

MINUTES of Trent Graduate Students' Association Board Meeting
Meeting Date: March 13, 2014

Call to order: A board meeting of the Trent Graduate Students' Association was held in Seminar Room 224 at Wallis Hall of Trill College on March 13, 2014. The meeting convened at 10:03 AM, President Karen Everett presiding.

Location: Seminar Room 224 at Wallis Hall

Members participating:

Karen Everett (President)
Jason Rae (VP Internal Affairs)
Gozde Kilic (VP Operations)
Jenilee Gobin (VP Finance)
Veronica Lai (VP Student Affairs)
Kaitlyn Watson (Senate Representative)
Philip Abbott (Health Benefits Coordinator)
Allen Priest (Environmental Commissioner)
Adam Marques (Equity Commissioner)
Erin McMorrow (History Representative-M.A)
Stephanie Dotto (Canadian Studies Representative-PhD)
Rathika Balthasar (Environmental and Life Sciences Representative-PhD)
Kyle Kenniphaas (Psychology Representative-MA/MSc)
Theresa Stotesbury (Materials Science Representative-PhD)
Gary Larsen (Theory, Culture, and Politics Representative-MA)
Jesse Lever (Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies Representative-MA)
Michael Tessier (Materials Science Representative-MSc)
Michelle McCay (Environmental and Life Sciences Representative-MSc)
Philip Cook (Anthropology Representative)
Maureen Elliott (Sustainability Studies-MA)
Tayo Aloh (English/Public Texts-MA)

Regrets: Raymond McKie (First Year Science Representative), Steven Martin (CUPE Representative), Latchmi Raghunanan (International Representative)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 13TH, 2013

- MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 13TH, 2013
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA
- ITEM ADDED TO THE OTHER BUSINESS: 1) gift cards for the events survey
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

REPORTS

1. President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity, and Accessibility

- Discussed lack of accessibility: the possibility of getting a van for students.
- Multi-year accessibility plan includes increased training for professors, but the university no longer has the legal push to invest in gender equity/discrimination awareness—what is left is only an internal motivation, something to look into in the future.
- So far ombuds has been provided by the province; grad students would direct their complaints about their supervisors to an ombudsman outside school—there is currently no option for internal recourse. It is discussed to have an internal ombudsman—the person you go in times of crisis—at Trent.
- If there are committees set up to discuss a) gender equity and b) ombuds, TGSA should look into having reps in these committees.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Fossil Fuel

- Undergrads passed the fossil fuel divestment proposal, but the voting was mostly uneducated and uninformed.
- Allen as the Environmental Commissioner suggests that we table it as we can't make an informed choice at this point; there are too many holes and not enough time to educate the voters. We should have more information and a better campaign next year.
- MOTION TO CURRENTLY NOT TAKE AN ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE TRENT PROPOSAL TO DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUEL.
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

3. Professional Development

- Karen spoke with the Career Center: 1) they are going to offer a grad workshop on what to do with my degree/what my skills are; 2) they don't have the skills to offer a grant writing workshop.

4. TUFA

- Jenilee wanted to talk to some members of the TUFA (Trent University Faculty Ass.) for support/to learn more about what the implications of the changes to Grad Studies and cuts to GTAs would be.
- If it is still in our interest to approach TUFA, she will go ahead.

5. Conference Bursary Support-2

- A volleyball team asked for support last Fall. 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 THIS TEAM'S REQUEST FOR GSA SUPPORT FOR THEIR COMPETITIVE VOLLEYBALL TEAM.
 - MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED

6. Emergency donations report

- The strike ended the day after the board approved donating money, so the emergency fund is not used. We should still stink about places to donate it. Suggestion: something green especially since we tabled the fossil fuel divestment proposal for now.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Health Benefits

- Our rates are going up essentially because we spent more than we paid. Any plan we choose will offer an increase from our current rate.
- RFP process:
 - RFP was posted in January
 - The closing date was February 14th
 - We received 5 proposals
 - Once they were received we formed a committee to review the proposals (committee composed of Phil, Karen, Allen, Veronica, Gary)
- Evaluation of the proposals:
 - Experience with student organizations (confirmed by references) – 15 Points
 - Benefits included in the plan and the Cost – 50 Points
 - Commitment to customer service (confirmed by references) – 30 Points
 - Value added services – 5 Points

The result was that two proposals were evaluated as very poor. (reasons – high price, not great value); two receive an average ranking; the proposal from Student VIP was clearly in front of the others.

A note: many of the proposals were unclear and did not provide all information requested in rfp or did not display the information as we requested it or did not follow up when we asked for further information.

