



University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union Board of Directors (General Council) Meeting Minutes Wednesday, 15 November 2016

1. Meeting Comes to Order at 6:16pm

a. Equity Statement

b. Adoption of Agenda

Chair moved to amend the agenda to include the following items under Unfinished Business:

- Equity and Advocacy Committee Legislative Program
- Graduate Student Census Ad-hoc Committee, Division 4 Rep
- Reverse the motions for 3a and 3b in the note to correspond with the topic.

MOTION B-130-16: BIRT the General Council of the Union / Board of Directors adopts the agenda as amended. Moved by Lynne Alexandrova (OISE), seconded by Robert Prazeres (Linguistics). MOTION B-130-16 CARRIES unanimously.

c. Roll Call: guests, proxies, and all non-voting members

- Nickie Van Lier – Geography and Planning
- Samantha Spady – OISE
- Ari Blaff - MUNK
- Kelly Bray – Executive Director, Bikechain
- Aidan Fishman – U of T Governing Council
- Adam Kramer – Cell & Systems Biology
- Jamila Ghaddar - Faculty of Information
- Chaim Katz – Biomedical Engineering
- Anne Boucher - UTERN
- Christopher Webb – Geography and Planning
- Neil Patrick - Chemistry
- Kyra Morris – Industrial Relations and Human Resources.

Speaking for the motion – Stefan Lazov (Information – Masters):

Extending speaking rights to all guests is the most democratic way to ensure everyone's voice is heard.

MOTION B-131-16: BIRT the General Council of the Union / Board of Directors extends speaking rights to the guests as identified. Moved by Suzanne Narain

(Civics and Environment Commissioner), seconded by Lynne Alexandrova (OISE).
MOTION B-131-16 CARRIES with one opposition.

d. Approval of Minutes and Roll Call – 26 October 2016

MOTION B-132-16: BIRT the General Council / Board of Directors of the Union approves the 26 October 2016 minutes and roll call as presented. Moved by Robyn Jones (Sociology), seconded by Rachel Mazzara (Classics). MOTION B-132-16 CARRIES unanimously.

e. Bikechain Report* - Kelly Bray (Executive Director, Bikechain)

- Kelly highlighted in the report that this year they have helped 4760 people fix their bikes, the most they've had in a year. Volunteers logged 950 hours in the shop, which doesn't count their hours with workshops, board of directors etc.
- She also highlighted that they have installed two new stands, have adjusted their staffing structure, and did some outreach on the UTM and UTSC campuses.

f. U of T Environmental Research Network (UTERN) Report* - Anne Boucher

- Anne highlighted three things UTERN is concentrating on:
 1. Provide students with funding and financial resources to fund a sustainability or environmentally-related event/project
 2. Provide students with contacts from across the environmental department.
 3. Facilitate conversation between different groups. Do this through the environment working groups that they have every month. This is also good for facilitating apprenticeships.
- Last year funded they over \$36,000 worth of events and projects on campus.
- This year, they have funded \$13,500 for ongoing projects. The application for funding is on their website.

g. Unfinished Business

i. Equity and Advocacy Committee Legislative Program – Cristina Jaimungal (External Commissioner)

- Cristina highlighted that they are still looking for members. The group has not yet met, but their priorities are as follows:
 - Funding
 - Accessibility
 - Community

MOTION B-133-16: BIRT the General Council/ Board of Directors adopts the Equity and Advocacy Standing Committee's Legislative Program, as presented, for the 2016-2017 academic year. Moved by Cristina Jaimungal (External Commissioner), seconded by Jennifer Langill (Environmental Studies). MOTION B-133-16 CARRIES unanimously.

ii. Graduate Student Census Ad-hoc Committee, Division 4 Rep – Branden Rizzuto

- Branden: Looking for someone to become the Division 4 Rep. 2-4 hours a week, very flexible.

Executive MOTION B-134-16: BIRT the General Council appoints Taksim Ahmed (Pharmaceutical Sciences) as the Division four representative to the Graduate Student Census Ad-hoc Committee effective immediately until 31 August 2017. Moved by Branden Rizzuto. MOTION B-134-16 CARRIES unanimously.

