



MINUTES

Graduate Students' Association

Board Meeting

Thursday, March 25th, 2021

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Online Meeting

Attendees – Executive Team:

Melanie Extance – Deputy President, Senate Representative
Daislyn Vidal – VP, International
Mohammad Moinul Hassan – VP, Equity & External Affairs
Hannah Young – VP, Internal
Ahmad Rabbani – AVP, Digital Communications

Attendees – Faculty Representatives:

Haley Myatt (Chair)
Felisia Milana (Vice-Chair / Secretary)
Ash Grover
Jensen Murphy
Nawal Syed

Staff:

Barb Daly – Executive Director
Mary Tibollo – Office & Health Plan Administrator

Regrets:

Christopher Yendt – President
Amanda Williams

Absentees:

Linshan Hou
Melissa Van der Wal

- **1.0 Meeting called to order at 12:07 p.m. by GSA Board Chair, Haley Myatt, presiding**
 - **1.A Welcome**
 - **1.B Conflict of Interest – None**
 - **1.C Land Acknowledgement**

- 1.D Establishment of Quorum at 12:09 pm
- **2.0 Approvals**
 - **2.A - Agenda of the Board Meeting, March 25th, 2021**

Moved by: Daislyn V. **Seconded by:** Melanie E. *All in favour*
 - **2.B - Minutes of the Board Meeting, March 11th, 2021**

Moved by: Hannah Y. **Seconded by:** Felisia M. *All in favour*
- **3.0 Items Arising from the Minutes**
 - **3.A - Constitution Approval for AGM (April)**
 - Changes made and Agenda will be presented at AGM in April
 - “Bylaws” title replaces “Constitution” – no longer 001C, changed to Document 001D
 - Fixing of letters and dates - Changes are small words
 - Big changes revolved around the change of the name (Document 001D). Require that this document be called by-law instead of Constitution and that is why many of the changes in language have been altered.
 - Changes to the Program Assembly
 - Confirmed this is the same document reviewed prior where gendered language was changed to be neutral

BIRT The Board approves the revised GSA Constitution (Document 001D) for presentation and approval at the April 2021 AGM.

Moved by: Melanie E. **Seconded by:** Hannah Y. *All in favour*

- **3.B - GSA Fee Increase**
 - GSA has one of the lowest graduate fees in all of Ontario
 - Better to help serve graduate students – we are proposing a small increase in the fees at a level the Board can oversee
 - Proposing a 5% increase in what we charge for Health and Dental
 - GSA Membership Fee to be increased by 10% (maximum done by Board)
 - Student emergency support fund, capital maintenance, and Ombudsmen fund will be increased by 10% (maximum done by Board)
 - GSA Ancillary Fees chart shown – emphasized that price is minimal
 - **Question:** Why are fees going up? **Answer:** Increased cost within the year, going back to school in Fall we will need PPE, expanding the office, paying Executives, things that we did not have in the past that we need increased fees to support. Pretty much need to increase to maintain what we have now and to sustain the direction
 - **Question:** Regarding Health & Dental Plan, why are there different categories? **Answer:** Can be ignored. Those are for people opting in families if they so choose. Not a fee anyone would be charge in for tuition, but a voluntarily opt-in

BIRT The Board approves the following GSA fee increases for its membership for the 2021-2022 academic year: Health & Dental Plan (5%), Membership Fee per term (10%),

Emergency Student Support Fund per term (10%), Capital Maintenance Fund per term (10%) and Ombuds Fund per term (10%).

Moved by: Daislyn V.

Seconded by: Hannah Y.

All in favour

● **3.C - 2021-2022 Board of Directors**

- Governance committee met earlier this week to discuss new upcoming Board positions
- Applications quite low this year and still hold some vacancies
- Part of proposal – keep recruitment open to fill vacancies until full
- Also need to approve the Board for the governance committee
- Do we extend the recruitment phase right now or do we wait closer to September when new students will come in and feel they have more time to be involved.
- Discussion on timelines of Board turnovers. Conversation leading more to rolling recruitment

BIRT The Board approves the slate of nominees recommended by the Governance committee for the May 2021-April 2022 Board year, for presentation and approval at the April 2021 AGM.

Moved by: Melanie E.

Seconded by: Daislyn V.

All in favour | Abstention: Felisia M.

BIFT The Board agrees to keep the recruitment period open throughout the summer until the remaining vacancies are filled, the Governance Committee will continue to review and recommend applications to the board on an ongoing basis whereby all successful applicants during this period shall be confirmed at a fall Special General Meeting (SGM).

Moved by: Melanie E.

Seconded by: Jensen M.

All in favour

● **3.D - Approval of GSA Auditor**

- Brought forward idea of having formal audit done for the GSA
- Reviewed 4 or 5 proposals and Grant Thornton by far best candidate and well versed in student governance and familiar with Brock as worked with BUSU
- Building Referendum enhanced the importance of this process
- Pricing competitive
- Have been in business for a long time and have a respected reputation outside of Brock and have a local St. Catharines office

BIRT The Board approves Grant Thornton as the GSA Auditor's for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and recommends their approval based on the engagement cycle determined by the Ad-Hoc Audit RFP Committee.

BIFRT the engagement cycle consists of three-year period, where the first year shall be a review engagement and shall transition to full audit for year's 2 and 3. (This cycle has been based upon conversations with the university and emerging requirements within the GSA-Brock Omnibus Agreement).

Moved by: Hannah Y. **Seconded by:** Daislyn V.

All in favour

- **3.E - Executive Reports**

President Christopher Yendt sends his regrets but will present report at next meeting.

i. Vice-President, Internal

- Last official Trivia March 24th, 14 attendees with gift cards given to winners
- Nomination form for Grad student award – may extend deadline from April 1st to longer based on low number of submissions. Hannah will be meeting with committee on April 7th so far that is where winners will be picked if there is a significant number of submissions. 8 awards with 5 submissions so far
- One more annual national trivia championship at end of April – still can sign up for Brock to attend. 50 students can be sent, on April 27. This will be last event Hannah will be running along with Gratitude Week

Moved by: Felisia M. **Seconded by:** Mohammed M.H *All in favour*

ii. Vice-President, Equity and External

- Discussion on international students not able to study in Canada during COVID being recognized for “Study in Canada” status
- Distance learning versus Canadian Education status – not counted as Canadian points for degree
- Lobby week 5 recommendations – freeze OSAP payments until after pandemic and students have access to vaccine at no cost, 25% reduction to tuition fees for next 4 years, reinstate OHIP to all international students, government must eliminate all differential fees for international students, and government needs to immediately repeal student choice initiative policy to ensure funding for campus student health

Moved by: Nawal S. **Seconded by:** Daislyn V. *All in favour*

iii. Vice-President, International

- Immigration session with collaboration of Brock International
- No one attended session, hopeful to distribute the PowerPoint for the students
- Try a different session in April with a new generalized topic with a different time
- Gender and Sexual Violence leadership 2-day certificate retreat highly spoken on and very interesting and informative. Suggestions to implement this in orientation for international students with FGS
- Suggestions to make Experience BU post to have better engagement for registration and reminders on events

Moved by: Felisia M. **Seconded by:** Hannah Y. *All in favour*

iv. Deputy President & Senate

- Grad studies committee two conferences coming up that were cancelled last year due to COVID but conference has shifted to online environment

- COVID-19 grad student survey sent out- has research or timeline for school been disrupted for COVID
- Teaching and learning policy committees have now passed mandatory breaks – every 5 minutes / 45 minutes of working
- Amendments to faculty handbook
- Digital learning resources brought back to Senate in April
- Indigenization sub-committee addressing the news/twitter
- Senate meeting March 24 – report will be updated on this matter
- Librarian re-appointment Mark Robertson for another 5 years
- Planning, priorities and budgetary advisory committee (March 23, 2021)
 - Department budgets
 - Faculty equivalent
 - Enrolment – down in enrolment (on par with 2018 projections) 2019 saw a large increase in enrolment unanticipated
 - Budget presentation – ensure budget is consistent with the academic policy of the university

Moved by: Daislyn V. **Seconded by:** Mohammed M.H *All in favour*

• **4.0 Items for Additional Consideration**

- Reflection on Board members of their experience – Haley said she will send a survey out
- Update on elections – 18.2% voter turnout
- Update on positive COVID cases at Brock – moved back to grey / lockdown, more information on April 5th
- Add an additional Board meeting for April 8th – hopefully all of the bylaws that were meant to be covered today can be addressed and we can prepare for AGM at end of month – still have a meeting on April 22 and the AGM would be the following week on April 29th

BIRT the board schedules the next board meeting for April 8th, 2021 (12-2pm).

Moved by: Daislyn V. **Seconded by:** Hannah Y. *All in favour*

• **5.0 Conclusion**

- Add an additional Board meeting for April 8th – hopefully all of the bylaws that were meant to be covered today can be addressed and we can prepare for AGM at end of month – still have a meeting on April 22 and the AGM would be the following week on April 29th

BIRT the board schedules the next board meeting for April 8th, 2021 (12-2pm).

Moved by: Daislyn V. **Seconded by:** Hannah Y. *All in favour*

5.A - Next Meeting, April 8th, 2021, 12-2 pm

• **6.0 Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned 1:45 pm

Moved by: Hannah Y. **Seconded by:** Jensen M. *All in favour*