

GSA MEETING AGENDA – Monday November 2, 2009

Present

Lindsay Thomson – President
Andrew Farnsworth – VP Executive Affairs
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
Stephen Oni – Science Liaison
Alison McDonald – Environment Commissioner
John Franey – VP Communications

Absent with regards

Rachel Herron - Arts Liaison
Carling Beninger - First Year Representative

Absent without regards

Kelly Woodley – Human Rights Commissioner

1. Approve minutes from Oct 18 meeting and the AGM

Motion by Shera: to approve Oct 18 minutes

Motion seconded by: Rathika

Voted: 6 voted, 4 abstained

Minutes approved

Motion by Shera: to approve AGM minutes

Seconded by: Julia

Voted: 5 voted, 4 abstained

Minutes approved

2. Off the record discussion - The GSA was informed of several concerns of students regarding supervisor responsibilities and time to completion. As a result, the GSA formed a sub committee to hear those concerns and take them to the graduate studies committee.

3. President

a. Emergency planning committee meeting – There is a sub-committee consisting mostly of VPs, Dean of research etc which deals with large-scale emergencies. They are responsible for making all of the decisions and the fire response and police are tied in with this committee. There are two areas on campus that are designated as emergency response areas: one being the disabilities computer lab and the other the DNA lab. The stand the committee has on the pandemic threat is that the last resort would be to close to university. If the caretaker staff were all to fall ill, this would place a major strain on the universities daily routine.

b. Health Plan – A clarification is needed in regards to whether the student affairs

representatives are responsible for health related concerns or if it is only the health committee. According to the constitution, the VP student affairs representatives should have a working knowledge of health related issues (i.e. TSCA health/dental plan). Therefore, the student affairs representatives should sit on the Health and Counseling Services and the Wellness Sub-Committee and be involved in any discussions regarding the health benefits plan for graduate students. Lindsay met with the health benefits person at Trent. Currently, graduate students are covered under the TSCA (undergraduate) health plan. There are approximately 400 graduate students (430 with part times) with some students opting out of the health plan, resulting in a low number of students. The Bachelor of Education students have a similar plan and if they were to be removed from the TSCA and join the GSA, it would make the student body larger and it may be more feasible to obtain a reasonably priced health plan. The Bachelor of Education students pay \$27, which is similar to ours and would give us a budget double to what we now have. Other health benefits organizations have been looked at who cover full and part time students. We could also get a more customized plan, with each individual student being able to concentrate the allotted money into certain areas (i.e. eyewear, prescriptions etc). Under the TSCA plan, extra fees are covered which graduate students do not have to pay. If the GSA wants a new health plan for next September, we need to start shopping around now. We need to gather opt out numbers so we have an idea of the number of students needing the plan and as a result can price out plans based on these numbers. A sub-committee will be formed and chaired by Lindsay, with Julia and Andy sitting on it.

4. Environment Commissioner

- a. Money for Environmental Project - Allison is partnering up with the Seasoned Spoon and they propose to build a sustainable root cellar on campus where greater quantities of local produce/food can be stored. It will teach students sustainability practices.

5. VP Student Affairs

- a. Chef Daniel and Deb Nichols meeting – An issue brought to Chef Daniel’s attention was the raise in the price of beer from \$5 to \$ 5.75. At GSA events, the price of beer will return to \$5/beer. The overhead costs of running the Trend/Sunrise Café are large and not enough business is resulting in price increases. Another issue is the accessibility of the space to student outside business hours. The space will not be open while the Sunrise Café is closed due to misuse of the space during the summer semester. They are also looking into installing a sound system so live music can be an option. There are alternative places, which students can work in such as the meeting room on the second floor with smart boards and the junior common room in Scott’s house. The seminar rooms and the Senior Common Room in Scott house can be booked through Deb Nichols: dnichols@trentu.ca and the Junior Common room in Scott house is open whenever the building is open. The GSA should send out an e-mail to students informing them of other workspaces at Traill campus. A third issue is the lack of light control in the Trend. The lights cannot be dimmed, and if events require entertainment these conditions are not ideal. Since the Trend is an older building, the process to install dimmers is considerable and if this space begins making money, they might be more willing to spend the money to improve it. The Trend/Sunrise Café will be open Monday to Friday 8:30 – 4pm and Thursdays from 7 – 10:30 pm for pub nights. Chef Daniel is concerned with the lack of business.

Weekly lunch specials offered by Sunrise Café were discussed and the GSA will advertise his menu to graduate students. Also, Doug pushed for pub nights to be held on Thursdays at the Trend, but they are not well attended as students are unaware they are occurring so advertising will hopefully help this problem. There will be a holiday pub night December 3 at the Trend through the GSA. Since this is a new event, it was not in the current budget. As a result, we can apply to graduate studies for funding.

6. Senator

- a. Vision Trent – There are multiple ways to participate in the re-visioning of Trent. Students interested can visit the integrated planning website to find out about workshops. There will also be a workshop more focused on graduate students Nov 24 from 9-12pm (tentative date).

7. CUPE Representative

- a. The CUPE AGM has been rescheduled for Nov 11 at 7pm in Sadler House due to the conflict with the Symons Series.

Motion by: Shera to end meeting

Seconded by: John

Meeting adjourned