

Council on Student Services (COSS)

Minutes of Meeting – February 15, 2019

Koffler Student Services Centre, Room 313, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members:

Present:

- Beth Ali, Executive Director, Athletics & Physical Activity, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Heather Kelly, Senior Director, Student Success, Student Life St. George
- John Monahan, Warden, Hart House
- David Newman, Senior Director, Student Experience, Student Life St. George
- Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs and Assistant Principal, Student Services, UTM
- Meredith Strong, Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students
- Richie Pyne, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
- Jennifer Coggon, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
- Anne Boucher, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Joshua Grondin, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Desmond Pouyat, Dean of Student Affairs, UTSC
- Tyler Biswurm, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Samantha Stead, Graduate Students' Union (GSU)
- Branden Rizzuto, Graduate Students' Union (GSU)
- Yasmine El-Sanyoura, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Atif Abdullah, Quality Service to Students (QSS)

Absent:

- Qusai Hassan, Council on Student Services (CSS)

Non-voting Members:

- Serena Persaud (Acting Secretary)

Guests:

- Shannon Simpson (First Nations House)
- Brienne Berry Crossfield (APUS)
- Michelle Brownrigg (Hart House)
- Mala Kashyap (APUS)
- Sherry Kulman (Hart House)
- Suzanne Macintyre (Hart House)
- Jim Webster (KPE)
- Ira Jacobs (KPE)
- Isabelle Kim (Centre for Community Partnerships)
- Francesca Dobin (Family Care Office)

Chair:

- Cameron Davies

Recording Secretary:

- Kimberly Elias (Acting)

AGENDA ITEMS

1) Land Acknowledgment

Chair Davies started the meeting with a personalized land acknowledgement.

2) Introductions

Chair welcomed the members and guests, and gave a brief overview of the meeting.

3) Meeting Called to Order

Chair called the meeting to order at 3:14 pm.

4) Approval of Agenda

Chair sought mover to approve agenda. Grondin motioned, Monahan seconded. All in favour, none opposed. The motion passed.

5) Approval of Minutes from Meeting #4

Chair sought mover to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 11, 2019. Overton motioned, Pyne seconded. All approved, none opposed. The motion passed.

6) Summary Minutes from Meeting #5

Since we did not meet quorum at the meeting of January 25, 2019, there are no official minutes. However, there is a summary of the minutes, and copies were made available at the meeting. If there are additional questions on how to access the minutes, members can email the Chair.

7) Discussion of Vote

Chair noted that because this is an important vote that is being recorded, it is best to have a roll-call vote. Chair sought mover to approve motion to have a roll-call vote. Newman motioned, Grondin seconded. All in favour, none opposed. The motion passed.

8) Approval of UofT Sport & Recreation at KPE Operating Plan

On a motion made by Ali and seconded by El-Sanyoura, it was resolved:

THAT the 2019-20 operating plans and budget for the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education: Co-Curricular Programs, Services and Facilities, as presented in the documentation from Beth Ali (Executive Director, Co-Curricular Athletics and Physical Activity) be approved; and

THAT the sessional fee for a full-time student on the St. George campus be increased to \$193.82 (\$38.76 for a part-time student), which represents a year over year increase of \$4.82 (\$0.96 for a part-time student) or 2.55%; and

THAT the sessional fee for a full-time student at UTM or UTSC be increased to \$22.48 (\$4.50 for a part-time student), which represents a year over year increase of \$0.56 (\$0.11 for a part-time student) or 2.55%.

Boucher asked for time to discuss motion. Chair allotted 20 minutes for discussion.

Boucher spoke in favour of the KPE budget increase, along with the other budget proposals on the floor. She noted that part of being a student leader is advocating for the best student services. Often student unions do this through advocacy, but at COSS, student representatives have an opportunity to give these service groups an opportunity to grow and expand. For these reasons, Boucher said she will vote in favour of the motion.

Biswurm asked to clarify the consequences of a negative vote. Strong noted that if it is a positive vote (majority of students and group), the number will go to UAB as-is for approval of governance with a permanent increase. If the vote is negative, then it will be a combination of a permanent increase (CPI) and temporary increase (UTI), with the temporary increase fall off after 3 years.

Chair led roll-call vote.

