

## Agenda of TGSA Fall General Meeting, 30/11/16

Start: 6:00pm, End: 8:00pm

Location: Gzowski College 115, Symons East Bank, Trent University, Peterborough, ON

**Chair:** Alexandra Ha

**Scribe:** David Hollands

**Attendance:** TBD

**Notes:** -During David Hollands' presentation, Alison Fraser will take over as scribe.

### 1. Introductions:

- a. Introducing the TGSA Executive and the TGSA's Mandate (*4 minutes*)
- b. **VP Internal Affairs:** How the Meeting Will Proceed (*1 minute*)

### 2. Call to Order

### 3. Motion to Approve the Agenda

### 4. Motion to Approve the [Minutes from the April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Spring General Meeting](#)

### 5. Executive Reports (*12 minutes, a 4-minute Q+A period, followed by motion to accept reports*): (See [Addendum I](#))

- a. President
- b. VP Internal Affairs
- c. VP Finance
- d. VP Communications
- e. VP Student Affairs
- f. Senator

### 6. Commissioner Reports (*8 minutes, a 2-minute Q+A period, followed by motion to accept reports*): (See [Addendum II](#))

- a. Equity Commissioner
- b. Environmental Commissioner
- c. Health Benefits Commissioner
- d. OGSA Commissioner

### 7. Presentations:

- a. **VP FINANCE:** [TGSA Budget for 2015-2016](#), and [proposed TGSA budget for 2016-2017](#). (*10 minutes, followed by a 5-minute Q+A period*)
- b. **Amy Lewis, CPA, CA, and Marie Dietrich, CPA, CA, from McColl Turner LLP Chartered Accountants:** [2015-16 Results of the TGSA's Annual Audit](#). (*10 minutes, followed by a 5-minute Q+A period*)
- c. **VP INTERNAL AFFAIRS:** Introduction of First Year Arts and Sciences Representative Candidates, and Voting Procedure (*8 minutes, followed by a 5-minute Q+A*)
- d. **VP STUDENT AFFAIRS:** TGSA Social Events. (*5 minutes, followed by a 3-minute Q+A period*)

- e. **PRESIDENT:** Feedback from General Membership about the current communication practices of the TGSA. (*6 minutes*)

**8. Other Business** (*15 minutes*)

**9. Additional Questions Period** (*15 minutes*)

**10. Motion to Adjourn**

## Addendum I- Executive Reports

### **President:**

My goals for TGSA are three-folds: 1) fostering strong and open communication 2) creating opportunities for graduate student aimed at developing academic, profession, and research skills, and 3) providing support for grad students' mental/physical health, inclusion, and well-being. In the past 6 months, I have made accomplishments in an attempt to reach these three goals.

#### **1. Fostering Communication**

Since my time as president, I have strengthened the social media presence for TGSA, including renovating our website and establishing more robust social media platforms. I am also planning more ideas beyond social media with the Board of Directors to facilitate a more fluid communication with students, the TGSA members, faculty and administration at the University, and local, provincial and national organizations. I have been meeting regularly with Nona Robinson, Associate Vice President Students, the president of TCSA, and prime ministers of cabinets, to ensure we are all kept up to date with latest details in our respective student body and the university. I am also in the middle of planning a filmed documentary featuring the TGSA with our VP Communications, David Hollands, which would help connect the TGSA members with undergraduate and graduate students, providing them all a sense of what the TGSA is about, who we are and what our specific roles entail, our individual passion for TGSA, and where we see the TGSA is heading in the future.

#### **2. Academic, professional, and research development**

This year, the TGSA is helping to fund the 3 Minute Thesis, an event which we believe to be a fantastic opportunity for students to develop presentation skills and showcase their research. I met with the career center to advertise to students on workshops that will help them develop academic and professional skills. I have also proposed an opportunity to grad students to get involved with a major local organization to possibly gain internship/employment positions and professional development training. The idea was to not only promote the University and its graduate students, but also the Peterborough community as using the graduate student body as a talent pool for the community contributes to economic growth. For this year, I aim to establish a mentorship program for grad and undergraduate students in conjunction with Traill College (have already discussed this with Trail Cabinets few weeks ago) which will provide both graduate and undergraduate students ample of academic and professional development opportunities. This will also help optimize the experiences at Traill College given the joint undergraduate and graduate students' presence – something novel this year. As well, one of my biggest aspirations as leader for grad students is to promote and support more graduate research. As such, I have initiated a Journal of Graduate Research. This will be the first ever graduate students research journal at Trent University and the planning phase is currently taken place at the Constitutional Committee.

