

MINUTES of Trent Graduate Students' Association Board Meeting

Meeting Date: February 13, 2014

Call to order: A board meeting of the Trent Graduate Students' Association was held at the Senior Common Room of Trill College on February 13, 2014. The meeting convened at 10:00 AM, President Karen Everett presiding.

Location: Senior Common Room

Members participating:

Karen Everett (President)

Jason Rae (VP Internal Affairs)

Gozde Kilic (VP Operations)

Veronica Lai (VP Student Affairs)

Kaitlyn Watson (Senate Representative)

Philip Abbott (Health Benefits Coordinator)

Steven Martin (CUPE Representative)

Allen Priest (Environmental Commissioner)

Adam Marques (Equity Commissioner)

Erin McMorrow (History Representative-M.A)

Stephanie Dotto (Canadian Studies Representative-PhD)

Latchmi Raghunanan (International Representative)

Gary Larsen (Theory, Culture, and Politics Representative-MA)

Michael Tessier (Materials Science Representative-MSc)

Maureen Elliott (Sustainability Studies-MA)

Raymond McKie (First Year Science Representative)

Tayo Aloh (English-Public Texts-MA)

Ben Perry (TCSA President)

Kelvin (Sustainable Trent)

Regrets: Jenilee Gobin (VP Finance), Theresa Stotesbury (Materials Science Representative-PhD), Rathika Balthasar (Environmental and Life Sciences Representative-PhD), Jesse Lever (Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies Representative-MA), Michelle McCay (Environmental and Life Sciences Representative-MSc), Philip Cook (Anthropology Representative), Kyle Kenniphaas (Psychology Representative-MA/MSc)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 16TH, 2013

- MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 16TH, 2013
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA
- ITEM ADDED TO THE OTHER BUSINESS: 1) EMERGENCY DONATIONS
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

1. Discussion of the Student Center (with the participation of Ben Perry, TCSA President)

- Last year TCSA members voted for the project while the TGSA members did not support it.
- Ben wants us to reconsider our position by putting another question in the ballot.
- Some basic info: \$14 million worth building; in 2015 construction will start. There will be a student lounge, a lecture hall, a wellness center, and service options (a convenient store) etc. Location: between Bata library and Athletics Center taking up the parking space.
- It will be autonomous from the university—as the university did not promise any money. It will solely be for and funded by students—students organizations such as TCSA (and GSA and other groups).
- Grad students need more information to understand its benefits for them: Why should we pay for this? We will get a certain percentage of space (215 sq ft) according to how much we donate—we can use it for a graduate student lounge.

2. Discussion of the Fossil Fuel Divestment (with the participation of a member from Sustainable Trent)

- Sustainable Trent is proposing that Trent University divests from the fossil fuel industry within 5 year.
- Why divestment? Because of the effect of the fossil fuel companies on the climate change; their violation of indigenous and human rights, extraction and refining processes, and corruption of democracy.
- Main goal: stigmatize fossil industry and thus reduce their political influence.
- They also acknowledge the long term risk of divestment on endowment and pension funds.
- Trent University has a reputation for being environmentally conscious—has the opportunity to position itself as the first Canadian university to divest.
- So far: 76% of students demonstrated their support; online petition has garnered over 500 signatures.
- They are looking for if GSA would be willing to support by endorsement.
Question: how many people voted in the referendum? 900 students
Question: Would you have future expectations from GSA for involvement? No
Question: How do you define fossil fuels? Top 200 companies with the most carbon emission

Question: What would be its economic impact be on Trent?

Discussion:

Fossil Fuel Divestment:

- We should consider having a referendum.
- We should also consider its ramifications in terms of grad studies. They do not seem to have considered this aspect enough.
- We should put up information on our website about its pros and cons.
- MOTION TO PUT UP MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTING THE PROS AND CONS OF THE PROPOSAL AND REVISIT THIS NEXT MONTH.
 - MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED
- Latchmi, Jason, and Allen will work together on collecting information about this. Latchmi can look into alternative avenues while Jason and Allen can try to find more information in addition to or in support of their proposal.

