

Minutes of TGSA Fall General Meeting, 12/01/17

Start: 6:10pm, End: 7:28pm

Location: Bagnani Hall, Symons East Bank, Trent University, Peterborough, ON

Chair: Alexandra Ha

Scribe: David Hollands

Attendance: Yunqi Jiang, David Hollands, Swarsattie Kishun, Theresa Carlos, Ainsely Lewis, Jane Affleck, Fahareh Bolori, Erin Laverty, Joshua Noiseux, Alicia Hartley, Katie Rosa, Laura Bouchard, Michelle Hisson, Marisol Campos Navarette, Alexandra Draghici, Laura Thursby, Matthew Kilko, Anastasia Nepotiuk, Anhiti Patnaik, Nooshin Aghayan, Mackenzie Armstrong, Kathleen Forward, Ellie Tamura, Ibraheem Alimi, Jennifer Thomas, Michael Olsen, Matthew Seaby, Rishabh Sarswat, Philip Abbott, Augustine Owusu Ansah, Miteb Abunayyan, Danielle Harris, Michael Riseley (auditor), Michael Eamon (Principal, Traill College) **-32 general members, quorum met**

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 with New Inclusions to Other Business: Alexandra Ha

Seconded: David Hollands

Approve: 32

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

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

Seconded: Swarsattie Kishun

Approve: 32

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

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

Motion to Accept Executive Reports: Alexandra Ha
Seconded: Swarsattie Kishun

Discussion

-none

Approve: 32

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

6. Commissioner Reports (*10 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
- e. International Student Representative Commissioner

Motion to Accept Commissioner Reports: Alexandra Ha
Seconded: Alison Fraser

Discussion

-none

Approve: 32

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

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. **Michael Riseley, 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 STUDENT AFFAIRS:** TGSA Social Events. (*5 minutes, followed by a 3-minute Q+A period*)
- d. **PRESIDENT:** Feedback from General Membership about the current communication practices of the TGSA. (*6 minutes*)
- e. **SYMONS SEMINAR SERIES EXECUTIVE:** Presentation of the Series budget ([projected](#) and [revised](#)), and the MoU with Symons, the TGSA, and Traill College. (*7 minutes, followed by a 3-minute Q+A*)
- f. **VP INTERNAL AFFAIRS:** Introduction of First Year Arts and Sciences Representative Candidates, and Voting Procedure (*8 minutes, followed by a 5-minute Q+A*)

Minutes (letters below are discussions that correspond to the lettered items above)

a.Katie: would you mind explaining the Spring fling year-end party... did you spend that much on it?

-Anastasia: that was last year. We budgeted \$600.00 this year.

-Alexandra: any other questions? Okay. Voting for the budget will be deferred to online.

-Michelle: I have a question about the conference bursary budget. I'm seeing here that on the budget last year for the proposed budget for 2015-16, the amount was \$12,000.00 as well. We also increased student fees by a motion. Can you explain that?

-Alison: I can answer that. The increase was voted on by referendum, not specifically designed for the conference bursaries, but for the student support levy fees, which aren't the college fees. That budget has to be designated for bursaries. The money we voted to increase was the levy account, which was no longer sufficient. We did do an increase to make sure we were in a position to not run a deficit. It was never promised to student support. That was a different budget.

-Michelle: the language in the referendum question specifically mentions thesis binding.

-Alison: yes, we could give that money from the levy fee, but bursaries are from a different budget. Through board approval, we can transfer amounts into the student services budget. If students wish for more conference support, they can request it.

-Michelle: right, I just feel that the language of the referendum question was misleading.

-Alison: perhaps, though that was last year. It probably should have been addressed then, but it is done now.

b.**Michael Riseley presents audit report**

Michael: do you have any further questions?

no further questions from membership

-Alison: thank you so much for coming back!

c.Swarsattie: just to let you know, the money for the Jan event had to be used to provide pizzas for this rescheduled GM. But we are holding a joint event with the Trent Film Society at no cost to us. The board still needs to approve the date for the movie night. **continues presentation**

-Alexandra: questions? Ideas?

