700. 2nd Robert. 6 for, 2 against, 3 abstain. PASS

7. Frais Institutionnel Obligatoire (FIO) Stance

Adnan informed that, after meeting with the Dean of students and CCSL, he thinks the previous GSA decision to take the issue to a referendum might have adverse impact on availability of concordia student services for graduate students (including health and advocacy services).

Motion- Mathew McDonald- BIRT the GSA reverts the previous decision regarding FIO stance and gives Adnan the authority to sign the documents regarding FIO. 2nd Holly. 9 for, 1 abstain. PASS.

Amendment- Nadia- BIFRT the GSA requests Dean of Students Elizabeth Morey and VP Roger Cote to work with the GSA to write a letter and explain the situation to the students. 2nd Robert. All in favor. PASS

8. Other Business:

Mathew informed the GSA that A letter needs to be sent to the GSA lawyer working on the CFS De-federation case. This is required as the lawyer needs documentation that the GSA asked to proceed with the defederation from CFS following a referendum.

Motion-Holly- BIRT the GSA writes a letter and directs the lawyer to start working in this regard. 2nd Mathew McDonald. 7 for, 1 abstain. PASS.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.