

GSA Special Board Meeting with Chris Tindale regarding the Traill College Review

March 7, 2016

Wallis Hall room 128

Board members present:

Corey Baldwin, History MA rep

Theresa Treasure, Environmental Commissioner

Natalie Barron, Anthropology MA rep

Dorothea Hines, TCP MA rep

Carolyn Reid, Equity Commissioner

Sage Flemming, OGSA Representative

Phil Abbott, CUPE 3908 rep.

Jane Affleck, Cultural Studies PhD rep

Alex Ha, MA candidate in psychology dept., (filling in for Psychology MA rep who couldn't make it),

GSA exec present:

Alison Fraser VP Internal,

Renee Hendricks, VP Student Affairs

David Bak, VP Finance

David Hollands, VP Communications (Skyping in),

GSA regrets: Laura Thursby, GSA president

Dr. Chris Tindale, Traill College external reviewer

Ashley Horne, assistant to the reviewer

- AF: this is meant to be an informal conversation with Chris Tindale, the Traill college reviewer. Please introduce your review so far, the goals,
- CT: So in terms of the goals – to identify how Traill can be modified/ or maintained to best serve the university. There are questions around the focus of the review, what kind of college should it be, should it be traditional, if so how, what kinds of remedies can be made to address its bottom line and to improve the budget shortfalls... are there any connections with the community that can we see happen at Traill...
- AF: So I thought we would go through survey really quickly, then have a Q and A about the review? [survey results projected on screen. AF also passes a bound copy of the survey report/summary to CT.
 - o The results are detailed in appendix B
 - o **Ashley asks for an electronic copy of the report.**
ACTION ITEM for Renee: email to ashleyhorne@trentu.ca
- Basic summary of respondent profiles – where previous degrees were done, etc.
 - o Were they affiliated with Traill, did they change their affiliation, if an undergrad at Trent...
 - o Barriers preventing affiliation... could be addressed...
 - o Some comments of these (former) undergrads who didn't know that they could switch at the time, or weren't aware that the affiliation

changes automatically upon becoming grad student... some confusion.

- The ancillary fee, which goes towards Trill, comes out of weirdly named fund... the “college” fee of \$15.
- CT explains that it is part of the dues taken by Grad Studies, the part that is given to Trill. The GSA is not a college, so why “college fee”? The rest of ancillary fees do go to GSA...?
- AF: Concern about sustainability, most happy to pay the fee, because they love Trill. There is also concern around the fact that tuition will be raised by another 3% next year... it’s a lot, we don’t break even, we can’t pay tuition on the funding/TA pay... so we are wary of paying more fees.
- AF (continues): The GSA is concerned about there being spaces just for graduate students
 - Survey shows breakdown of the different spaces that can be used... how often people use them. Most use them on at least an occasional basis.
 - Survey also elicited other spaces the GSA survey neglected/forgot about:
 - Frost Centre, which is another GSA association, specifically for Canadian and Indigenous Studies programs
 - Offices was a big one...
 - Picnic tables, bike racks...
- Question as to why students don’t use the college:
 - Concern about accessibility – East Bank bus doesn’t stop near here, a concern for some...
 - Most reasons have to do with the fact that they mostly spend their time at Symons, or they don’t have a reason to use Trill, or it’s out of the way... (no labs here... science students use Symons...)
 - Used for socializing, studying, working, etc.
 - Not a lot of services – counsellor comes only once a week. Barriers to access. Appointments involve 4 weeks of waiting time
 - Academic skills has trouble servicing needs of grad students.
 - The Trend, events at B Hall, offices, classes...
 - CUPE 3908 also located here.
 - People live here... at Wallis Hall.
- What kind of services are missing?
 - Parking lot is tiny. No pay and display, so if you don’t have a parking pass, you have to pay at main campus before even coming here.
 - Older buildings... with issues around accessibility. Accessible door is locked most of the time.
 - Transit
 - Student services.

