



TGSA Board Meeting Summarized Minutes

Date: June 2nd, 2020 (Tuesday)

Start time: 5.00PM **End time:** 7.10PM

Location: Zoom video conference

Chair: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Scribe: Shyong Quan (Elicia) Yap

Attendance: Tanya Aminataei, Sebastian Johnston-Lindsay, Verena Sesin, Alison Fraser, Shannon Fiedler, Anique Chatzis, Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan, Jordon Williams, Maryam Helae, Janina Schmitz, Elicia Yap - **11/15(quorum met)**

Regrets: Beatriz Bento (technical issues), Connor Elverson, Madhu Garg, Fatma Ozen

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

Everyone introduced themselves and gave an update on how they were doing amid the pandemic.

Alison read out the Land Acknowledgement for Toronto/Tkaronto and Peterborough/Nogojwanong.

2. Call to Order

3. Adopt the Agenda:

Mover: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Second: Alison Fraser

Discussion

-no discussion

Approve: 11

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

****motion carries****

4. Past Meeting Minutes

4.1 Adopt the Minutes from the Verbatim Minutes from 19th May 2020 Board Meeting

Mover: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Second: Sebastian Johnston-Lindsay

Discussion

-no discussion

Approve: 10

Oppose:

Abstain: Alison Fraser

****motion carries****

4.2 Adopt the Minutes from the Summarized Minutes from 19th May 2020 Board Meeting

Mover: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Second: Sebastian Johnston-Lindsay

Discussion

-no discussion

Approve: 10

Oppose:

Abstain: Alison Fraser

****motion carries****

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

a) Sandra (President)

(i) Updates from several meetings attended

Sandra has been busy doing marketing for TGSA, representing graduate students in a fund-raising campaign for Trent. She also delivered the prize for the 3MT competition. TGSA donated \$1000 to 3MT but not all the money has been used this year because of the current situation, thus, the leftover money will be used next year.

Convocation is happening virtually this year. Sandra shared many photos of graduate students and fun videos like celebrating the “I did it” moments to the Alumni office.

At the student leader meeting, they discussed about how the Fall term will look like. There is a possibility of having a new risk assessment form and a consent form for online events. In terms of academic, CUPE can help with this as there are intellectual freedom clauses that protect faculty members, instructors and GTAs.

Sandra also talked to Shaun from Housing. They will proceed with the contract model, which allows for renovations in the summer when students are not around and making sure that the spaces are for current students only. They are going to open their application soon and are rethinking about the price.

b) Sebastian (VP internal affairs)

- (i) By-Laws - a need for the whole board to review the 2017 version

Sebastian continued to work on the bylaws/policies upon receiving the latest 2017 version from former TGSA President, Alison. TGSA has realized that, over the past few years, positions for program representatives are often not filled. The board discussed about ways to streamline program representatives in our previous meeting in May. The bylaws section 16.1A states that the right to directly elect a representative will not be arbitrary withheld by any constituency group. Thus, the board discussed about having larger discipline representatives while maintaining the program representative positions. This will allow for demographic representation including having an Indigenous student or other minorities. The board also foresee to take out positions such as Ontario Liaison Commissioner and Health and Dental Commissioner that have been deemed unnecessary over the past years.

The board is also looking into rewording the TGSA bursary applications to make it more inclusive and clearer on our coverage. CUPE has informed us that their bursary covers everything as long as the applicant can argue that it is related to their ability to teach, however, it does not cover students in the professional programs as they are not Unit 2 workers. The board suggested on covering costs for books, tests such as MCAT and LSAT, laptops and commute for students in the professional programs. Other costs such as field research related (i.e boat license) will be judged on a case-to-case basis. The board plans to inform and communicate with the graduate student body about our bursaries during orientation and on all our social media platforms.

c) Anique (VP Finance)

- (i) Incoming emergency bursaries and bursary reminder

TGSA has received a lot of bursary applications that are Covid-19 related. The money requested was \$11,675 which was more than our cap of our entire emergency bursary for the year. Applicants that previously apply for the Covid-19 bursary can apply for the emergency bursary without waiting for the 12-month period. However, applicants who receive the bursary now will have to wait for another 12-month period before they are eligible to apply for their next emergency bursary. Anique and Sebastian will have to check through our bylaws/policies to ensure that TGSA can exercise its emergency power to allocate a sum of money for students in need amid the pandemic.