Student Center:

- 215 sq ft is too small.
- Gary: referendum should be conditional: like we get the vacant space in the Champlain. Administration is thinking about moving there, but if we voted conditionally, then it would be for guaranteed space. We could also have other demands.
- Would having the GSA office in the other campus be beneficial for students spending most of their time at the Traill College?
- MOTION TO HAVE A REFERENDUM AT THE AGM ABOUT THE STUDENT CENTER.
 - MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED
- We should discuss with members about what they would want to use the space for. Gary will work on it.

REPORTS

3. Board of Governors Lunch

Karen went to Board of Governors Lunch last week. Her general message was based on the SMA, concerns about budget cuts, the value of grad students, and possibility of program prioritization.

She emphasized that student funding and GTA stipends should not be cut, and talked about how that would negatively affect research and teaching environment at Trent.

4. PVP (President-Vice President) Meeting

- Reiterated the same message on Tuesday with the President and Vice President.

- Budget cuts: instead of 3-5%, 1-2%
 - TA spots will remain but are based on enrollments on the undergrad level.
 - Most vulnerable: TA funding and scholarship; unequally funded students are likely—and necessary for the university to grow.
 - Drafting a new SMA, emphasizing the strengths (the ENLS and Canadian-Indigenous Studies programs).
 - Jenilee is proposing to approach TUFA (Trent University Faculty Association) for support.
- **MOTION TO APPROACH TUFA TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL CHANGES TO GRADUATE STUDIES AT TRENT AND REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A STRONG GRADUATE PROGRAM.**
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**
- Allocations of grad students and research are based on the research output—but the university doesn't even have a system to track it. We should think about creating a platform as a way to track student research and publications.

5. SMA (Strategic Mandate Agreement)

We submitted the SMA in December. Paul G. (government contractor to negotiate the SMA) provided feedback on it: we need to strengthen our section on job and innovation and find new metrics to add to the SMA.

A new SMA will be drafted and submitted in 3 years. In the new SMA, grad studies will be more prominent because if it's not mentioned or omitted, there is a risk that the government can remove the grad studies from Trent.

The SMA is going to dictate some programs and predict new programs.

6. Health Benefits Update

Proposals coming in on the 14th of February, expecting about 5.

We need at least one other person to help review the proposals, discuss pros/cons and rank them. Allen, Veronica, and Gary agreed to sit on the committee. Karen will be in touch about the proposals.

7. Long Term Planning Committee

- Karen, Sean, and Stephanie met with Doug as representatives of the GSA/Long Term Planning C.
- Discussed issues of potential cuts to grad studies, funding to grad students, the place of grad studies at Trent, and general issues surrounding treatment of and respect for grad students.
- Their questions to Doug were:

- a) Have cuts to grad studies been implemented? Yes, but because of a one-time allocation from the province, the budget actually went up a little this year.
- b) Are cuts likely to be implemented next year? Cuts next year might affect GTAs—in that case, GTAs would be cut and grad students be hired back at a lesser rate. Students might work in the same job for different rates. GTAs would only be cut where faculty members would be prepared to make up the difference, and this would push some of the pain back on the line deans (Deans of Humanities/Social Sciences/Sciences).
- c) Can you work with the senior administration to avoid cutting grad student support? No answer
- d) Can you work with the registrar and senior administration to cut or reduce transcript fees for current grad students making external scholarship applications? He will be looking into it.
- e) Can you make a guarantee that students past their funding will only have to pay tuition in the amount of their final year of funded study? Students in both science and humanities should try their best to finish in 4 years and not past their funding.
- f) Can you make an effort to see the communications coming out of the grad studies office are more respectful in tone, understanding that students often come to the grad studies office in a vulnerable position? He will raise it at a department meeting and everyone can reflect on it more generally.

- MOTION TO CARRY OUT A SURVEY ON GRAD STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNICATIONS FROM GRAD STUDIES AS WELL AS THE TGSA

- MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED

- *Stephanie/LTPC will format the questions.

8. RA Info Committee

They are planning on using the summer to disperse and collect information.

They would like to have a presentation at the AGM to explain the members what they're doing.

- MOTION TO ALLOW THE RA INFO COMMITTEE TO SPEAK FOR A FEW MINUTES AT THE AGM.

- MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED

OLD BUSINESS

9. Results from the Equity and Accessibility Survey

2 people got prizes

80 responses in total but some are incomplete

Negative responses: health equity, housing equity, academic equity, and information equity.

Disability was pretty positive.

Will get back with more summaries of the results

10. Professional Development Workshops

Doug put Karen in contact with a certified coach about the professional development workshops. She suggested having a whole day or a half day event on Saturday on how to raise self-awareness and how to be confident about decisions we make.

We will need 20-25 people in guaranteed attendance for the event to happen.

- MOTION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE DAY LONG OR HALF DAY LONG WORKSHOP ON ISSUES ABOUT RAISING SELF-AWARENESS LED BY THE CAREER COACH

- **MOTION SECONDED**

Discussion: It is on Saturday; either on March 29th or April 5th. Not many would come on a Saturday for the whole day—we cannot guarantee 20 attendees.

- **MOTION OPPOSED**

Academic Skills/Career Center Workshops: a) Life After Trent, b) Late Night Against Procrastination. Good times for you/grad students to attend the events and ideas/topics to include—send an email to Karen.

NEW BUSINESS

11. Conference Bursaries (15 Sept-15 Jan)

22 valid applications; 5 are ineligible because they received bursaries previously

No late applications

Eligible claims: \$5,200.10 with a budget of \$4000

We will be refunding everyone 77% of what they requested

Some of the applicants are TGSA board and exec members—the ones who submitted applications should abstain from voting.

- MOTION TO REIMBURSE 22 CONFERENCE BURSARY APPLICANTS 77% OF FUNDING REQUESTED FOR A TOTAL OF \$4,000.

- **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

12. Conference and Group Support-1

Stephanie submitted an application for funding on behalf of the Frost Center for a Peterborough Petes event. They will be receiving funding from the Frost Center, but have requested \$200 from the GSA to put towards the cost of tickets.

- MOTION TO APPROVE THE FROST CENTER'S CONFERENCE AND GROUP SUPPORT APPLICATION AND PROVIDE FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$200

- **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

13. Conference and Group Support-2

A student emailed on behalf of his competitive volleyball team requesting support. We supported them in the Fall. However, even though we communicated to them clearly then that in order for us to fund their team, they needed to supply us with the team information before the registration deadline and not request funding after registering the team themselves, they repeated the same mistake. Because we've already made an exception, Jenilee's recommendation is to decline their request for funding.

- MOTION TO DECLINE THE REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF TEAM FEES FOR THE COMPETITIVE INTRAMURAL VOLLEYBALL TEAM GLOBAL WARNING
 - **TABLED UNTIL NEXT MONTH** (NEED FOR INFORMATION)

14. Budget Approval for March Event: Skating

Early March—we didn't pick a place yet. Serving hot chocolate and chilli.

- MOTION TO SPEND \$300 FOR THE SKATING EVENT IN MARCH
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

15. Budget Approval for March Event: Meet and Greet

At the end of March, we will organize an event for the interested candidates to come and meet with the people who are currently holding positions one-on-one

Sometime during afternoon, either in the Senior Common Room or the Trend

- MOTION TO SPEND \$200 FOR THE MEET AND GREET IN MARCH
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

16. Call for Bylaw Updates

Jason is revising the bylaws. If anyone has any suggestions, let him know.

The changes to the bylaws will be discussed as a group on March 1st.

17. Recruiting for Exec Positions

We're recruiting exec positions. Program reps, disseminate the information to the student body, and let them know that if they want more info, they can contact us individually.

We have to fill the President, VP Finance, and VP Operations positions for the TGSA to continue functioning.

18. Trent Mudder Committee

The organizing committee is looking for a graduate student to be involved in the organization of the event. If interested, contact Jason.

This year, Trent Mudder will be running on March 29th at 2pm.

OTHER BUSINESS

19. Emergency Donations

Mount Allison—a primarily undergraduate university in New Brunswick—Faculty Association is currently on strike because of a labour dispute.

- MOTION TO SPEND \$250 AS A DONATION TO MOUNT ALLISON FACULTY FROM THE EMERGENCY FUNDS.
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

It is both charitable and strategic in case CUPE goes on strike—they will show solidarity.

Stephanie will keep track of the money.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:53