-Michelle: Rock climbing?

-Swarsattie: fantastic idea, though that may be a risk management problem.

-Laura: I was thinking that it would be good to have something like a write-in day to bring graduate students together.

-Swarsattie: we did have something similar to that in October. And it was just Mac and I who were there. Some other students came earlier, but just grabbed food and left. I'd prefer to not have a repeat of that.

-Danielle: what about partnering with existing events? Instead of a party, I'd prefer a discount on the film festival coming up in Jan for example. And then put the TGSA logo on the ticket or something.

-Swarsattie: according to our bylaws, we have to have social events every month. But we are contributing money to the ReFrame festival. As for discounts, we could negotiate.

-Danielle: I'm not saying remove the monthly event, just perhaps have partnered events on top of that already connected to events on campus.

-Swarsattie: that's a great idea. If you have any ideas, you can email me.

-Alexandra: I'll bring that up in the future board meeting for sure. Any other questions or suggestions? All right, we're moving on.

d.Alexandra: what are some issues that you're having with our current communications?

-Danielle: I don't like the emails coming from Kristine. There isn't a clear indication right up front that it comes from the TGSA.

-Laura: perhaps maybe explain why emails are forwarded through Traill College for those who aren't aware?

-Alison: all right. As of last year, the TGSA had access to a graduate list serve, an aggregate of grad student emails. We were sworn to secrecy about it. A student got really mad at us and the general amount of surveys sent out to grad students. Words were thrown around like "harassment," so Trent revoked our access.

-David: I'd like to clarify that we didn't have our access revoked based solely on the student's complaint. Admin reviewed the new Anti-Spam Legislation, and it was technically a violation of that legislation for the TGSA to send out emails through the list serve, since they weren't coming straight from the university and that there wasn't an unsubscribe option in those emails.

-Michael: everything David said is exactly right. When rights to the list serve were revoked, Traill access was removed as well. The list serve repopulates every night. There's no way to remove people, which is against the anti-spam legislation. There was an option at the time for the TGSA to create its own list serve, or through Traill. The TGSA is perfectly able to create its own list serve. The TCSA has strict policies about their list serve. They only use it for elections, so there's a precedent that student groups go through colleges to use communications. That's the bigger picture. Perhaps we need a better communication system. If you're not happy with the current way, you're welcome to change that.

-Alexandra: we naturally have to appreciate that Traill is helping us out. And we can discuss having our own list in the future.

-Michael: we have a Blackboard list that we use.

-Laura: I would say that that would be a great move in the future, but it could be a lot of work. There's an awkwardness around having a university body filter our messages. Say if we're having a survey that took a political stance, that could cause certain problems for Traill and us, so that could be a good direction to go in. I feel uncomfortable having the GSA messages filtered.

-Alexandra: for sure. Time's up for that topic.

-Alexandra D.: is that something you're going to work on?

-Alexandra: for sure. I'll talk to my board and my team to get my opinion. We'll bring it the board, and all members are free to attend.

e.**David presents with Michelle, Alison Fraser takes over as scribe**

Hisson introduced the sss

projected budget presented

presented a revised budget

removed key note speaker

less sponsored tickets

will do gala at trail with Bagnani

David and Michelle finish presentation, David returns as scribe

-Swarsattie: why wasn't the endowment included in past budgets?

