

TGSA Board Meeting
Tuesday February 25, 2025 @ 12:00 pm – 1:30pm
Via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Maureen O., Christine W-S., Noah M., Susan M., Matteo C., Jasmine W., Marina G.,

Regrets: Bohdan H., Christian C-S., Sileen P., David R., Hye-lim Y.,

- 1. Prayer/Territorial Acknowledgment** The meeting was opened at 12:05 PM. Maureen prayed, and Susan and Maureen offered a land acknowledgement.
- 2. Approval of Agenda and January 16, 2025,** Moved by Susan, seconded by Matteo to approve the agenda and the January 16 meeting minutes as presented. Passed.

3. Reports

A. President

i. TGSA Conference Awards

At the TGSA board's last discussion about the TGSA Conference Awards policy, we made changes to the policy to reflect the following:

- a) that we not require a financial needs assessment in order to apply, with the proviso that if there are large number of applicants in any given year, we would then require the financial needs assessment and,
- b) that each applicant may only receive an award once within any 12-month period, rather than the current 24-month rule.

However, the TST office has asked if we want to remove the 12-month period entirely. Instead say priority will be given to those who haven't received in the past. Noah suggested changing to "once per academic year." Susan is good with either.

The TST has recommended that the financial needs assessment form needs to be submitted at the original submission time. If the form is not submitted from the start, then they do not have it available at their committee meeting if needed. This does not account for TGSA's concern that the form discourages people from applying. Noah suggested removing the form entirely. All graduate students have a certain degree of financial need. Susan is in favour of doing away with the form.

We have \$325 pending from the last award period. We usually confer 6 awards in the spring-summer period. Do we hold onto the money, offer 7 awards this period, or split the \$325 evenly between the other

6? Noah suggested we go with a 7th award for this spring-summer period.

Motion: We move to remove the financial needs assessment form as a criteria in the assessment process. We move to award a 7th award for this award period to make up for the \$325 left over from the fall. We move to remove the time limit on eligibility criteria but we will add a proviso that priority will be given to those who haven't previously received a TGSA conference award.

Moved by Maureen. Seconded by Christine
Passed.

ii. Accessibility Concern follow up

Noah and Heather met with Gordon Rixon the president of Regis and assistant Teresa Helik. Heather expressed her concerns. Gordon responded and explain the context of what was happening at Regis. They were working on making progress on some tangible efforts, rather than jumping straight to offering an apology without any actions behind it.

Heather suggested a ramp to the patio. Gordon will be looking into that, in a way that would accommodate the requirements around historic buildings.

Conversation occurred around doing a panel on accessibility and theology, or a workshop that corresponds with the opening of a statue around the idea of freedom for the oppressed that will be celebrated soon. Exploring various themes of freedom for the oppressed, beyond the statue's topic of human trafficking. Could include disability theology, dialogue of BIPOC students experience on campus. Gordon will be meeting with a donor about this soon. Gordon invited TGSA to be part of this as well. Regis will be providing funding for such an event, but open to partnering with TST, TGSA, etc.

We may want to follow up with Heather as far as the planning for the public theological discussion.

Susan would like TGSA to have a detailed follow up of what happens in future conversations with Gordon and what happens with the public theology discussion.

iii. Board positions

Many positions are coming to an end, including the president.

Maureen is hoping that a current TGSA board member will step up to fill the President role and maybe that of VP Academic, as these executive roles entail some knowledge of the board policies. However, in the past, we've had Christine who was not previously on the board, take on the VP Academic role and she has done great. Call for nominations comes in April. This will prepare us well for the fall. The

new board comes together in June. Maureen will send further details in March.

B. Treasurer / Student Financial Aid Committee

- i. Our income from student fees for the Fall 2024 semester was very strong, close to the top end of our projection.
- ii. Expenditure for the Fall semester was significantly under what we had budgeted for.
- iii. Our 2025 TGSA Conference will cost substantially more than it did in 2024, but this is not a problem because last year St Mikes gave us the venue for free! This time around we have paid a total of \$1017.00 all in after tax and cleaning fees for the room setup in St Mikes. They gave us a solid discount, and this is a reasonable fee - a free venue is the exception rather than the rule.
- iv. The increased cost of our conference year over year is actually a welcome change as our overall balance is very healthy and potentially verging towards not investing quite enough back into the student body.

C. VP Academic

- i. Academic council meeting:
 1. At Knox, a Jewish focus has been added to MPS. At Emmanuel, an interfaith focus has been added to MPS. Courses have been approved.
 2. TST will be hosting a reception at Congress this June.
 3. First round of admissions has happened. Similar numbers as last year.
 4. Lots of discussions around AI, rules around AI. This is being discussed further with faculty.
- ii. Nothing further to report from Graduate studies council.

D. VP External

- i. UTSU 2025 Election and Referendum elections coming up. Some question of where TST students fit in, we are under professional programs, even though we aren't listed there. We may want to alert students about this, as the elections do affect us. In the section on executive elections, there is VP Professional Faculties, which is the role that we are included in. Despite this, we are not included in the blurb given on the website. There are two students running. Susan encourages everyone to read the blurbs for the two candidates which reflect their priorities for the role. Next year, it would be worth liaising with the person elected to the VP Professional Faculties to have TST named in this blurb and to make sure we're represented in their work.
- ii. From the communications side, Matteo suggests we send the link in the TGSA newsletter, X, and facebook page.
- iii. For funding, Matteo noted that conversations around funding happen at the college level. Knox has shifted towards evaluating funding with the starting place of the ethical concern of what they can expect students to live off of in a full time program. Matteo has brought this up with St Mike's. We could advocate this further, by asking colleges what is ethical to ask their students to do in order to pursue this education fulltime.

