



TGSA Board Meeting Minutes

Date: June 1st, 2022

Start time: 6:02 pm **End time:** 7:21 pm

Location: Zoom Conference

Chair: Emma Kaszecki

Scribe: Sarah Rayner

Attendance: Emma Kaszecki, Sarah Rayner, William Kim, Egan Henderson, Conner Elverson, Jordan MacDonald, Sebastian Johnston-Lindsay

Absence with regrets:

Absence without Regrets: Cheryl Mitchell, Richard Moore, Alison MacMillan

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: Egan

Second: Will

Discussion

Approve: All

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

4. Past Meeting Minutes

Adopt the Minutes from May 4th, 2022 Board Meeting

Mover: Sarah

Second: Egan

Discussion

Approve: All

Oppose: 0

Abstain: 0

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

a.) Emma – President

(i) Updates from Board of Governors meeting on May 6th

- The size of Trent continues to increase, with a 14% increase in OUAC applications (with 16% of applicants choosing Trent as their first choice)
- There is an increase of 100% of international students at Trent Durham for Fall 2022
- Upper 5% of universities in Ontario for growth
- Alumni presentation showed a continued interest in student research
- The sexual violence policy was rejected because of verbiage/“violence against women” being exclusive

(ii) Meeting with James Conolly (Dean of Graduate Studies)

- The Provost’s Planning Group is looking ahead at creating a new academic plan centered around “guiding principles”: instead of changing curriculums how can we and updating programs how can [they] move education forward to enhance the student experience?
- Trent students are smart: when looking at academic regression of student performance at Ontario universities Trent is above regression
- Targeting major grant funding in the hundreds of millions (pillars have been placed outside of Bata Library/the Student Centre with donor names)
- Carry forward money: discussion of office space for the MSc in Applied Modelling and Quantitative Methods program
- Failed course policy: current policy is strict and there is no room for recovery; looking at strengthening structure of appeals for student accessibility
- Continuing Registration Fee Letter: response has been both positive (brought the issue to light) and negative (many are upset about how came about)—details of possible fee solutions can be found in monthly report

(iii) Student Leaders Meeting

- TA training workshops are going to be provided to help graduate students with teaching and class management skills

b.) Emma- VP Finance

(i) Meeting with Connor (our Student Support Co-Ordinator)

- We have a lot of money to spend—let’s spend money and do things this year
- Increasing bursaries: should be increased because our income is increasing as a result of more graduate students
- For further income we can use our custom clothing/merchandise as a fundraiser

(ii) Met with Tracy (Operations) about how to hire an employee (Connor); hiring as independent contractor is easier, and we can simply pay by invoice monthly

c.) Emma- VP Internal Affairs

- (i) Discussion of removing audits from our by-laws in regard to transparency and how-to
 - If we do it we need to be transparent with our members as to why (reason being we are not large enough of an organization to warrant them/money spent on auditor can be used for other things)

d.) Emma- other business

- (i) We have officially hired a photographer to take pictures at graduation for graduate students
 - Fitze Photography has been hired to take pictures of graduate students on stage, and they will be distributed for free
 - Sarah: suggests (as per their original idea) that we should also do a headshot session for students at some point in the future

e.) Egan- VP Student Affairs

- (i) Has approached Trent Queer Collective, Trent Radio, and Sadlier house for potential event ideas/other endeavours
 - Met with TQC online to come up with a list of event ideas (tea party event at Sadlier, speaking series, etc.)
 - Contacted Trent radio for radio show to highlight graduate research at Trent
 - Sadlier is open to the idea of having us have an office space in the building, as well as in using the building for events

f.) Sarah- VP Communications

- (i) Has been updating and performing maintenance on the website
 - Has been collecting bios for Board members and is awaiting headshots from upcoming photoshoot
 - Has been making notes on what makes the most sense to add and take away from the current website (reformat advocacy page, update helpful links, etc.)

g.) Will- VP Senate

- (i) Has reached out to key people from committees to introduce himself

6. Updates from CUPE

Sebastian- Unit 2 Lead Steward

- (i) Unit 2 is working on getting Stewards from across the university
 - Two people have signed up so far
 - Thinking of increasing money given to \$100 as an incentive
 - Thinking of informal training/outreach event
- (ii) Draft policy for “the right to disconnect”
 - Advocating for stronger language for those who work unusual hours (such as graduate students/Tas)

7. Student Support Co-Ordinator – Connor Elverson

8. Question Period and Departmental Issues

9. Business Arising from the Minutes

10. Motions

11. Other Business

12. Notices of Motions and Announcements

- a. The next board meeting will be held on June 1st at 6:00 pm
- b. The reports and motions for that meeting are due June 1st, 2022 (by 12pm)

13. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Mover: Sarah

Second: Will

Addendum I
Executive Reports

Emma (President):

Attended the Board of Governors meeting on May 6:

- Applications and enrollment at Trent is continuing on its upward trend with some highlights including:
 - OUAC applications are at a 6% increase, Trent up 14%
 - 16.8% increase in “first choice” domestic, 13% increase in “first choice” international OUAC
 - Fall accepts up 443 (20% increase), 0.5% increase in Ontario domestic high schools, up 61% for Durham GTA campus, up >100% in international, up 20.9% in nursing, up 20% in education
 - Upper 5-6% of universities that increase their growth (based on OUAC numbers)
 - **Lots of growth coming from international student and professional graduate programs**
 - As a result: Trent is looking into building a new residence in the Otonabee parking lot
 - The relocation of lost parking has not been determined yet
- There was an emphasis from alumni that they want updates on **graduate student research** in the Trent Magazine

