

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JUNE 20, 2015

University of Toronto Students' Union

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Report of the President

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Anti-Sexual Violence

The Advisory Committee to the President and Provost on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence is finishing up conducting research and fact-finding and is now moving to thoroughly drafting recommendations. So far, the safety.utoronto.ca website has been built up, to serve as a resource for students, and to communicate the advisory committee's progress.

A major development has been the construction of an anonymous online survey. Although it has some major problems, such as lack of questions seeking feedback on existing UofT services, and inequitable gender identity identifiers, it is still an improvement on past efforts to get feedback from students.

Another student member of the Advisory Committee and former VP Equity, Najiba Ali Sardar, has done an excellent job of collecting feedback on in-person consultation sessions and bringing them back to the committee to ensure that problems such as insensitive facilitation and missing question topics are addressed. Additionally, students from UofT Students Against Sexual Violence and the UofT Thrive Initiative have presented to the Policy and Procedures working group and the Services and Programs working group, with many excellent recommendations.

In summary, although there have been many issues with the advisory committee process, the Administration have been somewhat receptive to student feedback through the working groups. In the future, the UTSU will continue to be critical of the process, provide resources for students who are anti-sexual violence activists, and assist students with providing feedback to the advisory committee.

Code of Student Conduct Review

As part of the process of reviewing existing policy and developing recommendations, Abisola Olaniyi and Ben Coleman (President), the two undergraduate student members on the Policy and Procedures working group of the advisory committee, have reviewed the *Code of Student Conduct* and identified issues and suggested recommendations, strongly based on research and previous work by student activists. The main priority is to emphasize the need for a comprehensive, stand-alone sexual violence policy with a centralized office for student support.

Tri-Campus Coalition on Sexual Violence

On 10 June, Ben Coleman (President) attended an event, along with Ridwan Olow and Hashim Yussuf, titled "Discussing the Jane Doe Case and University Sexual Violence," which was hosted by the Coalition to End Sexual Violence (formerly the Tri-Campus Coalition on Sexual Violence), using a room booked by UTSU. At the event, survivors and activists were able to share their stories, and gave some excellent advice and information, especially regarding anti-sexual violence efforts within CUPE 3903 and the effectiveness of safety alerts at York University.

The Coalition to End Sexual Violence has released a letter for the advisory committee, which you can read here: [Coalition Open Letter](#)

UTMSU Board Meeting

On 30 April, Jasmine Denike (VPEX) and Ben Coleman (President) attended the first UTMSU board meeting on behalf of the UTSU. The major items were the selection of the Vice-President Campus Life (which was pleasantly straightforward), and the approval of the preliminary budget. Throughout the year, Jasmine Denike (VPEX) will serve as the UTSU designate on the UTMSU board.

Ryerson Students' Union

On 14 May, Jasmine Denike (VPEX), Ryan Gomes (VPIS), and Ben Coleman (President) met with Obaid Ullah, Vice-President Operations, Rabbia Idrees Vice-President Equity, and Harman Singh, Vice-President Student Life and Events from the Ryerson Students' Union. At this informal introductory meeting, we discussed plans for the year and received a tour of the RSU student center, to help when thinking through plans for the upcoming student commons.

Governing Council

On 20 May, Ben Coleman (President) attended a meeting of the UofT Governing Council. The primary item was a presentation on Technology and Learning given by Vivek Goel, the new Vice-President, Research and Innovation, and Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education. Important details include that UofT is examining whether to change from BlackBoard (Portal) to another learning management system, will be expanding online course offerings, and is reviewing other technology used in the classroom, such as lecture capture.

Ben spoke with Professor Goel after the meeting and will be meeting with him and Professor McCahan in the future to discuss UTSU's priorities for education technology. Likely issues will include student representation in decisions about adopting educational technology, ensuring that the expansion of technology in the classroom is not used for back-door tuition increases, and ensuring that students' rights to privacy and control of their information are protected with new technology.

[Agenda for the Meeting](#)

[Presentation Slides](#)

The Varsity

On 21 May, Ben Coleman (President) met with Iris Robin, News Editor, and Alex Ross, Editor-In-Chief at The Varsity campus newspaper to discuss media protocol for the upcoming year. While executives will attempt to coordinate communications with the media, board members are encouraged to talk to the media in whatever way they believe serves their members best. For the sake of professionalism and serving the interests of the UTSU, board members are encouraged to bring new issues to the attention of the executive first, where possible.

