Housekeeping:

1. Conference awards: Fall Conference awards have been dispersed. Spring Conference awards published by TST. I spoke with David about the concern that one name keeps popping up for awards. He will get back to me about the amount of applicants. He said to keep in mind that there are times that there aren’t enough applicants for these awards to begin with.
2. Student Parents’ support group: connected Emma with both the student and Barbara as consultant. I will defer the discussion to Emma if it is needed.
3. Equal Student Support: sent email to Colleen about our concerns about the types of support that is given to students by the different colleges. We hope that there can be some sort of standardization.
4. TST Charity number: 119267342 RR0001
5. TGSA response to government’s tuition deduction: Response has been sent out at this month’s list-serv email. Furthermore, I emailed our questions regarding the implications of this tuition change to TST, and I received the following update from Diane:

“Domestic conjoint tuition fee schedule for 2019-20 will now reflect a mandated 10 per cent reductions for over 2018-19 and then a mandated freeze for 2020-21 for all undergraduate and graduate programs. The Ontario government has not made any announcements concerning the domestic fee increases that will be permitted beyond 2020-21.

The Ministry has not released any policy document yet.

The Tuition Fee Schedules for International and non-conjoint (domestic and international) have been approved up to 2021-22 (prior to the announcement by the MAESD). To date I have not been given instruction by CORMS to adjust these in anyway, however, they don’t meet again until February 11.

With respect to ancillary and incidental fees we are unsure how the ministry will interpret the ‘non-essential’ fees that students can opt out of.”

6. I have spoken to Diane about the “International Student-Religious Worker” situation. Apparently, TST knows about this as a group of the affected students have raised this issue to them. Diane told them that the exemption is really based on which type of visa the student comes into Canada with. And she will speak with University of Toronto and the government liasion to get the right interpretation of that exemption. As of right now, there is no update.

Area Reps report:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area and Rep’s Name | Content of report: |
| Biblical - Deborah |  |
| Pastoral - N/A |  |
| Systematics - Ethan |  |
| Historical - M.J. | There is little to report this term. We hope to have two more symposia but do not wish to interfere with the Academic Conference as that should be the focus.I have been approached about two different topics a) The Patristics and b) Philip Melancthon but no offers to speak or suggestions of invited speakers. |
| Contextual - N/A |  |
| DMin - Barbara | I have received a response from Alison Hari-Sign, DMin Program Administrator, that I have done whatever I can to make my role as representative known and that she can facilitate communication with students should a specific need arise. |
| MA - N/A |  |
| ThM - N/A |  |

College Reps’ Report:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| College and Rep’s name | Content of Report: |
| Emmanuel - Gina |  |
| Knox - Mike A. | I will be attending the Knox Theological Community Council meeting tomorrow.  This group meets 3 times per year, and as TGSA rep I have a seat at the table, so I can advocate for Knox grad students.  I will be asking the Principal & Grad Director to encourage profs who have students presenting at TGSA Conference to attend their students’ presentations.Nothing else to report. |
| Regis - Mike R.  | * Opening of the Fraser Center and the Inaugural Scarborough Missions lectures tonight at Regis. Royakers Lecture on Social Justice on February 26th.
* Regis Dean search is moving along, and a candidate is coming to campus on Friday.
* Some students have asked why TST students can’t use the normal health clinic/counseling center on campus, and if we could try to change that.
 |
| St. Mikes - N/A |  |
| Trinity - Robbie |  |
| Wycliffe - Carolyn  | Nothing to report |

VP-Academic’s report

VP-Conference’s Report

As we draw closer to the conference there is in fact much to report:
1) I submitted the voted upon question to our plenary panel speakers. After doing so I was contacted by Marion Taylor who did not feel she could adequately answer the question since it was too theological. After discussion with Prof Taylor I asked the board about changing the question, and, after achieving consensus, proposed, to the panelists, that the question to be changed to one which Prof Taylor suggested How Do You as a Scholar Understand the Place and Role of Theology in Your Engagement, Professional or Personal, with the Bible? Has Your Understanding Changed Over Time? Profs Taylor and Butcher emailed me with their consent and I received consent orally from Prof Bernier. The topic for the panel is now set. Gina will be the chair.

2) Ephraim Radner’s keynote lecture will be on Friday morning. It is entitled “Theology and the Body of Moses: The Angelic Vocation of Preserving and Contending over Scripture.” Carolyn will be the chair.

3) We received 25 proposals. 4 people submitted multiple proposals making the total number of submitters 21. While submissions have come from all TGSA colleges, the majority of them were from Wycliffe. Each college has at least two students who submitted. No one submitted from outside TST. Of the 21 who submitted 13 were men and 8 were women. One student withdrew their papers (they had submitted 2) making the total number of papers that have been adjudicated 23.

4) Two of the proposals suggested (one indirectly, one directly) that they would involve the use of human subjects. I consulted David Wagschal and Diane Henson about this. They informed me that we should it “is ultimately the responsibility of the researcher to ensure they have the correct approvals for their research, however, she [Diane] also thinks that TGSA should require, as a condition of acceptance of a proposal, that the applicant provide documentation certifying that the research was covered by an appropriate ethics board approval (i.e. from the student’s institution). We took measures to deal with this by creating the category of conditional acceptance within our review process.