#### **3. Mental and Physical Health, Inclusion, and Well-Being**

Under my leadership, various projects and events targeted at mental health, well-being, and equity for graduate students have been created, because I understand the stress, isolation, inequality and discrimination that graduate students may feel during their studies. For this year, I have created a well-being event in conjunction with Dis-Orientation week and a fellow student-organization chair Alexa Small. I invited an open dialogue about Indigenous culture at our board meeting (given by Jessica Hinton our Ph.D. Indigenous Culture representative), and had a cultural event (an Kairos Blanket Exercise) organized under the auspices of TGSA. In addition, I am

working with Marisol Campos, our equity commissioner to ensure that board members are provided with training on Social Justice, Human Rights, Equity, and Accessibility issues. We also merged with the TCSA on our health and dental plan this year, and hope to provide all students with the best health and dental plan/coverage. I aim to spearhead many more campaigns, events, and programs aimed at promoting mental/physical health, providing support, and ensuring equity and inclusion.

**Conclusion:**

In a nutshell, I see the TGSA headed in the right direction under my leadership and I am passionate and motivated to lead my team to accomplish various goals as President. I intend to provide the best support for grad students by encouraging diversity and open communication. I have shown commitment in making a change and creating a better experience for graduate students, and will continue to demonstrate this commitment as I help strengthen this graduate-student based organization at Trent University.

**VP Internal Affairs:**

A lot of work was put in this summer reviewing the memorandum of understanding for the Trent Joint Health and Dental Benefits plan between the Trent Central Student Association, Trent Durham Student Association, and the TGSA.

Had the first meeting of the Constitutional Changes Committee and made a plan of action for the upcoming year including making a proposal for a journal of graduate studies at Trent for graduate students to publish in and finalizing the Emergency Bursary.

Brought to the attention of Nona Robertson the fact that graduate students were being charged an extra percent on their Traill College fee. This has been significantly corrected but there remains about \$3 of unaccounted for extra charges that are still being fixed. All ancillary fees will be brought in line with the ancillary fee protocol at Trent.

Updated the Trent University - TGSA Support Agreement. Made the language and expectations in the document clear. It is still going through a fourth round of drafting by the Office of Student Affairs.

Helped the Director of Housing at Trent start an official university committee to address graduate housing concerns at Wallace Hall.

Addressed individual student's needs as an advocate as necessary.

Committees I sit on: CASSC, Colleges CASSC Subcommittee, Housing Advisory CASSC Subcommittee, Graduate Housing (Subcommittee of the Housing Advisory Committee), Student Charter of Rights and Responsibilities Committee CASSC Subcommittee, Mental Health CASSC Working Group, Vision 2020 Development Working Group IT Committee, Health Benefits TGSA Committee, Finance TGSA Committee.

Committees I chair: Accessibility CASSC Working Group and the Constitutional Changes TGSA Committee.

## **VP Finance:**

- Taken over online banking at TD
- Provided insurance payment to Stewart Morrison
- Completed bank reconciliation for the 2015-2016 year
- Received and processed applications and reimbursements for May/September conference bursaries (currently doing so for January)
- Prepared documents for McColl Turner auditors
- Prepared a budget for the 2016-2017 year
- Sit on Academic Planning and Budgeting Committee
- Chair Finance Committee
- Maintain general ledger
- Handle all payments and reimbursements for TGSA events

## **VP Communications:**

Since the summer, I've served as the VP Communications for the TGSA, the Operations Coordinator for the Symons Seminar Series, and the Recording Secretary for our local CUPE3908. I decided to run for the position of Operations Coordinator of the Symons Seminar Series to ensure that the beginnings of the transition of Symons from under the auspices of the TGSA to Traill College would go as smoothly as possible. The general outline of this transition can be found currently in the Memorandum of Understanding between the TGSA and Symons which is currently hosted on the TGSA's website at trentgsa.ca. I have taken steps to further facilitate communication between the TGSA and the you, the membership. You've already heard about the updated website, and also, a new TGSA Facebook page has been created to exist alongside the current TGSA Facebook group page. Our Twitter page continues to be used actively, and Alexandra has also added an Instagram page to further promote the association. Another step that still needs to be taken is for our exec to upload some video content on our YouTube page, which we still plan to do, but haven't been to as of yet due to busy schedules. These videos are intended to be a fast and engaging way for the membership to learn more about the organization, and will always be an option for future execs to make use of. And finally, it's been a while since I've updated concerning the Traill College documentary that I was toiling away at last academic year. After a series of delays and changes to reflect the release of the Traill College review, I'm happy to say that the documentary will finally be ready this Sunday, and will be sent out to all interviewees first to see, and will then be published on the TGSA YouTube page in time for the holidays. And, of course, I'm typically the one sending you all those emails that you probably don't read. To wrap up, one of our later items on the agenda today will be us taking feedback from you on how the TGSA can improve its communications with you. Any suggestion is welcome.