- Follow-up: In the follow-up process, we looked at if we offered self-insured or fully-insured coverage; called references. Called Student VIP representative for clarification on:
 - Confirm that it is fully insured
 - Couple and Family rates
 - Part-time rates
 - Potential for post docs to enter the plan
- Student VIP's references were overwhelmingly positive; they provided quick answers/options; have excellent customer service; have a way to save money on drugs; they care. So far no clients/students groups left them. Some highlights:
 - Fully-insured
 - Couple and family rates are the same
 - Part-time rates are not provided yet but they will choose to automatically opt-in
- Coverage:

Prescription drugs, 80%, \$3,000/benefit year

We will also shift to TCSA's plan, 80% of dental coverage + extended health

At the end we will have the best of both the existing TGSA and the TCSA plan. Coverage will be improved.
- Service:
 - Online opt in / out
 - Online claims
 - Direct 2 u
 - Vision care discount
 - Multiple ways to receive easy access to help
 - Graduate student conversion plan
- Rates: (include all taxes, admin fee, and program manager fee)
 - Student VIP
 - Full-time \$450
 - Family/couple – \$858.44
 - Part-time \$547.94
 - MS
 - Full-Time \$500
- **Referendum Question:** Our current health insurance broker, Morneau Shepell, has proposed to maintain our coverage through the following academic year at a price of \$500 per student per year. Student VIP has proposed a rate of \$450 per student per year for improved coverage. If you vote no, the TGSA will remain with Morneau Shepell as our

broker. If you vote yes, we will change to Student VIP. Do you support a change to Student VIP for September 2014?

- Yes (Student VIP - \$450 per student)
- No (MS - \$500 per student)

- MOTION TO APPROVE THE QUESTION AS IT STANDS.
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

- MOTION TO ADD AN “ABSTAIN” OPTION TO ALL REFERENDUM QUESTIONS (on the condition that we make it clear what abstain means to the membership)
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED BY THE VOTE OF 12 TO 7 (2 ABSTAIN)**

- MOTION TO PUT THIS REFERENDUM QUESTION TO AN ONLINE VOTE
Discussion: what was it like last year? Some in person and some online (money-related stuff)
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED BY THE VOTE OF 12 TO 5 (4 ABSTAIN)**

The exec won't take an official yes or no position in relation to the health benefits question to encourage everyone to talk about it more informally.

Votes will open as the AGM closes.

- MOTION TO GO FORWARD WITH STUDENT VIP
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

8. Amendments in the Bylaws

Proposed constitutional amendments—mostly grammar edits, deleting/adding spaces, consistent use of terms—are going to be put forward for the membership at the AGM.

Overview:

- Article 5.02 changed
- 5.05 termination clause edited
- Definition of full and associate members: language is cleared up
- Term of office: changed to make it consistent
- The program reps are required to promote/recruit their position for next year
You can also re-apply and be re-elected in (6.04)
- New Senator will be elected in April but Kaitlyn will still be serving as the Senator because it is from May to May. This should be clarified in the bylaws (next year).
- Conference bursary policies (Policy 2; page 35) clarified: the existing policy says that people can apply for one conference bursary per year. This has been changed to allow people to apply multiple times during the year up to the maximum amount (\$250)

- Phil's role as the Health Benefits Coordinator should be clarified: we might not elect a coordinator next year depending on the health benefits provider. In that case, duties would fall onto VP Student Affairs.

- **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDED BYLAWS**

- **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

9. KWIC (Kawartha World Issue Center)

It is a charitable global education center, currently located in the Environmental Sciences Center at Trent; events they organized include climate change symposium, talks, ReFrame Undergrads currently pay \$5.35 levy fee for KWIC. Grad student fee should match that.

- **MOTION TO HAVE A REFERENDUM QUESTION ABOUT AN OPTIONAL LEVY FEE FOR KWIC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5.35**

- **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

10. Referendum Questions

Online through e-mail—Jason will send out an email and have them approved by e-motion.

- **MOTION TO HAVE ALL REFERENDUM QUESTIONS BE APPROVED ONLINE**

- **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

11. Pan College Budget

\$200 to Meet & Greet; \$500 for Symons Gala; \$400 for additional Group Support; \$300 for Spring Fling (+existing budget); \$600 for AGM (have a sit-down buffet dinner)

- **MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FROM PAN COLLEGE BUDGET**

- **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

12. Auditor

As the fiscal year ends, we will need an auditor to look through our accounts. Jenilee is getting help/recommendations from both Trent's Financial Services and TCSA. We can compare the prices each auditor asks.

13. Election

The entire board is rolling over. New positions will open up. Especially the exec positions need to be filled.

14. CUPE Teaching Awards committee

Gary agreed to sit on the committee as the GSA rep.

15. Event Budget Approval

- MOTION TO SPEND \$1000 FOR SPRING FLING IN APRIL AT THE JUNCTION
MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED
- MOTION TO SPEND \$700 FOR AGM
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

16. Gift Cards for the Events Survey

We'll have a quick survey about the events: individual ratings + what people want in the future. As an incentive to fill out the survey, we should have \$50 gift card from Freshco

- MOTION TO GIVE \$50 GIFT CARD FROM FRESHCO.
 - **MOTION SECONDED AND APPROVED**

Meeting Adjourned: 12:22