

GSA Meeting Minutes– August 20th, 2009 - 3pm @ The Trend

Present:

Lindsay Thomson – President
Andrew Farnsworth– VP Executive Affairs
Shera Birnbaum – VP Finance
Rathika Patankar– VP Student Affairs (Science)
Kathryn Hargan– ENLS Representative, Interim Science Liaison
Lynette Schick – CUPE Representative
Julia Lane – VP Student Affairs (Arts)
Allison Hayward– VP Communications

Absent with regrets:

Kaitlin Breton-Honeyman – Senator
Lisa Pollock– VP Operations

Guests:

N/A

- **H1N1 virus** pamphlet
 - Anticipating that it will hit hard around December
 - Relatively mild (the same of a regular, seasonal flu) couple of days in bed
 - Sensitive groups include young children, elderly, Aboriginal residents in northern and isolated communities, pregnant women in their third semester
 - Push hand sanitizers, stay home if feeling sick, potentially forgiveness for late assignments.
 - The flu buddy idea – you should have one – a group of three people where if one person gets sick you get their coursework for them, bring them their meals, etc.
 - Encourage profs. to post notes online so that students don't risk infecting the rest of the students by coming to class to get notes
 - Handing out thermometers to students in residents (kits – hand sanitizer, etc.) because you are supposed to stay home 24 hours after your fever is gone
 - Concern about people not handing in assignments because of H1N1 – e-mail submission might be concerned as being more widespread instead of just extensions. Or if extensions are given it should just be 3-4 days or however long the flu is supposed to last. Also concerned about labs and students missing mandatory labs.
 - Emphasize that other people can get really sick – so not to put other people at risk by coming to class sick, etc.

Shera – motion to approve last meetings minute

Andy seconded

Five approved

Two abstaining

President's Remarks (Lindsay)

- **Notes from Presidents Meeting**

- Change of date for OSAP so students can start picking it up in August
- Shera: announcement on WebCT said you have to have a 60% course load to be applicable for OSAP
 - They mean full/part time status/workload and grad. Students are at 100% even if they aren't taking courses anymore
- Talk to Erin or someone about the OSAP application because it is tailored to undergraduate students, so it is very confusing for grad students because they don't know where to put all their different sources of funding.
 - Another option would be to have Trent put out a "how to fill it out properly" form
- For event planning, if we need security try to do it as early as possible so they can plan accordingly.
- Draft of involuntary withdrawal policy – not being published on the website because not used that often and it's a sensitive issue. Generally it is used in the case of a mental illness – constant disruption in class, not dropping classes when they are failing, etc.
 - Allison: Doesn't it have to be publicly accessible? So it can be assessed and students can be aware of what the information is and how the policy is worded.
 - Allison: If it affects students, it should be available to them without it having to be by request – not the same as internal policy documents.
 - Lindsay: They've only used it once in five years
 - Shera: Students should know that something like this can happen.
 - Concern that students might be blindsided by this policy if it is not posted/accessible, it is the role of the executive to protect students from this kind of blindsiding. The executive agrees that this should be made available.
- Booking of the amphitheatre when it is done – MK seemed surprised that it wasn't going to be done until January. Not sure about booking yet – on list of rooms for booking.
 - Classes take precedent so concerned that we might not be able to get it
 - The hope is that we might be able to book one night a week
 - Not sure who will ultimately do the booking either (Deb? The regular system)
- Enrollment is up! (not sure if it is graduate enrollment or just Trent enrollment generally)

- **Notes from Registrar - hiring interviews**

- Interviews for new registrar candidates – Lindsay went to them and said that the last guy seemed best, even though they all seemed good
- Recruiting, adding courses, dropping classes, releasing scholarships, etc.
- Last registrar was fired because she was here for three years and enrollment dropped every year
- MK is working as acting registrar for the time being
- They did interviews and presentations to talk about what the registrar's office is going to look like for the next ten years
- None of the candidates were internally from Trent
- Who has final say? Not sure – everyone present filled out a form, but there is also a committee that will decide
- Announcement should be made in the next week or so.

