



TGSA Board Meeting Summarized Minutes

Date: January 13, 2022 (Thursday)

Start time: 3:00 pm **End time:** 4:30 pm

Location: Zoom Conference

Chair: Sebastian Johnston-Lindsay

Scribe: Stephanie Gao

Attendance: Sebastian Lindsay-Johnston, Tanya Aminataei, Gabriella Peters, Emma Kaszecki, Michael Schmidt, Jordan MacDonald, Nicole Covey

Regrets: Stephanie Gao, Devon Howell, Melissa Miller Gerrard, Richard Moore, Madison Moore

Absence without Regrets: George Danso, Jithendra Kodali, Emelia Naana-Baah

NOTE: The scribe had technical difficulties. Minutes are partially incomplete. Some attendees may not be fully noted.

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

Introduction and updates from board members

2. Call to Order

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the treaty and traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.

3. Adopt the Agenda:

Mover:

Second:

Discussion

Approve:

Oppose:

Abstain:

4. Past Meeting Minutes

Adopt the Minutes from Summarized Minutes from December 2nd, 2021, Board Meeting

Mover:
Second:

Discussion

Approve:
Oppose:
Abstain:

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

a.) President - Sebastian

a. Annual General Meeting

Date for the AGM has been officially set to February 17, 2022 at 3pm via Zoom

b. Meeting with Dean of Graduate Studies

b.) James Conolly is the current acting Dean of Graduate Studies. Craig has address concerns of graduate students, which is a retroactive reimbursed of tuition for those who have already graduate. However, it does not alleviate issues that students would experience during their time of study. It is now suggested that students who do not have funds outside of their funding period can receive a term's tuition without charge and can reapply if eligible. In addition, there should be a type of communication from Graduate Studies can allow students to reach out regarding impacts and problems students have faced due to COVID-19.

a. Meeting with Traill

c.) There is a need to be firmer and more diligent when communicating with Michael from Traill, however Traill is sometimes uncollaborative.

d.) VP of Student Affairs – Gabriella

a. Care Package Update

i. This event was very successful. All students picked up their packages. Two undergraduates managed to obtain a package.

b. Holiday Photo Contest Update

c. New events

i. Plant potting event with Trent Active Minds is pushed until in-person attendance.

ii. In February, TGSA will host a Blind Date with a Book event.

6. Updates from CUPE – Michael Schmidt (Steward Unit 2)

Collective Bargaining was successful and very respectful. Many things were ratified and a email was sent out regarding key updates about what was expanded and was changed. New funds being added, and a joint committee will be held to implement this. Professional Development Fund has now been expanded to \$500 this year. There is a discussion about removing barriers to accessing payroll. There has been concerns about remote learning and problems with transition back to in-

person learning. The University appears to be very adamant on decisions made for COVID management.

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:

Second:

Discussion

Approve:

Oppose:

Abstain:

8. Commissioner Reports (see Addendum II)

a. Equity Commissioner

At the Sexual Harassment committee meeting, there was a discussion for the University to review the current sexual harassment policy to make a safer place for complainants. At the second meeting, the TCSA has made some recommendations. The recommendations were reviewed and the committee came to a collective decision to have a new sexual harassment policy that is more complaint-driven.

b. Environmental Commissioner

Met with Shelley Strain is set to discuss progress of current projects and brainstorm ideas for future ones. This will hopefully open a new avenue for future projects for TGSA.

c. International Student Representative Commissioner

Minutes: Additions to Commissioner reports

Motion to Approve the Commissioner Reports

Mover:

Second:

Discussion

Approve:

Oppose:
Abstain:

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 on February 3rd at 3:00 pm.
- b. The reports and motions for that meeting are due February 1st at 11:59 pm.
- c. The next Executive meeting will be held on January 27th

14. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Mover:
Second:

Addendum I **Executive Reports**

Sebastian (President):

Welcome to 2022, everyone! This is a busy time of year for us all and especially for the TGSA as we plan for our AGM. This report will serve as an outline for what I'm hoping to accomplish over the next month or so based on some recent conversations and meetings I've been having with administration.

Annual General Meeting:

First of all, this year's AGM will be taking place on February 17th at 3:00 PM. This is primarily due to the fact that all Execs are able to attend during this time and given that we are the ones who are obliged to present our annual reports, this makes the most sense. More official information and notice will be forthcoming.

For each AGM, there is a nomination period of one week ending at least five days before the AGM itself. Therefore, the nomination period for this year will be between February 3-10. The voting period will follow immediately after the conclusion of the AGM and will be open for one week, or until February 24th at 3:00. Results of the election will be announced no later than

February 28th, and the transition period will begin on March 1st wherein the newly elected Board Members will be able to shadow the outgoing members until April 30th.

The list of positions which will be open for nominations are as follows:

- President
- Vice President, Internal Affairs
- Vice President, Communications
- Vice President, Finance
- Vice President, Student Affairs
- Vice President, Senate Representative
- Equity Commissioner
- Environmental Commissioner
- International Student Commissioner
- Trent Durham Representative

I would encourage everyone to please consider putting your name forth for one of these positions. If you have any questions about any of the positions, please don't hesitate to reach out to anyone currently serving in them for more information. You are only allowed to nominate yourself for one position. You are also able to nominate others should you wish.

Meeting with the Dean of Graduate Studies:

Following a number of emails from concerned graduate students, I set up a meeting with James Conolly, Acting Dean of Graduate Studies, to discuss how the TGSA and his office can work together to remedy some of the issues facing graduate students as it relates to the pandemic.

