

Summarized Minutes of TGSA Board Meeting, 12/12/2016

Start: 12:10, **End:** 14:13

Location: Wallis Hall 102, Traill College, Trent University

Chair: Alexandra Ha

Scribe: David Hollands

Attendance: Alexandra Ha, David Hollands, Miteb Abunayyan, Alicia Hartley, Elizabeth Aslin, Alison Fraser, Laura Thursby, Isaac Jiang, Joshua Noiseux, Phil Abbott, Swarsattie Kishun, Marisol Campos Navarrete, Anastasia Nepotiuk, Robert Clarke (invited guest) -13 board members present, quorum met

Regrets: Katherine Boyle, Samantha Snetsinger, Sarah Jessup

1. Presentation(s) and Discussion(s) without voting

- a. **Robert Clarke (Head Library at Trent University):** Concerning the Library Renovations - *please contact vpcommunicationstgsa@trentu.ca for verbatim presentation minutes*

2. Call to Order

3. Motion to Approve the Agenda: Alexandra Ha

Seconded: Katherine Boyle

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

4. Motion to Approve the Minutes from the November 10th, 2016 Board Meeting:

Alexandra Ha

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

5. Presentation(s) and Discussion(s) with/without Motions

- a. **President:** Next steps to address concerns over the Bata Library renovations.

Summarized Discussion

a. It is agreed that Alison Fraser will draft a letter on behalf of the TGSA Board to address concerns about the Bata Library renovations.

Motion, Alison Fraser: BIRT Alison Fraser draft a letter on behalf of the TGSA board of directors addressing our concerns about the Bata Library renovations, and BIFRT concerns about the renovation be sent to Alison Fraser by December 14th at 12pm, and BIFRT the letter then be forwarded to the board by December 16th at noon, and BIFRT the board return feedback to

Alison Fraser by December 18th at noon, and BIFRT the letter is to then be distributed appropriately.

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

6. Executive Reports (see [Addendum I](#)):

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

Motion to accept the reports: Alexandra Ha

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

7. Commissioner Reports, Board of Director Reports, Committee Reports, and Other Reports (see [Addendum II](#))

- a. Equity Commissioner Report
- b. Environmental Commissioner Report
- c. Health Benefits Commissioner Report
- d. OGSA Commissioner Report
- e. International Student Representative Commissioner

Motion to accept the reports: Alexandra Ha

Seconded: Katherine Boyle

Summarized Discussion

a. Marisol has been attending the Presidential Advisory Council on Humans Rights, Equity, and Accessibility. The council has been focusing on an event they're going to have next January, and the potential issues around campus regarding that event. A working group was arranged to talk to Leo Groarke regarding that. Also discussed: the TGSA not being to communicate with the general membership, and discussion of treatment of grads in general. The other thing is, there's a special Senate Appeals committee which only meets for special appeals. When I raised this point, the equity commissioner of the TCSA told me he'd like to work with us on this. That's another thing we should discuss. At some point the future, a discussion of the special Senate Appeals Committee should be had--the TCSA has expressed interest in working with Marisol on this.

c.Miteb and Alison shared results of the Dec 7th, 2016 meeting with Student VIP. The meeting was to go over some of last year's reports before the midyear review, which will happen sometime in the winter. During that meeting, Miteb and Alison shared concerns, one of which was the misunderstandings of benefits and costs of plans. A decrease in benefits with decrease in costs has been noted, while VIP told the TGSA that there were no changes. There have been some miscommunications, possibly. Miteb is currently waiting for Drew to get back to the TGSA with the results of our enquiry. Miteb will also be prepping an announcement to the general membership about January intake. Alexandra stated that the GSA will be putting out a survey about the health plan in January.

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

8. Departmental Issues/Question Period

a. -none

9. Main Motions

9.1 Changes to Recording of TGSA Board Meeting Minutes

Whereas the TGSA board meeting minutes are currently recorded in such detail that individual statements made by board members are written down almost verbatim and published publicly online, and

Whereas this may have damaging repercussions for specific students who vocalize dissent at these meetings, and

Whereas this may prevent some board members from comfortably expressing themselves at meetings,

BIRF the TGSA change the way that minutes are recorded and published in the following ways: (1) verbatim meeting minutes are still recorded, approved by the board at board or special board meetings and/or the general membership at general meetings or special general meetings, and kept by the executive in the online Google Drive folder of TGSA board meeting minutes; (2) these minutes are not published publicly, and can only be accessed by general members and all board members by special request; (3) a note shall be to the trentgsa.ca minutes page advising the general membership of this option;

BIFRT that the VP Communications summarizes the main arguments, justifications, decisions made, and next steps planned (e.g. the identification and tracking of action items) for the minutes that are to be published publicly, which are also to be approved by the board at board or special board meetings and/or the general membership at general meetings or special general meetings before being posted online.

