



# GRADUATE STUDENTS' UNION

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
LOCAL 19, CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

**GSU General Council Meeting Minutes  
Thursday December 10, 2009  
Bahen Centre for Information Technology  
40 St. George Street, Room 1130**

Nancy Dawe called the meeting to order at 6:11pm.

1. a) Agenda

**Motion:** BIRT (Be it resolved that) the Council approve the agenda.

Anton Neschadim/Mike Bailey

**Carried**

b) Roll Call

The members of the General Council introduced themselves by name and department.

c) Minutes

**Motion:** BIRT the minutes of the November 26, 2009 Council meeting be approved.

Christine DeLuca/Alexei Halpin

**Carried**

d) Business Arising from the Minutes

Sara Suliman addressed the question concerning TTC extending student fares to postsecondary students which was raised at the November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009 General Council meeting. She said that the student fee (which is in effect as of January 2010) of \$107 will be applied to postsecondary students in September 2010, however until then, students must continue to either buy a discounted metropass through UofT or pay the regular adult fare.

e) Downtown Legal Services

Judith McCormick, representing Downtown Legal Services, said that the clinic is supported via student levies and provides services in five areas of law: refugee claims, criminal law, family law, tenant housing law, and academic appeals and offences. She said that last year they were able to assist 3000 people with the aid of 180 law students. She informed council of a major victory on behalf of 70 tenants that resulted in changing the law in Ontario concerning tenants who signed leases where the hydro was to be included in the rent, only to end up being charged separately for hydro, while the landlord purported to reduce the rent accordingly; it was found the landlords were not reducing the rent fairly and thus Downtown Legal Services fought to establish the precedent in Ontario law that the landlord cannot charge separately for hydro and take the value of the bill off of the rent charge. She said that in the family law division, they received the highest award ever in retroactive child support which consisted of \$70000 for children living in poverty. She also said that one of the law students revealed that some parents were not revealing all income. She said that refugee cases came in from Colombia, China, El Salvador, Sudan, Jamaica, etc; she gave the

example of the halting of deportation of an elderly woman with terminal cancer who was staying here with her adult daughter who was looking after her. She said there is a new project ongoing in the refugee division to provide legal advice, because often they cannot take on new cases. She said that in the criminal cases division they won a number of Charter of Rights challenges concerning police misconduct and illegal activity of police, and she added that they got better plea bargains from the crown when Charter of Rights motions were filed. She added that they continue to divert many of their criminal clients into anger management, mental health, and addiction programs which have prevented many of them from having criminal records and thus remain more employable. She informed Council that they added a new satellite clinic this year at the Red Door family shelter for women and families fleeing violence. There is also a clinic at Church of the Redeemer for homeless people, and for transgendered people there is a clinic at 519 Church St. She said that they provide cross-cultural training for law students, and given the diverse clientele in Toronto this is advantageous. She said that the academic appeals and offences division was able to help many students keep their academic careers on track. She concluded in thanking the GSU and Council for their support.

## 2. Sub-Committee and Caucus Reports

### a) Academics and Funding Sub-Committee

Suliman said the Provost Cheryl Misak has extended library user fees to browsing fees for non-UofT students (e.g. Ryerson and York University students) and that the coalition has been deciding what the next action items should be. She said that a letter has been drafted to be sent to MacLean's Magazine in order to publicize the issue of instating a fee and restricting access to a public resource. She said members of Ryerson are currently trying to coordinate a meeting with Rosario Marchese (Ontario NDP education critic) who is in support of opposing these fees and can create pressure to halt the fees.

### b) Social Justice Sub-Committee

Suliman said the movie screening last week of the "Constant Gardener" took place and a panel discussion was held on how to uphold legal and ethical rules when drug trials are conducted abroad. She said the Poverty Free Ontario Campaign petitions (90000) have been delivered to the Premier of Ontario and that CP24 and the Toronto Sun were there to document it. She said herself and Greg West were there, and members of parliament are largely unaware of student issues, so it was mainly an educational meeting.

### c) Sustainability Sub-Committee

Michelle St-Amour said that the Sustainability Sub-Committee has been holding discussion about what would be happening next year. She said that the Public Realm Office is currently looking at the details of pedestrianizing portions of St. George, Devonshire and Wilcox streets and that the details of the report they sent, which was discussed at the November 2009 General Council meeting, are being reviewed. She said that St. George and Harbord-Hoskin is to become a Pedestrian Priority Zone (PPZ) and that one more pedestrian survey is to be conducted before this decision is finalized. She reported on behalf of Toby Bowers (representing Bikechain) that the Sustainability Sub-Committee passed a promotional endorsement for Bikechain. She asked Council members to take a copy of the posters back to their Course Unions, concerning open houses and graduate forums being hosted by Bikechain on January 27<sup>th</sup> and February 24<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. She concluded that there would be winter riding sessions, the next of which would be on January 6<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30 pm.

d) University Affairs Sub-Committee

Neschadim introduced himself and said that the focus issues in terms of the campaign that they will be pursuing next semester include achieving solidarity with the student association at Ryerson against turnitin.com. He explained how this service affects the quality of education at UofT including the fact that the student/faculty ratio is poor and thus this reduces the number of hours that TAs have access to. He said that reactive issues that members have complained about were also being discussed, such as the fees associated with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), e.g. confirmation of enrolment letters which cost \$7, and the new fees introduced at UofT libraries that are limiting resources available for those at other universities.