- The updates to the sexual violence policy were rejected and the new policy reading was tabled for the next meeting (or maybe even July as I understand June is a very busy month for the BoG)

Meeting with Dean of Graduate Studies (James Conolly):

- The Provost's Planning Group looking at creating a new academic plan centered around "guiding principles"
 - Is Trent a "small university" anymore? → there is a push to being "personalized" because there are advantages to being a larger school
 - More funding and collaboration
 - Trent is above the regression in terms of student academic performance
- Targeting major grant funding in the hundreds of millions
 - Focus is student support named scholarships (naming of programs is a possibility eg. "BMO of EnLS" vs "BMO PhD funding")
- Carry-forward money
 - Office space development for the MSc in Applied Modelling and Quantitative Methods has been approved, just has not begun
 - In ESB across from bio/kinesiology
 - IDSR does not have space either
 - Space identified under the OC caf
- Failed course policy
 - Currently: if you fail a required course you must withdraw (70% is a pass) in thesis, if you fail 2 courses in a course-based program you must withdraw
 - Developed ~10 years ago
 - International students are struggling the most (in most cases as a result of circumstances) + failing can create a bad situation for that student (loans, coming to Canada, Visas etc.)
 - Suggestion: students have the right to appeal any academic decision right to appeal being told to withdraw from the school = use judgment on a case-by-case basis
- Continuing Registration Fee Letter
 - The response to the letter has been useful
 - Raise the issue successfully creating a "heightened awareness of the issue"
 - The Board is pissed, Provost Cahn is annoyed, and President Groarke is hurt
 - There are options we can look at for pursuing the reduced fee
 - Writing semesters: A letter from your committee is submitted to SGS confirming you have completed the research portion of your degree. Following this, you maintain full-time status while paying part-time tuition, lose your extended access (ie. office, lab spaces etc.), and write your thesis. This gives the student time to write their thesis without the financial burden of paying for full-time tuition when they no longer require school resources.
 - Defense fee: Similar to the writing semester, however in the last research semester the student pays 60% of their tuition, with the remaining 40% being paid when they choose to defend. No tuition is required during the semesters where they are writing.

Defense semester: Other institutions (such as the University of Toronto and Western University) do not require their students to pay tuition for the semester in which they defend.

- PROBLEMS

OSAP Interest-free status: "Use this application if you're not applying for OSAP and are in full-time studies. It will keep your previous full-time OSAP loans in interest-free status so you do not have to start repayment."

Time to completion of a degree

Student Leaders Meeting:

- Student retention is a problem
 - Students have had a hard time learning the last two years online and the transition back into in-person learning has not be easy
 - New graduate students especially are having a hard time adjusting to the workload and transitioning from the undergraduate
 - TA training is coming to help graduate students enhance their classroom management and teaching skills
 - Need to make sure we are really connecting with our new graduate students. How are they doing? Are they okay?

Emma (VP Finance Report):

Met with Connor:

- We have lots of money! Let's figure out ways to use it.
- Increasing Emergency Bursary fund
 - Currently it is \$5,000 for the year → Increase to \$15,000? Increase the amount each student can receive?
 - Bring back bursaries that dropped off? (thesis binding, office supply bursary, separate Conference vs. Academic bursary)
- We can have "fundraisers" as a source of income
 - Clothing order

Met with Tracy (Operations - TGSA):

- How to hire employees
 - Get a business number + register with the CRA

Hire independent contractors

Emma (VP Internal Affairs):

Compiling suggestions for edits on the current version of the by-laws. Edits will be slow, but I am confident we will have freshly written by-laws by September!

- How do we pass omitting yearly audits?
 - Transparency with our membership
 - Special General Meeting?

Sarah (VP Communications):

In the month of May my focus was on sifting through the current website and making notes on what to update (there is a lot). I have reached out to current Executives and Board members to send bios and pictures to update our current team and have updated our vacant spots on the website. My current list of tasks includes creating an actual “advocacy” page, updating helpful links, and updating the pictures.

Willl (VP Senate):

- Discussed with the TGSA executives about refining the TGSA bylaws
- Reached out to individuals that organize committees
- Reviewed the excels of all the committees of 2020-2021

Egan (VP Student Affairs):

This last month I reached out to the Trent Queer Collective, Trent Radio, and Sadleir House.

TQC

- Met virtually w/ 2 of their board members
- Discussed interest in hosting an event in collaboration
- Several potential ideas but none concrete as of yet

Trent Radio

- Sent email asking about creating a grad student radio show
- The show would be me interviewing a new grad student or faculty member each week
- They are interested in having us run the show, would need to be pre-recorded to have interviewees

Sadleir House

- Met in person to discuss ideas between TGSA and Sadleir House
- Grad students already pay in, so may as well make use of the space there
- Could host events, there are a couple ideas being floated around
- They are very interested in having us there

Otherwise my duties were keeping up with emails and thinking of potential virtual events to run throughout August and then into the new academic year.

Addendum II
Commissioner Reports

Addendum III