Justification:

(Please see attached draft minutes for the November 30th, 2016 TGSA Fall GM, which are unofficial.)

The current way of taking minutes is detrimental to the political goals of the organization, where I (and some other members I have spoken to) feel that we are not able to fully express ourselves at meetings because of concerns that what I am saying will be made public (not just to our membership but to university administration, future employers, etcetera). I am also concerned that certain statements can be misinterpreted without the appropriate context (body language, tone, etcetera) and that this could have damaging effects on the members of this organization. A summary of main arguments and justifications raised at the meeting should be sufficient in providing our members with updates about what is happening at our meetings. If a student should want to publicly go on record as holding a certain position, they are still able to do so – but this should not be the case for the entire meeting minutes.

After having sat on other university committees, having worked with other graduate associations, and having sat on municipal governmental committees, I have found that this way of keeping minutes is not practiced at any other organization that I have been a part of. Moreover, Robert's Rules of Order are not explicit on what meeting minutes should look like, so it does not go against our bylaws and policies to adjust this practice accordingly.

Moreover, I think that shortening the public minutes would encourage more engagement from the general membership. Currently, the minutes are very long, and graduate students are very busy and do not have time to read these minutes in their entirety. Providing a condensed version of the minutes will be more accessible to the general membership.

Motion: Laura Thursby

Seconded: David Hollands

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

9.2 Nominate Graduate Student to Sit on the Graduate Studies Committee

Whereas we need a PhD graduate student to sit on the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC),

BIRT we take nominations from the floor at this board meeting for the graduate student who will sit on the GSC, and

BIFRT whomever we select be nominated.

Justification:

The graduate studies committee is composed of members of Trent faculty and graduate studies administration, the graduate program directors, and two graduate student representatives. It is one of the most important committees that we have access to and it is very important that our

student representative seat is filled next semester, as one of the students currently filling the position, Laura Thursby, is unable to continue due to scheduling conflicts.

Since the Senator (Mackenzie Armstrong) is required to sit on the committee, he fulfills the requirement of having an MA student on the committee. Hence, we need to have a PhD student sit on the committee to represent both MA and PhD interests. (Moreover, since Mac is from the anthropology department, it would be ideal to have a science student as the second member; but if that is not possible, at this point any PhD student will suffice). It would be ideal for a current member of the board to sit on the committee, as that will allow for better communication between the TGSA and the GSC.

The committee meets from 10:00am - 12:00pm on the following dates (one Thursday a month) at DNA D212:

- January 26
- February 23
- March 23
- April 20
- May 25

It is a standing committee of Senate and reviews and makes recommendations for graduate studies at Trent. The following are some of the main roles of the committee:

- Review and make recommendations to Senate on matters of educational policy and planning for graduate studies, including major modifications to programs, new courses, general and program-specific regulation changes and alterations in educational policy at the graduate level;
- Make recommendations to the Program Quality Assurance Committee on the degree requirements and curriculum of proposed new academic programs;
- Appoint ad hoc subcommittees to make recommendations on the selection of medal and prize winners and to review and make recommendations for institutional nominations for graduate scholarships;
- Appoint ad hoc subcommittees to hear graduate student academic petitions, as necessary.

Motion: Laura Thursby

Seconded: David Hollands

Summarized Discussion

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

Joshua Noiseux is nominated by the Board.

Motion to nominate Joshua: Alexandra Ha

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 12

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 1

****motion carries****

9.3 Festivus December Event

Whereas we are given funding to hold Festivus in December,

BIRT the TGSA will host a Festivus at Shots in downtown Peterborough on December 17th at 7pm, and

BIFRT a budget of \$500.00 will be set to cover the cost of one alcoholic beverage per student and light snacks.

Justification:

According to our bylaws, Festivus is scheduled to be hosted by the TGSA in December.

Additionally, Shots was chosen as the venue of this event because the owner usually let us use it for free. Light snacks will either be purchased from Costco or from Shots, depending on which option is cheaper.

Motion: Swarsattie Kishun

Seconded: David Hollands

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

10. Other Business

10.1 Re-schedule Fall General Meeting

Discussion

Motion, Alison Fraser: I move we reschedule on a weekday in between January 11th and January 18th at 6pm.

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

Motion, Alison Fraser: I make a friendly amendment that we solidify the online voting period. Seven business days after from the date of the GM.

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

10.2 Laura Motion Events

Discussion

-Motion, Laura Thursby: Whereas we want to be able to give reasonable time to grad students about our events, BIRT each TGSA event is approved the month before the event is to be had.

Justification: At the GM, there wasn't a lot of notice about that either. If we decide a month before, that would allow for more time for the general membership.

Seconded: David Hollands

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

10.3 Joshua Collaborative Response

Discussion

-Motion, Joshua Noiseux: I motion to have a GSA rep to the January meeting regarding the library once a time and date is established.