Voting Results

Students in favour (7): Pyne, Coggon, Abdullah, Boucher, Biswurm, Grondin, and El-Sanyoura

Students opposed (2): Stead, Rizzuto

Students abstained (0)

Administrators in favour (7): Pouyat, Overton, Strong, Ali, Newman, Kelly, and Monahan

Administrators opposed (0)

Administrators abstained (0)

Total: 14 in favour / 2 opposed

MOTION PASSED

9) Approval of Student Life Operation Plan

One a motion made by Newman and seconded by Grondin, it was resolved:

THAT the 2019-20 operating plans and budget for Student Life Programs and Services, as presented in the documentation from David Newman (Senior Director, Student Experience), be approved; and

THAT the sessional fee for a full time student on the St. George campus be increased to \$164.24 (\$32.85 for a part-time student), which represents a year over year increase of \$7.52 (\$1.51 for a part-time student) or 4.80%.

Chair allotted 20 minutes for discussion.

Grondin spoke in favour of the motion, adding that Student Life encompasses a number of different areas and departments that supports students. Grondin noted that it has been clear over the last month that student life departments are being directly attacked; therefore, it is important now more than ever, that students stand in support of the student services that benefit student life on campus. Grondin added that student leaders get requests from the larger membership for increases in mental health supports, accessibility supports, and equity offices on campus; and, these are supports are directly funded by our students.

Chair led roll-call vote.

Voting Results

Students in favour (4): Boucher, Biswurm, Grondin, and El-Sanyoura

Students opposed (5): Pyne, Coggon, Stead, Rizzuto, and Abdullah

Students abstained (0)

Administrators in favour (7): Pouyat, Overton, Strong, Ali, Newman, Kelly, and Monahan

Administrators opposed (0)

Administrators abstained (0)

Total: 11 in favour / 5 opposed

MOTION FAILED (Did not gain a majority of votes from student representatives)

10) Approval of Hart House Operating Plan

One a motion made by Monahan and seconded by Boucher, it was resolved:

THAT the 2019-20 operating plans and budget for Hart House, as presented in the documentation from John Monahan, Warden, be approved; and

THAT the sessional fee for a full-time student on the St. George campus be increased to \$97.96 (\$19.61 for a part-time student), which represents a year over year increase of \$8.56 (\$1.71 for a part time student) or 9.57%; and

THAT the sessional fee for a full-time student at UTM or UTSC be increased to \$3.01 (\$0.60 for a part-time student), which represents a year over year increase of \$0.27 (\$0.05 for a part time student) or 9.57%.

Chair allotted 20 minutes for discussion.

Grondin commented that he has been involved in a number of different consultations that Hart House held on this budget, adding that Hart House is very underfunded right now by students, and the building facing a number of challenges. Hart House at the same time is trying to increase their programming as much as they can. Students have made it very clear that they are looking for these supports, whether it be through Student Life or Hart House. Grondin argued that it is very important that students do their part to fund something that they see as so important to campus.

Boucher spoke in favour of approving the budget, and noted that while student leaders are generally against tuition increases in attempt to make tuition affordable, concerns about tuition costs should be brought to the provincial government and not Student Life. She further noted that student services

should not be sacrificed in the process, and students enjoy and benefit from these services. Boucher concluded that she was personally upset that the Student Life budget did not pass, but urged the committee to pass the Hart House budget.

Biswurm had two points to raise: the first focused on Hart House, and the second on the previous budget decision. He stated that most representatives saw Hart House's presentation, and it is clear that Hart House has an exceptional request, with the increase being higher than what has been presented in the past. However, Biswurm argued that the threshold of demonstrating merit for the increase has been unquestionably met, where Hart House responded to all the questions that have been raised. Hart House requires substantial changes to do what students ask of it to do, and Biswurm added that a negative vote is a direct contravention of what we ask of from administration. He noted appreciation for the representation at COSS, adding that the student representatives have a responsibility to act on behalf of the students they serve, and not on the basis of political agendas. Biswurm added his disappointment for the decision that was rendered in the previous motion. He argued that all representatives around the table have the same mission to serve students, and that if there were concerns, those should have been brought forth to administration in previous meetings.

Abdullah asked for clarification about the UTSC increase. The Chair responded that it would increase to \$3.01 or \$0.60 for part-time students, which represents a year over year increase of \$0.27 for full-time students, \$0.05 for part-time students, or 9.57%.