- **Grad Studies Comm. - PhD & MSc**

- Getting a few e-mails about people wanting to sit on committees

- Send these e-mails to Andy because he has a list of all committees that are filled and need to be filled.
 - Adam Guzkowski's e-mail – he wants to be on the committee he was on last year (SSHRC Grants sub-committee) and join another committee. We might also look into getting him involved in the Symons Seminar Series (very exciting because he is an arts PhD!!)
 - Shera: When does CASC start up? September or October? (after undergrad elections)
 - Get people by talking to them at the intro week BBQ
- **NAMP** – Lynn
 - Going to Andrew
- **Social Update** (Julia and Rathika)
 - **Intramural sports** – GSA executive to facilitate grad student teams
 - Allison is going to send out an e-mail with information about each sport and information of who to contact to get signed up on a team
 - Rec. leagues are really cheap and we can help to subsidize the cost, but we won't support any of the competitive leagues
 - You are allowed to have up to two alumni on the team, but you can't have a member of a competitive team on a rec. league.
 - Some of the events are only weekends whereas others are week after week
 - Set up a budget for how much we want to spend on this – not say any number of what we are going to contribute, just let them know that it will be partially subsidized and then we can determine how the money is distributed based on popularity.
 - Allison is going to send an e-mail to the GSA exec. first with the info. about all the teams and then we can determine who is going to head up which teams (aka be the contact person for the rest of the grad. students).
 - **August BBQ**
 - Getting money from CUPE for \$250
 - CUPE is okay with us rolling over funds so both BBQs will be listed as co-sponsored by CUPE
 - Lindsay: possible to have copies of the collective agreement at the August BBQ?
 - CUPE reps. will be at the BBQ with info. and possibly also with pins
 - Decide other special treat based on what is in the grocery store – we will try freezies again (that we still have)
 - Provide selection of salads, etc. and watermelon, grapes, fruit in general. Also, we will looking into whole wheat/better buns.
 - Andy: any possible way to have music? We don't think there is an outlet but we are going to bring guitars (Andy and Julia) and possibly have a special appearance by a lab barber shop quarter (Allison).
 - We are going to have two extra events for **Intro. Week** than last year
 - We are having a meeting with Chef Daniel on Monday the 24th at 4pm in the Trend
 - Allison: Chef Daniel has a hard time understanding snack food – be very explicit what we want and possibly also buy extra chips because he likely won't provide very much/it might not be what we want.
 - Shera: provide a budget for intro. week
 - Games: decks of cards, trivial pursuit, cribbage, scrabble, twister – bring games GSA exec. bring games!
 - Exec. agreed to be available as team leaders for the scavenger hunt on Saturday during Intro. Week - Julia will send out the draft scavenger hunt list for feedback and for your information.