2. Reports

a. Executive and Staff Reports

Elizabeth Eng (Internal Commissioner):

- Has been working on the Memorandum of Agreement with levy groups, as well as the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA)

Andrea Constantino (Academics and Funding Commissioner, Divisions 3&4):

- Has been looking into post-residency fees. She is also looking at ways to reduce tuition after students are out of the funded cohort. She met with budget and planning people from the administration about this and will be making a presentation/proposal to the dean of graduate school on implementing this.

Branden Rizzuto (Academics and Funding Commissioner, Divisions 1&2):

- Has been working with Finance Committee to finalize the budget and audit.
- He organized a lunch for the presidents of course unions to facilitate better communication and ties. He also rolled out the Graduate Student Census Ad-hoc Committee. He has been working with the other Academics and Funding Commissioner to deal with a variety of other funding complaints, particularly the implementation of a so called 10-hour rule.
- Also wanted to highlight a new hire for the UTGSU. Ally Sebben – Communications and Promotions Coordinator.

Sarah Cooper (Executive-At-Large):

- Participated in the National Day of Action (NODA). Has attended Executive meetings and has been getting caught-up with the requirements of her position.

Cristina Jaimungal (External Commissioner):

- Was focused on organizing the Decolonizing conference that took place this month, from November 3 – 5, as well as organizing and participating in the NDOA (National Day of Action).

Brie Berry-Crossfield (Finance and University Governance Commissioner):

- Has been going through governance cycle, attending Governing Council and Academic Board. She spoke with vice provost of students regarding sexual violence.

- She has been working with the administration about purchasing a new vendor in regards to Blackboard. She also sat on the Council on Student Services and the Athletics and Recreation Budget Sub-Committee.

Suzanne Narain (Civics and Environment Commissioner):

- Has been working with the Health and Dental Insurance Administrator to work on improving mental health coverage through insurance.
- In January, she is hoping to get a better understanding of how many students are accessing their mental health services in their package and increasing premiums.
- Wants to highlight that the health and wellness center is holding a focus group to try and improve their wait times. If you are interested in participating, there are two sessions, Nov. 28th 4:30 – 5:30, Nov. 20th 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. More info in the Digest.

b. Course Unions

Lynne Alexandrova - OISE

- The representatives from OISE would like to invite members from the different Caucuses to join them in figuring out how to make Caucuses more visible and to create a more robust governance structure for Caucuses. She highlighted that some Caucuses used \$0.00 in their budgets last year, which suggests that more can be done to reach their goals. They would like to hold a meeting between now and the AGM to come up with proposals. If you are interested, Lynne will stick around after the meeting, or you can reach out to her by e-mail.

c. Standing Committees, Ad-hoc Committees, and Caucuses

Suzanne Narain - Civics Committee

- She invited folks to join the Civics Committee. If you are interested, please email civics@utgsu.ca

d. Governing Council, Graduate Education Council, CUPE 3902, and USW 1998

None

e. Motion to Receive Reports

MOTION B-135-16: BIRT the General Council of the Union receives all reports as read. Moved by Connor Zeer-Wanklyn (Chemistry), seconded by Sarah Cooper (Executive-at-Large). MOTION B-135-16 CARRIES Unanimously.

3. Bylaw and Policy Amendments*

a. Bylaw 7.10.11. and 7.11.11: Duties of Academics and Funding Commissioners

- At the last Council meeting, the Academics and Funding Commissioners 3&4 and 1&2 presented the Funding Complaint Process. Council approved the preliminary process through which the complaints will be handled and in the interim they have added this duty to the actual job descriptions of these positions. These amendments would finalize that.

- There is an error on pg. 23. Under the section "Article 7 Executive", on the 4th and 5th lines down, 7.10 should read 7.11.