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 13

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

11. Notice of Motions and Announcements

- a. -none

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Alexandra Ha
Seconded: Laura Thursby

Discussion
-no discussion

Approve: 13
Oppose: 0
Abstain: 0
****motion carries****

Addendum I:
Executive Reports

President:

General Meeting

The executives are discussing whether or not to re-organize the general meeting because quorum was not met.

Symons Series Seminars

In the middle of discussing with the executives regarding the funding the TGSA is providing the SSS this year.

VP Internal Affairs: --

VP Finance: --

VP Communications: Currently working with the execs of the TGSA and the Symons Seminar Series to finalize the specifics of the MoU as approved by the general membership in the TGSA's last Spring GM. A meeting will be set for January once classes have resumed. Additionally, I have some good news to report from CUPE3908, which I will present at this board meeting as an addition to my executive report here.

VP of Student Affairs: --

Senator: --

Addendum II:
Commissioner Reports

Equity Commissioner: --

Environmental Commissioner: --

Health Benefits Commissioner: --

OGSA Commissioner: I have attended the November OGSA Board meeting.

I was appointed to one of the OGSA standing committees. I am still looking to see if any graduate student at Trent might be interested in sitting on one of their three committees: 1) Policy Development; 2) Membership Engagement; 3) Finance Committee.

I have been in discussion with the OGSA Executive Director (ED) about advocating for the removal of the 10-hour rule from university policy for scholarship holders. The ED has reported that over the course of a handful of meetings he had in Toronto this month that the Ministry has expressed to him their commitment to eliminating the 10-hour rule. They fully support our position that the rule is antiquated and needs to be abolished. They informed him that 2 years ago, they began striking the rule out of all Ministry documents. It is no longer part of the OGS for instance. However, the rule persists as a Council of Ontario Universities (COU) bylaw, enforced by each member institution. The ED began strategizing with the Ministry as to how we can get this bylaw either superseded by provincial legislation, or how we might negotiate with the COU to eliminate it. The problem is (and I am sure we can all agree) that the principle of the rule is fair, but it's a blanket rule that covers even those students the rule does not intend to target. There are some students who will seek more than 10 hours of work and who will also fall behind on their studies. This is not good because they are being supported financially to complete their degree in a timely manner, so falling behind puts strains on the system. Of course, the problem with the rule is that it covers those students who take on extra work but who don't fall behind. It therefore penalizes students who are able to balance additional work with their studies, and prevents them from gaining valuable work experience (especially in regards to academic teaching experience). We are looking to propose an additional accountability mechanism for those students who do fall behind and are hoping that it will be enough to convince the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) of the need to abolish the rule. That way the students who can handle the extra work load are allowed to work, but those students who try and fail have to take more responsibility when they fail because they made a conscious decision to work extra hours and let their studies suffer for it. We don't yet know what this offset would be because it's effectively an administrative issue, but Lucas has reached out to the Chair of the OCGS, who happens to be the most vocal critic of the rule to brainstorm ideas (and if anyone here might have a suggestion for this, please contact me right away). The ED thinks we can have a proposal ready before the OCGS some time early in the Winter semester.

Moreover, at our November meeting, we discussed that the OGSA needs to change their fee structure. Currently, different member schools each pay a different fee to the organization, which is disproportionate and unfair for those members paying more and receiving the same services.

The ED of the OGSA has proposed that each member school put to referendum a new fee, so that it is equal across all participating members. The proposed fee is \$2.37 per fall and winter term (\$4.74 per year). Currently, each graduate student at Trent pays a \$2.00 student levy to the OGSA. This fee is to be used to buy more human resources/ human capital for the association, so that more time can be spent lobbying for political gains on behalf of graduate students. I was hoping to discuss with the board to see if this new fee seems feasible and appropriate to us, or if there are concerns about raising the fee to this amount. Any changes will have to go to a referendum vote amongst all of our members at the Spring General Meeting.

Roles outside of the OGSA Commissioner's position:

I attended the fall General Meeting.

I attended Graduate Studies Committee meeting in November and will be attending again this week. At that meeting, we discussed the significant changes being made to BATA library. Since then, I have been in conversation with TGSA executives and our Cultural Studies Representative to plan on how to best engage the university to consider our concerns about these changes (in particular, the removal of over 50% of the library's physical collection). We are brainstorming how we can best work with other stakeholders, including faculty, undergraduates, and alumni, to voice these concerns to the upper administration at Trent.

I also wrote a letter to Joanne Sokolowski (Manager, Convocation and Alumni relations) at joannesokolow@trentu.ca to raise my concerns about changes being made and proposed about graduate convocation (that is, potentially merging undergraduate and graduate convocation together so that graduate students convocated with their departments – both undergraduate and graduate – as opposed to graduate students convocating with other graduate students). I encourage other graduate students to do the same.

Finally, I drafted a letter on behalf of the TGSA to send to undergraduate students in regards to the proposed changes to Bata Library.

International Student Representative Commissioner: --