- A cage is being put up in the Trend so that furniture doesn't get stolen so it will only be available during the day or when it is booked
- Desire to get grad student common room/lounge on the main campus with the building of the new building
- This graduate college isn't even really our space – the Symons Seminar Series wasn't given booking priority for the Trend over an Otonabee undergraduate event.
- **Yoga for Grad Students** (Julia)
 - Financial assistance for her own compensation or for materials (yoga mats, CD player, blocks, blankets, etc.)? What would the money be for?
 - If she wants personal compensation that would have to be by donation or she could set something more formal up
 - The material costs etc. could be covered using a conference and group support bursary
 - Andy: Could we give her an honorarium? If she is doing it for free and it is a popular service amongst grad students we could potentially give her an honorarium at the end of the year (the same as we would give a speaker)
 - In terms of spaces she can use The Trend to begin with and if she needs a bigger space then it can move to Sadler House.
 - Julia is going to e-mail her and find out about money, etc.
- **Finance Stuff** - (Shera)
 - No point in moving our funds out of ING
 - In the past the endowment fund was earning 4% interest and now it is only going to be earning around 2%
 - If we were to set up an additional scholarship/bursary account and we put in \$25,000 the gov. would match whatever we put in so we would end up with \$50,000. But that is *only* if it is for scholarships that is based on academic merit.
 - An endowment fund is basically not what we are looking for, for our larger sum of savings. Suggested an expendable trust account – no interest whatsoever until account is above \$100,000. In this case the interest from the endowment fund would go into the trust account so it could be used there, since we can't take anything out of the endowment account.
 - Update on Trent internal account in the next two weeks
 - Lots of applications for conference bursaries. This semester the total amount for bursaries \$2426, so \$1213 for each faculty (arts and sciences). Put in the e-mail that applications are due on August 31st but they are actual due on Sept. 15th – will keep accepting them.
 - Science students will probably only get around \$50 of their \$250 applications, but arts students will get whatever they ask for (currently there is only one application from the arts).
 - There will be backlash from the science students for why they can't get their full amount. Shera will make a form letter to send with the checks letting students know that that they can take their checks back (with a note about what the GSA covered) or they can chose to have their application kept on file to be reassessed at the end of the year.
 - Shera set up a spreadsheet to have a record of who received conference bursaries, who needs to be reassessed, etc.
 - At the September meeting we will vote on the applications for conference bursaries from May – August.
 - Budget is currently balanced.

AOB

- Shera: WebCT prowling and found a comment about a student requesting a trip to Wonderland and/or a ski or snowboard trip.

- GSA will cover the cost of the bus and then students will cover the rest of the costs themselves (rentals, etc.)
- Allison: concern about liability
 - Need to have waivers
- Andy said he will help with it because he really wants to go
- Someone posted that we should try to have a plan that has good vision coverage and we should only sign a contract that is one year long.
 - We are covered under the TCSA and until we have larger numbers we can't support or own plan
- Shera volunteered to be the WebCT watcher because she enjoys it
- Shera: ideas about the website – housing tab on the GSA website?
 - Tell Erin and Linda to stop sending housing announcements
 - Housing listing on the website – grad students only, like Trent's but free.
- Allison: website not functioning properly, can't do anything but basic edits – can't get in touch with the person who made the website (who was paid by last year's GSA) and because a contract wasn't signed it is impossible to get in touch with him now.
 - Lindsay's boyfriend might be able to fix it for us.
 - Allison: let's not scrap the website but just make it more functional and finish it. It needs to be something that doesn't need a program or programmer to edit it.
 - Shera: section on the website to put upcoming seminars/speaker's series and another tab for upcoming thesis defenses (arts and sciences in one spot)
 - Allison: put up a calendar like Trent with dates so it can be clicked on – or ask grad studies to do it for the defenses.
 - Lindsay: links to the websites for the series with brief descriptions so that students can search for speakers and series from there
 - Allison: other speakers (not already associated with a series, etc.) will be put under our "events" section.
- Shera: does the stipend come out of the GSA account or from the Symons Seminar Series account?
Kathryn: it is going to come from the SSS account after the GSA gives the \$5,000 – easier for it to come from that account. Trent payroll will do it and deduct it from the account.
- Allison: When are we doing the elections for the open positions? When are we going to post information about the positions? What positions can people run for, when are the elections, when is the campaigning week, when do they have to apply, etc?
 - Lindsay: Sign up for a position in Intro Week, then a week of campaigning and then elections.
 - Andy is working on this
 - Allison: How do we want this stuff to be advertised? Email? Posters asking people to run in the elections?
 - Exec. agreed to have Allison make posters advertising that elections are coming up
 - Andy is going to write an e-mail to Allison on Monday to send to the grad students about open positions. This e-mail will also contain information that needs to go on the posters.
 - We are going to decide who is going to go into what seminars during Intro. Week through e-mail once Rathika and Julia send out the e-mail and we will confirm at the next meeting.
 - If we need anything to hand out during intro week we need to let Allison know before the meeting on September 2nd.

Next meeting will be Wednesday September 2nd 2009, 12 noon at the Planet Bakery

Motion to Ajourn: Rathika
Kathryn seconded
Motion passed.