

GSA Meeting Minutes– June 25, 2009, 1pm, The Crypt

Present:

Lindsay Thomson – President

Andrew Farnsworth– VP Executive Affairs

Shera Birnbaum – VP Finance

Rathika Patankar– VP Student Affairs (Science)

Allison Hayward– VP Communications

Lisa Pollock– VP Operations

Kathryn Hargan– ENLS Representative, Interim Science Liaison

Lynette Schick – CUPE Representative

Absent with regards:

Kaitlin Breton-Honeyman – Senator

Julia Lane – VP Student Affairs (Arts)

Guests:

Philip Benmore – Trail College Summer Intern 2009

1. President Update

- a. Managers meeting: Four schools (Laurier with 900, Queens with 4000, Waterloo with 1500 and Trent University with 350 graduate students) attended the President's meeting held June 24, 2009 in Waterloo, Ontario. These schools provide different services than Trent, with all three owning an on campus pub. If the Trent graduate program continues to grow in size, steps need to be taken to be on par with facilities available at fellow universities. For example, Queens University has a self-sustaining facility, with the graduate association owning the building where the pub is located, and a manager is hired to run the pub. Trent having a dual campus and smaller student enrollment adds complications to plans such as these.
 - i. Performing surveys of Trent students is an option to obtain a better idea of how the current health plan fits with student lives. Other schools in attendance at the meeting appear to have a better system in place. After one of the participating schools surveyed their students, it was found that 1/5 of the student body had children, which was previously unknown.
 - ii. The GSA equivalent at other schools consisted of 4 paid executive members and board to make the committee a similar size to Trent's GSA. All members would still have a vote, but the body implementing these ideas would be smaller.
- b. GSA Compensation - The previous GSA introduced the idea of TA forgiveness, where members of the GSA would split a Teaching Assistant position between multiple people to compensate for the time spent performing GSA duties. Doug Evans appeared to be in favour of such a move; however, nothing came of it. Another option would be a tuition reduction for the members of the GSA. A meeting with Doug Evans and the President are required to open discussions on topics such as this to see what the college is willing to offer the GSA as well as the GSA's vision for Trail College. The details of the conversion of Trail College from undergraduate to

- graduate are largely unknown. A meeting will be set up with Doug through Erin Davidson and a room in Blackburn Hall will be reserved. Tentatively the meeting will be held between July 6 and July 17, 2009, dependent on Doug's schedule.
- c. Laurier University displayed an impressive budget, with each student paying into an endowment fund (\$9), but each year the fund would pay out \$35 per student. Laurier purchased a house to have an on-campus student pub and was able to use the endowment fund to finance the mortgage of the building. There may be an option for Trent to change money from a low interest ING account (approx \$50/month) to a higher interest endowment fund. However, further research into interest rates and whether it is a fixed or non-fixed account etc. is required before a final decision can be reached. Lindsay would like to be able to drop the fee the GSA pays for microfilming and place this money into an endowment fund. Other school operations could be supported by the interest of the endowment account. To be safe, the GSA could transfer a portion of the ING fund into an endowment fund, leaving some money available for unexpected costs.
 - d. Presidents Meeting: Notes from Mary Kim
 - i. There is a potential to change the fee schedule for transcripts and registration proofs. As it currently stands, individuals pay each time a transcript is ordered. There is talk of changing this to an annual fee, which would be included with tuition. This new system should improve service, with less advance notice being required, as payment would not need to be processed. However, the cost of what this will involve needs to be further explored.
 - ii. There is also a possibility that the president's group will become CASSC. As it stands now Andrew will be involved in this and provide updates at the GSA meetings.
 - iii. Charter – Student non-academic misconduct policy
 - There are three positions available (not necessarily restricted to GSA members). The first two positions would be graduate students sitting on the panel of judges. These people would take part in determining the verdict of the individual in question. However, this position is only relevant if the student in question is of a graduate level. The other position would be one of evaluation purposes (i.e. critique the process, point out flaws in the system etc.) Andrew volunteered to be one of the judges and the evaluation person. We will need to find another student to sit as a judge.
 - iv. New Athletics Complex: Construction of the new athletic building is currently underway. There are current plans for renovations to the old building to be completed by September 2009.
2. Undergraduate intern for trail college
 - a. Phillip is responsible for the transition from Trail being an undergraduate to a graduate college. He will develop a plan for undergraduate life at Trail College in the last two years of phasing out the undergraduates on campus. His position will be for the summer term, but will likely be a member of the committee into the fall as well.
 3. VP Communications

- a. Anthropology representative: The person filling the Anthropology representative can attend meetings but does not have a vote. As the constitution currently states, program representatives must be elected through a formal vote. However, the GSA can appoint people as interim program representatives until an election is held in the fall. If only one person is interested in the position, the GSA can appoint representatives since the constitution exempts these positions from the executive.

