

# A Year in Review

TORONTO SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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*2022/2023 Academic Year*

 [@tstgsa](https://twitter.com/tstgsa)

 [Facebook Group](#)

 [TGSA Website](#)

 [tgsa@utoronto.ca](mailto:tgsa@utoronto.ca)

***Annual General Meeting  
(AGM)***

Friday, May 6, 2022  
11:00 am - 12:00 pm

[Zoom Link](#)

## ***President's Report***

In 2020, I did not envision my presidency would begin at the offset of a global pandemic which would keep us in our homes and away from campus for two-years. The difficulties presented to TGSA were twofold: 1) moving online was a significant adjustment because in-person events and workshops are integral to how we connect with each one another; and 2) the pandemic proved difficult for many TST graduate students who were unable to access essential university services such as our libraries. Although there were many challenges along the way, I am proud of the work that the TGSA Board accomplished during the last two years — both in terms of our online social events, workshops and conferences and how we advocated for TST graduate students.

In the fall, we hosted our annual “SSHRC and OGS Grant Writing Workshop,” a “Back to School Social Hour” and our holiday event, “Christmas in the Kitchen” where we cooked and shared a meal together virtually. To kick off the winter term, TGSA worked closely with Career Exploration & Education at the University of Toronto to design a workshop centred around recognizing and articulating the skills and competencies students have developed through their academic, professional and co-curricular experiences. The workshop was entitled, “Identifying Your Transferable Skills” and it was hosted by Mary McAuliffe, Career Educator at Career Exploration & Education.

Furthermore, TGSA held a constitutional referendum this term and we held a “Town Hall Meeting” to discuss the proposed constitutional changes and hear student concerns.

Following the town hall, we ended with a coffee hour where students were able to socialize and relax before heading back to their work. Moreover, TGSA assisted TST in planning the Three-Minute Thesis Competition for graduate students; and we still have the TGSA Conference to look forward to which will be held on Friday, June 10, 2022. The theme of this year's conference is, "Traversing Schemas of Normativity: Methodological Concerns in Theology."

Outside of planning events and workshops, the board brought back the "TGSA Conference Awards" for spring 2022 as conferences are now being held in-person. We advocated for students through continued discussions with TST and the colleges regarding funding, specifically as it concerns international students. In light of the UTQAP report there will be a review of financial aid for graduate students. TGSA has insisted that tuition for international students be added to the committee's agenda. Our hope is that consideration will be given to charging international students the same tuition price as domestic students. As of 2018, most international PhD students at U of T pay the same tuition fees as domestic students. TGSA feels that a structural inequity exists which leaves TST international students in a disadvantaged position in comparison to other PhD students at U of T.

Additionally, TGSA was notified early on in the winter semester that the "Area Studies and Course Design" cohort class would become a full-year course for the 2022/2023 academic year because of staffing challenges. We wrote a letter of concern to the TST Executive Director, Pamela Couture and the Senior Executive Council regarding this situation. The letter voiced our concern with having the cohort class as a full year course for two reasons: 1) it presents an undue burden on students in delaying their time to completion of the program, as well as possible financial losses for those who receive money from the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP); and 2) it is in violation of the policy on 'program requirements' by which a student in a conjoint degree program is governed. We called on the member colleges to meet their obligation to students first and foremost but also to TST and the GCTS. We are happy to announce that our concerns were heard and the cohort class will be taught in the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. In the future, there will be continued discussions about the efficacy of the cohort classes in which TGSA will play a central role.

As my term as TGSA president comes to an end, I want to extend my sincerest gratitude and thanks to my fellow board members — our work together would not have been possible without your dedication to TGSA. Thank you to Carolyn Ibane, Elizabeth Neilly and Diane Henson for their administrative and registrarial leadership to which I am sincerely grateful; thank you to Jesse Billet, Associate Director, Graduate Programs for his continued support of TGSA; and thank you to Pamela Couture, TST Executive Director for listening to and advocating for TST graduate students. Leading the TST graduate student body during the last two years has not only been a privilege but a wonderful learning experience. I am immensely thankful to each and every one of you for trusting me in this position and I am excited to see what the future holds for the new TGSA Board.

Sincerely,

Mia Theocharis, *TGSA President*



## Treasurer's Report

Costs for TGSA-related activities, workshops, and operations increased from the temporary reduction of costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Student fee rates in 2020/2021 academic year were \$2.06 for full-time students, and \$1.03 for part-time students (this includes PhD, MA/ThM and DMin) and for the 2021/2022 academic year they were raised back to the pre-pandemic fees of \$9.50 for full-time students and \$4.75 for part-time students per semester.

Similar to the previous academic year, TGSA expenses were relatively low since we were not physically on campus due to the pandemic. Our expenses for this year included the cost of a \$25 gift card for Mary McAuliffe, M.Sc., Career Educator, who held the TSGA workshop "Identifying Your Transferable Skills" in January 2022; a gift for Dr. Pamela Couture since her term as TST Executive Director comes to end this summer, the gift has not yet been purchased but it will be no more than \$100 as approved by the TGSA Board; and lastly, an honorarium for the TGSA Conference keynote speaker which will not exceed the previous year's amount of \$250. It is projected that for the upcoming academic year, costs will increase proportional to the holding of in-person gatherings and activities.

## Incoming Board 2022/2023

### Executives:

President — Hannah Ferguson

VP Academic — Morgan Bell

VP Communications — Maureen Ononiwu

### College Representatives:

Regis — Patrick Nolin

St. Michael's — Rosemary Boissonneau

*Thank you to everyone who sent in their nominations!  
The new board will be ratified on Monday, May 9, 2022.*