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Student Caucus of Osgoode Hall Law School

# Minutes

30 September 2020 (12:30pm – 2:30pm)

Zoom (Online)

**Present:** Akshay Aurora (Chair), Chloé Duggal, Corey Fletcher, Rachael Glassman, , Karin Kazakevich, Nushrah Amod, Viktor Hohlov, Arielle Masur, Faiza Tariq, Tomislav Milos, Aya Fahmi, Jaylene Olson, Herman Wong,

*Note: The Caucus Executive suspended the usual rules of quorum and allowed for the meeting to take place online as well as in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All members joining online or via phone were granted voting rights.*

**CALL TO ORDER** (12:34pm)

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion: THAT the Agenda be approved. (Corey/Akshay) CARRIED**

## Chair's Remarks & Items – General

Akshay: *Land acknowledgement.*

*As this meeting is virtual and we are not all gathered in the same space, I recognize that this land acknowledgment might not be for the territory that you are currently on. We ask that if this is the case, you take the responsibility to acknowledge the traditional territory you are on and the current treaty holders. As a member of the York University (Osgoode) community, I recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University (Osgoode Hall Law School) acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.*

Akshay: How many of you watched last night's debate?

It was an utter waste of time and I'm sorry we all waste our time. Something that really shook me is how casually he referred to x as Pocahontas. Consistently referred to her as Pocahontas. The democratic party, Joe Biden, didn't do a thing. It would have taken one thing, but I don't think this man is an embodiment of what the liberal left should

Akshay: It really troubled me that Trump addressed individuals as Pocahontas. This surprised me even more that the

Nushrah: Just a little recap, Orange Shirt day started in 2013 to recognize the harmful impact of the Residential school impact. The backgrounds are to show solidarity. We wear the orange shirt to remember the harms of the residential school systems and the impact are lasting. The last school that close was in 1996. I also looked at the Toronto area and about one 120 km in Peterborough closed in 1986. And about 120 west of Toronto there was a Mohawk institute that closed in the recently as well.

Akshay: Thank you for looking into this. I want to first introduce the 1Ls. Say hello to our beautiful 1L'S. Say a bit about yourselves

*1Ls introduce themselves*

## **First Year Support Committee**

Rachael: I'm putting forward a bylaw to reflect something from the L&L constitution

*Rachael read tentative provision from the L&L constitution*

Rachael: L&L and SC has different things that we are in charge of

Rachael: Student caucus is more faculty facing. L&L is more student facing. There will be times where we say that is something caucus can do or that is something that L&L can do. We'll solicit feedback from all the 1L'S. We will remain in constant communication with the 1st and the admin about pressing student issues

Karin who is I&I president and Akshay collaborate with the dean. Any issues we find in the committee we will direct them to Karin and Akshay.

We can also say that this is an issue that we know of that is on-going and may not need to do anything about, but we can address it or say that we need to it

What I propose to do is have an orientation meeting with all 8 1L reps and we'll keep minutes of it. We'll just report to the executive and caucus about what we go over. I would like to put forward a motion to amend the SC con

Chloe: Just a point of clarification, is the text of the constitution available anywhere?

Akshay: I'm uncomfortable voting on something we don't have the text for

Rachael: I can send a redline

Akshay: We used to have a provision in the caucus constitution that Jordan thought should not be there, I have the same opinion. We have not had this committee in the 3 years I have been

on caucus. Both Karin and I have already gone forward with the mentorship. I don't want an unnecessary bureaucratic item, which is this committee. We're doing all of this already. I think it's better to do this internally as our mandates are different. Tbh, I really want to see how this mentorship pilot goes. I feel like it's working, and we should give it an opportunity to work. This is a hard year for us with the multitude of issues

Rachael: If I can just clarify, this is meant to work in conjunction with the mentorship program and to help with the 1Ls with summaries. This committee is meant to help them with the mandates of their organization

This is meant to be dealing with the mandates of our organization. The reason for having them be joined is that a lot of 1l reps won't know what is appropriate for them to handle and neither do the 1l's. Having a space to say here is what's come to me is helpful. We're mandated to meet once a month, but if we can't we can have a fb group where everyone can connect and be supported.

Akshay: if it's just a Facebook group, I am ok with this. However, this may need a motion

Corey: I have two functional problems, one of them is personal. This is my first year. Me telling a 1l what to do would entail me reading the constitution and telling the 1l what to do

The second concern is that the 1l students are expected to come to caucus meetings and hear and tell us what the concerns are. I am weary of it becoming redundant. Does that make sense?

