

Notes from the Student Governors & Student Society Leaders Meeting

Wednesday 5th November 2014, 12:30pm

Simcoe Hall Boardroom

Present:

Susan Froom, Student Governor—Part-Time
Kriya Siewrattan, APUS President
Yolen Bollo-Kamara, UTSU President
Susan Murray, Student Governor—Part-Time
Alex Harris, Student Governor—Graduate
Danielle Sandhu, APUS Executive Director
Ben Coleman, Student Governor—Full-Time Art/Sci
Nickie Van Lier, GSU Internal Commissioner
Pierre Harfouche, UTSU Vice-President University Affairs

1. Action Items

Last Meeting's Items & Progress

- A request at the next University Affairs Board by a governor for a report on the state of listserv use and mailing address access for Student Societies. This would be for the purpose of fulfilling their obligations under various regulatory acts and to ensure adequate communication with their members.

Done. Terms of Use should be received by November 14th. (This happened at UAB on Nov. 6).

- Have a meeting set up between the Student Society Leaders and the U of T President, Governing Council Chair, and VP University Relations. This meeting would help fulfil priority 2, Joint Advocacy Efforts, and would be targeted towards issues where Student Societies and the University Admin have common goals and can benefit from coordinated advocacy.
- After the above-mentioned meeting, attempt to facilitate a meeting with the Minister of the MCTU (Reza Moridi), in order to advocate for the previously identified common issues.
- Meet with Han Dong, MPP for Trinity-Spadina, with a concurrent purpose to the above.

In Progress. Some additional people have been considered, and we should be able to get things rolling soon. The University is not actively lobbying the Federal Government due to lobbying rules and the upcoming election.

- Nearer the end of the year, address the lack of transparency surrounding the appointment process for co-opted board and committee members.

In Progress. We just went through the appointment process for the UAB striking committee, so we should get some feedback on that process soon. Additionally, we'll be reviewing the terms of reference and making sure that they match what actually happens.

New Items

- Due to some confusion about the exact nature of agreements between student unions and the university, it was requested that student unions forward relevant information to governors. Furthermore, governors would request similar information from the admin. Of particular interest is whether agreements in each case are signed as contracts between corporations or as agreements with groups recognized by the university or provincial regulation.
- At the previous meeting of Governing Council, student societies which had participated in the “alternative summit” had indicated that a report would be forthcoming in the next month or so.

2. Discussion of the Student Commons and the Provost’s Response to the Student Societies’ Summit Report

Main Points

- Provost’s Response to the Summit Report
 - Concerns were raised by APUS and GSU about the lack of communication from the provost and vice-provost students regarding the summit report.
 - Concerns were also raised about whether the appeals board (as proposed in the summit report and supported by the provost) would infringe on the autonomy of student unions.
- Past restructuring of student unions, including the SCSU referendum in 2004 and the UTMSU/APUS court case were discussed in relation to the provost’s goal of introducing policy in the long term to allow for the restructuring of student societies.
 - There were a variety of opinions about this issue, but there was a consensus that the University should not unilaterally restructure societies.
 - A concern was also raised from APUS regarding the re-defining of their membership in 2003. Such changes were posited as an ongoing concern for all societies.
 - Note: the implications of any restructuring upon the COSS/CSS/QSS makeup and membership should be considered.
- The relationships between different student unions was discussed, with a variety of opinions expressed. The discussion included the following aspects:
 - The applicability and desirability of the “equal taxation for equal representation” principle, especially in regard to whether control of the Student Commons should be exclusive to St. George students.
 - Some members were in favour of unrestricted control, given that students from all campuses were likely to use the space.
 - Some members were in favour of restricting control to St. George students to ensure that the use of funds reflected the desires of students paying the commons fee.
 - The desirability of the option for St. George students to have an exclusively representative student society.
 - Some members argued that due to the high number of students at St. George and the concentration of decision-making power on this campus, this option was less

desirable. Furthermore, the splitting of representation between campuses would reduce the cohesion and strength of student advocacy.

- Some members argued that such an option should exist, especially given the lack of adequate internal processes available to consider such an option.
- There was a consensus that all members should further consult with their memberships/estates regarding these issues in order to be able to present an opinion that was representative instead of personal.