- Michelle: I don't know, because that past amount was reinvested.
- Alison: this is the first year of the Symons Series that they're using the endowment fund.
- Michelle: we had a meeting and I was told that were allowed to spend it. Dr. Eamon told us that the endowment fund interest can be used while under the auspices of Traill.
- Alison: I was seeking clarification on the budget. I know that in past years, Symons execs were adamant about not spending the interest.
- Michael: we're dealing with a fund that should be managed by the university. There was no regulation saying the Series had to reinvest or not. So, the reduction in funds from the TGSA means other resources have to be spent as well.
- Alison: it was made clear to me last year that interest wasn't to be touched until \$5000.00
- Michael: that was a precedent, there was nothing actually written down about that.
- Michelle: if our funding has been reduced, we have to use it.
- Alexandra D.: I was curious about the awards. What is the basis to receive that award? Who decides what grad student does the best job?
- Michelle: the judging committee, which is composed of graduate students. Every grad student has an opportunity to sit on the committee, and we keep an even split between Arts and Sciences
- Alexandra D.: what is the criteria?
- Michelle: that's in our online drive. This is the first year that Symons has actually had an online presence, so we're going to be more transparent now. And we're looking into setting up a website as well.
- Erin: I was on the judging committee last year. I know that discussions of the final winner was who was the best presenter. It was based more on the presentation and communication.
- Laura: I've talked to several students in the past who have presented in the Series. My concern is that with the judging criteria, there still is an overwhelming number of Sciences and Social Sciences. Perhaps the way that Humanities students present doesn't necessarily fit certain criteria of the Series. Perhaps that should be addressed more carefully.
- Michelle: we don't have submissions from quite a few Humanities departments.
- Laura: I think it's because students felt they were excluded from those criteria.
- Michelle: We're actually having trouble finding presenters this year. Maybe this is our problem, but we do send the call for abstracts graduate wide.
- Laura: I know, I just think that there are some dissatisfied students. I was wondering if the Series doesn't receive the additional funding, can they apply for additional group support? I know it's hard to throw in money from certain events. Are they open to apply to the same things other groups are able to?
- Alison: yes, there's nothing in our bylaws to prevent that.
- Laura: okay, then that can be discussed in our board.

f. Alison: nominations from the floor?

****Rishabh Sarswat is nominated for First Year Science Representative****

****Kathleen Forward is nominated for First Year Arts Representative****

-Alison: Do you accept the nominations?

****Rishabh and Kathleen accept nominations****

8. Other Business (10 minutes)

8.1 Motion to Hold Online Voting

Minutes

-Laura: I think some people are leaving. We may be losing quorum.

David recounts, finds that attendance is now at 27. Three general members begin to leave, which would result in quorum being lost. David brings back those who left on condition that they can leave after voting is over. Attendance now at 27. Quorum still met.

-Alison:

Motion: Hold Voting Online with Jan 16th to 23rd Voting Period

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 27

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

-Alison: great! Let's motion to adjourn now.

Motion to Adjourn at 7:28pm due to people leaving: Alison Fraser

Seconded: Laura Thursby

Approve: 27

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

-Alison: for anyone who's confused, what happened was that a few people were going to leave, and we would have lost quorum had that happened, meaning we couldn't vote to accept the nominees for first year arts and sciences reps. The rest of these minutes are unofficial, meaning we cannot vote on anything.

UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

8.2 Joint Health Care Plan Survey Announcement (see [Addendum III](#))

8.3 Update about Bata Library (see [Addendum IV](#))

Minutes

-Mac: so, as has been mentioned, the library is undergoing renovations. **presents slide** Also, this past week, I brought up all this at the Senate meeting, and then there was a ruckus about that. More students and faculty are aware, and how we get access to our research resources is a major issue. We're not thinking of moving forward.

-Erin: this may seem minor, but I see that it says AT LEAST 50%

-Mac: I was told 50% or more. Maybe up to 60%, but it could be more.

-Erin: Okay. And the selection? Who makes that decision?

-Mac: they're being removed based on needing to renovate.

-Sophie: I think Kristine sent an email about the whole response. Apparently, the books are being removed in April?

-Alison: books are continuously de-sessioned. Nona also said that books are always being de-sessioned.

-Alexandra: I wanted to say that the TCSA is holding a town hall about this issue on Jan 20th, and you're all encouraged to attend! It's a town hall meeting. In Otonabee. Robert Clarke is forming a committee that grads can sit on. So please come to me with that.

8.4 Update about Convocation (see [Addendum V](#))

Minutes

-**Mac presents update**

-Mac: I'll add that the Psychology department is the guinea pig for this. We're continually mentioning that even if it's just Psychology, that we wish to not see this happen. If you are concerned about that and want to send in a letter, the more the merrier. It makes our concerns clear to admin. And make sure to do that soon.