MOTION P-05-16: BIRT the Board of Directors of the Union adopts Bylaw 7.10.11 and 7.11.11: Duties of Academics and Funding Commissioners; and BIFRT the Board of Directors of the Union revokes all previous policies and positions of the Union that may conflict with the following policies. Moved by Elizabeth Eng (Internal Commissioner), seconded by Lynne Alexandrova (OISE). MOTION P-05-16 CARRIES Unanimously.

b. Bylaw 6.1, Policy G4.10: Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Committee – CHRISTOPHER WEBB

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Committee:

- The BDS Committee wants to move from an Ad-hoc Committee to a Standing Committee. The BDS campaign is part of a global movement that seeks to pressure U of T to divest from companies that profit from the military occupation of Palestine and that directly benefit from the construction of illegal settlements. U of T is currently invested in three military hardware and manufacturing companies. You can find more information about this on the BDS Committee website.
- The Committee has collected over 1,000 signatures from students, alumni, and faculty. They have been active through events, film screening and festivals, panel discussions, tabling, clubs day, etc. They have a good track record in terms of ensuring transparency.
- They also have established good relationships with other groups on campus. They have coordinated with anti-oppression groups, faculty and staff. They also work in solidarity with numerous organizers around campus. For example, they recently released a statement of solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe against the North Dakota Access Pipeline.
- Building support for the divestment campaign is something they see as an ongoing process. As seen with other divestment campaigns on campus, U of T can easily brush them aside. They are looking to become a Standing Committee to build long-term focus and a campaign that would enact the will of the UTGSU membership. U of T won't adopt equitable investment practices overnight, so a long-term strategy is needed to get them to do that.

Speaking For:

- Is a member of the BDS Committee. Divestment is a compelling tactic, as seen in many Environmental Justice campaigns, especially fossil fuel divestment. Divestment campaigns have been successful in the past, but they are long-term campaigns.
- Transitioning to a standing committee would greatly enhance the committee's capacity to continue the work it has done in engaging multiple constituencies on campus, building coalitions with other social movements, and to engage in long term organizing to hold the university accountable.

Speaking Against:

- An Israeli student brought to her attention that there are issues pertaining to the boycott aspect of this committee that affects Israel and the Israeli Academy of Scholars, Artists and Musicians. These are the people that fight for peace and acceptance in Israel.

Speaking For:

- Is a member of the BDS Committee. In response to previous comment, the committee is called Boycott, Divest and Sanctions, but their mandate is to focus on divestment, specifically from weapons manufacturing companies being funded by the university.
- Ad-hoc Committees don't currently have rules that govern internal operations to the same extent that Standing Committees do. If they become a Standing Committee, they will be brought under UTGSU policies which would benefit their internal operations.
- Moving to a Standing Committee is also good for General Council. It would be a time-saving initiative as it would mean they wouldn't have to seek renewal every September. They have been a committee for three years already.

Speaking Against:

- Last year the BDS committee invited a speaker called Amanda Lickers, who made anti-Semitic comments. This wasn't brought up and the committee obstructed the investigation by the administration.
- CHAIR: Please restrict your comments to the motion on the floor. We are not here to consider the character of the organization. It was created by a motion at the AGM and furthered by a motion from the General Council. To question the specific nature of the committee would be more appropriate for the AGM. I would invite you to speak with the Executive Assistant or myself on how to bring forward a motion to that affect.

Speaker Disagrees. Anti-Semitism is relevant to this motion and speaks to the cost of this committee. Students are not allowed to opt-out of the fees for this committee. This wouldn't be permitted if this was transphobic, homophobic, etc. There seems to be a special case that allows this when it comes to anti-Semitism.

Speaking For:

- Is a member of the BDS Committee. The committee is categorically anti-racist, anti-oppressive organization.
- The issue that was raised in terms of the event over the summer has been dealt by the administration and was resolved to their satisfaction.