## **VP of Student Affairs:**

- Organized:
  - Two BBQs (July and September).
  - Game day
  - Tex Mex fest
  - Blanket exercise
- Several orientation day events:
  - Health Monday
  - Arts and Crafts with recyclables

- Pub night at the Trend
  - Pub crawl
- At our November 10<sup>th</sup> 2016 Board meeting, I gave a brief presentation to familiarize board members with the University's policy including the Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Violence and Harassment Policy and Procedures.
- As VP Student Affairs, I am required to sit on the Health and Wellness CASSC Subcommittee and the Convocation CASSC Task Subcommittee. So far, I have attended one meeting each for the subcommittees (meeting notes can be found in exec. report)

### **Senator:**

Role involves: Taking part in Senate and Senate Executive Meetings, overseeing filling open positions on the TGSA Board, and finding volunteers for committee representation on University committees.

- 80 – 85% of the Board positions have been filled, with the hopes of having all positions filled by December, though Committee volunteer involvement has been low, and therefore I have had to attend these meetings as well.
- Continued communication with Traill College over Traill College Review
- Continued monitoring of changes to convocation, and consultation with the library over the upcoming renovations.
- Coordinate a meeting between all Department Representatives to gain feedback and suggestion on improving this position on the Board, to bring to CCC.
- Consultation with Housing over Wallis Hall and improvements to be made to Graduate residence.

## Addendum II- Commissioner Reports

### **Equity Commissioner:**

- Collaboratively designed Information Sessions:
  - AODA, Human Rights Code, Discrimination and Harassment Policy, Accessibility Policy, Sexual Violence Policy (**December 8<sup>th</sup> 2016**).
  - First Nations and Aboriginal persons (November 24<sup>th</sup> 2016).
  - People with chronic diseases and invisible disabilities and illnesses (during Winter).
- Equity and Accessibility Commission Manual (May 2017)
- Committees and Subcommittees:
  - Presidential Advisory Council on Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility, and in the Accessibility Subcommittee of this Council (PACHREA)
  - Special Appeals Senate Committee (SAC)
  - Mental Health Colleges and Student Services Working Group of the Colleges and Student Services (CASSC).
- TGSA Social Justice Committee
- Representing and advocating for marginalized populations within the TGSA;
- Identifying equity issues pertaining to the General Membership;
- Organizing, facilitating, and participating in research and other activities to raise awareness around:
  - women's and racialized groups,
  - people with chronic diseases and visible and invisible disabilities and illnesses,
  - First Nations and Aboriginal persons,
  - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, and other minority gender identities and sexual oriented persons.
  - Creating more inclusive and accessible spaces in the TGSA, Trent University, and the broader Peterborough community.

## Environmental Commissioner:

### Environmental Commissioner Slide

Zankhna Mody ([zankhnamody@trentu.ca](mailto:zankhnamody@trentu.ca))

- Working with VP Student Affairs to make TGSA events more environmentally sustainable
- Communicating opportunities for graduate students to get involved:
- Green Team is putting together second year of 'Green Your Campus'
  - Competition for student proposals to improve sustainability on the Trent Campus
  - Judging metrics: advancing sustainability, practical impact and uniqueness
  - Students will present their project at Fleming College's Sustainability Conference
  - Proposals are due by March 1, Conference is held March 11<sup>th</sup>/2017.
  - Winner gets funding (\$5000) to implement their idea on campus
  - More info: [trentgreenteam@trentu.ca](mailto:trentgreenteam@trentu.ca)

## Health Benefits Commissioner:

I would like to start by saying how happy I feel by serving you as part of the TGSA. I also thank all those who helped me from day one. This might be a bit detailed report but I will try to keep it as simple as possible.

This year our health plan changed as it was merged in a unified plan for all Trent students. This was a result of a joint effort between TGSA, TCSA and TDSA. The plan is administered by TCSA on behalf of the other students associations although TGSA maintains its authority and responsibility towards grad students.

As we enjoy a lower cost per student (\$425/yr where it was about \$580 last year -%25 =>%50 less coverage) we do have decreased benefits that reflects the price change. The reasons and motives to go along this path was well discussed and based on the circumstances at that time, TGSA moved forward in what we believe is in the best interest of the all students as a whole and grad students as our main stakeholders.

Based on the issues we faced and managed during the first few months, there was only a limited number of issues related to claim submissions or coverage. The main reason behind those issues are summarized as follows:

- 1- Late registration resulting in not including the names of eligible students in the first list sent out.
- 2- Use of the old policy number instead of the new one.
- 3- Reasons related to the provider (late upload of member information)
- 4- Reasons related to the health provider in submitting claims.

We did receive a number of concerns especially related to family coverage and the decreased coverage. Those concerns are compiled and will be used to improve our health coverage next year. For that reason we do have a plan to engage grad students to help formulate a better plan and give a better direction to the TGSA where to go. The health and Benefits Committee is seeking volunteers who would like to see this plan get better while it serves the interests of grad

students including their families and special needs. We hope that we have a clear understanding of our needs in the Winter term just in time to seek a better plan whether with our current provider or to seek a new one.

As a final note, I encourage you to send your feedback to me or TGSA on your experience with the current health plan. Also, If you face any issue with your coverage and was not resolved by the provider (StudentVIP) please contact me. My contact information is available on the TGSA's website and at the StudentVIP website.

## **OGSA Commissioner:**

### What is OGSA?

- a coalition of graduate student associations across Ontario (including Waterloo, Guelph, Trent, Laurier, McMaster, Athabasca, and UOIT).
- an organization that strives to work collaboratively, informed by the voices of graduate students residing in Ontario (and in particular, its member schools), to advocate for policy and system change that will support the continued improvement of the graduate student experience in the Province of Ontario.
- Focus: advocacy and political lobbying (provincially and federally)

### The TGSA's relationship with OGSA

- Member since the beginning
- Each graduate student currently pays \$2.00 in fees to OGSA

## What I do as OGSA Commissioner

- Attend monthly OGSA board meetings and monthly TGSA board meeting (and other additional meetings that pop up)
- Keep record of what is going on in both organizations and communicate this to one another
- Present Trent-specific issues (and larger graduate student issues) to OGSA so they can lobby on our behalf
- Sit on one additional committee of the OGSA (which also meets monthly)

## Provincial and Federal Initiatives Made by OGSA

- Please consult my longer notes for a list of the initiatives made (and currently being undertaken by OGSA)
- Two recent gains:
  - OGSA having a voice in Tri-Agency funding, and have so far successfully lobbied to secure increased Tri-agency funding in the federal budget.
  - Also secured graduate student access to the Ontario Student Grant (Students from families with incomes of \$50,000 or less will have free tuition and the cost of a college or university education will be more affordable for middle-class families. This was originally going to be just for undergraduates, but OGSA lobbied successfully to include graduate students).

## OGSA Supporting Trent Graduate Students

- Provide support if we need resources or advice throughout the year (including attending senate, when needed).
- Also, focusing on three identified Trent-Specific Issues:
  - GSA Sustainability; Graduate Student representation at the university; Teaching opportunities for graduate students (especially scholarship holders)
- And Graduate Student-wide Issues:
  - Tuition; post-residency fees; differentiation; job prospects for graduate students; graduate-specific mental health resources
  - (again, some of these will be short-term, and some will be long-term initiatives)

## Opportunities to get involved

- The OGSA is working to split efforts into various committees that are tasked with specific objectives for the year. The committees are as follows:
  - 1) Policy development
  - 2) Membership Engagement
  - 3) Finance Committee
- I have been asked to reach out to members within our respective teams to see if they would be interested in partaking in any of the OGSA committees. Please let me know if any of these positions would interest you. You can reach me at [laurathursby@trentu.ca](mailto:laurathursby@trentu.ca).
- (There is space for one graduate student from any member-paying university to sit on each of these committees, so let me know right away if you are interested!).

**International Student Representative Commissioner:**

- Attend regular Board Meetings and Special Board Meetings
- Have been in contact with TIP (Trent Internal Program) and continue to work as a liaison between the TGSA and TIP
- Representing international students on the Graduate Housing Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of CASSC (Colleges and Student Services), which first meets Dec 7, 2016
- Representing international students on the TGSA Health Benefits Committee to meet next semester
- Representing international students on the TGSA Social Justice Committee to meet next semester
- Will help plan an event with the VP Student Affairs with an international student focus