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Student Caucus of Osgoode Hall Law School and The Legal & Literacy Society of Osgoode Hall Law School

# Minutes

13 November 2019 (12:30pm – 2:30pm)

OHLS RM 2009

**Present:** Sara Omar (Chair), Jordan Crocker, Madi Pulfer, Genevieve Giesbrecht, Mihail Salariu, Sabah Kalim, Chloé Duggal, Akshay Aurora, Andrew Tebbi, Nora Parker, Alannah Marrazza-Radeschi, Rachael Glassman *From L&L:* Jacob Braun, Alex Mulligan, Ashley Jung, Shvata Chopra, Aiishwariya Haran, Chadd Pirali (via phone), Karin Kazakevich, Mahir Mohamed

**Regrets:** Bobby MacKenzie, Fatimah Khan, Gaby Pellerin, Marcel Beaudoin, Priyanka Sharma  
*From L&L:* Reilly Everitt-Cunningham, Phoebe Goldig

**Guests:** Connor Campbell (via phone)

**CALL TO ORDER (12:32pm)**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

***Motion: THAT the Agenda be approved as amended. (Crocker/Parker) CARRIED***

- **Sara:** we're going to be tabelling some of the Caucus specific matters for the purposes of our synergy meeting.

## APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

***Motion: THAT the Caucus Minutes of 30 October 2019 be approved. (Crocker/Aurora) CARRIED***

## COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

- **Sara:** the purpose of this meeting is to work together with L&L on any common issues. We'll begin with an Indigenous Land acknowledgement.

## UPDATES

- **Sara:** lack of maintenance of the pathways leading to Osgoode. It is an ongoing issue, but it hits home when you hear issues like a 1L student who requires accessibility from Assiniboine housing and they are having issues accessing the campus. Ally has been a strong voice in reaching out to administration regarding this issue. But the stonewall response we get from administration is that it is a York University issue.
- **Jordan:** I was aware of some of the communications with administration.
- **Sara:** no tangible responses have been made. Ally has reached out to Student Caucus in actively involving her in our talks with administration regarding this issue. We are hoping to get a response from Lisa Dufraimont soon on this issue.
- **Mihail:** do we need to run through administration on this matter, are there any other avenues we can pursue?
- **Genevieve:** one option is that we go directly to York maintenance or York Accessibility services, because they would know exactly who to talk to. For some background context, we had Michael (President of Access to Osgoode) in addition to this issue we need to be careful with where our dialogue is focused.
- **Sara:** we will be updating all of you on this issue.

## Statement of Free Speech

- Sara: a working group on free speech beginning in January, they have reached out to Student Caucus to have a representative. Given the timing, it might be better for a 1L or 2L to be considered for this representation.
- Rachael: L&L we do have an Equity Officer who can assist with the issue.

***Action: Priyanka to reach out to Alannah and Caucus to see if another student government member from Osgoode is able to sit on this Committee.***

- Sara: they did only reach out to Student Caucus with one position, but I can talk to them about this and see if there is room for another student representative for this group.

***Motion: THAT Priyanka Sharma be ratified as the student representative from Student Caucus on the York Committee for Free Speech (Omar/Aurora) CARRIED***

### **CDO Updates**

- 2 Students to work on the accuracy of their materials and applications. Traditionally, the Chair of Student Caucus has taken on these roles for the CDO. Bobby is looking to see if there is any interest in joining this type of committee.
- Mihail: would it be working with the CDO to improve their services? Would that be the goal of this position
- Sara: Bobby has been working with them on reminding 3L students on matters like 3L Licensing deadlines.
- Mihail: is the CDO looking for people to help them advertise, or for us to inform them on how to help?
- Sara: I think it is a little bit of both. One of their concerns is that people don't show up as often and they do not receive the feedback required.
- Jordan: you can refer to the minutes regarding this matter. For those who had showed interested I would like to see if they still are?
- Akshay: Leanne did work with me on the 2L Recruit, and she did ask for people to reach out to her regarding issues, and they were changed. So, it would be good to reach out to her.

*From the 18 September 2019 Minutes: Action: Andrew/Marcel/Gaby/Nora/Fatimah showed interest and will assist Bobby.*