- (ii) Incorporating our main goals as the TGSA for this year into the budget

Anique is looking into restructuring our budget for 2020/21 by incorporating communication and Covid-related bursaries budget. The eligibility of graduate students for CERB and CESB were also discussed.

(iii) Financial statements of 2018 to 2019

Anique will follow up with Connor, our Student Support Coordinator, on our financial statements.

6. Updates from CUPE

Alison (CUPE Unit 2 representative)

- (i) A place to discuss what TAs are going to look like in the Fall. Trent will be making an announcement about what it wants to do this fall in terms of instruction delivery. CUPE has also been in touch with the employer (Trent) prior to this announcement. I would like to let grad students what's going on with their TAs and AAs. I also want to collect graduate student questions and concerns, so I can take them back to the employer.

There will be more marker positions for Fall semester employment. CUPE is pushing for (1) more student support in terms of GTA for job duties and not only limited to marking (2) student evaluations (3) accommodation for graduate students with disabilities (i.e hearing disabilities) (4) outreach to ensure that graduate students know that course material, instruction equipment, access to office supplies are provided by Trent. Trent will honour funded graduate students first for positions and academic assistants will be allocated last.

TA online training will also take place and is paid for. Cathy Bruce, who sits on the Trent Covid Committee, has asked a list of suggestions which will be helpful in terms of TA training in this new online environment. Alison asked the board to email her suggestions.

- (ii) A place to solicit feedback from the TGSA regarding how CUPE can better help the TGSA and grad students now and going forward.
- (iii) A place to discuss the Canada Student Emergency Bursary. Or at least a little space to let grad students know about the CSEB and how to apply.

Alison also wants to help establish a good relationship between CUPE and TGSA. Another discussion about the distinction between CESB and CERB.

7. Executive Reports (see Addendum I)

- a) President
- b) VP Internal Affairs
- c) VP Communications
- d) VP Finance
- e) VP Student Affairs
- f) VP Senate Representative

Minutes: Additions to Executive reports

Motion to Approve the Executive Reports

Mover: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Second: Elicia Yap

Discussion

Jordon expanded more on his report on event ideas for the year. There will be online style events and discussion groups. The board has decided to change our events to biweekly and Covid café to monthly. This could help with the turn out for events. Jordon proposed that we could carry out a model parliament themed event in the Great Hall, Champlain College and students can give speeches and pass bills.

Approve: 11

Oppose:

Abstain:

****motion carries****

8. Commissioner Reports (see Addendum II)

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

Minutes: Additions to Commissioner reports

Motion to Approve the Commissioner Reports

Mover: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Second: Elicia Yap

Discussion

Tanya is the Equity Commissioner and was voted into TGSA in the previous meeting. She found a gap in the previous documents and has contacted the previous commissioner for their transition document. Andrea Walsh, who is responsible for the PACHERA committee will send Tanya the latest document.

Approve: 11

Oppose:

Abstain:

****motion carries****

9. Question Period and Departmental Issues

10. Business Arising from the Minutes

11. Motions

12. Other Business

13. Notices of Motions and Announcements

- a. The next board meeting will be held 7th July 2020
- b. The reports and motions for that meeting are due 2nd July 2020

14. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Mover: Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan

Second: Alison Fraser

Discussion

-no discussion

Approve: 11

Oppose:

Abstain:

****motion carries****

Addendum I
Executive Reports

Sandra (President):

During the last two weeks of May, I worked on communication materials to represent the TGSA in various Trent initiatives. This included recording videos 1) in which I announced the winner of the TGSA Runner UP prize for the 3MT thesis, 2) in which I encourage alumni to donate for the summer Trent fundraising campaign (highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on graduate students' work progress and the role they are currently playing in the world during this pandemic), and 3) in which I celebrate graduates for the virtual convocation in June. I have also attended a meeting with the other Trent associations and unions (TUFA, CUPE 3908, CUPE 3205, OPSEU 365, TDSA, TCSA) to give updates about how our respective members have been impacted by the university shutdown and discuss the university's response to our requests. I also contacted Shaun McCracken to receive updates about the graduate housing situation on campus. Lastly, I have been coordinating with TCSA and TDSA to deliver a joint graduation gift (a magnet with a customized message and our three associations logos) that will be mailed to graduates along with their degree.