-Laura: I sent this to the board. If anyone's interested, I sent a letter to the board. You can ask me if you'd like a copy.

-Gwyn: will this email be online?

-Alison: it is online. It's not listed on our website, but we could potentially list it on our website.

8.5 Executive Position Announcement

Minutes

-Alexandra: if anyone wants to run for our positions next year, please let us know. We'll discuss with you all the aspects of the position. It has been a great experience!

9. Additional Questions Period (*10 minutes*)

Minutes

-Rishabh: can you elaborate more on the benefits of being an executive officer of the TGSA?

-Alexandra: made more friends, learned more about admin, more presentation experience... so many! It's fun! And it looks great on a CV. And we're making decisions that actually matter.

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 Wallis 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 am also happy to tell you that the MoU was signed on January 11th, 2017 by myself and fellow Symons exec Michelle Hisson, TGSA President Alexandra Ha, and Dr. Michael Eamon, the principal of Traill College. 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, of course, I'm typically the one sending you all those emails. 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 10th 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 8th 2016**).
 - First Nations and Aboriginal persons (November 24th 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)

- 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 11th/2017.
 - Winner gets funding (\$5000) to implement their idea on campus
 - More info: 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.
- (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

Addendum III-
Joint Health Care Plan Survey Announcement

Joint Health Care Plan Survey Announcement

As you know the TGSA joined a Joint Health and Dental Benefits Plan with the TCSA (Trent Central Student Association) and the TDSA (Trent Durham Student Association) this year.

There were problems getting a Memorandum of Understanding that was as promised to graduate students at the Spring 2016 General Meeting. Most notable is that the TGSA and the TDSA do not have equal voting power to the TCSA who has the final say over the health and dental plan.

However, there are predicted long-term savings that could be established in this joint health care format.

We want to hear your thoughts. We will be sending out a survey about the Joint Health and Dental Benefits Plan. In the meanwhile we always want to hear your thoughts. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about your health care please email us at gsa@trentu.ca

Addendum IV-
Update about Bata Library

Bata Library Research and Innovation Cluster

What has changed or not been openly communicated:

- 50% (At least) of the books in Bata's stacks will be removed and placed in storage at a facility elsewhere in town. Bata is unsure whether or not this will function as a visitable offsite library or strictly storage, requiring a request form to retrieve books from storage. Books will not be deaccessioned (removed permanently) without extensive consultation to determine what books are least used, and without ensuring that other libraries at other universities have copies of the book (not a unique item). Bata expects to make heavier use of Interlibrary Loans if Trent does not have the source.
- Originally only the third and fourth floor were being targeted by this project, however all floors may now be renovated, and no space is off limits for renovation (or so I've been told).
- 3rd floor will remain a silent floor, and the Grad Students' Reading Room will continue to exist in the plans for the renovations. Nothing was indicated about the study carrels, but I anticipate the library will keep some of them in a reduced capacity.
- It was indicated to myself by Robert Clarke, Trent's University Librarian, that the 2nd floor office spaces would likely be removed, the circulation desk at the front drastically reduced in footprint, and the IT may be shuffled elsewhere, however the location of the stacks and computers on the 2nd floor would remain relatively the same.
- Consultation with Grads, Undergrads, and Faculty have not occurred, and there is expected to be little to no consultation due to a tight deadline to get the budget approved before Trent loses access to the governmental funding. Budget will be passed this Friday at the upcoming Board of Governors Meeting.

Addendum V-
Update about Convocation

Update about Convocation

Last year, the President of Trent University (Leo Groarke), has suggested that graduate students should convocate with the undergraduates.

This has been largely opposed by faculty and graduate students.

Your opinion still matters. Please email your thoughts to Joanne Sokolowski (Manager, Convocation & Alumni Relations) at joannesokolow@trentu.ca.

We would also like to hear from you! Please email us your thoughts about convocation to gsa@trentu.ca.