**Student Caucus: Madi, Chloe, and Pri would be interested**

From L&L: Alex, Ashley, Rachael

## 1L TOWN HALL UPDATES

- Sara: student caucus has approved a \$65.00 budget for the town halls.
- Genevieve: to the 1Ls could you give us a quick takeaways from them?
- Chloe: For Section B the town hall went great. Campus concerns, class concerns, and Osgoode concerns were how they addressed the matters.
- Alex: a lot of the concerns were regarding Legal Process and how it operates.
- Chloe: the 2 day reading week was complained about. It is new and we're appreciative that it is there.
- Rachael: it is relatively new initiative to even get the 2 day break.
- Chloe: accessibility was brought up. Ahead of time we did circulate a link, we didn't get too much feedback, but we did draw that it was a sizeable concern. A lot of the York concerns were related to walkways, so we can see what we can do about that.
- Genevieve: that connect to Access to Osgoode's work.
- Alex: it would be useful to have a survey for the 1Ls to generate feedback. Sometimes the way that Administration conducts these surveys, certain issues are overlooked that they don't want to deal with.
- Chloe: we are hoping to have a 1L Student Caucus and 1L L&L meeting more often to prioritize certain issues.
- Sab: there were a lot of concerns regarding the mid-term process. People are not getting their feedback in time. Legal Process was also a concern. ELGC were having a hard time getting feedback for this class and the anonymous grading wasn't explained well. Study spaces there was a survey, and people think that there are too many undergrads. Student Caucus has discussed a possibility about carding. Regarding Formal people did have opinions on the price.
- Mihail: we set aside the ELGC and Legal Process matter, so we focused on the structure of the classroom. There are some accessibility concerns regarding recordings, etc. As well, people are not impressed that professors are deviating from the handbooks. Faculty Recruitment is an issue, focusing on publishing faculty but we should be focused more on the classroom environment. Do we have a mechanism for what law firms want from us? What classes should we be taking, etc? Spaces was also an issue, undergrads taking up too much space on our campus.
- Jacob: Maybe people were using the products and not putting them regarding the Ch Month effort.

- Genevieve: I am impressed with the engagement. If you could all write something up and send it to Bobby and I.
- Chloe: the gender-neutral washrooms also came up as a concern. I was wondering if we this is something pursued further?
- Genevieve: Access to Osgoode and OUTLaws are dealing with this, so you can reach out to them.

## COMMENTS FROM L&L

### Club Events

- Ashley: generally they have been going well. Overall, I am very impressed with the level of planning and the details going into them. Clubs are getting more external sponsorship which is good.
- Rachael: you had encouraged clubs to join in to do events, which I have also seen a lot more of.

### Budget

- Mahir: the last time we tried to ratify the budget there were lots of questions, some of which I have answers to. The JCR is exceeding our expectations so far.

### Remembrance Day

- Rachael: it went well. With a smaller budget we are trying to work with as much we can. We are trying to get people more informed on what we do.

### Clothing Sale

- Aiish: the bookstore was very impressed and wanted to do another one, but we are holding off on that due to concerns about interest. It might be better to be doing it next semester.

### Yearbooks

- Aiish: we were discussing distributing them earlier than graduation. We could maybe push up 3L Formal as that comprises a huge part of the Yearbook. If we can't have the yearbook out earlier, we can stick to the original date.

## Ski Trip

- Karin: 50% of our pub nights have been at accessible locations. We are aiming for once a month having an accessible pub night. The Deadline for ski trip is open till this Friday.

## Mental Health & Wellness Week

- Alannah: there is a turn out difference for different types of events, so this is something we can work on for Diversity Month next semester. But so far, it is going smoothly.

## Charity Month

- Alex: we are supporting Movember and Period Purse. We have an event on Monday, a pancake breakfast for charity. At the end of the month we have a "shave date" coming up.
- Nora: Regarding Period Purse what is the gist?
- Alex: it is more than menstruation products, I can share the poster to indicate what they accept.
- Nora: right now there is confusion regarding what to place.

## Environment Issues

- Madi: We did have a meeting with Associate Dean Van Harten. But other people have suggested that for the Vegan month, Student Caucus and L&L should promote clubs to have vegan options at their events.
- Ashley: as far as i know, clubs are offering vegan options.
- Madi: it wouldn't be mandatory, just at the end of the month we could say that these clubs did participate in the Vegan month.
- Ashley: to commend a certain club for doing it and not others just doesn't seem right.
- Rachael: the alternative could be to encourage it.
- Madi: it was brought up by the Animal Rights Club and the Environmental Club so it is something to consider.
- Ashley: Vegan food is expensive so that could be a concern. It might be a bit much to ask. But I can tell them that it is going on and they have the option to support it.
- Sara: maybe there could be something beyond food to show support? But, that also goes back to commending certain groups over others.
- Madi: it is an environmental thing, but to say that it is harder seems like a cop out. So, no enforcement it might not be a difficult thing to do.

