

TGSA Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 17th, 2021 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Via Zoom

In Attendance: Morgan Bell, Hannah Ferguson, Gustave Ineza, David Kennedy, Patrick Nolin, Maureen Ononiwu, Mia Theocharis, Nathan Williams,

Regrets: Deborah Ko, Hannah Scanlon, Vincent Yi

Call to order: 3:05 pm

1. Prayer and Territorial Acknowledgement

- David K. prayed; Mia T. acknowledged the territory

2. Approval of Agenda and Meeting Minutes from October 15th, 2021

- Patrick N. motions to approve agenda and meeting minutes; Morgan B. seconds.
- **All approve. Motion carries.**

3. Reports

A. PRESIDENT

1. Referendum

- We for sure need to have a referendum so we can make changes to the constitution, **but do we want to include a vote on moving from UTSU to UTGSU?**
- My opinion is no: It didn't get the votes last time in 2018 and I don't think we will get the necessary votes now, it will be difficult to argue the "yes" side of the question considering COVID-19 and students not being on campus. We can suggest that the incoming board review the possibility of switching student unions a year or two from now when there is a more realistic understanding of where the university stands post-covid.
 - Morgan B.: It's hard to express the relevance to the switch to students who are not currently in Toronto. It is more relevant for a future where people are on campus.
 - Hannah F.: An earlier decision now will come into effect for students who are coming in next year.
 - Patrick N.: A layout of the two-different plans should be introduced to students.
 - Nathan W.: It would be good to have the UTGSU because we are more like the Faculty of Arts and Science graduate centre, as we are research students.
 - David K.: Most D.Min students have their own insurance and are barely on campus so if they have to choose, they would opt for the cheaper option.
- **Motion: Not to include moving from UTSU to GSU in the referendum this year. The referendum will only be for a constitutional change. *Instead, we will suggest it to the incoming board for them to consider in a year or two — once there is a clearer understanding of where the university stands post-covid.***
 - Morgan B. moves the motion, Hannah F. seconds.
 - **All approve. Motion carries.**

- **Constitutional Change**

- *Proposed changes to the constitution Presented: What do we think?*
 - Nathan W.: Practical questions come up about availability for meetings if the group is too large.
 - Hannah F.: Limiting the size of the board might reduce the complications of having more people if a quick decision is needed. It wouldn't be the best to have an odd number on the executive team, for voting purposes.
 - Mia T.: We would vote on the proposed changes during the December meeting.
- We now need two board members to argue the “yes” / “no” side of changing the constitution + an impartial Board member to be the Returning Officer — this will be make up the referendum committee. Both the “yes” and “no” sides need to be approved by the RO, however, not officially. It can be approved via email correspondence.
- Timeline:
 - At our December meeting, I will bring a motion to accept the proposed changes to the constitution. If the motion carries, we will then have the RO present the “yes” and “no” sides and we will motion to accept those descriptions.
 - At our January meeting, following the approval of our December meeting minutes, the RO will secure access to the online voting system.
 - In January, I will send an email to students with all the information they need for the referendum. We can plan to having the voting end of February or early March. The RO will need to look into how long we keep voting up for, maybe a week? To pass a referendum question you need quorum (which is 25 students) and the support of 2/3 majority of those voting.
 - If the constitutional change is approved by our members, I will create a subcommittee to assist in changing the policies and procedures to reflect the constitutional changes. One of those will be adding a description for the role of Vice-President Communications role. The policies and procedures draft will need to be approved by the Board.

2. Search Committee TST Executive Director

- I am the student rep; first committee meeting is on Thursday. Will update everyone at our December meeting.

3. Graduate Studies Council

- We had an emergency meeting last Monday to discuss the admissions deadline. Several of the colleges were really unhappy and against the idea of moving the admission deadline to Jan 21st from December 1st.
- The biggest worry was that the colleges would lose students to other schools. There was a discussion about moving the deadline to beginning of Jan. to allow more time to adjudicate the applications. TST decided to keep the date to Jan 21st, as they had already advertised that date.
- The plan is to make the adjudication process quicker and more efficient. Hopefully this is possible.

4. Memorandum of Agreement between TST and U of T

- Colleen Shantz wrote to some of the execs about TGSA intervening in the MoA process with respects to tuition for international students. She said it may be a good time to bring this topic up, that is, having the same fees for international students as domestic students. Some PhD departments at U of T already do this.
- I sent an email to Pam and Stephen Andrews who is heading the committee on funding about having this topic being part of the conversation.
- It's still early but they are aware TGSA would like to discuss the issue further.