Speaking Against:

- Did her undergrad at McGill. BDS has inflicted damage both on Jewish life and student life at McGill. Anti-Israel extremists at McGill have repeatedly tried to impose BDS on campus and failed. There were anonymous death threats to Jewish student leaders and a breakdown in relations between Jewish students and their peers. They tried to shut down a celebration of a Jewish holiday that had nothing to do with Israel. BDS starts as an attack on Israel but often morphs into an assault on Jewish life in general. BDS was rejected at McGill when the Undergraduate Student Union's Judicial Board ruled that they violated their anti-discrimination

policies. Here at the GSU we don't have a Judicial board, but I urge the General Council to do the right thing and vote against the motion.

Speaking For:

- Regarding the events last year, we fully complied with the investigation by the university. Their investigation prompted some discussion about how we deal with comments of this nature at our events. We are happy in the future to present to General Council the discussion that was had and our plan on how we plan to deal with events in the future.

POI:

- Will making this a Standing Committee affect the ability of the AGM to change the committee?
- Answer: The motion includes amendments both to policy and bylaw. Policy is the jurisdiction of this body, but Bylaw is the jurisdiction of the AGM. So, Council can approve and reject policy and bylaw amendments. The Bylaw will then go to the AGM for ratification. If the motion is successful, the Bylaw would then have to be ratified by the AGM.

CHAIR: As the next AGM coincides with the next General Council, I would rule it out of order if we tried to lock anything into Bylaw outside of the AGM, especially as we would need to have the appropriate notice.

POI:

- Why is this a closed committee and are there other Standing Committees that are closed?
- Answer: Finance is a closed committee. When BDS was an ad-hoc committee, there was a process to be admitted that was passed through a General Council meeting. We want to continue this because in the past our members have faced threats and intimidation. We want to have a check in place to make sure that whoever joins is committed to furthering its work, not disrupting it.

Speaking For:

- This motion is here because of a technicality regarding renewal, which people tried to exploit to bloc the ad-hoc committee, which wasn't possible because it was passed through the AGM. We are seeing a lot of attempts to try to exploit technicalities to reverse the spirit of the committee itself. This is a bad-faith way to go about bypassing the decision of the AGM and a larger democratic body. If you disagree with the committee, bring it up at the AGM. Trying to exploit the Bylaws to bypass an actual debate is in very bad-faith.

POI:

- A document with serious accusations against the BDS committee has been passed around. I would like the Chair of the BDS Committee to say a few words about it.
- Answer: Would like to reiterate that the issue about our event has been dealt with through an official complaint mechanism with the University of Toronto. Our committee, along with the UTGSU Executive and all appropriate stakeholders went through the process requested by the University to deal with the complaint and in the end the question was settled. The University was satisfied and it took no further actions. There is a long history of the movement being

accused of anti-Semitism and of having to prove that it is not. The BDS movement was supported by the AGM because it is an anti-racists, anti-oppressive movement.

POI: There have been several Ad-hoc Committees that became Standing Committees using these same policies. We are interested improving membership engagement and this group is very active and engaged and we should be focusing on the motion on the floor.

POI: Wants Elizabeth Eng (Internal Commissioner) to report on what the Policy and Operations Committee found regarding the technicality about renewals.

Elizabeth Eng (Internal Commissioner): The Policy and Operations Committee discussed the procedure on how the BDS committee came to be. They found that the AGM requested that this group exist and gave them their mandate. General Council fulfilled this by striking an ad-hoc committee. What was said before was that it couldn't be struck down because it was created at the AGM, but in fact it was created by General Council.

Speaking Against:

- This is a contentious issue and group. Neither side is right about what this group does. However, students who you represent as Representatives feel isolated and not represented by the Committee. By making it a Standing Committee you are forcing those students to accept this and pay their fees permanently, where they have no chance of opting out. The Equity Policy (13.1) says that UTGSU won't allow discrimination based on nationality. This Committee is focused on nationality. I also have a letter from Jewish students who are asking that we don't make this a permanent committee. There are other groups and ways to have this discussion that already exist on campus.

POI: Can a secret ballot be established and does it need a 2/3 majority to pass?

CHAIR: Changes that affect Bylaws do require 2/3 majority. A secret ballot is out of order because as representatives, your constituents have a reasonable expectation of knowing how their representatives voted.