- Alannah: it might not necessarily be expensive if people explore their options, such as cooking from home.
- Madi: the clubs could provide a list of where they are planning on ordering from.
- Alex: it seems like an easy solution to say January is a Vegan Month and see if Clubs are willing to participate.
- Akshay: What if we put it to the clubs, and not give them a certificate, but to have Animal Rights and Environmental Society recognize their participation.
- Genevieve: Clubs may or may not participate for the recognition. It can be sufficient.
- Shvata: What if more people went to a different event that didn't have the vegan options?
- Sara: Free food is free food.
- Mihail: It would be good to use our influence on the campus to promote this. I have never heard of this before, so it is something we can support and show options for people. We can give the student body more options. We can put it on the table and put our name behind it. We can just support the month itself.
- Sara: supporting the Animal Justice Society and Environmental Society on this matter would be the positive way to go to see how they want to move this forward. I think the student body will be receptive.
- Jacob: there are other law schools that have banned paper cups, so maybe we can hand out mugs for coffee at O-Week.
- Rachael: York has banned plastic water bottles on campus.
- Genevieve: we can't really speak on this, since it is beyond our scope as it is run by Air Mark.
- Madi: there are other organizations working on this if you want to speak to them.
- Nora: it is an interesting topic. We could try to get this from sponsors.

## REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

**APPC:** concerns about academic freedom come into this – issues around language need to be clarified and made consistent

Madi: needs some work done from the equality committee

What is covered within it and who? There's some confusion whether students are covered in it – NOT. Only faculty. What qualifies within the resolution.

Nora: one part in resolution where there's process – statement about commitment to addressing systemic discrimination and Berger wanted to move that into another section because could have students raise issue of admin not addressing discrimination

Working on the 30 and under profile

Madri: problem that grades committee has had is in under 30 classes median should be B+ – different profs distribute that differently. Haters want the profile to match the distribution to other larger classes.

Alannah: Even though rationale is that curve isn't representative of under 30 classes

Madri: concerns on all sides. Huge report done 10 years ago that explained why this model is the right one to use but people in grades committee is still mad about it. People concerned that more high grades given in classes than low grades. Right now looking at research and have to give response back to grades committee from APPC – deadline by EOY

Nora: grades committee is exaggerating the issue. Will need to address that.

## **BUSINESS ARISING**

### ***OLD BUSINESS***

#### **1. CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS (Jordan)**

*Motion: THAT Caucus accepts the updated Caucus Constitution and Bylaws AND THAT Caucus directs the Director of Communications to put forward the updated Constitution for a vote at an AGM no later than March 2020. (Crocker/\_\_\_\_) TABLED*

*Motion: THAT the conversation on the Constitution is tabled at the next meeting and will be presented for a vote. (Crocker/Tebbi) CARRIED*

### ***NEW BUSINESS***

#### **1. LIBRARY CARDING (Andrew)**

Andrew: there is a rumour going around school that the administration is looking for attendance to become mandatory. Students did approach me and asked me about spaces in the library because of undergraduate students. If attendance became mandatory, we would need more space in the library. So, how can we restrict access to just Osgoode for the library. Student Caucus did propose a carding system to secure more spaces.

Nora: carding has a very negative connotation. Card checks might be better.

Sara: how did the idea go in Town Hall?

Alex: people thought it was a great idea, but I think it is a bad idea. There is a perception that lawyers and law students are elitist and this would feed into this narrative. We expect to use York University's services, but then tell them that they can't use our library. To give us access to their services, but to limit thier's is unfair. There are other issues to address like if we don't have your I.D. you won't be able to access the library?

Nora: You can show them MyOsgoode.

Alex: there are many ways to prove that you are a student, but people do have a problem with authority coming down on them. And, there is a concern that only certain people will be tolerated.

Chloe: we all agree that we did study in law libraries growing up, it is about finding a balance.

Akshay: this is an issue that Jordan and I dealt with last year. We do need the space much before November 18. The space is not big enough to accommodate everyone. People are studying much more in advance of November 18, so not fair to assume on that date is when Osgoode students need it the most.

Rachael: I don't like the idea of closing off the library. Everyone deserves a place to study. It is not just undergraduates making noise, it is everyone. There is a lot of space to study there. We shouldn't be advocating restricting access to it.

Jordan: Connor Campbell is our representative on the Faculty Council Committee on Libraries and has been for the past three years. He can provide some context .

Connor: when I joined the committee in first year, I advocated making the library more Osgoode specific. The two responses, the push back comes from Library staff and Faculty. Security incidents at the library is an issue. There is an issue of discrimination with the carding process. Another issue is that we don't know who is an Osgoode student and who is not, not a lot of the complaints just relate to undergraduate students. They would need to see that Osgoode students are not getting the benefits of the services they are paying for. It commonly comes up that it requires extra work on the Library staff. The relationship between York's Library and Osgoode's Library is important. Osgoode is separate, but it is linked in a way that the resources in the database searches come up for both. To access those resources would be difficult. We have a certain amount of autonomy that is compatible that everyone can still access the library. I would advise for this to be well thought out, because the general call for carding will fail.

Jacob: it is interesting that it is controversial. It is a common practice in other schools where access to Graduate libraries are restricted.

Connor: the way that the library is set up is that Osgoode and York both pay for publishing materials, we are paying for a certain number of users to have access. They are sharing agreements for the libraries. We are paying for York students to have access to the materials. There are certain materials that are limited where you would have to prove you are in a course to access it.

Jacob: the librarians can still help you find the resources.

Connor: this might be a staffing issue. There will be cost concerns as well. There is a price difference in what we pay to what they pay.

Ashley: the difference with us and other faculties is that we are a law library so creates an access to justice issue.

Akshay: Marcel did bring up that there are other law libraries doing this as well.

Rachael: we are a commuter school. The whole university has a lack of study space, so we shouldn't be just making this an issue for us. We should be advocating for more study space for everyone.

Aiish: there is a brand new student centre that has been built for this purpose. It is empty at times, that building could be developed to be more student friendly.

Andrew: the concerns raised are important. I think I am in favour of a little more exclusivity. We could maybe move the date up for making the library Osgoode specific. We could implement lanyards to avoid some tensions with carding, so that non-Osgoode students could still access the resources.

Connor: if there is a general issue that you can't find a seat in the library, then you need to record those complaints so that they can better understand the issue. They do think that there are no issues. Also, need to come up with a list of objectives. The library staff are in unionized positions, so there is a lot of paperwork involved. Having clear objectives would be more helpful.

Akshay: the idea of having to complain every time might not be something that everyone wants to do. Could we do a survey instead?

Mihail: we do have a survey that was circulated to the 1L group. The comments are interesting. It is not just about the library, it is about study space. To be able to utilize other space available. This is hurting York's reputation globally. So, there might be a need to come up with more creative solutions.

Sara: it might be best to create a proposal so we have clear objectives and things that are feasible with a direct option to consider. We can have a show of hands to see who will participate? **Andrew, Jordan, Akshay, Rachael, Jacob, Madi, Aiish, Chloe.**

Genevieve: Bobby and I will be meeting with the Deans next week. We might need to restrict the JCR use because of the cost of cleaning it.

Connor: the Library Committee has met on Monday, the next time that they will meet is in the New Year so that gives us more time to come up with things. Even if there is no formal complaint process, a form of receiving feedback would be good to indicate how many people are being affected and how they are being affected.

Ashley: are people aware that you can book in Helliwell as well? That is available as another study space.

**Action: Caucus to formulate a document to clearly articulate the issues and goals of students and address students' concerns so that we may bring it up at a future forum.**

## 2. CAUCUS BANNER (Chloé)

Chloe: I do have some designs, and I am responsive to criticisms, so at the end of the meeting I will put it in the chat for feedback.

## 3. INSTAGRAM & SLACK (Nora/Rachael)

Nora: I know that slack is very useful.

Rachael: we do have an L&L feed on instagram and facebook. We can share the instagram because we use it to promote events so if there are things that Student Caucus would like to add that would be good.

Nora: I do have certain ideas for the use of instagram stories.

Sara: so maybe we will let one Student Caucus Representative on this? Perhaps Sabah.

***Motion: THAT Caucus will use L&L's Instagram account. (Parker/Pulfer) CARRIED***

## ***OTHER BUSINESS/UPDATES***

### 1. FACULTY COUNCIL CONFIDENTIALITY (Jordan)

Jordan: There was a 1L curriculum report last year that we didn't end up sharing with anyone then. It was confirmed after a while that it could get out. This year started speaking to Chair of FAC and Dean and we now can share whatever is in FAC documents in those meetings. We will get budget at next FAC meeting and we'll publish it in Obiter. There will potentially be cuts this year. We need to hold them accountable. In our own circles make sure students know what's happening. If funding cuts are not this year, it's next year.

*"Dear Jordan, thank you again for your query. After having consulted with some members of Faculty Council, I am prepared at this stage for Faculty Council agendas and materials to be distributed by you to non-members, including the minutes of previous meetings. At thi*

*stage, I am not prepared to agree to reporting outside of Faculty Council on oral presentations made to Council or discussions had at Council meetings on the basis that the official summary of the meeting is in the minutes. This practice is forward looking and will take effect as of the meeting dated November 25<sup>th</sup>. Sincerely, Poonam Puri"*

Madi/Rachel: cannot log into FAC meeting minutes.

Jordan: email Courtney again and CC Poonam Puri

## **2. EMAIL LISTSERV (Jordan)**

Jordan: there is a concern from some individuals that L&L and Student Caucus emails are spam. This could be something that breaks Canadian anti-spam laws.

Genevieve: this is an IT issue.

Rachael: we have a distribution list.

## **3. ANY FURTHER BUSINESS**

Andrew: this year a course did not secure funding, unclear how or why – student concerned because wanted to attend moots but is unable to. Student has to find funding.

***Note: Members from L&L Adjourned at 2:08pm. Caucus continued its meeting.***

**ADJOURNMENT (2:20pm)**