Abdullah acknowledged that Hart House has done a lot of great work, but that he would like to see more active collaboration between Hart House and the UTSC Student Union. He added that he would like to see more events like the one that was hosted last week. Monahan thanked Abdullah for his comment and said that Hart House is committed to their tri-campus mandate. Tri-campus work and collaboration has grown significantly over the last several years, and there is now an embedded staff person. For example, Monahan noted that the Board of Stewards meeting was just held at UTM, and that there have been fulsome discussions about how to better integrate Hart House at UTM and UTSC.

Pyne thanked Hart House for the budget presentation, and noted that it was very transparent. He acknowledged that Hart House is under special circumstances this year, and said that this understanding will be reflected in their vote.

Pouyat added to the comments about Hart House's involvement at UTSC, where he acknowledged that there has been a stronger commitment on the part of Hart House to be involved in programming at UTSC, and it has been demonstrated in very real ways. Pouyat noted that these efforts are being recognized by the UTSC campus and that he is pleased with the direction.

Chair led roll-call vote.

Voting Results

Students in favour (7): Pyne, Coggon, Abdullah, Boucher, Biswurm, Grondin, and El-Sanyoura

Students opposed (2): Stead, Rizzuto

Students abstained (0)

Administrators in favour (7): Pouyat, Overton, Strong, Ali, Newman, Kelly, and Monahan

Administrators opposed (0)

Administrators abstained (0)

Total: 14 in favour / 2 opposed
MOTION PASSED

11) Other Business

The Chair asked if there is any other business to discuss.

Grondin asked if the representatives who voted no to the Student Life budget could share their reasoning, adding that wants to know why representatives are against funding the various Student Life offices, including the Equity Offices, Career Centre, and Housing Services. Grondin also added if representatives raised these concerns prior to the budget presentation, since Student Life administrators have offered to take student representatives through the budget line-by-line. He wanted to know what needs to change so this vote does not happen again—and whether Student Life needed to change something, or if the unions need to update their policies so that it is not an automatic no.

Rizzuto responded that most people probably know that irrespective of their personal feelings about this, it is written into the student bylaws and policies of all GSU representatives that they have to vote down any proposed fee increases to student tuition. There is also a clause in our bylaw and policy that for the sake of the general council, the board of directors can overturn it by two-thirds majority. Last year, there was a motion made to the general council to overturn this, but they voted to maintain the current bylaw and policy. Therefore, at the end of the day, Rizzuto concluded that they have to respect the will of the membership.

Monahan asked a clarifying question, wondering how tuition is defined and if it includes ancillary services. Rizzuto corrected that it is student fees, and not actually tuition.

Pyne noted that as a representative of APUS, he represented the budget conclusions that were made by the group at large. In looking at the various budgets, a number of concerns were outweighed, and APUS will be sending comments to Student Life via email. The primary concern noted was student representation. While APUS saw themselves reflected in the KPE and Hart House governance systems, they were unable to find where they were represented in Student Life, including who sat on the various Advisory Committees. Pyne thanked Student Life for the many improvements that were made over the last few years, especially increases to Health & Wellness and Accessibility Services. Pyne also noted that APUS has been protesting the Student Choice Initiative, which impeded their level of communication with administrators throughout the COSS process.

El-Sanyoura commented that student unions have been at the forefront in protesting the cuts to student services from the government. She asked how does APUS see voting against supports to student services through these increased fees, as being along the same lines of fighting against the Ford government?

Pyne responded that APUS did not connect the two, and that they were not related in their discussions. APUS discussed as a team how they would vote, and they will provide their feedback to Student Life directly.

Coggon indicated that the deliberation was difficult and that the decision was in no way showing opposition to the extremely important and essential student services offered by Student Life, further

adding appreciation for Student Life's leadership and staff. Coggon echoed Pyne's comment that the main concern from APUS was student governance. After searching for information online, Coggon noted that she could not find clear information about student representation on Student Life's Advisory Committees. Coggon apologized to Student Life's leadership, since a number of circumstances meant that she looked at budget information relatively late, which did not provide an opportunity to give Student Life feedback. She further added that since the protocol still allows for a temporary increase, she felt that this would provide an opportunity to discuss this issue with Student Life in the coming years. Coggon concluded that she looks forward to deep dialogue in the future, and that APUS is absolutely open to voting yes in the future.