Sebastian (VP Internal Affairs):

This month I started the process of reviewing and updating the TGSA by-laws and policies. I began a report comparing our by-laws to those of four other graduate student associations (GSAs) in Ontario. These schools were Guelph, Lakehead, Queen's and Western. In the midst of my work on this, I discovered that the TGSA by-laws that were available online and which I had been referencing were not the most recent and representative version. The by-laws had been updated and approved at an AGM in April of 2017. I contacted the current TGSA President, Sandra Klemet-N'Guessan, and she was able to contact the previous President who confirmed that the by-laws had been updated and approved. How or why they were never updated online is not altogether clear. It's interesting to note that the version available on the TGSA Facebook page is the updated version. Addressing this kind of inconsistency should be a priority for the 2020/21 Board.

This fact complicates my work somewhat, as the by-law amendments which were voted upon at the 2019 AGM were based on an old version of our governing documents. Despite this, the main findings of my initial report stand. The main ideas of my report as it stand are as follows:

1. The TGSA governing document is a reasonable length when compared to other GSAs. It is of average length and its style is comparable.
2. All student groups group their constitution/by-laws in a single unified document. I assume this has to do with accessibility and ease of reference between the various sections which depend upon each other.

3. The TGSA's Board is largely similar to other GSAs that I have looked to. The matter of simplifying and perhaps reducing the number of program representatives was raised at the May Board Meeting. This was raised based on the previous by-laws which were slightly more cryptic on the roles and expectations of the program representatives and their roles. Furthermore, the 2017 version of the by-laws states that the "right to elect a representative shall not be arbitrarily withheld from any constituent group" (By-Law 16.01 a.). We might consider this alongside the other parts of By-Law 16 which outlines some of the powers the Board holds in terms of deciding to appoint program representatives. The main take away from this is that while we cannot withhold a program's right to elect a representative, we do have the power to not actively appoint a representative from every program and department.
4. Honouraria and Executive Pay is divergent and again sees Trent as largely average. The disparity between Executive pay and Representative and Commissioner pay is also similar to the other GSAs that I looked to.

In conclusion, the TGSA Board might consider moving forward in amending the by-laws after each member has had a chance to review the 2017 version. I have created a new file in the VP Internal Affairs file in the TGSA Shared Google Drive entitled "TGSA by-laws 2017 version edited 2020." I continue to welcome feedback on possible improvements to the by-laws, but my personal opinion is that the 2017 by-laws represent an improvement in terms of organization and clarity.

Elicia (VP Communication):

I have been working on:

- (a) Our new TGSA website as we transition from Wordpress to Squarespace
- (b) Being active on our social media platforms and sharing news, updates, resources and events that are relevant to graduate students
- (c) Reached out to Mike Kirkpatrick who is in charge of designing the Trent University application. He has been in contact with staff from School of Grad Studies and has suggested on having a graduate student tile with TGSA as a subsection. The TGSA members have discussed and proposed some suggestions which I have relayed it to Mike.
- (d) Creating posters for events and have uploaded these posters in Google Drive
- (e) Compiling blurbs from TGSA members to be put on the website and our social media channels. We will be posting up our TGSA team on our social media by first week of June
- (f) Utilizing Trent Calendar and Traill College Newsletter as a mean of communication to graduate students

Anique (VP Finance):

Completed/current duties:

- 2020/2021 TGSA budget projection
- 2019 Fall and Winter levy income

- Spring bursaries, emergency bursaries
- CUPE 3908 donations to orientation
- CUPE 3908 bursaries: what do they entail?
- Aiding in the topic of graduate alumni relationships (Trent University Alumni Association)
- Organizing of the VP Finance folder from 2018 to 2020
- 3MT Finances
- Determining the applicability of graduate students to either CERB or CESB

Incoming responsibilities:

- Student representative on the Special Appeals Committee
- Student representative on the Trent University Alumni Association
- Financial statements for 2018 to 2019 for future levy cheques
- E-transfer bursaries
- Incoming emergency bursaries
- CUPE partnership with COVID relief funds

Jordon (VP Student Affairs):

The current status of events has finally cleared, and we are looking at a primarily online fall term. As such, this list will be a bit barren until we can figure out the full extent of what the university is planning for campus. However, here are some ideas for how events should move forward for the coming term:

