

GSA AGM MEETING MINUTES – Wednesday October 21, 2009, 5pm at The Trend, Traill College

Present

Lindsay Thomson – President
Shera Birnbaum – VP Finance
Rathika Balthasar– VP Student Affairs (Science)
Julia Lane – VP Student Affairs (Arts)
Kaitlin Breton-Honeyman - Senator
Lynette Schick - CUPE Representative
Lisa Pollock– VP Operations
Rachel Herron - Arts Liaison
Alison McDonald - Environment Commissioner
Carling Beninger - First Year Representative
Andrew Farnsworth– VP Executive Affairs
Stephen Oni - Science Liaison

Absent

Kelly Woodley - Human Rights Commissioner

1. VP Finance

- a. Overview of budget: Out of tuition fees, full time students pay \$27 and part time students \$11 to levy fees. College fees go to Traill College. These levy fee payments are made in 3 installments; September, January and June. The working budget for the year takes the average number of students over the 3 semesters in order to calculate the levy fee amount. There are 350 full time and 61 part time graduate students. The total working budget is approximately \$30,000, which gets split into 2 budgets, one for college fees and the other for levy fees as required by the constitution. It is a ‘working budget’ as the number of students may vary but the % of each budget remains the same.
 - i. Investment purchases are long-term investments. For example, last year the GSA purchased a printer and this year we bought a small freezer.
 - ii. Media accounts for advertising, printing costs associated with the GSA.
 - iii. Incidentals are daily GSA operating costs (i.e. stamps).
 - iv. In previous years there was an overdraft, which we are attempting to avoid this year.
 - v. According to the constitution, GSA executives receive \$100 each at the end of their term, totaling \$1300. There is a little extra money in this budget for hard working representatives and volunteers.
 - vi. Microfilming – Graduate students entered into an agreement to absorb the costs of microfilming theses due to the incoming levy fees the GSA receives. It costs \$44.06 per student and we calculated the budget for 90 students this year to defend their thesis. Currently, we have paid for 21 graduate students who defended by August 31, 2009.
 - vii. The total levy fee budget was increased this year due to the remaining money being added to it since it was unclear as to where this money belonged.

- viii. The GSA is allowed to move \$1000 between budgets without prior approval from the general assembly.
 - ix. The College fee budget includes all big-ticket items. The Symons speakers budget is \$5000/year, covering the hosting costs of the gala (speaker stipend, food/refreshments). There is \$5000 set aside for conference/group support. This includes graduate student teams entry fees for intramural sports and is new this year. This fund is highly under used.
 - x. The Surplus/Savings budget is required to account for 4.7% of college fee budget and 2.5% of the total operating budget must be allocated to this according to constitution.
- b. The conference bursary is to support graduate students after attending a conference, meeting or workshop. The money can be put towards entry fees, accommodation and travel expenses. Original receipts are required with the application. The applicant must also justify the relevance the conference has to their thesis. The conference bursary budget is divided equally between the 3 semesters (as stated in the constitution). Last year the GSA gave each applicant the full amount requested and as a result, went into deficit. The budget is divided equally between science and arts graduate students. The summer semester had 26 science student applications and 2 arts applications. The arts students that applied for the conference bursaries received up to \$250 and then the remaining money was given to science students. If after this, any money left over will be moved over to next semester. Students are only allowed to submit one application per year (May-April) and can request up to \$250 maximum in support. The conference bursary committee then takes the total amount of the conference bursary budget and divides it equally among applicants.
- i. Q: Could money from under used budgets be moved into the conference fees?
A: If there is money left over, it will be used for conference help.
 - ii. A clarification of the definition of a ‘meeting’ was suggested. For the meeting to qualify for conference bursary assistance, it must be a meeting of minds and not a one on one meeting with your advisor. It has to be multiple students coming together to share knowledge.
 - iii. Q: If a conference costs below \$250, can a student apply again?
A: If there is money left over at the end of the semester after funding all applicants, a second conference may be applied for.
 - iv. Fieldwork for arts graduate students are not supported by their advisors, so the money comes out of the student’s own pocket. As a result, conferences are not financially feasible after the expense of thesis work.
 - v. The conference bursary should define what is available for arts students, and have a different definition for science students because fieldwork for the sciences is different than that of the arts and supported by advisor. It should be made more available for arts students so can afford thesis work. The GSA will work on this for the spring AGM to become active May 2010.
 - vi. The conference bursary application can be found on the GSA website.