Newman added a comment for the groups that voted no, including QSS, acknowledging that he is happy to take any feedback.

Grondin acknowledged that Student Life is run differently than Hart House and KPE, where it encompasses various departments that focus on different areas. Therefore, having one governance group would not be effective. Grondin added that Student Life receives feedback from numerous channels, including Advisory Groups, consultations, direct concerns brought to front-line staff, and groups like COSS. Students often raise concerns to front-line staff, such as Accessibility Services staff, who then bring those concerns forward.

Coggon clarified that APUS had not discussed a governance system, but rather representation on Advisory Committees. She acknowledged that representation could be embedded, but that she was unable to find detailed information about these Committees. Coggon added that Student Life is a complex organization, and that this might require more grassroots input. However, she was looking for more robust and transparent power for students.

Pouyat commented that he has heard students praise the work of student services over the years, and then apologize for voting no to the budget. However, he thanked this year's student representatives for highlighting concrete issues, such as student representation; which, in previous years, had not be offered. Pouyat argued that if we want student services to thrive, it is important that COSS members find ways to negotiate these issues before the budget, rather than expressing these sentiments at a critical budget vote. Pouyat echoed the earlier comment about the contradiction of protesting the Student Choice Initiative and then voting no to the services that they are supporting, and argued that student services will be in a compromised position if we don't negotiate and work out some sort of solution to issues presented.

Grondin asked if the concerns about governance in Student Life were brought forward earlier or are they just being brought forward now?

Coggon acknowledged that it has been a very difficult and busy time, and that more due diligence could have been given to the decision-making, following up with an apology to Student Life. However, she noted that the decision was a group process, and that the group felt that even if concerns were raised, it would not have been enough time for Student Life to enact changes to student governance. Coggon thanked Student Life for constantly offering to meet, but that with the budget only coming out on the 25th, the timeline was pressed to engage in discussions. Coggon suggested that the budgets be provided earlier, so there is more time for deliberation and discussions.

Boucher noted that there has been a lot of discussion about governance of Student Life, but for her, it came down to two questions. Are these services benefiting our students and whether or not there are channels available for students to offer input on the work on Student Life. For both, Boucher strongly felt that the answer was yes, adding that Student Life offers a laundry list of services and its administrators have offered multiple times to meet with COSS representatives. She felt that there are plenty of channels for students to get involved and provide input, and did not echo the concerns about student governance. Boucher acknowledged that Student Life does great work, yet that there needs to be sufficient funds to support this work. She felt it is unreasonable to expect services without proper funding, and expressed disappointment with the negative vote against student life. Boucher concluded by urging members who are around next year, to consider these points when voting next time.

Grondin echoed similar comments to Boucher, adding that there are numerous ways in which Student Life receives input, and that it does not always have to be the 5 student unions to give this feedback. Students should feel the agency to sit on these groups themselves, but maybe this highlighted the need to be transparent about those feedback channels. Grondin encouraged the student COSS representatives to actively bring up concerns throughout the year, and to not wait until after a budget vote.

Biswurm thanked APUS and GSU for providing the rationale behind their vote, since it took courage to share these responses and he was happy to hear they were thoughtful decisions. However, Biswurm noted that while change has begun, it needs to continue. The new landscape ahead of us, including changes to non-tuition fees affects all members of COSS, and thus, it highlights how all members share the same goals. This is an opportunity to show each other that we care about those we have a responsibility to and to open communication lines and opportunities for collaboration to reach that mission in light of the obstacles ahead of us. Biswurm thanked the administrators at the table for showing a great deal of responsiveness to questions and concerns raised, and that though follow-up meetings, he felt he received positive responses. He acknowledged that this is the first time that budgets have been approved, but that we need to continue to work with one another. Biswurm argued the GSU to go back and ask if their policy can be reconsidered, and asked that APUS take those opportunities to work with administration through their feedback.

Coggon suggested that the COSS process should have built-in consultations after each presentation, and noted that she would be interested in meeting with Student Life to get feedback on their deliberation process. Coggon highlighted that there may be ways to improve the COSS process, so that representatives have time to process information and come to a decision that has been analyzed and discussed. For example, help make the explanation of the protocol easier to understand. COSS is very important, therefore, it is important that we review the COSS process going forward, so there is dialogue all the way through, instead of rushing at the end to come to a conclusion.

