

General Assembly 26 March 2012 – Minutes

Graduate Students' Association

Minutes of the General Assembly [DRAFT]

March 26, 2012
Concordia University
Hall Building, H-110, 1455 de Maisonneuve O.

1 Call to order

The Assembly was called to order at 9:30am

2 Adoption of the Agenda

Chris Parent moved the Agenda.

Arwen Fleming moved that the Agenda be amended to include a point 2.1 to change the chair of the Assembly.

Vote on amendment PASSED

Nadia Hausfather moved that that the Agenda be amended to include a point at 5, "Strike Logistics", to include a motion for a strike committee to meet weekly, and a point at 7, "International Student Demands"

Jean Sebastien Senecal moved that the amendment include a point under point 5 regarding setting a budget for the committee. The amendment was friendly.

Vote on amendment PASSED

It was asked regarding point 6 why the Assembly needs to vote on dues payable to CLASSE. The VP External replied that the fee had not been specifically approved by the Assembly.

Holly Nazar moved to add the endorsement of the Minimum Agreement (see attached) to point 6.

Vote on amendment PASSED

Vote on adoption of the Agenda as amended PASSED

2.1 Change of chair

Nadia Hausfather moved to Remove the President as Chair, and proposed Gabrielle Bouchard as replacement.

Discussion followed:

Gabrielle Bouchard spoke about her style as chair. She stated that she does not use Robert's Rules. It was asked whether the use of Robert's Rules is mandated by the GSA by-laws. The chair informed the assembly that the Bylaws provide that Robert's Rules are used when Points of Order not covered by GSA by- laws. There was a discussion about whether the GA can function without the use of Robert's Rules. The Chair was asked if he wanted to continue as chair. He replied that he did. Gabrielle Bouchard stated that she can follow Robert's Rules if necessary but prefers a feminist discussion approach which is less structured and more equitable. The Chair objected and stated that Robert's Rules are used precisely because they provide structure and an equitable discussion format.

The question was called.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA appoints Gabrielle Bouchard as chair of the GA.

Vote on motion PASSED

3. Administration Communication re: Application of the Code of Rights and Responsibilities

The Assembly asked for clarification of the Administration's communication.

During the discussion that followed the following points were made and questions asked:

- is blocking classes necessary?
- a statement should be issued regarding the intimidating tone of the message
- the GSA should publicly denounce the statement in the press
- the message is intimidating, and a discussion regarding a response to the message should be held
- are there specific actions on the part of the GSA?
- it is important to state that the GSA is not violent
- there has, however, been "hard" picketing involving blocking and obstructing University activities
- the Code of Rights and Responsibilities is obscure – "obstruction" is broadly defined and penalties are vague
- should there be a motion to seek clarification of the Code?
- we cannot make broad statements about not obstructing or causing disruptions without clarification
- we should not be discussing the pros and cons of the Code
- the GSA should review and disseminate a public statement denouncing the Administration's communication

- the Administration is targeting “hard” pickets
- the Administration is serious – they will invoke the Code
- anyone who is charged should contact the GSA if any incident occurs
- any strikers who suffer harassment or violence should lay complaints using the Code
- this could be a sign of the ineffectiveness of the strike: students are still attending classes, Assemblies are poorly attended, Assembly decisions are being disregarded
- more effective strategies are needed
- it is not clear how a new GSA statement would be different from the one already publicized
- it is an opportunity for the GSA to continue to disseminate information

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GA condemn the University notice of 23 March 2012 and publicize this to Québec media, the public and the student body through the GSA executive.

Vote on motion PASSED

4 Vote on Continuing the Strike

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Graduate Students’ Association of Concordia University shall remain on strike as voted at the General Assembly of 6 March 2012;

Note: at the GSA Assembly of 19 March it was resolved that: “By Strike we mean that we will not be attending class nor submitting coursework in recognition that they are inseparable, and that to submit coursework while not attending class implies that class time is irrelevant; and that the GSA will encourage and support picket line actions for the collective and visible cessation of classes”

During the discussion that followed the following points were made and questions asked:

Q: why do graduates vote in both GSA and departmental Assemblies?

A: departments should have an opportunity to vote other than at the GSA Assembly

Q: if the GSA Assembly does not reach quorum does the strike end?

A: the original Assembly voted for an unlimited strike, so the strike will continue until the government rescinds the tuition increases or the Assembly votes to end the strike.

- if a large percentage of the student population is not implementing the strike then why bother?

Q: what if a departmental assembly votes not to strike – can GSA members continue to strike?

A: yes, GSA members are always members of the GSA, and if the GSA is on strike so are they.

- no law covers student strikes, but there is legal precedent and constitutional arguments
- the GSA membership needs clarity on the issue of departmental versus GSA votes

It was moved (mover absent in notes) that the motion be amended to include department status.

Vote on the amendment FAILED.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Graduate Students' Association of Concordia University shall remain on strike as voted at the General Assembly of 6 March 2012;

Vote on motion PASSED

5 Strike Logistics

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA calls together a strike committee with at least one representative from every department that meets at least once a week, and that a budget be provided at the discretion of the GSA Executive Committee;

It was moved (mover absent in notes) to amend the motion by adding:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the GSA Strike Committee collaborate with the interdepartmental undergrad Strike Committee.

During the discussion that followed the following points were made:

- a GSA strike committee including departmental representatives has already been formed and has already met
- in response to a suggestion to remove the amendment it was stated that the amendment is intended to guarantee the dissemination of information

Vote on amendment PASSED

Vote on motion PASSED

6 Update on CLASSE membership

During the discussion on CLASSE membership the following points were made:

- request for decision from the GA on whether to have outside picketers contribute to Strike Action
- information was provided as to CLASSE actions
- this week is a week of "economic perturbation"
- there will be a provincial protest in Sherbrooke on 2 April
- there will be a protest in Montreal on 4 April

Holly Nazar nominated Holly Nazar, Richard Hinton, Rushdia Mehreen, and Shaun (?) to be delegates to CLASSE.

Shaun (?) declined the nomination.

Giulietta (?) put herself forward.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Holly Nazar, Richard Hinton, Rushdia Mehreen, and Giulietta (?) are appointed as the GSA delegates to CLASSE.

Vote on motion PASSED

Holly Nazar moved that the General Assembly approve up to \$6000.00, at the discretion of the GSA Executive Committee, to be paid as dues to CLASSE for CLASSE membership.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GA approves up to \$6,000.00 to be paid as dues for membership in the CLASSE, subject to the discretion of the GSA Executive Committee

Vote on motion PASSED

Irmak Bahar presented the Minimum Agreement, an undertaking to abide by three points.

During the discussion on the Minimum Agreement membership the following points were made:

- discomfort with non-denunciation clause as restricting freedom of expression
- discomfort with the non-recommendation clause as being irrelevant to the GSA

It was moved (mover absent from notes) that the GSA General Assembly endorse the Minimum Agreement.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GA endorses the Minimum Agreement

Vote on motion PASSED

7 International Student Demands

Nadia Hausfather moved that a set of demands protecting the interests of international students be presented to the CLASSE Negotiating Committee.

Motion TABLED to 2 April General Assembly.

8 Adjournment

The General Assembly was Adjourned at 12:00pm.

Linda Overing
Acting Secretary