

GSA Meeting Minutes July 12, 2010 Traill College, Wallis Hall 226

Attendance

Present:

Andy Farnsworth	President
Allison Hayward	VP Executive Affairs
Agnes Pelletier	Science Liason
Beth Evans	VP Student Affairs
Kyle Borrowman	VP Student Affairs
John Franey	VP Communications
Carling Beninger	Arts Liason
Rachel Herron	VP Operations

Absent with regards:

Megan Buckham	Environmental Commissioner
Jessica Ellison	Human Rights Commissioner
Kim Wilson	CUPE Representative
Judith Mintz	Senator
Agata Durkalec	VP Finance

Agenda:

President's Remarks

1) Health Plan: Health Plan negotiations are still underway with the TCSA. The TCSA has been negotiating with health benefits providers and is in favour of a health benefits package that will cost each student \$260, which was the previous cost of the Greenshield package (please correct me if I am wrong here). The proposed new plan is with a new benefits provider. The TCSA is looking into extending eye care coverage external to the new health care plan, which would cover \$80 worth of eye care services. Discussion about what and how much should be covered in the health plan and the differences between Graduate student and Undergraduate students' needs is still a source of tension (see previous minutes for details).

Undergraduate students currently pay an administration fee of \$26; however, graduate students pay nothing for the administration of the plan. The TCSA claims that one full-time and two part-time employees working a cumulative total of 60 hours a week administer all health benefits claims. Several members of the GSA question this claim, particularly since Trent Health in Motion, deals with many student claims directly. The GSA consensus was that graduate students should pay a representative proportion of the administration costs. The TCSA claims that they cannot sort out how much of the TCSA fee goes towards the administration of the health plan. However, the GSA does not want Graduate students to pay an association fee when Graduate students have their own association that provides benefits and services, which would overlap with those of the TCSA. Part-time students and Consecutive Education students have their own associations and still pay into the TCSA. The GSA also questioned the TCSA salary noting that they are building in their own salary to discuss health plan issues.

The TCSA has not been transparent in their discussions with the GSA. At the next health plan meeting, more GSA representatives will attend to support our concerns and urge the TCSA to give us more information about their negotiations. If we have to pay more for the administration of the health plan, a referendum in December will be required to approve an increase. If the GSA were to pay the \$ 26.58 fee to the TCSA to cover cost of administration, it would be paying for ¼ of the administration costs.

GSA representatives will speak with Joan Sangster and Merri Kim about the issue. Allison (not sure who) made a motion to strike a sub-committee to work on health plan issues and form a coherent document that states our position. The motion was passed and a committee was established, including: Agata, John, Beth, Rachel, and Andy. A final question was asked about the GSA's potential options and role in health plan: can the GSA hire their own claims officer, perhaps a student?

2) Bottled Water Bill: Discussion continues about the bottled water bill and the TCSA welcomes any GSA input on the subject. As Environmental Commissioner, Meghan has researched and developed a formal write-up looking at bottled water policies at Ottawa, Queen's and Memorial Universities.

The role of Aramark in bottled water policies was one issue raised. In March 2010, an *Arthur* article stated that Aramark was against the proposed policy due to cited financial losses. Statistical arguments and free choice arguments were used by Aramark to support the sale of bottled water; however, it was pointed out that the statistics used came from a small private school and may not apply to the student population at Trent. Although Aramark's stance is important, Trent does get some money from vending machine sales of bottled water and this revenue should be considered.

Another concern in the current policy is a statement that requires Physical Resources to install water fountains "as resources permit and as needed," which does not make a strong commitment to the accessibility of free water. Stronger guidelines should be made and guidelines for the accessibility and number of bathrooms should be considered as a point of comparison. Fountains should also be wheelchair accessible. Water accessibility will also be affected by the type of fountain installed. Ottawa University has installed gooseneck fountains to aid filling water bottles. Alternatives for visitors should be considered, such as the sale of reusable bottles for the same price as disposable water bottles, a protocol currently used at Ottawa University. Special concerns for Traill College, where there is no vendor for a longer period of time should be considered. New maps and signage as well as a new student package will be required. For further debate on the issues associated with the water bottle ban, see previous minutes.

3) President, Andy Farnsworth has failed his PhD exams and therefore must step down as president by December 2010. The GSA discussed whether it would be best for Andy to step down early to give a new President a full term. Elections for first year candidates will be held in September, which may be the best time to elect a new president. No election plan was decided on. This issue will need to be discussed at the next meeting.

4) Events:

Symons' Seminar Series: The first Wednesday in October, will be the first Symons' Seminar. The GSA is not technically responsible for organizing the seminar series; however, one executive member does sit on the Symons' Series Committee of three and the GSA supports the series as an event for which it provides food. GSA members are strongly encouraged to attend the series.

The date and budget for the next GSA BBQ were discussed. Beth suggested we spend \$250 on the next BBQ and she proposed making a more long term budget for event spending to aid planning. Rachel motioned to spend \$250 on next BBQ, Agnes seconded the motion and all were in favour. The BBQ will be held the last week in July. Other potential sources of event funding were discussed including CUPE funding and the potential to partner in events particularly during introductory week.

The introductory week event budget was discussed. Last year's introductory week budget was \$500. Suggestions for intro week events included a band/open mic night at the Trend on Wednesday night. The event organizers will have to speak with Chief Daniel and Deb Nichols about event details and funding from the College as well as the capacity of the Trend. Intro week runs from September 6th to 10th. Beth and Kyle have suggested that they would like to run two family-oriented and two night time events. Further event suggestions include a games night, a bar night, a GSA pub crawl or "brewery tour" and a bonfire. Beth also brought to the GSA's attention the need to update the GSA website and facebook group to promote events and involvement.

5) CFS wants to meet with the GSA to discuss the benefits of being a CFS member. The CFS is a student lobby group, which charges a \$14 fee for students to become members. However, Allison raised a concern that it does not represent Graduate student issues and students cannot campaign against CFS, but CFS is allowed to campaign on campus, which presents no opportunity for opposition against this organization. Members of the GSA will meet with a CFS representative to gather more information.

Rachel motioned to adjourn the meeting, Kyle seconded the motion and all were in favour.