

GENERAL ASSMBLY PACKET

GSA GA – Friday October 30, 2015, from 2:30PM to 5:00PM in room MB 1.210, John Molson School of Business Building, 1450 Guy Street.

PRINT YOUR OWN COPY

PROPOSED AGENDA

Adopted by the GSA Council on October 25, 2015.

0. Plenary to explain/ask questions about agenda items
1. GA business
 - 1.1 Call to Order
 - 1.2 Appointment of Chair and Secretary (Chair's report on procedure)
 - 1.3 Approval of the Agenda
 - 1.4 Approval of the past GA minutes ([LINK to April 4, 2014, and October 23, 2014](#))
2. Business arising
 - 2.1 Bylaw changes (20 mins)
 - a) BYLAW CHANGE: Compulsory audit
 - b) BYLAW CHANGE: By-elections by ballot
 - c) BYLAW CHANGE: Member-at-large on Budget Committee
 - 2.2 President's report (10 mins)
 - 2.3 Budget (20 mins) [Link](#)
 - 2.4 Auditor Appointment (10 mins)
 - 2.5 Financial Statement (20 mins)
 - 2.6 Elections (30 mins)
3. New business
 - 3.1 Austerity (30 mins or more)
4. Other business
 - 4.1 Announcement of election results (5 mins)
5. Adjournment

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (AND YOU)

PLEASE READ: <http://gsaconcordia.ca/governance/what-is-a-general-assembly/>

BEST PRACTICES FOR GA PARTICIPANTS

1. Arrive promptly and prepared

Read the packet. Send any questions or amendments in advance to the Chair. Show up 30mins early with a device or printed copy of the packet. Use this time before the meeting to consult and prepare for the meeting.

2. Line up at the microphone and practice self-facilitation

All motions, amendments, and debate will only be allowed at the microphone and your comments must be directed to the Chair. You may interrupt the Chair only to ask from your seat for points of information or order.

You are requested to self-facilitate, keep your comments relevant to the motion and direct your comments to the Chair. Also, if you find yourself at the microphone more than once on any issue, consider requesting to speak at the end to sum up your points thereby yielding priority on the list to other 1st time speakers.

3. Do not talk during the meeting unless called on by the Chair

If you need to consult, take the conversation outside or ask for a caucus (60 secs) or motion for a plenary (5 mins).

4. Refrain from asking questions or requesting to motivate during voting procedure

The Chair will repeat the resolution and ask for questions before the calling the vote. All points and questions should be raised before entering voting procedure.

5. Disciplinary action can be taken

Jokes, commentary, or side-conversations will not be tolerated. If any members(s) persist, they may be asked to leave. NOTE: THE GSA Council passed the following Motion ([CO-20141118-16](#)) as Amended: *Be it Further Resolved That the Graduate Students' Association shall remind every GSA GA participant of the Assembly's right, as per Robert's Rules of Order, either by a rule or by a vote, to eject any one from its place of meeting, and that "it is the duty of the chairperson to enforce the rule of order, using whatever force is necessary" to eject the party.*

6. Motions made in GA

If we are already discussing another motion that has nothing to do with yours, wait after it is dealt with. If you are not sure of the writing, ask for drafting time. Make sure that the motion

written by the Secretary is what you had in mind.

SAMPLE MOTION

BIRT the GSA fund the purchase of 5000 reusable mugs GSA promotions;
BIFRT the GSA giveaway these mugs at all events for GSA members.

Amendment – Changing 5000 to 3000 reusable mugs;

Call for a seconder on the amendment, then debate/discussion/questions, followed by a vote on the amendment (For, Against, or Abstain). If approved as an amendment, we still have to vote on the entire motion as amended.

BIRT the GSA fund the purchase of 3000 reusable mugs GSA promotions;
BIFRT the GSA giveaway these mugs at all events for GSA members.

Call for any additional debate/discussion/questions or amendments, then call for a vote on the main amended motion (For, Against, or Abstain).

7. Counting the vote

Simple majority votes are 50% +1 as required in bylaw. So if 6 vote for and 6 against and 1 councillor abstains, the motion does not pass. If 7 vote for and 6 against, the motion passes.

For a supermajority or two-thirds (2/3) vote to pass, this would mean that any number of votes equal to or greater than 2/3 (67% or more) of votes would mean a pass. Conversely, any number of votes less than 67% would mean a fail. Therefore, if 8 of 13 members (61.5% of members) vote in favor, the motion fails.

Abstentions do not count in the final tally, so for example, if a vote is called and there are 8 votes for, 7 votes against, and 3 abstentions (or 8:7:3) the motions carries by a simple majority of 8 to 7, abstentions are not included. Also, if the vote result is 7:7:4, the motion fails as it did not receive a simple majority.

