

## TGSA Meeting — Friday, August 21, 2020 at 1:00 - 2:30 pm via Zoom

In Attendance: Michael Rogers, Hannah Scanlon, Sam Needham, Nathan Williams, Mia Theocharis, Deborah Lee

Regrets: Jordan Balint

Absent: Maureen Ononiwu

### Call to Order — 1:05 pm

#### 1. Prayer and Territorial Acknowledgment

- Hannah S. offers prayers and Mia T. offers territorial acknowledgment.

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

- Mike R. motions to approve the agenda and Sam N. seconds.
- **Motions carries. All in favour.**

#### 3. Approval of Minutes from July 15th, 2020

- Mike R. motions to accept the minutes from July 15th, 2020 and Nathan W. seconds
- **Motion carries. Approved by consensus.**

#### 4. Nomination for Knox College Representative: *Deborah Lee*

- Mike R. motions to accept *Deborah Lee* as the Knox College Representative, Hannah S. seconds.
- **Motion carries. Approved by consensus.**

#### 5. Reports

##### A. *President's Report:*

- **Update re: Library Committee**
- **Open TGSA positions:**
  - To fill ASAP: Trinity Rep — Josh Heath respectfully declined, who else? Should we wait for orientation?
  - Mike R.: Wait until orientation.
  - Sam N.: Who do we know from Trinity?
  - Nathan W.: Andrew from our cohort is from Trinity.
  - Mia T: I'll send an email Chris Brittain who's the Dean of Theology at Trinity to ask if he has any recommendations.
  - Sam N.: But maybe we just wait for orientation like Mike R. said.
  - Mike R.: We don't want to get caught in a situation where people have are graduating, looking for first years means they are able to stay on longer, there's continuity.
  - We can ask to fill the Secretary position at Orientation.
- **Orientation:**
  - Colleen would like us to identify 5 volunteers who would be good at facilitating a small group exchange (doesn't have to be from TGSA) — "they should be relaxed, outgoing and welcoming."
  - Volunteers so far are: Mia T., Sam N., Nathan W., Hannah S.

- Mike R.: Reach out to Fiona L. about this or Mariia I. as well.
- Mike R. motions to accept the President's report, Sam N. seconds.
- **Motion carries. Approved by consensus.**

*B. VP External*

- Update re: Leaving UTSU for GST — Referendum?
- Sam N.: Should we stay with UTSU or transition to UTGSU (research graduate students)? UTSU is undergrad and professional students and UTGSU is grad research students; we are the only grad research students in UTSU; major issue is health insurance, dental, mental health benefits.
- UTSU per student = \$412.13
- UTGSU per student = \$615.14 (\$200 more in health costs if we decide to go to UTGSU)
- UTGSU is a substantially better plan but Sam N. can't make the determination of which is the right chose, at least right now.
- Do we want to talk to other research grad students? Do we want access to their buildings? We have to tell students that it will cost more but it comes down to whether they would value being part of a grad program like this?
- Hannah S.: Can we talk to someone that is from UTGSU to get anecdotal evidence?
- Mike R.: Reach out to Religious Studies Department who are in UTGSU; when UTSU cut mental health benefits students were really upset; do we want undergraduate students in charge of our health plan? As VP Academic, GSC has said that there are things that students need at UTGSU that they don't get from UTSU (i.e. writing centre, mental health coverage).
- Nathan W.: Access to recreation... is that a separate cost or ruled in with UTGSU fees?
- Sam N.: KPE gyms, hart house, the gym in GSU building are not part of our package as theology students; it is a possibility to stay on UTSU and pay fees for gyms; doesn't seem possible we can negotiate a lower rate, they would be the same fees all other students pay.
- Hannah S.: Would this be more expensive to do UTGSU or do UTSU + gym fees? Sam N. will look into this.
- Mike R.: Even being able to network through students from other disciplines would be helpful; newer students, more at home at U of T as opposed to just being at your college.
- Nathan W.: In favour of GSU move, TST is already pretty isolated; professional development, networking, writing centres is really beneficial.
- Sam N.: The problem of complexity at U of T is through the roof, with TST on top of that, GSU makes more sense but as I've had conversations with the heads of UTSU and UTGSU, I'm less determined to get us into GSU — I don't know if all our bureaucratic problems will be solved, it will for sure make more administrative sense and we will be paying \$200 more but they both contract the

same company for our health insurance, we don't know if it will be a lot smoother with GSU; when we put this to students to vote, we have to get comparisons.