- Discussion Groups: The goal for discussion groups is to engage with the grad student body and open dialogue based on the topic of said discussion. I would propose at minimum one such group a month based on a list of potential topics. One key discussion group that we might want to have is "Being a GTA During a Pandemic" hopefully a better title can be presented. Other discussion formats will be determined for the first semester by the first week of August. I would also propose that at minimum one of these groups be an "open" discursive format like a town hall. Given the context of the pandemic and the potential weight, it has on the student body a check-in style discussion like "COVID Café" might be a good idea.
- COVID Café- I attended the past event, and it had some lacklustre attendance (only two attendees myself included). The café is a wonderful idea, but from student testimonial, there was little attendance over the last few weeks. I would propose we shift this event to biweekly and advertise it a bit more to see how the attendance goes for the rest of June. If this does not turn up much, then we should look at having this event maybe one or two more times throughout the summer and advertise accordingly.
- Events. We are in a tight spot with events as our physical presence will be lacking. Online events seem to be the new norm, at least with the fall term. Accessible events to run online are trivia and various board games. However, looking outside of this box, we could still host some fun and unique events. A few that I think are important are:
 - An online talent competition. This might be a bit difficult, depending on the talent being presented but is still possible. Individuals could show off writing as a talent,

maybe some comedy, music as well. There is still a lot of openness for an event like this.

- Grad/undergraduate mentorship. This would be good to host before November when undergrads begin to look at grad school opportunities. This event would have grads presenting and answering questions about their respective departments. In my case, I could talk about what it means to be a humanities/social science student. What the work is like and what I can research concerning my department.
- Guest speakers and panel discussions: I come from a political and social background. One of the standard events we ran were panels and guest speaker events. I propose we try to do the same and work with departments such as Indigenous Studies for example to get speakers on campus. Warranting that we are unable at this time to have a physical presence, zoom discussions will have to do. Names that come to mind include Cindy Blackstock, Anthony Rota (Speaker of the House of Commons) and any other suggestions.
- TGSA: Lecture Series. I write this knowing full well that there are various lecture series out there. But this would be the work of all members of our team. I would propose that TGSA exec and any interested student who wants to present research but are intimidated by the larger groups or miss deadlines for other lecture series be invited. The goal would be a 10ish minute or shorter discussion on your research, whether it be your thesis or even just a topic that interests you. Could be a fun presentation like rhyming, dancing, singing, any creative avenue or just a simple presentation.
- Model Parliament. At my past university, I was president of the Political Science Association and the main organizer of 3 years for our event Model Parliament. The event takes about 100-150 students to Ottawa to act as parliamentarians for a weekend. Three nights in a hotel, one day in the house of commons with lunch and dinner provided on the day in the house (Friday). Dinner is at the Chateau Laurier; Saturday is a free day and Sunday we return. However, considering Trent does not have such an event, and due to COVID if we want to go through with this event, it would have to be on campus and preferably in January. Our best course of action is to get TCSA, TDSA and the political studies department on board for this event. Being on campus means that we may be able to get away without charging for it and that we would only need one day for our sitting. I think renting out The Great Hall at Champlain and having the Seasoned Spoon cater would be a good idea. Still, I will draft a budget when more details become available. Other things to keep in mind is to look for people to lead one of the six parties this event usually has (NDP, Liberal, Conservative, Bloc, Green, FPNP). MP would also require some training on how to write a bill and a speech for the event. I have confidence that we can pull it off and I have extensive experience working on this event but will still recruit help for it. Most of the planning will be done throughout the summer and hopefully finalized in August.
- Radio. This may not apply, but it is still something we could consider. Starting a radio show for the TGSA where we talk about grad life, upcoming events, and what the TGSA

is doing is a great way to advertise and get exposure. Plus being on the radio is fun, and we can get some more viewership for our college station.

Janina (VP Senate):

As this was the first month in office, I spent most of my time working my way through the transitional documents. I set up my VP senate email account and worked my way through last year's messages. My main goal this month was to attain a better understanding and a broad overview of the VP senate position and the work of the TGSA in general. During the upcoming academic year, I plan to become an active member of the TGSA as a communicator between the committees I'll sit on, the senate and the grad student concerns. I will take over the previous VP senate's projects concerning grad student housing. I hope to be involved in further shaping and supporting our grad school community especially as we will likely be navigating several significant changes in our grad school life due to protective Covid 19 measure in the upcoming fall term.

Addendum II
Commissioner Reports

Verena (Environmental Commissioner):

In the next month I am planning to go through all the green tips raffle entries and extract tips that students were giving. To enter the raffle, I had asked every student three questions:

1. Do you think that living eco-friendly and sustainable is important and why?
2. How could you be more eco-friendly this year?
3. Do you have a Go Green tip to share?

My goal is to have a list of statements to share in our newsletter later this year.

Equity Commissioner: -

International Student Representative Commissioner: -