

TGSA

2023/2024

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A YEAR IN REVIEW

Toronto School of Theology Graduate Students' Association (TGSA)

President's Report

The 2023-24 academic year has been a productive one for TGSA as we continue to navigate life in the wake of the pandemic, with most programs returning fully back in person, coupled with the post-covid reality of hybrid learning alternatives. This reality means that we now have more out-of-town (and, sometimes, country) students than in the pre-covid years. In all of this, the board has endeavoured to serve our membership body in light of the new reality and all that it entails. So, here is a look back at some highlights of our activities in the concluding academic year.

When I began my tenure as President of the TGSA board in May 2023, we had a significant number of empty board positions to fill. The reality of an increasing number of out-of-town student membership made filling the board positions more of a challenge. We thus launched a board-recruiting campaign, especially via our social gatherings, as the gatherings indicated which persons are likely to be around campus more often, and thus more available to serve on the board. I was chiefly concerned with filling in the virtually empty College Rep positions, because the reps serve as intermediaries between TGSA and the colleges and help foster the ecumenical element of the TST graduate studies. We successfully had all, but one (Regis), college represented. But thanks to the Regis-St Mikes, merger, the St. Mikes college rep was able to provide some feedback on Regis college.

We began the fall semester with our annual TGSA welcome back socials. This year, as in the previous, we had a Pizza Lunch Party. I was able to recruit two of our college reps via this event. We also held our annual SSHRC grant writing workshop – the first in-person since the pandemic. As with many academic events nowadays, it was hybrid so out-of-town students could join in. TGSA continued to hold our Cohort Cohesion socials once a month. It is an opportunity for fellowship, friendship and conversation over beverages and snacks, to foster community so students, especially those who are at the research phase of their program, do not feel like they are working in silos. The 2023 AAR/SBL conference in San Antonio, Texas saw a significant number of GCTS /TGSA attendees and presenters. TGSA liaised with the GCTS office to organize some form of network system to coordinate group travelling and

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[torontotheology@o
utlook.com](mailto:torontotheology@outlook.com)

Annual General Meeting

Friday, May 31

12pm -1pm

via Zoom

link in email

facilitate peer support for paper presenters. With the goal of streamlining conference proposal application and attendance, we launched a Call for Papers Hub, on the TGSA website, with links to some upcoming call for papers/ proposals on theological and religious studies. This enables students to view, as well as share, information on upcoming conferences. We wrapped-up the fall semester with our holiday event, "Christmas Cohort Cohesion Cookie Exchange."

TGSA kick-started the winter season with a Prospectus / Proposal writing workshop, in liaison with the GCTS office. The workshop addressed the numerous questions of what is required of students in completing both of these documents. We hope to make it an annual TGSA workshop. We also hosted an OGS Application Writing Drop-in. This was a three-day event that offered common space for students applying for the OGS to gather to write, share tips and bounce idea off each other. Our TGSA newsletter, The Theolog, served as a great communication medium for exchanging news and info across students, the Toronto theological scene, and member colleges. In this spirit of ecumenism, we included the TST college-wide community worship schedules in the newsletter.

This Spring, TGSA held our first in-person conference in five years, "Doing Theology in a Canadian Context," with Dr. Mary Jo Leddy as our keynote speaker. We conferred a total of nine conference awards in the 2023-24 academic season.

TGSA continues to serve as a forum for the expression of student concerns. We are currently liaising with our student community on multiple issues, including the ongoing student encampment on the UofT grounds, of which some of our graduate student memberships are a part. We are also in communication with the TST registrar, UTSU, and other applicable bodies to determine possible ways forward for TGSA membership to access UofT Student Life amenities. We also have board representatives on external TST committees such as the recently established Student Financial Aid Committee, and the Library Committee.

I am grateful to the TST and GCTS leadership and administration for their support of TGSA, including Diane Henson, TST Registrar and Manager of Academic Services, who has been a fountain of information; Dr. John Sampson, GCTS Coordinator; and Dr. Darren Dias, TST Executive Director. I am enormously grateful to my fellow TGSA Board members for their hard work and commitment to our student membership interests. Most of all, I am sincerely thankful to you, the community we serve, for entrusting us with this service.

Sincerely,

Maureen Ononiwu,
TGSA President.

Treasurer's Report

This report covers September 2023 – May 2024 and was prepared by the new Treasurer, David Ross, who began the position in January of 2024. If any TGSA students have queries regarding TGSA finances, please email David at davidpaxton.ross@mail.utoronto.ca. He would be happy to answer your questions.

1. Student Fee Increase

The TGSA Board voted to increase student fees for the 2024-25 academic year by \$0.50 for full time students and \$0.26 for part time students. It is standard practice to increase the fee incrementally most years, rather than having several years of no increases followed by a larger increase.

The previous fee structure was:

Full-Time Students - \$9.50 per semester Fall and Winter for a total of \$19.00 (DMin, PhD, MA, ThM)

Part-Time Students - \$4.75 per semester Fall and Winter for a total of \$9.50 (ThM, ThD only).

The new fee structure for the 2024-2025 academic year:

Full-Time Students - \$9.75 per semester Fall and Winter for a total of \$19.50 (DMin, PhD, MA, ThM)

Part-Time Students - \$4.88 per semester Fall and Winter for a total of \$9.76 (ThM, ThD only).

2. TGSA Academic Conference May 11th, 2024

We did successfully plan and run a TGSA Academic Conference in May 2024 (there was no TGSA Conference in 2023). The total expenditure for this Conference thus far stands at \$1,048.85. The only outstanding cost that is yet to be reimbursed is the fee for the St. Mike's Charbonnel Lounge rental fee. This will be taken care of within the next week.

3. TGSA Conference Travel Awards Academic Year 2023-2024

Three conference travel awards were conferred in the Fall of 2023 totaling $\$325.00 \times 3 = \975.00 . This money has already been disbursed. Six conference travel awards have been conferred for the spring/summer of 2024. This money has not yet been disbursed to the recipients as we are still waiting for them to provide proof of their paper presentation at the applicable academic conference(s). The awards come to a total of $\$325.00 \times 6 = \$1,950$. The grand total for conference awards between September 2023 and May 2024, therefore, is $\$325.00 \times 9 = \$2,925.00$

Available Board Positions

Executive

- VP Conference

College Representative

- St. Mike's Rep
- Regis Rep

Program Representative

- Master of Arts Rep
- Master of Theology Rep