BDS Committee Closing Argument: This is a campaign which has been incredibly active. We meet on a bi-weekly basis with a lot of support on campus from thousands of undergraduate students, staff and other student groups. Some of the accusations are lies, that can be confirmed by the Administration. The formation of the BDS Committee came from General Council and from the AGM. We look forward to continuing the work and mandate that was put to us.

MOTION B-136-16: Kyra Morris would like to challenge the ruling of the Chair that a secret ballot on this motion is out of order. Moved by Kyra Morris (Industrial Relations & Human Resources), seconded by Chris Rogers (Medical Science). 32 in favour. 39 opposed. MOTION B-136-16 FAILS.

WHEREAS the General Membership of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU) voted at the Annual General Meeting on December 2012 to take immediate action in support for the global campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS); and
 WHEREAS the General Council of the UTGSU voted on September 30, 2013 to strike the UTGSU BDS Ad-Hoc Committee; and

WHEREAS the UTGSU BDS Ad-Hoc Committee has been active for three years.

MOTION P-06-16: BIRT the Board of Directors of the Union adopts Bylaw 6.1: Standing Committees and Policy G4.10: Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Committee as presented; and

BIFRT the Board of Directors of the Union revokes all previous policies and positions of the Union that may conflict with the following policies. Moved by Christopher Webb (Geography and Planning), seconded by Cristina Jaimungal (External Commissioner). 27 in favour, 34 opposed, 17 abstentions. MOTION P-06-16 FAILS. Abstentions by the following representatives are noted: Lynne Alexandrova (OISE), Varshinie Pillar (Cell & Systems Biology), Adora Tuk (Rehab Sciences), Anna Cwikla (Religious Studies), Jennifer Langill (Environmental Sciences).

4. National Day of Action – Cristina Jaimungal (External Commissioner)

- It finally happened. Began at Sid Smith, went past convocation hall and went to Queens Park. There was a great turn out.
- Wanted to remind everyone that this was a fight for free education and it is not over. We will still be collecting petitions. This campaign will not end.
- Also wanted to thank all the Executives and staff for their participation and help in the event.

5.ONCA (Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act) and UTGSU Structure – Elizabeth Eng (Internal Commissioner)

- The ONCA will determine our governance structure, as it clarifies rules of corporate governance. It was created with the intention of helping new non-for-profit incorporate. We need to become compliant with the ONCA, and currently the way the UTGSU is structured is not in compliance.
- Information on how the UTGSU plans to do this can be found in the presentation attached to the minutes.

Sarah Cooper (Executive-At-Large):

- Highlighted that she has worked at another Student Union and revised their bylaws to become in compliant with the ONCA. Wants people to keep in mind that it's important to start making progress soon because the changes for an organization of this size will take time.
- Also asked Representatives to get involved in the Policy & Operations Committee if they are interested or have an opinion on how the UTGSU should move forward. Given the size of the Council, this isn't the forum to debate the minute details of policy.

Representative Comment:

- Wanted to bring attention to the fact that the ONCA is only proposed legislation, it hasn't been brought into law. In fact, it has died waiting for Royal proclamation, so the whole process needs to start over again. We should only start working on coming into compliance with it when it becomes law. As mentioned in the presentation, the law would provide a period for organizations to become compliant once it is enacted, so that's when we should be doing this.

Sarah Cooper (Executive-At-Large):

- To my understanding the legislation itself has passed multiple readings. What is remaining are two independent amendments that don't impact our organization. It is safe for us to move forward on this.

6. Any Other Business

None

7. Next Meeting – Tuesday 6 December at 18:10 in Banting Institute, room 131

**MOTION B-137-16: BIRT the General Council meeting be adjourned at 8:03p.m.
Move by Robert Prazeres (Linguistics), seconded by Lynne Alexandrova (OISE).
MOTION B-137-16 CARRIES unanimously.**

Evan Rosevear
Chair

Samantha Larocque
Secretary