Chris Landon asked what specifically the complaint was about turnitin.com.

Neschadim replied that our campaign is informational. The purpose is disseminating information so that students be adequately informed about being opted out of this service. He added that automated tools of marking reduce work hours available for TAs and the time they can spend with students, which allows for a better learning experience. He expressed that submitting your work to this service is essentially an assumption of guilt, and that there have been situations where students have had to file appeals with regards to how their work was assessed by this service. He concluded that the GSU does not support this service because it is for-profit.

St-Amour added that 'for-profit' means that turnitin.com partly owns the students' work once it is submitted, hence they make a profit from the students' work. She clarified that the students are signing away a portion of their copyright.

Mubdi Rahman raised support for turnitin.com, saying there is a course with 600 students in his department in which they are required to write essays and as such there are many academic integrity offenses. He said this has been effective in reducing the workload for TAs.

e) International Students' Caucus

Suliman said that the provincially coordinated teleconference decided collectively to send petitions to the Minister of Health at the end of January and she said further details would be sent out to councillors. She said there was a request from one undergraduate student union to work with the GSU on inviting an immigration lawyer to host a forum for international students to discuss issues such as how to apply for new classes.

f) Queer Caucus

St-Amour said on behalf of herself and Greg West there was another well attended social on Friday November 27<sup>th</sup>. She said there would be no social in December and there would be more events to come, starting in the last week of January.

g) Women's Caucus

Bodia Macharia said there have been no meetings thus far and on November 5<sup>th</sup> they tried to schedule a meeting but not enough ladies were available. She said she is still awaiting responses from members for a future meeting.

3. Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) – National General Meeting Report

Macharia said that due to the need to strategize the reporting of the CFS National General Meeting, given that many GSU members attended and need time to file a congruent report that is accurate and complete, the majority of the Executive decided to table the report until the next General Council Meeting.

An unknown speaker inquired as to why the report was being tabled.

Macharia responded that a conflict of opinions requires that the report is accurate.

Suliman added that a number of GSU members attended the CFS National General Meeting and they need time to file a congruent report that is accurate and complete due to differing perspectives.

Neschadim further added that it would take hours to give a complete report of what happened at the meeting in terms of policies, motions, and resolutions brought forward.

An unknown speaker asked if there was no formal report at the time. He further asked if all different versions of what happened would be reported.

Macharia responded that there was no report as of yet, and she affirmed that all perspectives would be presented equally.

Neschadim said that all delegates who went to the meeting would contribute to the report.

**Motion:** BIRT the presentation of CFS National General Meeting Report be deferred until the January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 General Council Meeting.

Bodia Macharia/Leo Mui

**Carried**

4. Reports

a) Course Unions

There were no Course Union reports.

b) Executive/Staff Announcements/Questions/Correspondence

Ellie Louson announced that the GSU annual holiday party would be taking place on Friday December 18<sup>th</sup> at the GSU pub at 5pm. She said that sales between 5-6pm would be donated to the Yonge Street Mission.

c) CUPE 3902, Governing Council, Graduate Education Council

Catherine Macdonald, a member of the CUPE Liaison Committee, on behalf of Vanessa Parlette said that there were four items to bring to the Council's attention which should then be disseminated to course unions. She said they would like to visit with members of your department to have information sessions on the grievance process, how to use the health care plan, how to get involved, and questions regarding CUPE 3902; she said they can send a representative along or organize a pizza lunch session which CUPE 3902 will fund. She said that for more information regarding organizing a session to contact [lo@CUPE3902.org](mailto:lo@CUPE3902.org). She informed Council members of the Financial Assistance Fund, now with online application forms available on the CUPE 3902 website, for members of Unit 1 who are not a part of the funded cohort and outside of funding packages because they have reached a certain point in their program. She added that the total is based on the number of applicants and cannot exceed a certain amount. She said that applications are due on February 8<sup>th</sup> 2010. She added that the Women's' Committee are having a lunch on

January 13<sup>th</sup> from 12-2pm at Hart House and to email Vanessa Parlette at [liaison@CUPE3902.org](mailto:liaison@CUPE3902.org) to RSVP. She said that it would be beneficial to coordinate activities of their Women's Committee with the GSU Women's Caucus. Lastly, she said that CUPE has become aware of the fact that Unit 1 Course Instructors have special concerns that are not always foremost in bargaining and the union is dedicated to learning more about concerns of Unit 1 Course Instructors in an effort to achieve more parity in working conditions and entitlement as to those in unit 3 and faculty. She said that on January 12<sup>th</sup> at 5pm, at the union office in Suite 803 on 180 Bloor Street West, there would be a drop-in to voice the concerns and needs of Unit 1 workers.

Macharia responded to the Women's Committee and expressed her interest in coordinating with them. She added that concerning Unit 1 workers, if there were questions or concerns you could also contact her at [bodiamacharia@utoronto.ca](mailto:bodiamacharia@utoronto.ca) or [bodia@hotmail.com](mailto:bodia@hotmail.com).

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Next Meeting – Thursday January 28<sup>th</sup>, 6:10pm sharp, Bahen Centre, Room 1130.

7. Adjournment

Dawe declared the meeting adjourned at 6:49pm.