5) The Committee has completed the peer review process as of yesterday. The process was as followed. Each member received a package with the proposals included anonymously. They then recommended either to accept, conditionally accept, or reject. Certain papers were flagged with minor conditions, and two were flagged with major conditions. The committee met to discuss these papers. During the interim between the suggestions and the meeting one student withdrew their proposals as was already noted. This lead to three discussions about submissions

1. The first had to do with gendered language in reference to God within proposals. While many members of the committee noted this as problematic, upon review of the TST handbook we discovered that while TST urges GCTS to use inclusive language re God there is no actual TST policy requiring this or any inclusive language (nor as I can tell does the University of Toronto again just suggested guidelines.) Suffice to say here that the conference committee decided that as there is no official policy anywhere, and that there is a human rights policy that we could potentially violate by trying to force this on people, we cannot ask presenters to change their language. We discussed how we could deal with it, which I will get to later in my report. We did agree that TGSA members during their public duties at the conference will be asked, provided that they are comfortable with it, to use the phrases God and either Godself or God’s self when representing the board at the conference. The appropriate pronouns to describe Jesus were not discussed.
2. The first conditional acceptance had to do with the use of “case studies.” During the discussion a member of the committee revealed that they were the author of the proposal and offered us clarification that they do not intend to use any personal interviews but rather public blogs, print journalism, popular media etc. With this person abstaining the remaining members present voted to accept the paper as clarified.
3. As we discussed the conditions for the second paper it became clear that many members of the board had serious reservations about it. We ultimately voted to reject the paper 3-1 with one absent. I have written the rejection letter expressing our concerns and it will be reviewed by the committee before it is sent.
4. As of now 22 papers have been approved by the board. The letters will be sent out Friday.

6) Due to inclement weather our meeting was moved to Wycliffe and was cut short by a Professor kicking us out of the room so he could teach his class. We were unable to discuss honoraria due to this.

7) I still haven’t heard back from either Regis or Emmanuel. I will try contacting by phone. I also haven’t heard back from Andrew Wesley but I’ve been told he tends to be a last minute person so I’m not that worried.

8) Based on the circumstances that have arisen this year I would like to propose the following additions to our Policies and Procedures:
I. Conferences

I.1 As stated in D.3 the TGSA Board will hold an annual conference.
I.2 The organization and implementation of the conference will follow the procedures set out in D.3 with the following additions:
I.2.3 Pursuant to TST policy, proposals that require the use of human subjects in any ways must indicate that the author has already received ethics approval from their institution. A copy of this approval must be provided upon acceptance of the proposal by the conference committee.

8) The majority of people who submitted to our conference were, what under the old system we would refer to as, theology or pastoral students. I didn’t think much about this until I was writing my report and reflected on something Prof Taylor mentioned during our conversation about the majority of the board also coming from these areas. We can’t change that, but I think it’s worth noting so that the Board will perhaps be aware of an implicit bias towards these sections in the future. I feel that the more we are aware of this the more we can course correct in a way that will perhaps make Bible and History students feel more inclined to participate.

VP-External’s Report

Treasurer’s Report

Nothing new to report. Finances remain as they were.

TST- Library Report

The committee met on February 11th. The following decisions were made and information shared.

1. The TST-Library will not renew it’s purchase of ATLAS PLUS but will return to ATLAS for 2019-20 unless there is significant upgrade and journal acquisition improvement as the purchase is not deemed to be of value for the cost. It was pointed out to the committee by the TGSA Representative that journals, books, etc. on Scholars Portal can not be downloaded for reading on Transit or any other places where wi-fi is not available. Only 25% of some works may be downloaded.  The committee will investigate solutions.
2. The TST Interim Director updated the committee on the accreditation processes being undertaken over the next two years and congratulated the committee for having completed one report so quickly.
3. The tri-ennial survey has been completed. The survey will be distributed through the Registrar’s office. TGSA will be asked to promote the need for the survey to be completed for the libraries to calculate the most effective and helpful ways to spend funds and improve services. The survey will be sent out within the the two week period following reading week and will be available for one academic week (weekend included).
4. The TGSA Representative requested library accessibility be placed on the agenda of the meeting. Accessibility was discussed at length and some specific items were also discussed at length. As well, the committee shared the information that inter-library loan is available through Accessibility Services but the onus is on the student to initiate the request with Accessibility Services. The Interim Director then informed the committee that Accessibility Services had recently acquired more staff and was undertaking a new way of initiating services that is supposed to be less onerous on the student. The new Accessibility Services information had been sent to college heads. The committee members stated they were unaware of it. The Interim Director promised to send the committee the information. The TGSA representative also asked that it be shared with TGSA and was assured it will be. Following the meeting the student who initiated the request was contacted and updated with the information.
5. Regis college has been tasked with the responsibility with French language collection development.
6. Discussion as to how the tuition cuts will affect the library was begun and will be placed on the April agenda when more information has been gathered.

TST Director’s Search Advisory Committee

There are a total of 11 applicants, and the committee has finalized a short-list. Discussions on how to proceed are happening, including arranging to meet with the short-listed candidates. If the Committee has any official news to update, it will be brought to your attention through email.

TST UTSU Director’s report

Non-voting Social Chair’s report

Facebook Policy Committee report

TST Board of Directors’ Meeting

On Monday the Board of Directors met, and I[as TGSA President] was invited as a guest to attend the meeting. The only thing that is relevant to us is to note that the grievance policy as outlined in the student handbooks are currently going through an update/review. Nothing conclusive has been presented to the Board of Directors. Further discussions are happening.