2. VP Student Affairs

- a. Highlight of events:

- i. During the summer semester, the GSA held monthly BBQs for graduate students, which were successful.
- ii. Intro week for incoming graduate students included a few pub nights, a scavenger hunt throughout Peterborough and a BBQ.
- iii. The October social event was bowling which had a good turnout.
- iv. The social event for November will be at the Peterborough Art Gallery. There is a featured artist giving a lecture and his collection is called Hunter-gatherer. It will be November 26 starting at 6pm. The event is completely free for graduate students.
- v. Festivus will be held December 12 at the Gordon Best Theater. There will be free food and hopefully live music. The GSA is looking for a band/DJ to play at the event for free. The cost of admission is a canned good.
- vi. The January social event will be a Peterborough Pete's hockey game.

3. President

- a. The Non Academic Misconduct Policy (NAMP) came into affect in September. This policy covers situations where a student harms another student in a non-academic way (i.e. impede their ability to go to school). There are 2 graduate students going through the training in order to sit on the NAMP panel. The GSA has issues with the policy and hopefully by the end of the year, these will be changed.
- b. Swine flu – If students are absent from class, doctor notes are not required. Lindsay receives regular updates on the flu situation. There have been 7 cases reported in residence at Trent but that it did not spread.
- c. Senate – Currently, there is no policy concerning intellectual property.
 - i. Supervisor leave – There needs to be regulations on deadlines for getting feedback on thesis chapters etc. One idea is if a professor is on leave, then they are not allowed to be on a graduate students committee.
 - ii. We are attempting to get another seat in senate for graduate students. Undergraduates have 12 seats and Trill College holds 2 seats. However, it is unclear about who gets those since no undergraduates are at Trill anymore. Hopefully, we can obtain one of the seats for graduate students.
- d. CUPE is holding its AGM on November 4 at 7-10pm at Sadler House.
- e. The Symons Seminar Series is also being held Nov 4 at 7pm at the Trend Trill College.

4. CUPE Representative

- a. CUPE fund – Each CUPE member is eligible for \$200 for professional development fees. There is \$15,000 fund for professional development. International students pay UHIP, which has a much higher rate than that Canadian health care (OHIP). International students should not pay a higher amount, so tentatively, the fund will be used to credit these students \$200. The remainder of the money will be applied to professional development. A suggestion of having the deadline for CUPE applications a few weeks after the GSA application process was brought up. Another option would be if a student attends more than one conference per year, the GSA bursary fund would cover the cost of one conference and the CUPE fund could possibly cover the second conference expenses. CUPE could also have lower limitations than the GSA fund to be more applicable to arts students. If the GSA cannot cover it, the application could be forwarded to CUPE.

5. Senator

- a. Revision of Trent – A workshop with graduate students will be held in order to come up with a new vision statement for Trent. The president is pushing for fast progress so the workshop may be held in November. If students have suggestions for the vision, they can take part in the workshop.

6. President

- a. The Dean of graduate studies is reaching the end of his term. There are 2 graduate student positions on the selection committee, so if students are interested in sitting on this committee, let Lindsay know.
- b. There have been a few concerns about The Trend in terms of the way the space works (i.e. closing the space at 4pm).
- c. Website – Currently the GSA website is difficult to update. The format is code based so it is not user friendly. It is being changed over into Wordpress. Hopefully this change will allow more frequent updates, as each executive will be able to update their own section.
- d. A meeting with the health and benefits representative is taking place soon. Currently, graduate students are covered under the TSCA plan. Graduate students should have a different plan but the problem is that our numbers are so small that a bigger plan would be too expensive. Therefore, changing the plan is not a viable option right now.
 - i. Q: Are benefits for part time graduate students not covered?
 - ii. A: They have an opt in plan for undergraduates. This issue will be brought up with the representative. Graduate students are the largest burden on the health plan. Last year the GSA asked about benefits and TSC didn't think they should cover graduate students. Currently, graduate students have a good deal since we are not paying administration fees as the TSCA covers these costs for graduate students.

7. VP Executive Affairs

- a. Elections were held in the spring for electing the current GSA. However, one position did not get filled since Allison retired from GSA (no VP Communications). As the constitution states that if elections have passed, then the GSA can elect someone if there are no objections. The GSA raised the possibility of instating John Franey as the new VP Communications. No objections were raised during the AGM and the general assembly will be given three days to raise any concerns by e-mail. If no objections occur, John Franey will assume the role of VP Communications.
- b. Constitutional changes – There is a committee which look over the constitution and all the changes reflect policies voted on in last years meeting. Therefore, the only changes this year are things already approved, so no vote is required.
 - i. Program representatives used to be member of GSA executives. The referendum questions from last year's vote reflected this change but it is not in the constitutional changes. In addition, the constitution states the conference bursary being valued at \$400 instead of \$250 even though it was changed last year.

Quorum was not obtained, so the budget vote will be on webCT.

Meeting Adjourned