5. TGSA Conference Awards

- Before COVID, TGSA gave out 2 Conference Awards for \$250 each.
- The awards were adjudicated by the GCTS because there was a worry that if the TGSA Board adjudicated the applications it may not be completely objective/unbiased (ex. if your friends were applying there could be favouritism). So it was decided that the GCTS would handle the advertising, short-listing, selection and awarding of the TGSA Conference Award.
- The previous Board didn't give me any information about the Conference awards and then COVID hit and things were a mess.
- Hence why we didn't have the Conference Awards for the 2020/21 academic year. I'm not too worried about this because it was in the thick of COVID and there weren't many in-person conferences being held.
- I think it's fitting that we bring the award back for **Spring 2022** and possibly with a higher amount (maybe 2 awards with a value of **\$500 each** but this would need to be approved by the board).
- Hannah Scanlon is in charge of this and hopefully we will have more information about this at our December meeting. She is going to coordinate with the GCTS.

Patrick N motions to accept the President's report, David K seconds.

All approve. Motion carries.

B. VP ACADEMIC

- Academic Council Meeting
 - The Council concluded that deadlines for applications are to remain as they were originally published: January 21 for PhD and Feb 18 for MA / ThM. This is to avoid losing out on potential students; and to avoid burdening not only prospective students, but faculty as well.
 - In the meeting, GCTS Graduate Coordinator, Jesse Billett pointed out that the Wycliffe basic degree students application process incorporates a Microsoft system for student enrolment and faculty search. Jesse B. recommended applying the system to the GCTS application. This will help alleviate the problem of long application process.
- Annual Reports: Three signatures (all committee members) are no longer required. All that is required in terms of signature for the annual report, is the signature of the student's supervisor.

Morgan B. motions to accept the VP Academic's report, David K. seconds.

All approve. Motion carries.

C. VP EXTERNAL

- Working on the referendum.

Gustave I. motions to accept the VP External's report, Hannah F. seconds.

All approve. Motion carries.

D. VP CONFERENCE

- In the process of deciding on the Conference theme.

Gustave I. motions to accept VP Conference's report, Nathan W. seconds.

All approve. Motion carries.

E. TREASURER

(Offered by Mia T.)

- VP treasurer to take over handling the conference award.

Nathan W. motions to accept Treasurer's report, Hannah F. seconds.

All approve. Motion carries.

F. COLLEGE REP'S:

- St. Michael's: Back on schedule for having the regular liturgies and monthly conferences.
- Regis: An upcoming lecture on Missions in the Age of Migration.
- Emmanuel: Labour Dispute - A meeting scheduled for late November

Gustave I. motions to accept the College Rep reports, David K. seconds.

All approve. Motions carries.

G. AREA REP'S:

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- Doctor of Ministry (DMIN): The DMin is in the process of getting revamped but no real clarity, currently.
One of the program difficulties is financing the DMin program. The Ontario Government does not consider the program a cohort so offers no funding.
- Master of Arts (MA): NA
- Master of Theology (ThM): NA
- Contextual: NA

- NON-VOTING CHAIRS

- Communications: Maureen to take over the Twitter and Facebook accounts to reach students in those platforms.
- Library Representative: NA

Gustave I. motions to accept Area Rep reports, Nathan W. seconds.

All approve. Motions carries.

4. Events/Workshops

(Offered by Mia T)

- **End of November-early December:** I was hoping to have a mental health event but Health and Wellness at U of T are booked. How about an online event where we **cook a meal**, we pick a recipe and everyone comes together via Zoom to cook it!
 - Gustave I.: Combining a cooking event with academic or theological themes.
- **Mid-January:** Career Exploration and Education will be hosting a workshop around transferable skills and alternative academic careers. I will have more details in early December.
- **February:** Morgan's idea: Panel discussion with a Queer theologian, theologian of colour, a female theologian who can talk about navigating the academy...not as a white male.
- **March:** Mental Health
- **April:** AGM + in-person social event

5. Questions/Concerns/New Business?

- **Next meeting(s):**
 - Friday, **December 10th** from 10:00am - 12:00 pm

Motion to Adjourn 4:19pm

*Respectfully submitted by Maureen Ononiwu
November 22, 2021*