You can request that your vote (For, Against, or Abstention) be noted in the minutes.

1.1 Call to Order

The meeting is called to order at {insert TIME}

1.2 Appointment of Chair and Secretary (Chair's report on procedure)

Be it resolved that the Chair and Secretary of the General Assembly of the October 30th 2015 will be Gretchen King (Chair) and {insert NAME} (Secretary)

Moved by:
Seconded by:

1.3 Approval of the Agenda

Be It Resolved That the following agenda be adopted for today’s General Assembly:

{insert agenda}

Moved by:
Seconded by:

1.4 Approval of the past GA minutes

Be It Resolved That the {insert DATE} General Assembly minutes be adopted.

Moved by:
Seconded by:

2.1 Bylaw changes (20 mins)

Whereas the following council motions for bylaw changes remain pending from previous General Assemblies.

BIRT

2.1.a Bylaw Change: compulsory audit

Proposal to amend ARTICLE XIII of the GSA bylaws, previously tabled motion-GA-20140404-10 – Members Petition – Moved by Alex Ocheoha

ARTICLE XIII - FINANCES	
Current bylaws	Proposed changes
9. All G.S.A. accounts shall be reviewed by an external auditor annually. The external	9. All G.S.A. accounts shall be audited by an external auditor annually. The external auditor

auditor shall be approved by a General Assembly as per the recommendations of the Budget Committee.	shall be approved by a General Assembly as per the recommendations of the Budget Committee.
	10. The audited financial statements shall be received by council at the end of the financial year and made available to members.

Be It Resolved that the GSA Bylaws Article XIII – 9 be amended and Article XIII – 10 be added:

JUSTIFICATION:

An audit ensures that there is more accountability and transparency. The audit will provide a review of the association’s finances and identify areas that need improvement. The credibility of the financial statements is enhanced with a written reasonable assurance from an independent source to members.

DEFINITION OF AN AUDIT

An audit is the examination of the financial statements of an organisation by an independent entity which involves performing procedures to obtain evidence on what was stated in the financial statements. An auditor gives an opinion the financial statements.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AND AUDIT AND A REVIEW

An audit provides a reasonable basis for expressing an opinion on the financial statement and provides a higher level of assurance. An audit performs certain procedures ordinarily performed during an audit such as understanding the internal control, as well as testing the accounting records through inspection, observation and confirmation.

A review does not give any opinion on the financial statements and provides limited assurance.

A review does not assess the risk of fraud, test accounting records or perform other procedures ordinarily performed in an audit.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The GSA executives are usually graduate students who may not have had any prior management experience. This makes the risks of misstatements high. The executives cannot self-review and self-certify the financial statements they produce. An audit will help reduce the risk of submitting incorrect financial statements to the government when required by law.

The council cannot audit the financial statements because they are not trained to do so. Council members may not be able to give an independent opinion on accounts because of familiarity and friendships. The GSA’s staff might feel intimidated and may not give a contrary opinion.

THE COST OF PERFORMING AN ANNUAL AUDIT FOR THE GSA

An annual audit usually costs between C\$1,000 and C\$2,000 above the cost of an annual review. The annual audit of the GSA’s financial statements will cost between C\$4,000-5000 or up to between C\$20,000-25000 depending on the auditor appointed.

Moved by:
 Seconded by:

2.1.b BYLAW CHANGE: By-elections by ballot

ARTICLE XIV - ELECTIONS	
Current bylaws	Proposed changes
8. By-elections can be conducted by secret ballot in accordance with Sections 4 and 5 of this article and the Electoral By-Laws of the G.S.A., or through a General Assembly, during which a secret ballot can take place if the members present vote for this option.	8. By-elections shall be conducted by secret ballot... or through a General Assembly, during which a secret ballot shall take place, unless unanimously adopted otherwise.

Moved by the Bylaw Committee to Council where approved by two-thirds or a super majority: see [Motion CO-20141118-15](#)

Be It Resolved that the GSA Bylaws Article XIII – 9 be amended and Article XIII – 10 be added.

Moved by:
 Seconded by:

2.1.c Member-at-large on Budget Committee

ARTICLE XII – BUDGET COMMITTEE	
Current bylaws	Proposed changes
2. The Budget Committee shall be composed of:	2.7 One member-at-large elected annually by the General Assembly.

