

Report of the President

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During the past month of June, I have spent a great deal of time doing office work, especially with the hiring of our new ED—drafting an employment contract, checking references for all final candidates, etc. I am also glad to be finishing up work that the ED will now be taking on, such as dealing with workplace issues and liaising between staff and work of the executives. As well as the work that comes with orientation and our general meetings in the first semester, I am looking forward to reaching out more to other student societies and helping to coordinate all of the campaigns that UTSU will be running during the fall. I was happy to take a vacation from August 4-8 before the busy season.

Current Bylaws

After discussing previous changes that are relevant to transitioning to the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act (CNCA) with our legal counsel, we have received the opinion that any bylaw amendments that had been made at the last Annual General Meeting (AGM) as well as provisional bylaw amendments made since then are not valid nor in force.

As you will see in the minutes from our first Policy and Procedures committee meeting, the current bylaws in force are those that were last updated on January 2014. The bylaws have been updated on the UTSU website to reflect this change. The material implication of this problem is that there may be amendments that have to be re-introduced at the Annual General Meeting this year in order to ensure CNCA compliance. In addition, the clause previously added allowing for bylaw amendments to take force before AGM approval is no longer in effect, as it is one of the changes that did not pass at the last AGM.

The legal reasoning for the situation is as follows: the bylaw amendments that were not changes to the structure of the Board of Directors were passed with a number of votes that was greater than a majority, but less than the 2/3 required in the bylaws at the time. The previous chair had ruled that because the CNCA set a minimum requirement of a majority vote to approve non-fundamental bylaw changes, this superseded the current UTSU bylaws. However, the legislation is clearly worded to indicate that the majority-voting threshold is in effect, unless otherwise provided by the organization's bylaws or articles of incorporation. In this case, the bylaws required a higher threshold than the CNCA for passing bylaw amendments. The result is that the vote at the last AGM did not meet the 2/3 threshold required by the bylaws, and therefore did not pass.

If you have questions about this issue, feel free to contact me at president@utsu.ca.

ED Transition

During the past couple of weeks, I have been working to prepare transition information for our new Executive Director, Ms. Tka Pinnock. The Executive Director is responsible for managing all UTSU staff, acting as a liaison between the Executive Committee and staff, and ensuring proper professional financial management of the UTSU.

It is important to note that although the Executive Director often serves as a resource to directors and is visible to the board due to their role advising the Executive Committee, the UTSU Board is not responsible for managing the Executive Director. As per the UTSU bylaws, the board members tasked with management of staff (including the ED) are the President and Vice-President, Internal. If you have further questions about what the ED's role is and how it intersects with your work as board members, please feel free to contact me at president@utsu.ca.

Anti-Sexual Violence

Since the last board meeting, I have attended two meetings related to UofT's sexual violence advisory committee. On the 21st of July I attended a meeting of the Policy and Procedures working group, where the group drafted recommendations to put forward to the larger overarching committee about changes to UofT policies and guidelines to improve responses to incidents of and to improve services for those who may experience sexual violence. From these recommendations, there will be a strong focus on ensuring that UofT policies have companion guides that give clear, plain-language explanations and definitions with clear examples. Hopefully, this will make it easier for students to know where to get help and resources, and what options are available to them. The committee is also recommending providing clear definitions in training for anyone that works with students as well as in all web and printed information that clearly outline what sexual violence is and help to reduce confusion and stigma regarding the issue. An important recommendation is that all policies be developed with an "equity lens" in mind (in plain language, developed using equity principles), and that diverse groups be consulted when drafting any changes to UofT policies. Lastly, the committee is recommending changes that will ensure that there is one hub for students to access resources and supports if they have experienced sexual violence, which also has office hours far beyond usual business hours.

On the 10th of August, I attended a meeting of the Sexual Violence Advisory Committee. At this meeting, draft recommendations from the three working groups were presented, including those previously drafted by the policy and procedures committee. The most significant recommendation in addition to those already mentioned was to ensure that UofT ran comprehensive training and education programs that students and staff would be exposed to continually throughout the year to encourage proactive bystander behavior, reduce stigma, and change the "climate" surrounding sexual violence (i.e. fight rape culture).

There are still many problems with how the committee is functioning, including last-minute materials handed out to members and, so far, difficulties ensuring proper input and participation from all marginalized groups. The content of the draft recommendations proposed so far is encouraging, but the UTSU must ensure that all the recommendations are followed through with and that substantial changes are made. If you have any questions about how the committee is progressing, or want to see my rough notes of all the recommendations, feel free to email me at president@utsu.ca.

Audit

On the 21st of July, I met with the UTSU Auditors (Yale and Partners LLP) to discuss the draft UTSU audit for the past year. As well as giving an independent opinion on the state of UTSU finances, auditors also give advice on internal controls, or in other words, the processes that are in place to ensure transparency and oversight in everyday transactions such as the signing of cheques, and moving inventory between safes. The auditors indicated that UTSU has good internal controls, and gave suggestions for further improvements. We have already made some informal improvements (e.g. keeping notes on the reasons for issuing taxi chits, not having myself or Ryan sign cheques for ourselves), but will be working to implement the auditor's recommendations in a permanent way after we receive their full report, which will also be distributed to the board.

The final audit should come before the board in the September meeting, before it is forwarded to the AGM for member approval.

Clubs Directory

With the advice of the UTSU Executive Committee and Budget Committee, we have decided to try to reduce the size of the Clubs Directory this year, from 150 to 60 pages. Many executives and budget committee members expressed concern that the directories (which are somewhat expensive) may only be used once by students and then thrown away. The new design is intended to work well with the online bulletin by using shortlinks that can later be directed to club profile pages.

Website Improvements

I have been working with Justin Raj, our graphic designer, to improve the back end functioning of the UTSU website. Due to way hosting is set up currently with the CFS, we have no ability to manage Wordpress plugins, meaning that we have no way of running analytics on site traffic or adding extra features. We plan on changing over to a different host to get better control of the site and for faster support with hosting issues.

Student Commons

On the 21st of July, staff met with administrators from UofT Planning to finalize details of the Student Commons project planning report. The original planned schedule was to finish the project planning report by the end of June, but the report has taken longer to finalize for a couple reasons. The UofT staff has changed since the project began, and we have been taking extra time to make adjustments to ensure that the businesses in

the commons are successful. The copy shop has been moved towards the front of the building to help increase its visibility and the kitchens have been planned in greater detail to ensure that the UTSU can run a catering business. The operating costs of the student commons are projected to be slightly greater than the operating levy, so it is important that the business operations of the commons are successful in order for the building to be financially sustainable. UTSU staff is currently working to finalize the details with UofT Admin quickly so that the project can proceed.