Canadian Intern Association

On 21 May, Ben Coleman (President) and Jasmine Denike (VPEX) met with Joshua Mandryk from the Canadian Intern Association (CIA) to discuss their plans for the future and to hear a proposal for donations to the organization from the UTSU. The proposal will be considered fully by the UTSU executive and the Budget Committee in the coming month. Please send a request via email to president@utsu.ca if you would like more information.

Student Governors and Student Union Leaders

In 27 May, Ben Coleman (President) met with incoming and outgoing student governors, and representatives from UofT's other student unions to discuss the following Governing Council issues:

- Improving the Appointment Process for “co-opted” members of Governing Council board and committees to ensure a fairer and more diverse selection of students to sit on UofT governance bodies.
- The [discussion paper](#) put out by the Office of the Vice-Provost Students that attempts to resolve some of the issues that arose from the Student Societies Summit. The decision made in this paper was to negotiate a dispute resolution process for societies with shared membership to circumvent the imposition of policy by the UofT administration. It was felt by governors and student union presidents that this would be a better and more effective way to resolve ongoing disputes. There has been some support from the administration for a dispute resolution process decided among student governments, as long as it is seen to be functional and effective, and ensures that society conduct is open, democratic and accessible.

Throughout the year, Vere-Marie Khan (VPUA) and Ben Coleman (President) will represent the UTSU at these meetings, which occur one week after each Governing Council meeting, and provide regular updates to the Board of Directors.

Student Leadership Conference (SLC)

On 1-3 May, Ben Coleman (President) attended this conference put on by UofT student life, including the following sessions:

- Get to Know Your Position: Dinner
- Think, Plan, Achieve: Goal-Setting for Your Organization

The conference was primarily useful for networking with other student leaders.

UTSU Handbook

Throughout the past month, the UTSU executive have been working with staff to write the annual handbook, which contains information about UTSU services and goals and can be used as a daytimer. The printed handbooks will be ready for orientation so that they can be handed out to students and placed in frosh kits.

Bulk Purchasing

To increase the options available for colleges and divisions ordering fresh materials from the UTSU, the executive have expanded the suppliers this year to include Fairware in addition to the Canadian Federation of Students' Bulk Purchasing program. Feedback on usage of both suppliers will be given in the annual Orientation report. The money provided to divisions was kept the same as previous years, with those having enrollments under 1500 receiving \$4 per incoming student, divisions larger than 1500 students receiving \$2 per incoming student, and other divisions, such as UTM, having separate subsidy arrangements to ensure financial fairness.

Committee to Review the Office of the University Ombudsperson

Ben Coleman (President) was a member of this committee, which wrapped up work in late May, with the naming of Ellen Hodnett as the new UofT Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson is tasked with providing independent and confidential assistance to members of the UofT community who have been treated unfairly by the UofT Administration. The report of the committee can be found here: [Ombudsperson Report 2015](#)

Executive Retreat

On 16 May, the UTSU executive went to Toronto Island to discuss plans for the year. Going to the Island was very cost-effective compared to previous years. More information and consultation with board members about UTSU priorities and events will occur at the UTSU retreat on 10-12 July.

Legal Representation

The executive committee designated the President, or any other executive with the President's approval or a majority vote of the executive committee, to communicate with and direct legal counsel. This system should allow for UTSU committees, groups creating board reform proposals, and the UTSU executive to access legal counsel easily while ensuring that we are coordinated and frugal when seeking advice.

Council on Student Services (COSS)

The executive committee chose the following members to represent the UTSU on the Council on Student Services (COSS), which reviews budgets for student life programs and services:

- Ben Coleman, President
- Ryan Gomes, Vice-President Internal and Services
- Jasmine Denike, Vice-President External
- Vere-Marie Khan, Vice-President University Affairs

In the future, these members will be keeping the board updated on COSS business and appointing a chair for the body from the UTSU membership.

[More Information About COSS](#)

New Vice-Provost, Students

On 22 May, it was announced that Professor Jill Matus would step down as Vice-Provost, Students, and would be succeeded by Professor Sandy Welsh. The Vice-Provost, Students is one of the most important administrative contacts for the UTSU, as they oversee all student services and student society policies. Professor Welsh is an expert on workplace safety and sexual harassment, which is encouraging news as UofT works to develop better policies and services for students who experience sexual violence. The executive will be meeting with Professor Welsh when she takes office in July.

