

GSA MEETING MINUTES – January 18, 2010 – The Crypt 6pm

Present

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

Absent with regards

Shera Birnbaum – VP Finance

Absent without regards

Kelly Woodley – Human Rights Commissioner

1. VP Student Affairs

- a. Haiti fundraising – A recent meeting, which Rathika Balthasar attended, addressed how Trent University students are raising money for the Haiti earthquake disaster. Various student organizations were present, with approximately 30 people discussing donation amounts and which organizations would be better to donate to. Currently TICK is doing the most but are still trying to decide which specific organization to contribute to. They appear to be leaning towards the Red Cross, as the government will match the amount raised. TACS (Trent African and Caribbean Society) is hosting an open mic night at the Spill and the money collected will go to Haiti. They will also be accepting food and clothing but they are unsure of where to take it (i.e. Salvation Army). The Trent international student association needs volunteers. A professor from international development informed the attendees that CETA would match any donation to specific organizations. The primary purpose of this meeting was to inform students of what fundraising events are occurring and how individuals can get involved. Trent Spirituality association assembled meal packages that were sent to Haiti and there are plans for volunteers to produce additional food packages for Haiti. This food will be sent by boat, as there are many delays at the airport in Haiti.
- b. Graduate students will be given the option of donating through the GSA to either a large organization such as the Red Cross or through a grassroots option where medical supplies will be purchased and brought to Haiti by a Doctor (Dr. Yates) who has worked in Haiti for over 20 years. The GSA will collect money for Dr. Yates in coin jars located at Traill and the main campus (Linda's office, the crypt, seasoned

spoon, The Trend) where students can drop off donations. There will be a WebCT vote for using a portion of the GSA budget to donate to Haiti.

2. CUPE Representative

- a. The Professional Development and Employee Assistant Fund (PDEA) is almost complete but not yet approved. There will be a re-imbusement of \$200 for conferences (only for full time GTAs). All international students are eligible for a \$200 refund as long as UHIP is paid each year. The first deadline for the PDEA application will be March 15, 2010 and will cover relevant expenses incurred since September 2009. The regular deadlines for this fund will be March 15, July 15 and November 15 each year. The GSA deadlines are the 15th of September, January and May, so we could develop a system where applicants not receiving the full amount requested from the GSA could be passed onto CUPE's PDEA process. The PDEA could split funding into 40%, 40% and 20% due to higher demand during school year.

3. Senator

- a. There is currently an unclaimed student seat on Senate belonging to Traill College. We proposed that if Traill was unable to fill both of its seats (as is currently the case), the GSA could fill 1 vacant seat. If this is the case again next year, graduate students would have 2 seats on Senate. There will no longer be undergraduates whose college affiliation is Traill beginning in September 2011, so a decision has to be made about how Traill's seats will be allocated thereafter. The person holding a seat should be an elected member of the GSA (executive) but we are hesitant to make this a requirement of any of the current executive positions as each already has other time consuming responsibilities.
- b. A new subcommittee is being formed to set up a policy to address late tuition payments. Shera has volunteered to be on this committee.
- c. The vision committee is releasing a bridging document with several possible vision statements followed by descriptions of each. They are hoping this will stimulate campus discussion and a consensus on Trent's vision statement. There will be an opportunity to give feedback on Tues/Wed as well as online.
- d. The Student Concerns Subcommittee is meeting this Thursday morning to finalize the reported concerns and to make recommendations on the student handbook. Their report will be circulated around the GSA and the goal is for it to be ready for the next graduate studies meeting.
- e. Currently there are no drop dates for graduate courses. The GSC is forming another committee to discuss potential drop dates and to determine whether grades below 70% constitute failing out of a program. Another concern is who can supervise graduate students. Previously in the Environmental and Life Sciences Graduate Programs (ENLS) an adjunct professor or community member (such as an employee of the MNR) could be the sole advisor to a student. Now they need to be a co-supervisor with another Trent faculty member in order to better protect students. Requirements for the granting of emeritus supervisory status will also be addressed and formalized.
- f. In current graduate programs that need directors in the coming year, the assignment of new directors has been delayed as there is currently some questions about for the funding for those positions and there is some concern that if someone was hired they might not be paid.

- g. A large endowment for graduate studies is currently used for entrance scholarships. There was some discussion of other possible uses of this endowment fund. One suggestion was that it could be used to decrease the amount of funding Trent takes away from scholarship holders. Some of the other universities wave tuition for students holding major scholarships.
- 4. Conference and Group Support
 - a. There are currently four applications for GSA Conference and Group Support funding: Synchronized swimming, the Arthur, TUNA and the Seasoned spoon.

Motion to adjourn: Rathika

Seconded by: Allison

Meeting adjourned