

## Report of the President

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The end of June and beginning of July have felt like an uphill struggle, with interim executive director duties and logistical planning within the office taking up a large portion of my time and other goals related to campaigns and strengthening ties with other UofT student societies put on the backburner. I hope that with an ED hired in the next couple of weeks, I can refocus and put some more time into ensuring the year is successful.

### Anti-Sexual Violence

In the last several weeks, there have been some developments on this issue, the most important of which was York University student Mandi Gray filing a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, alleging that the school's inadequate sexual violence policies and support services create an environment of gender discrimination. This landmark case has the potential to have a large impact on schools' obligations to have good policy and support services, as it would create a specific legal liability for schools that do not adequately protect and support those who are at risk of experiencing sexual violence. As I had to attend a meeting of the Provost's Advisory Committee on the same day, I made sure that my associate, Catherine, attended with other UofT Anti-Sexual Violence activists and took detailed notes.

At the Advisory Committee meeting, there were updates from the three working groups (policy, services, and community relations), as well as an extensive discussion on how to reduce revictimization from students, such as Mandi Gray, who have to re-tell their stories many times in order to access academic accommodation, justice, and support services. However, the students on the committee, myself included, feel that the information collected from students through consultation sessions so far is inadequate, information presented to the large committee is not detailed enough for thorough discussions on important issues, and promised projects, information, or responses to concerns are too often left aside. I will be working with the other students on the committee to ensure that the recommendations that come forward are subject to an extensive discussion from all committee members, and that the committee is ultimately doing a good job of improving UofT policies, services, and education programs.

As part of researching UofT policies, I have been taking with Paddy Stamp, the UofT sexual harassment officer, and met with her in person to discuss the history and effectiveness of UofT's anti-sexual harassment policy. She has also given some extensive input on the review of the Code of Student Conduct that I coauthored with another student member on the policy working group.

As always, if you have questions or input, or want to get involved in anti-sexual violence efforts, email [president@utsu.ca](mailto:president@utsu.ca).

## **Employer Obligations**

Within the last couple of weeks, Ryan (Vice-President Internal and Services) and I have been able to resolve all outstanding issues with CUPE 1281 (UTSU staff union) that had occurred before we took office and now there are no outstanding grievances. Within the next month (and with the hiring of a new ED) we hope to ensure that the Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee is re-struck, as it has not met since May 2011, and that training requirements for all staff are met, including training on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

## **Elections**

On 7 July 2015 Jasmine (Vice-President External), my associate Catherine, and I attended a meeting of the Federal Elections Working Groups, which is a coordinating group for all efforts on campus from student groups and admin to encourage students to vote in the October 19 Federal election. Discussion topics included coordination of volunteers for reaching out to students and encouraging them to register to vote, as well as the creation of a week of election-related events in early October to highlight important issues. For more questions about the Federal Election, email Jasmine Denike at [vpexternal@utsu.ca](mailto:vpexternal@utsu.ca)

## **Climate March**

On Sunday 5 July, I attended the march for Jobs, Justice, and the Climate, along with other UofT students, student leaders from SCSU, APUS, GSU, and UTMSU, as well as OC Grayce Slobodian who was a key organizer helping with marshalling. The march was organized by 350.org along with a broad coalition of other groups, and was focused on a broad spectrum of issues relating to climate change, including recognizing the rights of aboriginal people, having accountable government, having good jobs in a post-carbon economy, and creating solutions to climate change. The event was incredibly successful with over 10,000 attendees, and has attracted significant media attention, helping to highlight a broad array of issues.

## **UTSU Summer Mailer and Email Listserv**

In the last couple of weeks, I have been working with staff to figure out the plan for the summer mailer that goes out to students in August. The summer mailer includes health and dental information, details of orientation events, and information about UTSU services. It will be sent to incoming students only, to save costs from previous years. Although it sounds very 20<sup>th</sup> century to send out physical pieces of mail to students, our hope is to also reach parents of incoming students, as this helps with promoting use of the health and dental plan. To resolve past concerns of the mailer arriving after orientation for some students, we have pushed the timeline forward and students should receive the mailer by the second week of August at the latest. Because the earlier list of students includes some students who have been accepted to multiple UofT campuses or who have not decided whether they are full-time or part-time, we are also working with APUS, UTMSU, and SCSU to include information about their events and services as well.

## **Governing Council**

As of June 30, my term as a Governor has ended. On 18 June 2015, I attended the final meeting of the Business Board, where the UofT financial statements were presented, as well as the Governing Council meeting of 25 June 2015. Although the University posted a large net income of \$287.8 million, a large portion of this has been allocated for future buildings and repairs in keeping with the university's nervousness about the variability of income from international tuition fees. As part of our lobbying efforts with the University throughout the year, we will be examining UofT finances more closely to ensure that spending decisions are made in the best interests of students.

## **TA Arbitration**

As many of you who are Facebook friends with TAs will know, on 6 July, the Arbitrator between UofT and CUPE 1281 released their decision, awarding the agreement that was previously narrowly voted down by TAs during the strike. This decision has been widely seen as in UofT's interest, as the arbitrator decided that it was fair to award, despite the two additional bursary funds being potentially insufficient to provide the tuition relief in the bargaining mandate if the University decided to change graduate enrollment or other factors. The decision is concerning for undergraduate students, as it leaves the potential for more conflict between UofT and TAs in the future, which may continue to degrade classes and tutorials for UTSU members.

## **Student Commons**

UTSU and UofT admin are close to finalizing the details required to go to tender for an architect. Information has been gathered from consultation with clubs, levies and internal UTSU staff, compiled by the excellent UTSU staff working on this project, and sent to UofT to add to the final project plan. At our next board meeting, I hope to give updates on the architect selection process and the finalized project plan.