Chloe: There's a few concerns I have. I know you 1l's are keen to take on this additional meeting but it will end up feeling like a lot later in the term. I can speak to how busy the communications role is, and I'm not sure that Corey taking minutes is productive. An issue I had was that a lot of the issues brought to me in my first year were sensitive and I'm not convinced that it needs to be a discussion of 8 1l's. Even just two people is not great for sensitivity. Within the context of Corey's motion last week, I think this is redundant

Akshay: Having being a first year representative I got a lot of info that was pretty sensitive. I would be opposed to my four 1l reps having those discussions at a committee that is public. I Don't want them having conversations regarding this outside of the four walls of the zoom meeting

Jaylene: I think at this point my understanding of how the communication can flow is that there are some places that I can already take this information. I know that my legal and lit rep, Christina, her and I already have a good working relationship where we message each other if there has been something that has been brought up to her. I don't think it's a space I would need as I already kind of have that space already.

Akshay: Do you and Aya or Herman have anything?

Aya: I'm not sure I have enough knowledge and not many issues have come up so far. I just normally resort to IM clarification and learn as I go. I'm not sure if more will be needed, but so far this has been ok.

Akshay: Don't think this is anomalous I'm also seeking instant message clarification to this day

Herman: I don't understand the reasons of having the orientations schedule. I don't know the whole context behind it rn, looking at my schedule I already like having the instantaneous message between me and Akshay. I don't know that it would be suitable for our learning schedule

Rachel: I wasn't expecting the amount of negativity, but I can see it's not what people want. L&L will have our meetings with our 1l. I think that if we don't teach our 1l's about governance, there can be some confusion. But I can understand if people don't want to take that extra step. We'll prob go ahead with this on our side.

Corey: I just wanted to clarify for the 1l's. It's your duty to liaise with the 1l legal and lit student reps. Be cognizant of what Karin is responsible for and what Rachel is responsible for.

Rachael: I'll withdraw the motion.

Akshay: I do appreciate the motion and see where it came from, but I don't think that it was the year for it.

### **Chair's Remarks & Items – General Continued**

Akshay: So, I realize that we didn't do this earlier. The upper years didn't introduce them yes. You know me, Chloe, and Corey but you don't know everybody else.

Akshay: As a point of procedure if you want to say something off the record, you just need to say off the record if there are members of the public, please move to have things off camera and we will remove students to breakout rooms

*Everyone in attendance introduces themselves*

## **Faculty Council**

Akshay: Let's move onto updates from me. I guess the first thing is that faculty council meeting is cancelled, because we don't have any agenda items and I didn't want to just talk about how great SC is for 15 minutes. Our next meeting will be on October 26th at 12:30.

## **BLSA**

Akshay: Senate update, it relates to BLSA. Rhonda Lenton spoke about having consultations on anti-Black racism, developing a framework. Maybe if we can rely this to BLSA that would be helpful.

## **Markham Campus**

Akshay: in OTHER exciting news, the Markham campus is being built.

## **YU Student Cards**

Akshay: If any of you or your classmate applied for 1Ls cards which you will need. Those will be mailed on Wednesday. Keep your students involved and notified.

## **Library**

Akshay: Scott Library is open. Available for study. Must make booking. The booking is available on the library website. It is viable study space so if you know that people need it, tell people. Osgoode will be opening soon; we just don't have an update on when that will be happen

## **Committee Appointments**

Committee appointments now complete. Appointed an excellent set of students to various committees. I am impressed with calibre of people hired. All deserve spots on committees, but scarce seats. Having been on caucus for two years, I haven't seen this level of engagement

### **Meeting with the Deans – Incentive Issues**

This comes out of a discussion I had with the 1L'S. I don't want to take any names for the sake of privacy.

Issue of insensitive professors. Issues that trans students are facing. Brought up with KD, who has said that she wants to implement some sort of training to address it.

Is anyone on this call from teaching and learning?

Chloe: All the 1L'S haven't received their committee placements yet. But I will email?

Akshay: I want you to push this as a student caucus issue.

Don't want to go through the formality of having motion on it, but whoever is on the teaching and learning committee should push for having mandatory anti-oppression training. Whoever is on it needs to push for some anti-racism training.

Akshay: Evaluations assess whether instructors should offer classes as well. Must communicate that it is not just for them, but the evaluators. In absence, the status quo will persist. Complaints about certain classes based on instructor assignment will not be heard.

We need to really push for course evaluation. Maya tells me that we only have 30% of students filling out course evals. It's really helpful because it clears up whether we should give a professor a class. We need to tell them it is not just for you but for Gus VH as well who will be deciding if a class keeps going. That is something that is really important as I have heard that so many people have to choose between being in a class with a professor that they don't want.

### **Black Individual Appoint from Faculty Council**

Suggestion from SC that BLSA be involved in recruitment decisions by the relevant committee. Suggestions from MC to replace existing students with BLSA rep. 1. Administratively inappropriate because it punished us hard on making committee appointments. 2. Distinction between what JD students does and what BLSA is wanted for. We want their expertise.

## **Exam Registration**

Akshay: Exam registration to open soon. All information available in single space (start time, end time, etc.) very convenient. They are trying to revamp the system for everyone needing accommodation.

I can't speak to it because I've never asked for an accommodation. The exams aren't supposed to be any different from the winter term. We don't know everything yet but that is a quick update on exam registration.

Akshay: Issue that some students brought up in relation to async classes, niche subset, problem that they do not have an exam. No application to 1Ls. Upper year classes do not have professors teaching in those time slots, and no exams. Effect is that it is blocking off time where students could take a synchronous class. MR says the class is async, but professors can do pre exam sessions with students at that time, so cannot allow students to enrol in classes that are async and do not have exams, even though not at same time. AA finds reasoning peculiar, because if a professor opts for async classes, they can find time for review sessions.

Karin: It def sounded like it would be an uphill battle. If we're going to fight for it, we have to have good backing

Corey: From a practical standpoint, courses have been selected for both fall and winter terms.

Akshay; we are thinking things are going to be online for 2L's. I dunno if you've looked at the upper year timetable, a bunch of really good classes are at the same time

Akshay: We can table and discuss this at a later time. Can work on scheduling.

Faiza: my only concern is whether all students are ok with having a review session on the go, for them it actually makes sense to have that in the scheduled session. I don't see the value in



it. I agree with Corey, if all the popular classes are being given at the same time slot, it's because they want people to take other courses as well.

Akshay: *Expresses agreement.* Much more administratively convenient for students to know this time is blocked off for them. Take this point.

Aya:

Akshay: Freedom is with the professor to choose synchronous or asynchronous. They are not supposed to be going over their allotted times. Readings are not included in those 4 hours a week. If this is becoming an issue, email this prof and cc me as this is not acceptable.

Ayah: all we can ask for is "don't go over time"?

Chloe: It is an accessibility issue.

Akshay: just cc me whenever you follow up on this and I'll follow up with the dean.

Faiza: Raise issue in course evaluations because it might work for future classes at least.

Akshay: these are totally anonymous. Be careful with comments in course evaluations. Be respectful. AA wanted to see what people have to say about this...

## **1L SC Mentorship Program**

Akshay: Before we move on, I wanted to speak to the 1l's about whether your mentors have reached out to you. Is there anything more you want us to do as your mentors?

Jaylene: At this point there is not any more needed. Yes, they have reached out. Other mentors from other sources, so a matter of deciding whether others will come. But overall good.

Herman: I agree with jaylene. I love that all i have to do is message you on fb. Right now, i don't think we need anything more.

Aya: *No comments to add. Gaby reached out and 1Ls were satisfied.*

Akshay: I might try to entrench this program if the successes continue to manifest.

Faiza: Can I add something to the mentorship point. You have your official mentors, but I encourage you to go to networking events, and I encourage you to reach out to upper years you connect with. Upper years are really helpful, and if you connect on something, don't hesitate to reach out.

Akshay: Super important point. At least for SC, we can do an Excel sheet to organize who to speak to about different matters. Speak to Faiza about working on Bay St.

Corey: *will put this document together.*

Akshay: This is also a group for you to make contacts in.

Akshay: Use us because we have much to offer for free! *That concludes AA's remarks.* Any questions? Especially 1Ls. We will come to you for your agenda items later. No questions, okay. Always available to answer your questions.

### **Vice-Chair's Remarks & Items**

Chloe: Hi everyone, I don't have a lot of updates. I'm going to talk about

FC committee placements and how this went down. Blessed this year with a lot of applications. This year was the first year that we added demographic information for candidates.

We thought it was especially important to do so because our focus was on diversity and inclusion. We were overwhelmed with fantastic applications. I'll go through the committees now and say who's on what.

Chloe: *Lists Appointments to Committees*

Chloe: I will connect each of the students together

Chloe: Logistical difficulties with interview process this year. Almost 30 interviews. Many committees only had 1 seat available. One committee especially competitive and difficult to decide who would sit is Equality. Thinking of creating a subcommittee under Equality. Eight people applied and only one spot available. Subcommittee will be populated by the remaining seven individuals. Comfortable and willing to advocate from their diverse perspectives, which

we value. Some logistical kinks to hash out before that. But we would like to solicit feedback on this issue. Visualizing it as a remainder 7 individuals who didn't get the spot, and in an advisory capacity to the students on the Equality committee. Chaired by 2L and 3L candidates. What are your thoughts — unnecessarily bureaucratic? Necessary?

Excruciating to decide was equality. Akshay, Corey, Nush and I have talked about creating a subcommittee. 8 people applied for 1 spot. Thinking of taking the seven remaining and creating a sub-committee. We thought their willingness to advocate from their diverse perspectives was impressive. Logistical kinks we have to hash out at this point.

Akshay: I hate bureaucracy. I am always like can we just get to the source and get on with it. Before we go – my suggestion is not to call it a subcommittee but to call it an equitable roundtable as it sounds more inviting and welcoming

Chloe: I like that.

Akshay: I would love to hear thoughts on it. This year our mandate is especially directed toward diversity and inclusion and mandate is having all of the diverse perspectives that we can possibly recruit. We must find ways to be in touch with these perspectives, especially given the Zoom reality.

Nushrah: I have two points to make. 1st is about how the committee appointments were done.....I want that to be on record so that the next vice chair can do the same thing in equitable fashion. A lot of the issues discussed will be quite sensitive, so I like the idea of the round table. Like you said with the issue of bureaucracy, it's about getting to the source. Even myself, I can't represent perspectives I haven't lived through. I know Chloe struggled with trying to pick the most suitable candidate.

Akshay: *Nush likes AA suggestion of calling it a round table because it is more inviting, especially given sensitive nature of topics.* Given diversity of perspectives, would be too burdensome to have one-person digest all of these opinions and reflect them in a manner that would do justice to the source. Chair can put recommendations to people on the Committee so that issues are properly represented. People can only speak to the extent of their life experiences. Applications were very strong, so picking most equitable candidate was very hard. In support of the creation of a round table/ working group to supplement the Equality committee.

This is a way to make sure that you don't have to reach out. It's sort of taking away the amount of pressure that's going to be on you. I feel really sorry about that and i want to help out as much as possible.

Chloe: Would be good for the committee to be chaired by someone not on the committee. Not so that the chair can mediate situations where members do not have capacity to deal with the situation. Alleviates the burden on our representatives at SC.

Akshay: I do think that there should be one member from the equality committee who sits on the round table so that they can tell when something isn't in their mandate so that there is no waste of time.

Chloe: All three could sit ex officio. If not all can make it then one can raise concerns.

Corey: Yeah, so just reiterating, I was impressed with Chloe's excellent job. We're going to be sending out a survey for all the applicants to identify what criteria or group you represent so that we can put it out there so that students know that we tried, and it offers a standard for further years to ascribe to that this is the minimum standard to ascribe to.

Akshay: This will be important to us. Having been on SC for 3 years. *AA exceptionally impressed by the effort of Chloe and the rest of everyone and their dedication for setting these standards.* Ensuring that diversity is not just a section on our constitution. We should all be proud of our achievements, even if not perfect. Any other thoughts on this? We should pat ourselves on the back. I want to take a minute to appreciate all of your efforts.

Arielle: I think that Chloe's idea that anyone who is on the committee already can stay on the roundtable as an ex officio member.

Akshay: I want it be at the same time accountable, but let's not take copious minutes. I did say i want to work out the logistics a little more. We just wanted to get a feel of where everyone was at. I mean we need to hash out what this roundtable would discuss and its mandate.

Chloe: I know that I mentioned that we would try to have a how-to committee. Scheduling has been crazy so far, but i will try to make it happen. For upper years, we can take it on a co-learn basis.

Akshay: Suggestion that we have an orientation session for the students at large. 1Ls already orientated. We have appointed some first timers.

Nushrah: If we do an orientation session, should make it open. *Nush would like to attend one of them.* Should widen the scope of it and make it available.

Akshay: By all means, make it available to anyone who can do it and is free.

Chloe: Concur.

Akshay: On the topic of committees, always remember that your voice is a voice for the student body at large, and it might be easy to say that your opinion is XYZ, but your position is to advocate for students' interests in general.

Always remember that your voice is a voice for the student body at large. You're not there for your opinion, but how it will impact the students. Ayah, you're on teaching and learning so we can circle back to training for insensitive comments.

### **Director of Communications**

Corey: ILs – Please submit your Bios to me. I will also be hoping to add one more person to the media team from among you all. I also want you to explore the insta page and to send either Faiza or Arielle your secondary more chill bio. As you don't have a favourite law school experience, you should tell us something you are looking forward to..

Corey: I will put out a call over email as I know Annie is not here and I don't know if she wants to be in on this.

Corey: *Technical problems*

### **Year Updates – 2nd Year**

Arielle: we are actively trying to set a date for the town hall. Thinking of doing it on a Monday evening.

Akshay: Do it during reading week. First week of November.

Arielle: reading week? Do you think we'll get attendance

Akshay: I would go on vacation usually, but... Avoid doing it right at the beginning when people are most keen on studying.

Arielle: ok, so Monday reading week would be good.

Karin: Are we still ok with getting L&L folks to do town hall. I don't think you guys reached out to the L&L reps, but if it's during reading week, they should be able to attend.

Akshay: Reach out to Mario, the 2L L&L rep. I want to vet what goes out, so keep that in mind.

Chloe: it might be beneficial for the upper years to have Alex mulligan, the social convenor there.

Akshay: Karin, if you think there is someone valuable to have there, do let us know. I think even Reilly is a 2l, so if she wants to join up and talk about clubs.

Karin: Will let 2Ls and 3Ls concerned know.

Akshay: Any issues with your classes that you have been in? Heard any complaints from others? Zoom or otherwise?

Chloe: One 2L complained that in Real Estate the professor does not seem to be posting the lecture recs consistently, only on an accessibility basis \_ this itself is inaccessible. Evidence prof as well has cancelled classes, two adjuncts who are not adhering to allotted timeslots. Maybe within the 2Ls we can figure out who can reach out and check-in .

Akshay: Just as a bottom line to take away. If your prof is only making recording available on an accessibility basis, that is acceptable on their end. I can't entertain concerns about wanting to have a lecture recording.Chloe: Is that something we can push on?

Akshay: No. You will not get anywhere with it. We fought hard to get where we are. Our only compromise is that it is opt-in opt out system.

Chloe: Because even now, given the virtual reality, it is unreasonable for people who have diverse living experiences to not be able to apply for

Akshay: They can apply for accessibility courses in those regards. Nobody is prevented from applying on accessibility basis.

Faiza: Do we know if accessibility concerns are more flexible ?

Akshay: From my understanding, Personally, I have a no need for an accessibility related accommodation but they have been willing to offer it to me as well. They are cognizant that it is a difficult time. What might not have floated last year might float this year. Thanks for that 2Ls. Urge you to keep your eyes and ears open and remain available. Also should make Facebook posts to check in and introduce ourselves to make ourselves more available. Make one cohesive post.

### **Year Updates – 3rd Year**

Faiza: We haven't really discussed the town hall date yet, but i do have some updates from equity groups. One was an I&I concern about finding out when events are going on because they keep clashing with events going on. On the student caucus side, same concern with the evidence class. It's the same concern about with the professors going over time. Same concerns about profs not staying within the time limit.

They need more clarity around async classes and are they having async or sync sessions, we just don't know . Insufficient clarity. Feels like it si async for now. One professor refused to respond to Qs. He is completely async. Offers email availability but no follow up. ...

One major concern is that eclass keeps crashing. Or they can't access zoom anymore.

Akshay: Okay, that is great and I appreciate you soliciting this feedback. Karin, please make this LL calendar more available to everybody so that clubs could know when to do their activities and coordinate them.

Karin: Yeah, so that's a rachel question as she is in charge of making it. It's up there, so i assume that it is something technical holding it up. Good to know it's a topical issue as i just push the people responsible for it

Akshay: Yeah, that should be fine. I will raise this issue of professors running over time up with the Deans. For e-class, it is clearly an issue to the extent that ... whoever is on digital innovation, this is your job this year. Good luck with that. Thank you Faiza.

Chloe: huge shoutout to the mandem, Corey, Vik, and Tomi for taking notes

Akshay: This brings us to the end of our meeting. Any new business to raise before we sign off?

Akshay: ADS Drake was pleased with idea of post-class hangouts. She claims that research reveals this is very helpful.

Vik: It was me and Arielle both who came up with it. Thank you.

**Motion: Motion to conclude the September 30<sup>th</sup> Student Caucus Meeting (Akshay/Jaylene)**  
***CARRIED***