

TGSA Board Meeting
Thursday, Oct 17, 2024 @ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Minutes

Present: Maureen O., Christian C-S., Bohdan H., Hyelim Y., Christine W.S., Marina G., David R., Susan M.

Guests: Kristen Blair

Regrets: Matteo C., Sileen P., Noah M.

- 1. Prayer/Territorial Acknowledgment.** The prayer was led by Christine, following which Maureen read the Territorial Acknowledgement.
- 2. Approval of Agenda and September 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes.** Moved by Christine and seconded by David to approve the agenda for today's meeting and the minutes of the September 10th meeting. Passed.

3. Reports

A. President.

- i. Ratification of Jasmine Wiens as VP Conference. Moved by Susan seconded by Christine to ratify Jasmine as the VP Conference. Passed.
- ii. Ratification of Susan McElcheran St. Mikes Rep. Susan has volunteered to take on the St. Mike's Rep position in addition to her regular board position. Moved by David, seconded by Christine to ratify Susan as the St. Mike's rep. Passed.
- iii. TST Board of Trustees Meeting. Maureen reported that:
 - a) There is a concern regarding the difficulties raised by governmental legislation for the visa application process of international students. A number of international students who were admitted into TST affiliated colleges this academic season have been unable to travel to Canada and commence their studies. Prof. Attridge will be in communication with the University of Toronto graduate studies council to determine what exactly the problems are with the goal of overcoming the current difficulties.
 - b) The TST board moved to approve the Toronto Journal of Theology's terms of reference, which was adapted from the University of Toronto press.
 - c) The decline in international student admissions, which begun in 2018, has gradually improved as there has been a steady increase in enrolment in the last two years. Now enrolment is slowly recovering to pre-pandemic numbers. The past low enrolment depth had financial implications for the colleges. The faculty councils of the member colleges will be meeting to figure out how

TST can provide the best services to the colleges in a multi-year plan for strategic enrolment management. The hope is for the TST affiliated colleges to benefit from shared resources, in terms of enrolment management.

- iv. Fall Conference Awards. Maureen introduced the TGSA conference awards for the new board members. Our requirements and terms of acceptance will be the same as in the past, three \$325 awards will be available for the autumn. The college reps are encouraged to inform their respective college graduate students about the conference awards.
- B. Treasurer / Student Financial Aid Committee. David reported that he has worked on the budget with Maureen, and a report will be submitted with the budget and actuals at the end of the semester. Maureen has confirmed that we have received \$4,340.41 into our account which is more than what was originally budgeted. David also reported that he has met with the TST financial aid committee and will be meeting again in November. If anyone has any thoughts, opinions, or suggestions as to how financial aid to students might be increased, please inform David in advance. He also shared a thought regarding a way in which the OGS policy of certain colleges may be changed to help increase the amount coming to students.
- C. VP Academic
- i. Guest: Kristen Blair - TST Language Exam Issue. (The letter written by Kristen and Ching Sum was circulated to the board members in advance of this meeting). Kristen reviewed the issues involved and their experience of having had the course cancelled and the subsequent complications which this caused for them and would cause for anyone else who might/would be in the same situation.

The TGSA board members were supportive of the idea of TST putting notices on the website and publicizing in a more transparent manner both the rationale as well as the particular details of the class, as well as being completely transparent in regard to the possibility of the class being cancelled.

Moved by Marina seconded by Susan: That the TGSA board will draft a letter to the TST supporting the constructive suggestions found in the letter of Kristen and Ching Sum regarding both the matter of language requirements and language courses offered by TST, specifically asking for clarity on the website and transparency in regard to when a course would be cancelled due to low registration.

- ii. Christine reported that there is a policy being developed regarding the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in the process of supervising and assessing doctoral work concerned with Indigenous topics. Regarding the thesis embargo policy, a process is being identified so that students who wish to publish their dissertations may have the on-line publication of the theses

deferred for a year in order to give them time to explore publishing their theses commercially. In regards to language course requirement policy, such a discussion has been going on for at least 30 years, including a discussion in regard to the expansion of research languages to include non-European languages, especially since research often depends on these, rather than European languages. The summer courses cost approximately \$50,000 to offer, which is a financial burden to TST.

D. VP External. No report.

E. VP Conference. Jasmine asked for volunteers to the committee, Bohdan and Christine volunteered. Maureen is on the committee ex officio; David offered his help in regard to any financial questions.

F. VP Communications / Library. No report. Maureen reminded everyone that if there are any events going on in their affiliated colleges, please share them with Matteo so that he can include them in our newsletter, so our members could benefit from the ecumenical element of the TST.

Moved by Susan and seconded by Christine to approve the executive reports. Passed.

G. College Representatives

- i. Emmanuel. HyeLim will be speaking with the Graduate Director in regard to organizing the graduate students at Emmanuel, as there has been some turnover there of late.
- ii. Knox. No report.
- iii. St. Mikes. Susan reported that cooperation between the Regis and St. Mike's students' has been good. She also reviewed the letter which was sent to Regis and St. Mike's regarding accessibility issues at the colleges as well as at TST (letter attached). In response to Heather's concerns Dr. Dias responded with several important points, not least of which was using this situation to consider incorporating universal design as a foundational principle and real reflection upon the theological as well as the practical opportunities this presents for growth. A TST wide accessibility audit is coming up. Susan went on to suggest that TGSA advocate for transparency, that the results be communicated to the TST students, and that all colleges have a plan in place to deal with emergencies at any time that a given building is open.

Moved by Marina, seconded by HyeLim that:

In the interest of accountability to the student body, the TST provide TGSA with the date and results of their accessibility audit; that TGSA request from all its member colleges an emergency response plan that would include an

emergency contact at all times when the building is open; that the TST organize and support consciousness and awareness raising initiatives throughout the TST; and that all of this be done in a theologically responsible manner, with the participation of those most dependent upon and familiar with accessibility issues.

Passed

- iv. Regis. No report.
- v. Trinity. Marina reported that Trinity does have an accessibility section on the website. Trinity is looking for members for the constitutional advisory committee. The annual book sale will happen next week.
- vi. Wycliffe. Christian reported that the colloquium will happen tomorrow and in November a couple of big events will be taking place, namely the Reformed House of Studies and then on November 9th is the Women's Breakfast.

Moved by Christine seconded by Jasmine to approve the College Rep reports. Passed.

H. Program Reps

- i. DMin Rep. No report

4. Events/Workshops

- A. Mental Health for Scholars workshop. Maureen is following up on this, David is assisting her. Marina also volunteered to help organize this event.
- B. Cohort Cohesion. The new name is "TheoSocial," i.e., we will have a "TheoSocial" on November 14th, but we will have "TheoSocials" throughout the academic year.
- C. TGSA Agape Service. To date there has been no movement toward organizing or hosting such services.
- D. In regard to the information circulated earlier today, Bohdan requested that anyone who had any thoughts or suggestions regarding topics or times for a presentation by Fr. Philip Lemasters which would be open to TST students let him know by the end of the day.

Moved by Marina seconded by HyeLim to approve the Events/Workshops reports. Passed.

5. Questions/Concerns/New Business? None.

Adjournment moved by Christine at 1:40 PM.

Minutes prepared by Bohdan Hladio