Pyne raised that another issue is one of access to services, adding that some people pay for services that they may not use or access for various reasons. Students have given feedback that there are issues around access, and while many students access some services (e.g. mental health services), there are different realities and barriers for others in accessing those services (such as marginalized folks).

Newman acknowledged that while he is disappointed by the Student Life vote, he thanked those who voted yes, and thanked those who shared their rationale for why they did not vote yes. Newman reiterated that he is very open to engaging in conversations that will help decision-making in the future.

With that, as discussions occur about the Student Choice Initiative and its impact on our budgets, Newman noted that it is important that we have open conversations.

Kelly started by thanking everyone, and acknowledged that these deliberations are not easy. Based on the feedback, Kelly noted that Student Life will review and evaluate Advisory Committees within the Division of Student Life, and will seek input and feedback on how we can ensure robust student participation. For the next meeting, Student Life will commit to bringing the richness of their student advisory input to COSS. In addition to advisory groups, Kelly noted that there are other informal processes for students to provide feedback, appreciating sometimes the barriers that some students face to more formalized processes. She provided an example that in many of the peer mentorship groups (the Accessibility peers for example)—these groups provide ongoing feedback to service improvements. Kelly concluded that she has heard that Student Life can do more to help the COSS community understand the broader ways in which Student Life solicits student feedback in their work.

Chair noted that they reached the end of the speakers list, and asked if there is any other business.

Newman noted that this meeting normally serves as a reminder to the next student union who is in rotation to put forth nominations for COSS chair for next year—which is GSU. GSU would put forth a name or a couple names from their membership to COSS and then to UAB.

Strong added to that, noting that if a Chair is selected soon, conversations for COSS can start earlier, so that groups have time more time to look at and discuss budgets. Strong noted that the Chair is an integral part of this process, and it would be ideal to appoint a Chair at UAB by the end of this academic year.

Rizzuto asked for clarification of timeline and process, including who is the point of contact for these recommendations.

Chair Davies invited Acting Secretary Persaud to respond. Persaud said the challenge is that COSS needs to meet quorum at the next meeting in order to approve the nomination that will go forward. Noting the he next meeting could be short for this process, she went on to explain the GSU would submit a couple of nominations, or even just one nomination, in advance, to the Secretary (Julia). The Secretary would circulate paper CVs at the next meeting (paper so the CV is collected after and the nominee's personal information is no longer available), after which COSS would have a motion put forward for the nomination for the next Chair and it would be voted on.

Strong added that UAB has an April May meeting, and we need to have documentation in advance. Once GSU has a name, then it needs to be fit in the cycle. The person put forth needs to be a registered graduate student.

Stead asked how long members have to look over the CVs.

Persaud responded that what usually happens is the paper CVs are distributed at the meeting and COSS representatives have a chance to review it. There may be a discussion (*in camera* if the nominee is present), but generally, the matter is dealt with at the same meeting.

Ali wanted to remind everyone that we can move things up, but that divisions all have processes that need to be fulfilled before budgets are brought to COSS. The timelines could be moved up a bit, but that not significantly, given these other processes.

Monahan said because of the weather recently, the annual Hart House Hancock lecture had to be postponed. The new date is March 14, and the topic is "Moving Towards a Disability Justice Revolution" by Sarah Jama. It was sold out, but a few tickets might free up because of the change of date. Please do check our website. It will be a revolutionary presentation. The lecture will happen that evening and Board of Stewards meeting will move up an hour.

Boucher asked about the policies and procedures for COSS. Is it ever re-evaluated ever, and if it is, where?

Pyne said that COSS as an organizational body is tied to the Tuition Fee framework from government, which might change. Pyne acknowledged that there may be space to discuss how COSS is run, but unsure about the details of that process.

Strong added that the framework requires universities to have a protocol, and the protocol is a binding policy through Governing Council. However, how the meetings are run and certain elements around the procedures of COSS were devised many years ago by COSS themselves, and this can be discussed. That might be something COSS wants to consider if a Chair is in place soon.

Ali added that Men's Hockey is playing against Ryerson on Saturday at 7pm.

Monahan added that another postponement for Black Visionaries and Entrepreneurs event because of the weather happened, and it is now March 11. It is on Hart House's website.

12) Adjournment

Chair Davies asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Biswurm motioned to adjourn, seconded by Pyne. All in favour, none opposed. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM.