

ID:219

Student Caucus of Osgoode Hall Law School Minutes

January 23, 2019, Study Room on the Ground Floor (0014K)

Regrets: Angela, Riel, Simi, Chadd, Lucas

Present: Ara, Akshay, Aashish, Jordan, Christian, Marcel, Graham, Vibhu, Adam, Rebecca,

Manuela, Danielle

CALL TO ORDER (12:35pm)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ryerson's Yellowhead Institute's Hayden King said something → what he wants from territorial

land acknowledgements is some action Hayden+King+on+CBC+Radio+-+territorial

acknowledgements

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(Crocker/Oberoi) Approved & CARRIED

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

- Adam
 - Meeting updates – nothing Caucus related brought, Access to Osgoode Reporting Project, York system recordings “sunsetting” – recording access lost, according to policy need to delete at end of the semester, issues with attendance at Academic

Success Seminars, overlapped with ELGC Moots and SC meetings, discussion about things we had been taking on and perhaps shouldn't be, slated schedule of events (Public Interest Day on March 1, events planned for March 4, 6, 8, planning non-traditional legal role/in-house counsel event for March 5), provided advice on Friday scheduling

- Graham: bear in mind that 1L's are on campus on Friday, catering to two demographics with different sets of needs
- Aashish: attendance was low at the Grades Release session, other problems – holding too many, no one wants to attend by the time second semester rolls around, Dufraimont wanted to cancel some, Aashish believes that "Understanding Your Grades" should be mandatory, alleviate some of the panic that we see
- Adam: agrees that this is a crucial issue
- Graham: relevant to grades appeal, a number of appeals are submitted
- Aashish: should send out an email that reviews basic information
- Marcel: 1L students did not realize how helpful the session would be
- Graham: Mya is in the process of updating the Student Handbook
 - Digital Innovation Sossin flex-classroom project discussed, need more classroom

space, Trial Advocacy in particular, funding slated (millions), more information to

come

◦ Tuition letter & petition, L&L presidents and SC chairs contributed, will not donate

any more money to bursaries until there are cuts to tuition, seeking support

▪ Aashish: things have changed with recent provincial government tuition

cut and freeze announcement, need to find a way to reframe advocacy,

being forced onto school in a way that is not sustainable

◦ CDO event: "Oh the Places You (may want to think about) Go (ing)!"

▪ Adam proposed this name in jest, does anyone have any other

suggestions? Record them in Slack

◦ LSSO meeting & donation, seeking \$100 donation from SC to keep system

running, expenditures SurveyMonkey account

▪ Manuela: we always give them money, either split between L&L and SC or

L&L only

◦ Faculty Council Feb 4

• Rebecca

◦ What types of surveys are folks interested in distributing? Polling students on

prioritization of initiatives

- Rebecca to put together Tips and Tricks (by another name) survey to distribute to 1L's

- Graham

- Send committee minutes
- Academic policy development slow this year because we do not have a Dean
- Graham to reach out to Teaching and Learning

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

There were none.

SENATE UPDATE

There was no update.

HEALTH PLAN UPDATE

- Recommendation – give a ceiling of money that we are willing to put student fees towards, L&L and SC will have the power to negotiate with YUGSA/YFS, considerable power for government to have (negotiating health plan for students at Os), caveat – cannot go forth and determine which plan is best, administer survey on health coverage (i.e. usage, improvements), in the future, not required to hold a referendum each time we'd like to switch health plans, time consuming process

- Graham: is every year realistic? Recommendation – collect survey data every year,

review every 2 to 3 years

- Manuela: student feedback will vary based on changes to tuition
- Aashish: when will the new plan come into effect?
- Manuela: referendum procedure in February, election in March, students starting at Os in 2019 will be on the new plan
- Aashish: is the transition doable in that time frame?
- Manuela: yes, main barrier putting forward the actual referendum

INITIATIVES

- Accommodations staffer for Oz @ York (Adam) – continuing to push for single staff member
- Oz Equity Officer or equivalent: Mya? AD Dufraimont? (Adam) – asking what the equivalent is at Os? Burden should not fall on a student, seeking clarification as to where concerns should be forwarded
- Student Handbook revamp – easier to read, correct internal contradictions, Mya best equipped to undertake this, returning student interesting in offering to work with her on this? Would welcome collaboration
- Financial transparency – budget in Obiter? Tie in to tuition, no restrictions once budget released WRT confidentiality, becomes public information, use in terms of publishing raw

data in Obiter

- Tuition issues
 - Advocate for students, faculty and admin to unite on calling on the government to increase funding to our institutions and better access to financial assistance for students (Danielle)
- Danielle: Osgoode Hall Law Union will have conversations about how changes will impact us. Next Wednesday from 1:30 – 2:30. Drop in. As for SC = Faculty Council cancelled often, we should be putting business on the agenda. Facilitate a conversation. Bring up some points at FC. We (profs and staff) can rally around that we all want more funding. So having a motion at FC might be an opportunity. We should ally with other groups that are impacted by funding changes. We do work for the school, we provide value. Might even be an essential service — maybe administration should recognize that. In terms of alumni letter = good strategy, but how much a role does endowment play? What is “reasonable?” Need a clearer goal.
- Aashish: Communication is important. Getting basic messaging ready earlier is better. Need to get on this soon because it gets busy later and

people start getting overwhelmed. Early March = start comms campaign.

■ Danielle: University has more leeway to designate what is essential or not

and you are already opted-in but there is a mechanism to opt-out as

opposed to opting-in.

■ Aashish: It should be an opt-out. Government can still cut even if university

claims something is an essential service.

■ Danielle: We can have conversations with administration. When will the

"shock" come into effect? We should start budget planning because the

axe could come back in April, so what will be essential?

■ Manuela: It's getting harder. Tuition goes up, but it doesn't come to L&L.

Clubs want more funding, but only got \$40,000 and can only give out

\$15,000.

■ Aashish: How is the bursary funded? Can administration refund things?

■ Adam: Many are donations and have conditions attached.

■ Danielle: Ask Osgoode administration: given the announcement, what

room do you have to stave off the impact for the next cohort? Can we talk

about the needs are and think strategically about the funding that is not

'ear-marked?' Surpluses don't mix between admin and L&L. Need to

educate students about where their funding goes. There is no replacement revenue for student groups.

■ Adam: To push for a Town Hall from Rimon and Condon, hopefully willing to talk about the issues.

■ Danielle: Need information first and go to Committees. Condon/Rimon can't solve alone, need the appropriate channels to make decisions. We also don't want the administration to influence students. They're not making the decisions. We can also give information.

■ Adam: Informational. Students are concerned. Doesn't have a lot of time. If it ends up as "I don't know's" at least we have that. Maybe have SC members on the panel. If we sense opinions then we can counter that.

■ Vibhu: Town hall important and we don't want to have conversation that goes nowhere. Need to touch base. Make it tailored. Need to touch base on a preliminary basis.

■ Adam: Would recommend doing this at February 4th Faculty Council, so far it's the only meeting planned. Perhaps speak with AD Dufraimont.

■ Christian: Responses have been 1) have a good opinion and that it means less tuition, not concerned with clubs or 2) have difficult financial

backgrounds. Need to plan now.

- Aashish: Supplementary fee cuts less obvious.
- Adam: 1 move with 3 components
- Aashish: Might need to schedule a second FC meeting that discusses the budget cuts. Many groups want to know what's going on. We might get lost. Potential impact on OPD.
- Adam: Will touch base with Chair Cameron. We need a 45 minute/1 hour discussion — if not enough time, then go for 11th.
- Aashish: Might need to talk about getting a Committee together to discuss comms. Many unknowns/potential impacts. Information needed.
- Adam: Put a call to other groups. Don't want duplication. Put in next newsletter in tandem. Email Ashley.
- Danielle: February 4th = we should put an item forward and can speak to it. Broaching the conversation. Here is what we are worried about/we need some information. Could we have a list of the levies/fees so we know what groups we are talking about? We want to highlight concerns and work together. Ask the administration: how to do you plan on addressing these concerns? Potential action item could be the town hall with two parts. 1)

Summarize cut and 2) students can express how they will be impacted.

Administration can them absorb.

- Aashish/Manuela: Carol from Office of the AVP Finance can provide breakdown, then can give to students.
- Danielle: We should be able to email Mya.
- Aashish: Email Chair of Finance.
- Adam: Lay out concerns and drive conversation/framework. Do we want a new email account or have Rebecca put out comms and receiving emails.

Contact person for students.

- Danielle: Put January 30th event in newsletter
- Adam: Good starting point.
- Aashish: We should get informed ourselves. Have something for the next Caucus meeting. 1) Full understanding required, 2) email Phyllis — what is the breakdown, 3) a quick analysis of the breakdown. Try for the 4th.
- 1L/2Ls to think about joining campaign. Can join Slack channel "Money Panic." Accept the invite if you want to join. Aashish and Manuela volunteer to be part of it.
 - Encourage the Osgoode admin to use its budget to mitigate the impact of the

announcement on students and support continued access for students whose funding situation is about to change.

- Council of Ontario Universities statement, Oz alum open letter/petition, LSO?
- Aashish: in addition to changes to tuition cut and freeze, students now able to opt out of secondary programs, has a significant impact for at least two clinical programs (CLASP and Mediation Clinic, rely on nominal cost per student), certain amount of students would opt out, Os being asked to cut own funding by \$10, freeze amount, manage the fact that clinical programs will lose additional funding on the side, need to make up for loss elsewhere
- Christian: one thing that 1L's are coming to them often with, unsure about how these changes will affect them
- Manuela: technically could lose all club funding, comes directly from student levy, easier to opt out
- Aashish: easier to campaign students entering Os WRT Os student life as opposed to entire York student body
- Adam: similar threat made when Adam was going to school in Quebec, government had a blitzkrieg approach, attempts to destabilize student unions, focus on what student groups do for students, reiterate what we're responsible

for. Use as an opportunity to reach out. Give a reason for opting-in.

- Waste audit, postering (Riel)
- Grade release timing (happened during Property again, stories of people crying)
 - Adam: Out of Osgoode's hands
 - Christian: Section C was smooth, Aashish helped the day before. Rachel/Christian encouraged very few opened in class. Contracts released on Monday after.
 - Akshay: Section B also had issues with Professor Swan and Contracts. Grades were given and then changed. Some bumped down and some went up.
 - Danielle: Grade Review Committee issues has happened in other years where grades are changed afterwards.
 - Adam: Admin tries not to post a date ahead of time for grades. Some professors are late with grades. Will bring up issue regarding rando changes after having grades uploaded
 - Aashish: More help needed around grades release. Ellen fully booked. Need someone for 3-4 weeks.
 - Manuela: Difficult for 1Ls and motivation. January slam.
 - Danielle: You will be fine — but we need to encourage to apply. We will all get to the same place. Arbitrary. Debunk grades release.

- Aashish: Need to make course release session mandatory
- Academic Rules Advocates: 2L, 3L (Graham, Jordan) Help w grade appeals, handbook academic rules. Last meeting discussion – handbook translated to easily understandable guide for students.
- End of term: no break between class end & exams, papers due @ end of exams at U of T (Angela). Similarly, winter start date is early and expensive for students flying back to TO, first classes often cancelled too.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- TUITION LEVELS AND CLINICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS (Angela)
- FACULTY HIRING PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR (Angela)
- ADVERTISING STUDENT CAUCUS OFFICE HOURS (Angela)

ENVIRONMENTALISM UPDATE (Riel)

END OF YEAR GIFT CARD FOR BISTRO WORKERS (Riel)

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT (2:20pm) (Sandhu/Morales) CARRIED