<p>2.1. The President – who will be chair.</p> <p>2.2. The Vice-President Internal.</p> <p>2.3. The Vice-President External.</p> <p>2.4. Four current council directors representing separate faculties and appointed by Council</p> <p>2.5. The Finance Manager shall be the secretary of the Budget Committee. The Finance Manager will have ex-officio status (non-voting member) at Budget Committee meetings.</p> <p>2.6. The secretary shall attend all open meetings of the Budget Committee.</p>	
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Moved by:
 Seconded by:

2.2 President's report (10 mins)

GSA President’s address to the October 30, General Assembly

It is my pleasure and honor to serve as President for 2015-2016. I am privileged to be working with a motivated and dedicated team of executives and directors. I will do my best to ensure that GSA’s resources are managed effectively to provide resources and services that will help improve the experience of graduate students. We are experiencing several challenges which we hope to overcome. We will do our best to perform the duties we were elected to perform, with the best interest of students at heart. We will be partnering with some university departments during the year to better serve you.

Successful fall 2015 Orientation

This semester we had a successful fall 2015 orientation which was one of the biggest in GSA history. There were 22 events over 2 weeks. We were able to achieve this with special thanks to other members of my executive team, GSA directors, GSA staff and volunteers. We had a good attendance for the events and thank all students that attended. A post event report will be made available to students.

Renovation of the GSA lounge

This summer we renovated the GSA lounge to make it more welcoming and improve the experience of students. All graduate students are welcome to use the lounge which serves as a central meeting space for relaxation and study.

GSA Services

This year we have been working towards improving the services that we provide and introducing new ones. We are currently reviewing our French and English language classes using the feedback we received. We are working towards maximizing the utilization of our classrooms.

We have hosted several events from June 2015 to date and will be hosting so many other exciting events during the year. We will be happy to welcome GSA members to our student life committee.

GSA 2015-2016 Projects

This year we are working towards establishing an advocacy center in the GSA house. The center will provide students with resources and information to help them make informed decisions. The center will also provide general advising and help in defending the rights of students.

We will be reintroducing subsidized printing and copying services this semester. The low priced prints will help reduce the printing costs for graduate students.

We have included funding for clubs in our budget this year. We will be encouraging graduate students to form clubs during the course of the year.

Anti-Austerity

We will be hoping to consider and pass a motion against Austerity today. The GSA will work with other groups on campus to reject austerity and advocate for an increased funding for education. I strongly encourage all graduate students to support this campaign.

I also encourage all graduate students to who wish to get involved in any of our campaigns to join our campaigns committee.

I am looking forward to the elections in the GA today and will be happy to welcome new directors to our team.

This year we will ensure that we are transparent and accountable to all members. We will be appointing an auditor who will conduct an audit for the 2015-16 financial year.

We are hoping that this will be a great year for all of us. I am looking forward to meeting as many students as possible during the year at our events or at the GSA house. I hope that you all have a wonderful semester.

2.3 Budget (20 mins)

{insert budget}

Be It Resolved that the proposed budget be approved for the remainder of the Fall and Winter semesters.

Moved by:
Seconded by:

2.4 Auditor Appointment (10 mins)

Moved by:
Seconded by:

2.5 Financial Statement (20 mins)

2.6 Elections (30 mins)

3.1 Austerity (30 mins or more)

Whereas the Couillard government in Quebec has made drastic cuts in funding to higher education, in the context of so-called austerity measures referred to as “budgetary compressions”

Whereas Concordia University was made to make over **\$15.7 million in cuts** to its own budget, and have eliminated several jobs through its “Voluntary Departure Program”

Whereas the quality and accessibility of our education is directly and negatively impacted by austerity measures, as is our society as a whole, and especially its most vulnerable members

Whereas austerity measures are part of a larger neoliberal trend of raising user fees while decimating public services (healthcare, childcare, pensions, etc.) at a time when the wealthiest people and the largest corporations are enjoying record profits and decreasing taxes

Whereas such measures have been denounced by experts worldwide, including Nobel-prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, as well as organizations from OXFAM to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Whereas various student, worker, and community associations at Concordia and across Quebec are currently organizing against austerity, with talk of a potential escalation of tactics in Spring 2016, including the group Solidarity 2015 Concordia

Be It Resolved That the GSA denounce the prevailing government discourse of austerity and “budgetary compressions,” and advocate for more just and sustainable economic solutions (such as progressive taxation, addressing tax evasion and corruption, and making corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share)

Be It Further Resolved That the GSA support the group Solidarity 2015 Concordia and other anti-austerity initiatives at Concordia and elsewhere, with the aim of halting government budget cuts to public services, through an escalation of tactics over the coming months while respecting the community’s rights and safety

Be It Further Resolved That the GSA Campaigns Committee and campaigns budget be charged with event planning, mobilization, education, the production of materials, and other activities associated with its commitment to the anti-austerity movement

4.1 Announcement of election results (5 mins)

5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at {insert TIME}.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

USEFUL LINKS

GSA Bylaws ([Link](#))

Robert's Rules ([Link](#))

Companies Act of Quebec ([Link](#))