E. VP Conference

- i. We have only had 4 paper submissions so far. If we don't receive enough submissions by March 1, we will extend by a week.
- ii. It might be worth discussing in a future meeting the possibility of evolving the conference and role into something that better responds to the needs and interests of the student body. Maureen noted that the AGM would be a good time to open this up to the student body for discussion. Perhaps we can discuss it at our next TGSA meeting as well.

F. VP Communications / Library

- i. Newsletter: Next newsletter coming by Friday.
- ii. Darren Dias mentioned to Matteo that TST has considered moving from X to BlueSky in the future. Matteo is likewise considering adding a Blue Sky account to the roster of TGSA social media, for the potential of broader engagement. Noah mentioned that Instagram might be the best place to transition to, since that's the platform that people still use. Marina suggested LinkedIn as a possible option. Matteo will look into these three options.

Moved by Marina, seconded by Susan to approve the executive reports. Passed.

G. College Representatives

- i. Emmanuel
Emmanuel Student's council held the Emmanuel College Formal party for Emmanuel Students, Staff, Faculty, Caregivers, and Guests on Feb 17th. It was a good opportunity for the college members and guests to socialize together with catered food, games, dance parties, and raffles.

EM Graduate Student's Pizza lunch will be (or was) on Tuesday, February 25, 12:00-1:30 in EM107.

The Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) from Vic will be hosting, and some of their staff will be present to speak briefly about their services. Subsequently, there will be a discussion on preparing successfully for general exams, led by HyeLim Yoon and Wendy Cranston. All EM graduate degree students are invited to come and join the discussion and socialize with one another.

- ii. Knox
No report.
- iii. St. Mikes
Nothing to report from St. Mike's.
- iv. Regis

Nothing to report from Regis, except what was noted in the accessibility discussion above.

- v. Trinity
Retreat was postponed for the divinity class within Trinity. They will be holding a breakfast instead.

Summer class: "Spirituality: The Love of Learning and the Desire for God," led by Sister Connie Gefvert, is now scheduled to be held at the [Sisterhood of St. John the Divine](#) from May 12 to May 16, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sacred Space: Conflict and Convergences | Call for proposals

In celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Trinity Chapel, a conference on "Sacred Space: Conflicts and Convergences" will be held at the college on November 19-20, 2025. Presentation proposals of 100-150 words are now being accepted and are **due by February 28, 2025**. Please include a current condensed CV with complete contact information and submit it to gabriela.pinho@utoronto.ca.

- vi. Wycliffe
Wycliffe has two major events coming up in March:

"When Christianity Matters" A special dinner with Christian ethicist Dr Brian Brock, Thursday, March 20, 6:00 p.m.
www.wycliffecollege.ca/ethics

"The Jewish Gospel and Christian identity: an exploration in contextual discipleship" The Annual Jakob Jocz Lecture with speaker Dr Jennifer M. Rosner, Wednesday, March 26, 7:00 p.m. <https://www.wycliffecollege.ca/jocz-lecture>

Moved by Susan seconded by Noah to approve the college rep reports. Passed.

H. Program Reps

- i. DMin Rep
No report.

4. Events/Workshops

A. *TheoSocials going forward.*

Bohdan proposes cancelling the TheoSocials for now based on low attendance in the last couple of events. Jasmine says perhaps we could reconsider the goals in the future, alongside reconsidering the conference (e.g. move to lunch and learns?). Marina suggested we rotate the responsibilities, this would mean that it would draw on the network of the person coordinating it each time. Noah suggested that perhaps next year each college rep could take turns organizing a

TheoSocial, and even host it at the different colleges. That could give college reps one event to take responsibility for each year (e.g. booking location, lunch, professor to share).

We will continue the TheoSocials for now, but have others coordinate it to give Bohdan a break. Marina will organize the TheoSocial for March.

B. Mental Health for Scholars workshop

This workshop has been cancelled because the presenter was sick. Maureen will follow up in March to see if we can reschedule.

C. Proposal / Prospectus Workshop

This workshop is happening on March 4, 2025. Christine will host, Dr. Mike Attridge will speak. It will be held at the TST building. It will be hosted both in person and online.

D. Resume and LinkedIn Profile Building Workshop ((U of T Career Exploration and Education Centre)

Mary McAuliffe of the University of Toronto Career Exploration and Education Centre is hosting this workshop on the last Thursday of March. Maureen is meeting with her next Monday to discuss the focus of the workshop.

Susan noted that it would be helpful to have it deal specifically with academic CVs. Samples would be helpful. Additionally, LinkedIn will be addressed.

Moved by Susan seconded by Noah to approve the events/workshops reports. Passed.

5. Questions/Concerns/New Business?

None.

6. Next meeting date/time?

Maureen will send out a doodle poll

Moved by Susan to adjourn the meeting at 1:33 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jasmine Wiens