[Notice of Appointment of Prof. Sandy Welsh as Vice-Provost, Students](#)

AODA Compliance

Throughout the past month, Ben Coleman (President) has provided training for UTSU staff to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Other improvements to improve the accessibility of the UTSU will be considered in detail by the Policy and Procedures Committee, the Organizational Development and Services Committee, and the Student Accessibility Committee.

Relations with CUPE 1281

The UTSU is an unionized workplace, with our seven full time staff being members of CUPE 1281 and their terms of employment covered under a negotiated collective agreement. On 29 May, Ben Coleman (President) met with Mary-Jo Nadeau from CUPE 1281 to discuss minor unresolved issues from previous years and to update the union on hiring plans. Following the hiring of the executive director, they, along with the UTSU executive committee, will be attending employer training provided by CUPE.

Appendix: Detailed Divisional Society Meeting Notes

Arts and Science Students' Union

On 29 May, Ben Coleman, President, met with Abdullah Shihpar, President of the Arts and Science Student Union (ASSU) to discuss academic issues and priorities for the year. In addition, they have met informally numerous times.

Additional topics of discussion:

- Improving petition procedures and exam deferrals
- Ongoing issues with online course evaluations, and advocating for the reintroduction of comments into published course evaluation data, similar to the old ASSU anti-calendar.
- Plans for encouraging students to vote in the Federal elections
- Supports and Services for International students

Trinity College

On May 4, Ben Coleman, President, and Ryan Gomes, Vice-President Internal, met with Sarah Harrison, Female Head of College, and Reid Dobell, Male Head of College.

Additional topics of discussion:

- A discussion regarding dispute resolution did not occur at this meeting, and will occur at a future meeting.
- Plans for the year of the Saint George Roundtable, which is potentially seeking to expand the ways in which it represents and advocates for students on the St. George campus.
- Tentative plans for elections reform, including making it easier for students to become nominated to run in UTSU elections, improving the financial accessibility of elections, and increasing the independence of the UTSU CRO.

Victoria College

On May 11, Vere-Marie Khan, Vice-President University Affairs, and Ben Coleman, President, met with Ben Atkins and Gabe Zoltan-Johan, Co-Presidents of the Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC).

Additional topics of discussion:

- PRESTO access at museum station
- Advice on a small course guarantee based on Victoria College's policy of mandatory small courses for incoming students.
- Advice on creating a universal bulletin, based on similar efforts in the past of the Victoria College Dean's Office.
- External advocacy for accessible education--in particular, it was heard from the VUSAC co-presidents that the CFS-Ontario headline advocacy goal of reallocating funding committed to the Ontario Tuition Grant to an across-the-

board tuition fee reduction for all college and university students was regressive and advocacy to increase needs-based grants would be better.

- Feedback based on experience with Victoria College's embedded counsellors, and a discussion on expanding mental health resources across campus, including the introduction of peer counselling or faculty advisors for incoming students.

Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering

On 27 May, Ben Coleman, President, and Ryan Gomes (VPIS) met with Ernesto Díaz Lozano Patiño, president of the Engineering Society (EngSoc).

Additional topics of discussion:

- Franchising of UTSU services to the EngSoc office
- Status of discussions with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students regarding the successful EngSoc referendum to gain representation on the Council of Student Services
- Advice based on EngSoc clubs funding procedures and communication strategies
- Academic issues in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, including the quality of labs and other practical sessions, issues with fair marking and availability of past exams, timing of workload between courses, and future developments with the office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education.
- Reducing duplication of services between EngSoc and the UTSU
- GPS tracking systems for TTC above-ground vehicles

Woodsworth College

On 11 June, Vere-Marie Khan (VPUA) and Ben Coleman, President, met with Olivia Hauck, President of the Woodsworth College Students' Association (WCSA).

Additional topics of discussion:

- Feedback from past years regarding Homecoming
- Issues of students who had been targets of fraud scams for UTSU health and dental refunds.
- Ideas to improve space and events for commuter students.

Saint George Roundtable

On 12 June, Ben Coleman, President, attended the first official meeting of the Saint George Roundtable (SGRT), a meeting of the presidents of all of the college student governments and some of the faculty student governments.

Additional topics of discussion:

- Plans and organization for Homecoming
- Plans for improving mental health resources across campus, and news from student life about changes to CAPS to attempt to improve service.
- Representation to the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). I stated that the UTSU executive had no plans to seek a referendum to defederate from

the CFS, but that we would be examining our business relationships with the CFS, including handbook printing and provision of the health and dental plans, and that we would try to make decisions about how the UTSU represented students to the CFS more open and transparent.