4. VP Finance

- a. Budget Update - The new budget is based on the student numbers from last year, as the amount of financial input for this year is pending. The total amount from students was determined and the budget is based on this amount (\$28,983). However, the enrollment for this year is expected to be higher, which will result in a larger sum of money.
 - i. The major change in the budget is an increase in conference bursary allocation and a decrease in the incidentals budget. For larger items such as a printer, this would now fall under the investment purchases account instead of incidentals.
 - ii. Microfilming – According to Erin Davidson, 22 students defended recently which will cost approximately \$930 for microfilming these theses.
 - iii. Surplus and Savings – This account makes up 2.5% of the total budget, which is in accordance with the constitution. This value must remain the same.
 - iv. Conference bursary – Each year, there is a surplus in this account due to high demand and carry over from previous terms, with last year having a surplus of \$4000. We need to have a better system in place to decrease this problem. The conference bursary in the new budget has been increased to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total budget to help relieve some of this pressure. According to the constitution, the budget is split into thirds and once the bursary output meets the bursary budget, the remaining applications are pushed back into next term.
 - The largest problem is that there is not enough money for bursary students. If each student maximized the amount of money they received (\$250), we could support 10 students per semester. There are several options to try to reduce this problem.
 - Reduce the amount per bursary so that more students can take advantage of the financial aid.
 - Keep the bursary at the same amount but hold to budget cap so once the quota is filled, no further money is given out.
 - Students are only allowed to apply for 1 conference per year according to the constitution. If there is money left over, then students attending multiple conferences may be reconsidered.
 - The summer term tends to have a higher proportion of conference bursary applications, so we should hold onto all the applications until September to see about budget availability
 - Science conferences tend to be more expensive than arts conferences. However, Arts students do not have any funding in the summer and often are unable to attend conferences due to financial constraints. We could divide the bursary into a portion for science students and another portion for arts students. If at the end of the term there is money left in

the arts account, it could be allocated to science students. The GSA plans to make the conference bursary more widely known to arts students (e-mail, put up posters at Trail College etc.).

- v. Binding of thesis – The GSA will attempt to have funds allocated to cover the cost of thesis binding instead of individual students paying.
- vi. Introduction Week – The budget for social events has been rearranged slightly, with the introduction week in September budget being increased by \$200.
- vii. Organization and Conference Support – This account is established for student run organizations on campus as well as to provide financial aid for conferences being held at Trent. However, this fund is infrequently used and the availability of this fund should be better advertised.

5. VP Student Affairs

- a. The Summer BBQ held June 24, 2009 was a success with approximately 70 people in attendance. Water jugs were provided to coincide with the GSA being a water bottle free organization. However, most of the water was not consumed, as pop was the more popular choice. There will be some turnover in food for the next BBQ as there were leftover hamburgers.
- b. Introduction Week - Lindsay suggested we provide sign up sheets for graduate sport teams during the introduction week in September. Hopefully, this will increase recruitment for these events and help to introduce new students to fellow graduate students. A one-day team event could also be established during this week as a fun way to meet new students and to get students involved in recreational sports. GSA members will also attend department orientation during September in order to recruit department representatives.

6. VP Executive Affairs

- a. Constitution: A constitutional committee needs to be established and each member of the GSA must be familiar with the constitution as well as the role each member plays in the GSA.

Motion by Andy: to call special constitutional meeting

Seconded by: Lindsay

Voted: Unanimous

Meeting will take place on Tuesday July 7, 2009 at 161 Antrim Street, Peterborough (Andy's house) at 7:30pm.

- b. Minutes need to be approved from May and June GSA meetings.
- c. Freezer purchase Update – New freezers are not within our budget constraints. Andy researched Kijiji Peterborough and found a few used freezers. Shera will check into these over the weekend and hopefully purchase one.

7. CUPE Representative

- a. CUPE Ontario convention update – This meeting provided an opportunity for workers to meet others from their own sector. CUPE funded shuttle buses to this convention, resulting in a turnout of 1000 people.

- i. One topic of interest was York University contemplating implementing a fixed tuition. This would mean that both part and full time students would pay the same amount of money for tuition.
- ii. There was also talk about major programs being cut at universities. For example, McMaster University has cut the entire Women's Studies program.
- iii. Windsor city workers have been on strike for 10 weeks.
- iv. A coalition was started, with administration (OPSU) staff in communication with other groups. Faculty will also be going into bargaining this coming year. In question is justifying half a million dollar severance package to Bonnie in light of the current economic state.
- v. NPRT is functioning once again and there is a meeting coming up.
- vi. CUPE also wants to implement facilitation training, which will be free and everyone welcome. It is thought that this training will improve campus group functionality.

8. Schedule July meeting

- a. The next GSA meeting will be held Thursday, July 23, 2009 at 3 pm in the Trend at Trail College.

Motion by Shera: to conclude meeting

Second by: Rathika

Vote: unanimous

Meeting adjourned