- Grad Studies is located in the Science Complex at Symons. Why? When we need to do something, we have to go to Symons... our own “school” is not here, where we are, at the grad college.
- No library services... lack of access to research materials...
 - RH: Even if there was just a drop box or a pick up for RACER materials (inter library loans)... This is related to the summer bus schedule and the difficulty of having to pick stuff up in summer... drop off/pick up would be great, even if they can't supply the same library services as at Bata.
- AF: More student housing – only Wallis, and there are barriers to entry/living there (lack of units, for one. Other reasons?) At least our seat has been reinstated on the Housing Advisory Committee to ensure our grad voices are maintained.
- Breakfast!
- Porter service ... this comes out of talks with Michael Eamon... A porter would regularly service and maintain the campus.
- Security – has to come from Symons...
- Better/more food services...
- Trent U card services... etc. all at Symons...
- Some rooms that are accessible to/designated as grad areas require passcodes, but many students don't know the passcodes... (sr. common room)
 - No one is orientating grad students... no tour of the campus... either Traill or Symons...
- Wallis Hall residency – there are strict rules around who can live there and why... working with HAC around these issues... maybe change, now that voice has been reinstated...?
 - Many people like living in WH
 - Should be more spaces designated for International grad students, who don't have access to “shopping” for apts. in Pbro prior to their arrival
 - Another issue is the year-long lease, even though we're away in summer for work, as we don't have TA contracts in the summer...
- How often are offices used at Traill?
 - Mostly “often”
 - Some have private offices
 - Used for studying, TA work, seeing people. Etc.
 - Good place to de-stress, to work, generally satisfied with offices...
 - Pay nominal fees for office space? Yes/maybe... etc.
 - Long answer around resistance to getting rid of offices...
 - Need reliable, quiet space to get work done, to meet with students...
- David Bak: My office is at OC – and on weekends, I can't access it. So I use the GSA office. (RH backs this up...)
 - Alex Ha notes that you can just ask security
 - AF: easier here – tap student card to get in, afterhours...

- Symons...
 - o Lots of shared offices – “really shared” – 5 to 10 people in one office.
 - o Some are 20+! So full that you can’t get work done... what to do about that?
 - o Sage: That’s in DNA building... most people end up there.
 - o Renee: Biology?
 - o AF: Students like offices with windows! In the basement/DNA Building, no natural light. Relegated to basement 8 or 9 hours a day, depressing, headaches...
 - Renee – that’s why I’m working at Traill tomorrow...!
- Ashley – reminder that she and CT have another meeting at noon
- AF: long survey! Sorry.
- CT: good to have so much info
- Q & A:
 - o CT: Who sits on the Colleges and Student Services Committee (CASC)?
 - o One seat, AF fills it.
 - Subcommittees? Renee sits on the wellness committee.
 - Others? Raise your hand...? Laura?
 - AF does most of the CASC, since it is under her job description.
 - o CT: CASC looks at fee increases, especially ancillary fees
 - AF: We are in the process of rewriting the ancillary fees protocol... it was outdated. Nona Robinson would have latest update on that.
- AF: Open the floor to the committee for questions or discussion:
 - o CB: I’ve always wondered why our ancillary fees are so much lower (than undergrad fees). Our tuition is the highest, why not redirect that money to maintenance... ? There were other universities I could’ve gone to – but I chose Trent in part because of the dedicated grad spaces. It’s one key reason, aside from supervisors. Also, Wallis hHall needs fixing, updating, seems not to have been done since 1960s or whenever... shower head at chest level...!
 - Why doesn't tuition money get used towards refurbishing?
 - o CT – tuition and ancillary different budgets...
- RH: It seems like a majority would be in favour of doubling the ancillary fee to \$30... But I don’t want to speak for all graduate students, especially those who don’t come to Traill or use Traill. But most who answered the survey would be willing to pay more to keep it maintained/running. Also there has been some talk of opening up Traill to PT/mature undergraduates who are interested in going to grad school, so there is talk of some solutions to increase ancillary fees to better maintain college.
- CT: Would you be happy to have more undergrads of that “nature” around?
 - o RH: for me it wouldn’t be a problem.

- CB: [nods...]
- AF: Should we do a straw poll? Last year, graduate students were apparently strongly against the idea of having undergrads affiliate... So a show of hands: how many in favour of having more “mature” etc. undergraduates...?
- PA: Last year, I don’t think it was specified that it would be mature undergraduates, so...
- NB: I think grads would welcome undergrads if it meant that, instead of getting rid of our college, we could keep it by taking more undergrad affiliation...
 - RH: There would still be dedicated grad spaces, such as our offices, the Sr. Common Room, the Frost Centre. But in order to maintain the college, we will probably have to do something like that. At \$15, it can’t be sustained... so I think there is openness to considering that solution, to opening up to a greater undergraduate presence.
- Dorothea Hines: I just wanted to point out that in Cultural Studies and Media Studies, which I’ve TAed for – we’re here now. It’s already happening for some departments, that undergraduates are here, it’s already open to that.
- CT: Yes, there’s always a mix of students in the Trend. But perhaps they’re not always aware they could choose their affiliation here... so that’s a problem, that they’re using the space, but not showing up on a “ledger” which is what matters to some people.
 - This review has drawn attention to this - might change naturally over next few months – more will chose? Or have chosen, but will actually make it official...
 - Perhaps 3rd and 4th year students, but also – there’s a cohort of mature students at Symons who might be more interested in the events at Traill... how to get them engaged? Any proposal has to make sense in terms of the mix... to avoid an “unworkable” situation.
- RH: Yes, how to make people more aware of talks, lectures happening here, how to get them to use Bagnani Hall more. In the Anthropology dept. recently, there was a successful post-doc lecture there. Other depts. should be encouraged to use the hall, perhaps especially after 7, when it might be more accessible to grad students who are busy during day... it would be nice to see.
- CB: My office looks into Bagnani Hall, so I can see how often it’s not used – in the evenings, during the day too. In terms of community interaction – it’s a great space that’s empty a lot of the time, not a lot of spaces like this in P’bro – there are lots of community groups who could rent out the space.
- PA: I’m on the board of Kawartha World Issues, and we’ve often used BH for our meetings, then go to the Trend after. Not every week, but when there’s an opportunity, it’s one of the better locations in town. And the

organization is a mix of grads, undergrads, and and community members. We just book the space through Deb Nichols.

- AF: But that said, if you don't have someone from Trail in your community group, it's not very clear or info is not available on how to book it... not readily available on the website.
- RH: It's true, in my role I book a lot of social events, and on the website, you can't find it, do a google search, room booking, you find conference services, than subsidiary for "other spaces" like Traill. I only learned from my predecessor (on the GSA exec).
- AF: My roller derby group is having an event at Symons, which was booked before I was on the team. So now they know about Traill, but before, no idea. Traill has become a secret.
- Ashley: So it's 15 minutes till noon...
- CT: I can be late to the next meeting.
- TT: Just a comment about Wallis Hall – I wanted to live there, I looked into it, but it was difficult to find info, and I was told I wouldn't be given a receipt for rent, which is the reason I didn't rent a room there, it was a deciding factor in not living there.
- AF: I'm bringing this up with HAC. Wallis Hall policies often don't align with the Residential Tenancies Act. It's become a hotbed of things that are no longer in line with RTA... why these issues around grad students?
- RH: I also wanted to live in WH, but it was really hard to find info. And, no pets. In the RTA, it says that can't be used as a discriminatory factor. As an international student, I would have found it so much easier to just move into WH from Texas... I had a huge hassle with the kijiji place prior to arrival. Luckily I had a contact in Canada to help, otherwise it would've been incredibly hard.
- CB: I have friends who are international students, who have found it hard that there's no housing support for them. There should be guaranteed spaces for them.
- CT: the International Program is also in review... What about grad studies? Can they help in finding spaces?
- TT: They're more administrative... there is a website where landlords in area post rentals. Luckily I'm from Toronto, so it was easier for me to check out the options ...
- AF: final comments?
- Sage: A lot of university campuses, not just Trent, services for grad students are missing. For example, in dealing with OSAP matters, I just need one person who understands my needs for that. Though I'm at Symons most of the time, I wouldn't mind coming here, if there were student services here that understood my particular needs.
- PA: Just a quick question [for CT] – is this your second time here? Third, okay. So where is the review at right now?
- CT: I hope it's coming to a close. As wonderful as it is meeting you, I'd like not to come back. I hope to see everyone today who hopes to be seen. A lot of work, will read this survey with great interest. But if other things

come to mind, we are open to receiving comments, submissions, questions. I'd like to have everything by the end of the month, so I can work on report in April.

- NB: Will the report be published? By the university?
- CT: I have no control over that. A copy will go to the president, and to the chair of the board of governors. This is the first step in the process, involving a lot of input from affected parties... I would hope that there will be grad student representation on any decision making that happens. It's possible that they won't like what I say. So they might decide to do it again next year. I would be surprised, but I would also be surprised if they accepted every recommendation. Some of them will have to do with costs, others, not. In my experience, guess which ones are more attractive. My understanding is that there is an internal process for these decisions to be made. WE need to modify Traill. There has been introspection on your parts as well, and it's clear that the current model not tenable, not indefinitely. The changes introduced will likely be incremental, not radical, necessarily... It could be very exciting, what could be done with a campus like this, if given a certain degree of autonomy... I hope you get to see what I've done... But it's the commissioning body that owns the report. You could kick up some dirt... are you still recording this? ... But I can't guarantee that it will be released. Thank you for giving up your time.
- All: thank you...
- CT: I appreciate this – and if someone could send an e-copy... parts of this survey report could become an appendix in my report... unless it's confidential?
- RH: Students were told it might be used anonymously in a report. So no worries.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55.