

TGSA
2025/2026

In This Issue:

President's Report

By: Maureen Ononiwu

Treasurer's Report

By: David Ross

Contact / Follow Us

[@tstgsa](#)

[TGSA Facebook](#)

[TGSA Website](#)

torontotheology@outlook.com

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Toronto School of Theology Graduate Students' Association (TGSA)

President's Report

As I come to the end of my tenure as TGSA President, this report marks both a Year in Review and the conclusion of a presidency that extended beyond its expected term. At the end of the 2024–2025 academic year, virtually all board positions were due for transition, including the position of President. However, despite an extended nominations period, the nominations process did not produce candidates for those roles.

In light of this unprecedented situation, the existing board agreed to continue in an interim capacity while we worked to recruit new members and ensure the continuity of TGSA's work. The interim year brought a gradual transition in board membership, as some members concluded their service, some helped identify their successors, and new members were gradually recruited to take up responsibilities. I am deeply grateful to those board members who remained to help hold the association together during that transitional period. With this extraordinary chapter now drawing to a close, here is a look back at some of the highlights of the 2025–2026 academic year.

We began the academic year in the fall by welcoming a new cohort of students to the Toronto School of Theology. TST's annual orientation introduced incoming students to the work of TGSA and to the role the association plays in fostering community and advocating on behalf of graduate students. New students continually bring fresh energy and perspectives that enrich both our community and the board. The orientation was followed by our annual TGSA Welcome Back Lunch socials, which once again gave returning and incoming students an avenue to meet and reconnect at the beginning of the academic year. Events such as these help build community, but they also allow us to identify students who are regularly present on campus and may be interested in serving on the board. A number of the students who attended our fall gatherings later became members of the TGSA board.

Early in the fall semester, we also hosted our annual grant-writing workshop. This year, the workshop addressed the Canada Graduate Scholarships – Doctoral (CGS-D) program, following the discontinuation of the former SSHRC Doctoral Awards competition. Led by Professor Callie Callon, the workshop

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, May 20

3pm -4pm

via Zoom

link in email

offered practical guidance on preparing a strong doctoral funding application.

As the fall semester came to an end, we partnered with TST to host our second annual Santa Claus Parade live viewing party. Because the Toronto Santa Claus Parade passes directly in front of the TST building, the event brought together students, faculty, friends, and families for refreshments, kid-friendly crafts and games, and to enjoy the festivities. At the same time, we extended our best wishes to those travelling to and presenting at the annual American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature (AAR/SBL) meeting, which was happening on the same weekend. We wrapped up the fall semester with our end-of-year socials, which featured our now-familiar Cookie Exchange, along with Jeopardy and other games. It was a lighthearted and enjoyable way to conclude the term and celebrate the season together.

In the winter semester, TGSA launched an Academic Success Initiative, a series of workshops designed to support students at different stages of their graduate studies. We began in January with a Scholarship and Grant Writing Success workshop led by Dr. Callie Callon, who offered guidance on preparing strong funding applications. This was followed by a PhD Road Map drop-in session with Dr. Michael Attridge and Dr. Brian Irwin, which gave students an opportunity to ask questions about the path from coursework to prospectus, proposal, and beyond. In February, we hosted a Language Exam Success Panel in response to one of the recurring challenges faced by doctoral students, especially as students now navigate language competency and proficiency requirements without TST-hosted language courses. The panel included faculty and student contributors with experience in modern, classical, and ancient languages. We concluded the series in March with a Publication and Conference Success workshop, where faculty and student presenters shared practical insight on presenting, publishing, and building scholarly connections.

In the spring semester, we hosted our annual TGSA Spring Conference, which this year was organized around the theme “Theology and Culture.” The conference featured a range of papers that reflected the richness and diversity of perspectives within the TST community. Graduate students, recent graduates, and external participants were able to hone their presentation skills and engage in scholarly conversation with colleagues across disciplines. Dr. Swee Hong Lim served as keynote speaker.