The main issues facing graduate students tend to revolve around access to resources, the continuation of full tuition costs, and the inability to complete within the funding window available to them depending on their degree. These are primarily financial concerns which have historically been remedied by allowing students to apply for a tuition rebate upon completion of their degree after supplying Graduate Studies with a reason for why they went over time.

James and I both noted that this process places an undue amount of pressure on students to disclose aspects of their lives, especially surrounding mental/physical health, family situations, living situations, etc. which they shouldn't have to openly discuss with university administrators. To preemptively address this, he has agreed to draft a message to all graduate students that if they are or will be post-funding in the near future and that this is specifically due to the impacts of COVID, that they are encouraged to reach out to him and his office, as well as their program directors at any time and that they need only relate the structural reasons for delay having to do with access to materials, lab/office space, travel restrictions, etc.

James has also started addressing these instances through an advance on the costs of tuition, meaning that students should no longer have to pay a term's tuition when they go overtime, which effectively addresses the concern that students will be able to focus on their studies rather than take on extra debt, or work, as they finish their degrees.

This being said, James is also hesitant to introduce any form of universal relief to graduate students as it's next to impossible to know how it has affected them across the board and chances are this would recreate issues surrounding the equity of this situation. The individual approach, where we encourage students to reach out and explain their circumstances is a good start, but certainly not the last step in helping support these students.

To this end, we're going to work on putting together a survey to get some information on how COVID has impacted time to completion for graduate students across the student population and from different programs (eg. research and professional, M.A., Ph.D.), disciplines and also the year they started their degree in order to understand how these factors have affected graduate students' experience overall. We're hoping this will give greater insight into what is a rather complex problem which can't be solved with blanket policies as the reality is it has been and continues to be an unequal experience depending on numerous factors. More to come on this, but watch out for this survey and for James' message to graduate students.

Meeting with Traill:

I also had the opportunity to meet with Michael Eamon at Traill College to go over some of the concerns the TGSA had regarding consultation around different aspects of college programming which has to do with graduate students at Trent. More formalized arrangements need to be made in order for it to be clear that the TGSA needs to be involved in and consulted for events geared towards graduate students and so I'm proposing an amendment to our by-laws which would ensure that at least two members of the executive have clear guidelines on when and how often they need to reach out to the college and work alongside Michael and Traill to ensure proper communication takes place between both parties.

There is also the possibility that we will need to work on a Memorandum of Understanding which would ensure that proper communication and consultation takes place moving forward.

Devon (VP Senate): -

Gabriella (VP Student Affairs):-

- December was a very productive month for the TGSA executive. This month we started using our office space more frequently. We found a bunch of cool items that may aid in the planning of events. One such item is a popcorn machine!!! I am really hoping that at some point of time this year, our events can go back to being in person, because I would

like to make use of our popcorn machine.

- This month the major programming that I focused on was Graduate Care Packages. As a graduate student, and as a member of TGSA exec, the lack of University support for graduate students has really stood out to me. Having this dilemma in mind, I decided that it would be beneficial if the TGSA shared some love with our membership. All four of the exec members worked together to shop, package and distribute care packages to 30 grad students! These packages were filled with treats, seasonal supplies, stationary and informational pamphlets. The feedback we received from our membership was strong. I think this should become an annual event because it was the best response to TGSA programming so far, as well as the fact that it acts as a reminder to our membership that we are here and that we care.
- This month we also are running a holiday photo contest. Our membership has the opportunity to submit a picture to us via email. The exec will vote on a winning photo, and one lucky winner will win a festive gift basket. We got a few responses immediately which was very exciting!
- I have started planning an event in collaboration with Trent Active Minds. I want the event to be run in January after the new year because I have a quirky idea to hopefully boost morale and help people relax and focus on their mental health. My idea is to purchase a bunch of pots, each individual will have the opportunity to paint their pot and when it is dry, write an affirmation or goal on a piece of paper and stick it underneath the pot. When the pots are dry, I want attendees to plant a plant or seeds (depending on our budget) in the pot. My intention is that in a few months/ a year, individuals can read their affirmation/ goals and reflect on their own growth.

I am also in the middle of planning an event with Tanya. This event is currently being planned as a panel discussion regarding gender minorities. The idea is that participants and the panelists can experience a safe space to share their experiences at Trent as well as in the broader Peterborough

community, raising awareness and discussing what needs to be improved so we can have a more inclusive community

Stephanie – VP Communications

Addendum II **Commissioner Reports**

Emma – Environmental Commissioner

Last month I met with representatives from the UC3 to discuss Trent's eligibility to join the group. While the meeting was informative and the representatives responded positively to Trent's sustainability initiatives, environmental programming, and research, Trent is not considered a "top research institute" in Canada. Therefore, we are not eligible to join the UC3.

A meeting with Shelley Strain is set to discuss progress of current projects and brainstorm ideas for future ones. With the term coming to an end these future prospects can act as a springboard for the incoming Environmental Commissioner to focus their efforts on.

Tanya – Equity Commissioner

I attended two meetings organized by Trent's sexual violence committee during December. Just to briefly update you on them, the first committee meeting was about the sexual harassment that had happened which brought the university to reconsider its sexual misconduct policies in terms of creating a more supportive space for the complainant to feel safe about coming forward. Some recommendations were made by the TCSA. Those recommendations were reviewed and discussed in the second meeting and the second meeting ended with a new sexual policy document for the university which now is being more complainants driven than being led and pushed by the university to open and lead the case. To that end, I'm wondering, here at the TGSA, we could have an introduction to the new policy or some sort of an event to make more awareness about university's policy in that regard, so I was thinking about getting in touch with Nona Robinson who in charge of this and find out if there is a possibility there to cooperate. Your opinions on this or any other idea that you might have for any related event is absolutely appreciated!