

GSA Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2009, 4pm, The Crypt

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)

Kathryn Hargan– ENLS Representative, Interim Science Liaison

Lynette Schick – CUPE Representative

Kaitlin Breton-Honeyman – Senator

Lisa Pollock– VP Operations

1. Senator

- a. Graduate Studies Committee – There are currently 433 graduate students at Trent University. This number is predicted to decrease once students defend. There is funding for 190.9 full time Masters students and 67.7 PhD students. However, there are currently 195 Masters students and 63.4 PhD students that are eligible for funding.
 - i. A new process for evaluating university programs will be mandatory. Previously, an external review of programs was only required, but now both an internal and external review will be required. All universities will look at both undergraduate and graduate studies to assess the quality of the programs. Allison (PhD representative) and Kaitlin (Masters representative) are members of a review board for structuring graduate studies at Trent.
- b. The priorities and objectives of the meeting were:
 - i. Intellectual property – A policy will be established for graduate defenses and for determining what information is public versus private. Previously, these issues were discussed between graduate students and their advisors only. They want to establish a university wide policy so there is consistency between schools. There is also no current policy on who can be on a graduate students committee.
 - ii. Quality of thesis – Currently, a thesis is assessed by the student and advisor. The committee wants to develop a policy that will take some of the power away from the advisor and give more to the university.
 - iii. Graduate supervisor responsibility – There is a plan to make a policy outlining the responsibilities of the advisors of graduate students in regards to timelines of returning things to students etc.

2. VP Executive Affairs

- a. Elections – Election week is September 21-26, 2009. Voting takes place on WebCT and has a similar format to last years vote. Since there are 450 graduate students, we need 45 students to vote for quorum. The position of VP Communications still needs to be filled due to Allison's resignation. If this position is not filled by the fall AGM, another vote can occur at this time.
- b. Program representatives – There are a few program representative positions on the GSA that need to be filled, including Indigenous PhD, Modeling, Material Sciences

and Trent-Queens PhD. There are also 5 committees that need spots filled, including academic planning, research policy, CUPE awards and 2 committees that no longer exist.

3. VP Student Affairs (Arts)

- a. Chef Daniel has many great ideas for events to be held at the Trend, Traill College. Doug Evans has suggested pub nights to be held every Thursday night at the Trend and wants the GSA to be involved in these. Chef Daniel suggested a Thanksgiving dinner, Oktoberfest, and salsa dancing throughout the year. However, there are too many demands on the GSA with regards to time and funding. It would be feasible for the GSA to advertise these events but not hosting them. Doug Evans has a budget for Traill College and could use this to provide food and supplies for these events
- b. Betty the caretaker provided fudge for all of the summer BBQs. To recognize her contribution, a \$20-\$25 gift certificate will be purchased.
- c. Book Sale – The book sale will be held Wednesday September 23, 2009 from 4-6pm at the Trend, Traill College. We need to plug the book sale in order to get a reasonable turnout. Chef Daniel should be contacted to see if he is willing to remain open during the book sale. Providing the option of purchasing food/drinks may draw a larger crowd.
- d. Fall AGM – This meeting will take place at the Trend, Wednesday October 21, 2009 at 5pm. The GSA will ask Chef Daniel to remain open and have Sunrise Café cater the event.
- e. Festivus this year will be held at the Gordon Best Theater on Saturday December 12, 2009 (doors open at 9pm). Last year the cost of food was between \$200-300 and this year will probably have a similar budget. To rent the space is \$400 and the total budget for Festivus is \$800 (includes food, decorations, rent, honourium). However, entertainment is still required for this event. Once someone interested in providing their band/DJ skills is chosen, they should contact the Gordon Best Theater directly in order to get details pertaining to equipment needs etc.
- f. An October GSA event is required. Last year the GSA organized a bowling night, which again has been requested by current graduate students. Another idea suggested was a ski trip, however, this would likely occur later in the year. Wildrock (downtown Peterborough) provides buses to ski resorts in close proximity to Peterborough. It may be possible for the GSA to go on one of these and invite graduate students to come along. The January social event will be a Peterborough Pete's game. We are looking into booking the skybox but if this falls through then we will get tickets for within the restaurant as in previous years.
- g. Intro week was a large success and came in under budget.
- h. The University of Toronto letter and reply regarding fees for usage is attached to the minutes. U of T is insisting that students from other universities who want to go to the library are required to pay \$200/year to check out books. There seems to be a lot of pressure from other schools as well regarding this issue so we will keep you up to date.

4. VP Finance

- a. The Conference bursary budget for this year is \$7278 (or \$2426/semester). Half of this budget is allotted to arts students and the other half to science students. Currently,

2 arts students and 25 science students have submitted applications for a bursary. Even if the extra money was transferred to science students, the budget does not cover the \$250 cap. The average amount graduate students requested were between \$240 and \$260. With the current budget, each science student would be allotted \$83.89, which is 33% of what they requested. One option to deal with this is to boost each reimbursement to \$100 and use some of next years budget to cover the difference. Each of the 2 arts students will get the full \$250 value.

A sub-committee is required to approve conference bursary applications. VP Operations (Lisa) is the chair of the committee with members Shera, Rathika and Lynette.

Motion by Andy: to approve funds received for each person that applied for a conference bursary application (see attached spreadsheet)

Seconded by: Lisa

Voted: 6 in favour, 2 abstained

5. President

- a. Presidents meeting – There is a call for candidates to fill the new dean of graduate studies. There will be a committee who hires the new dean and it will come through senate.
- b. Mandatory training program – All GSA members must attend one of the sessions offered through the Service First Student Staff - Student Leader Training Program. The program comes into effect in January 2010 and will be in effect nationally in the next three years.
- c. A new lecture hall at Trail College has potential for GSA events. Trail knows that the GSA is interested in having access to this venue.
- d. The contract Trent has with Aramark is due in 2011. A major problem in the past is that it has not been developed early enough. It requires student input and it is important to include specifics in the proposal so each party is clear on responsibilities and restrictions. This contract will come through CASSC as it supports a focus group, which puts together the proposal for the contract.
- e. Students from the history department are looking for funding to attend a conference in Cuba. They are having problems finding funding. As a result, they contacted the GSA in the hopes of financial assistance. Our budget for conferences/group support is \$5000. The GSA will determine what we could realistically offer in support after examining what is left from the bursary budget (after paying this semesters conference bursaries). We will meet with the history department to determine the number of students requiring funding and the total cost of the conference.
- f. The one-day softball tournament this past Saturday was not well attended. Only 5 graduate students showed up out of 14, but still managed to come in 3rd out of 4 teams.

Motion by Andy: to conclude meeting

Second by: Shera

Vote: unanimous

Meeting adjourned