The TGSA Conference has long been part of the association’s academic life. During my tenure, it took shape as a spring event, marking a return to in-person conferences after several years of virtual conferences through ‘Doing Theology in a Canadian Context’ in 2024, ‘Theology, Conflict, Violence and Peacebuilding’ in 2025, and this year’s ‘Theology and Culture.’ Together, these conferences have provided a forum for collegial presentation and feedback on timely topics.

TGSA awarded nine conference grants during the academic year—three in the fall semester and six in the spring and summer—to support students presenting their research at academic conferences and to recognize their scholarly contributions.

TGSA's newsletter, *The Theolog*, also continued this year, though less frequently because the board did not have a VP Communications. Even so, it remained an important way of sharing information across the student body, including college-wide worship schedules, internal TGSA updates, and external conferences, workshops, and events. In a similar spirit, the TGSA Call for Papers Hub provided a space where students could find and share conference opportunities beyond TST. Both *The Theolog* and the Call for Papers Hub are useful resources, and I hope students will keep using them to share opportunities with one another.

Throughout the year, we hosted our monthly TheoSocial gatherings. These informal gatherings give students an opportunity to take a break from academic work, enjoy light refreshments, and connect across programs, cohorts, and colleges. They foster community, especially for students who may otherwise feel isolated in the more independent stages of graduate work.

Part of TGSA's role is to advocate on behalf of student concerns. This year, the board followed up on a number of student issues, including access to U of T Student Life services such as Hart House. In response to recurring questions from students, TGSA conducted a survey to assess interest in a possible referendum on paying additional incidental fees required for access to those services. While the results indicated that most students were not prepared to take on the additional cost, the board continues to explore alternative avenues for accessing services that matter to students. Accessibility was another area of follow-up, including asking college representatives to consult with their colleges about accessibility measures and building access. While some of this work remains ongoing, it has helped keep accessibility before the board as an important part of student advocacy. We also worked with students and academic administrators to address concerns related to language requirements and other academic matters as they arose.

TGSA's work rests on advocacy, academic and professional development, social connection, and board governance. These have been the guiding concerns of my presidency. TST's ecumenical character is one of its unique strengths, and I have tried to ensure that TGSA's work reflects that richness by creating spaces where students across colleges, programs, and traditions can be supported, heard, and brought into conversation with one another.

I am grateful to TST and GCTS for their support of TGSA. Thank you to Dr. Mike Attridge, GCTS Associate Director, for his work with TGSA and graduate student concerns; to Diane Henson, former TST Registrar, for being a generous source of information and institutional memory; to Ruth Maddeaux, current TST Registrar, for her availability and for being a helpful resource; and to Dr. Darren Dias, TST Executive Director, for his leadership and support of graduate students.

Most of all, I am deeply thankful to the board members with whom I have served. It has been a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated team, each bringing different perspectives and abilities to the shared work of serving and representing TST graduate students. I also want to acknowledge the TST

graduate student community for entrusting us with this responsibility. It has been a great honour to serve as TGSA President, and I am very grateful to God for the grace of this role and the strength to fulfill it.

I wish the incoming board every success, and I pray that God will grant them wisdom in the work ahead.

Sincerely,
Oum.

Maureen Ononiwu, TGSA President

Treasurer's Report

TGSA Budget August 1st 2025 - Today

Money In	
Student Fees 2025-2026 Academic Year (deposited December 15th 2025)	\$4,502.71
Additional income	\$0.00
Total income	\$4,502.71

Money Out	
September Orientation	\$318.34
TheoSocials	\$288.61
Workshops	\$413.95
Conference Awards	\$2,275.00
TGSA Conference	\$1,900.00
Dinner for TGSA Board April 23, 2026	\$265.35
E-Transfer Fees	\$25.50
Total expenses	\$5,486.75

Money Left Over	
Income minus expenses	-\$984.04

Balance	
Balance August 1st 2025	\$7,788.75
Balance Today (after two final pending deductions - one TheoSocial: \$45 and conference catering: \$1400)	\$6,804.71
Difference	\$984.04