- Mia T.: How does this work going forward?
- Sam N.: This would be for next year, referendum not till late October or November and we wouldn't start a new plan till September 2021. This would be one part of a referendum, we would attach this to the larger referendum which would include changing the board (re: area rep positions), it would be put all together. So in the meantime, we need to hammer out our topics for the referendum, exactly what topics we want and what they include.
- Mike R.: We will need a CRO for referendum — in the meantime, start talking to our constituents about why we are having this referendum
- Mike R. will write the constitutional language and if Sam N. can do side by side comparison with UTSU vs. GSU we can reveal the information we have in October or November and then have the referendum in January.
- Mia T.: Can I get a motion to empower Sam N. to write a side by side comparison between GSU and UTSU and for Mike R. to write new constitutional language? Hannah S. motions to accept this and Nathan W. seconds.
- **Motion carries. All in favour.**
- Mike R. Motions to accept VP External's report, Deborah L. seconds.
- **Motion carries. All in favour.**

#### C. *VP Conference*

- Update re: Annual Conference
- Nathan W.: May conference postponed; recent conversation with Colleen S., totally supportive with TGSA rescheduling our conference and is willing to help if we need anything for the conference; we have 16 proposals to look over.
- Next step is to establish a date, and get a committee to review the proposals. Possibly a Friday or Saturday — October 9th/10th or October 30th/31st
- Mike R.: Unless the paper is totally out left field we would accept it, the committee can be as selective as they would like.
- Nathan W.: Does this seem doable?
- Hannah S.: This is good for keeping student moral strong, in favour of the conference.
- Nathan W.: What do we do if a board member submitted a paper, can they be on the conference committee?
- Sam N.: It's no problem, just need to be mindful.
- Motion to empower Nathan W. to proceed with the conference on whatever date he decides and to have full authority in forming a committee; also to give Connor Wood whatever honorarium we had previously agreed upon (\$200).
- Mike R. motions to empower Nathan W. to chose a date for the conference, form a committee, give the honorarium previously agreed upon AND use Starbucks gifts cards to thank those who participant and help with the conference. Seconded by Sam N.
- **Motion carries. All approve.**

- **Motion to accept Nathan W.'s VP Conference report. All in favour.**

D. Treasurer

- Motion re: talking to college heads about tuition
  - *“Be it so moved: In gratitude for TST’s acceptance of the SGS decision to allow one term without tuition to students who have been delayed in the final stages of the writing phase of their program due to Covid-19, TGSA respectfully requests of its member colleges that they extend this principle to any student currently enrolled who, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, has found themselves delayed in their program, and apply this extension for one term for any student who exceeds four years in their program.”*
  - Mike R.: Final stage vs. everyone; you must be in the middle of your writing phase, but we want to now expand that to everybody, give everyone an extra semester of funding.
  - This goes to GSC first (through Mike R. And Mia T.); then it would go to Academic Council (where Mike R. is a voting member).
  - GSC needs to put this in their report first and then motion it in Academic Council. Mike R. can advocate for it once that is done. It is a 3 step process.
  - Mike R.: Hannah can go to the heads of colleges after we take this to Academic Council but go to heads of student governments first, to start networking there and get them familiar with this language because students at the colleges will already be advocating for this.
  - Motion to empower Hannah S. to go to heads of the student governments to take about funding and tuition. Essentially, we are asking for a statement of support, so we can go back to GSC and say we have broad support from all the student governments across the colleges.
  - Mike R. motions to accept this, Nathan W. seconds.
  - **Motion carries. All approve.**
- **TGSA Conference Awards:**
  - Petitions Committee has now selected two winners for the TGSA competition and normally the TGSA treasurer would have arranged for a cheque to be cut for both students but seeing as the students’ conferences have been cancelled we need to figure out our next steps.
  - Mike R.: This is the travel grants which pay for travel, hotels etc... around \$200; if they aren’t travelling, it’s not wise to disperse those funds. Maybe give more in the fall? I don’t know if we want to wave it totally because it is a travel grant not a registration grant.
  - Hannah S. agrees with Mike R.
  - Sam N.: If we want to change financial policies do we have to take any other steps?
  - Mike R.: Grants are in policies and procedures so we can change that with a vote; if no one meets the qualifications than they can’t be given the award, then technically no one would qualify.
  - Hannah S.: Can we hold the awards until their conferences get rescheduled?

- Mike R.: Give them the money but make it a one time thing because these are really travel grants.
- Motion to empower Hannah S. to email David Wagschal about this.
- Mike R. motions to accept this, Sam N. seconds.
- **Motion carries. All approve.**
- Mike R. Motions to accept Hannah S.'s report. Sam N. seconds.
- **Motion carries. All approve.**

6. Planning: Events and Workshops

- *What are we thinking?*
- Grant Writing Workshop
  - Mike R. will organize this as VP Academic.
  - Motion to empower Mike R. to give honorariums for grant writing workshop.
  - Sam N. notions, Hannah S. seconds.
  - **Motions carries. All approve.**
- Conference — October 9th, 23rd or the 30th,
- Mental Health for Scholars — early or middle November.
  - Sam N.: We should make it more about an experience rather than about mental health specifically. Having an experience that makes you mentally healthier — this is how we should present this.
- Sam N.: We should also think about when events should have a certain take away and when they shouldn't.

**Motion to Adjourn at 2:40 pm**

**Approved by Consensus.**

*Respectfully submitted by Mia Theocharis*

*August 25, 2020*