

Student Societies Summit

Meeting #5 – December 11, 2013, Governing Council Chamber, Simcoe Hall

Attendance:

Faculty Summit Members: Prof. Joe Desloges (Chair), Prof. Donald Ainslie, Prof. Linda White, Prof. Graham White

Student Participants: Yolen Bollo-Kamara (UTSU), Anges So (UTSU), Raymond Noronha (UTMSU), Melissa Theodore (UTMSU), Dylan Chauvin Smith (ASSU), Mauricio Curbelo (EngSoc), Thomas Santerre (EngSoc), Ryan Lamers (ICSS), Kim Blakely (MedSoc), David Bastien (MedSoc), Ashkan Azimi (NCSC), Craig Maniscalco (NCSC), Anthony O'Brien (PHEUA), Maha Naqi (TCM), Michael Amiraslani (WCSA), Joe Bodley (STU)

Administration: Prof. Jill Matus (Vice Provost, Students & First-Entry Divisions) Prof. Mark McGowan (Special Advisor to the Vice-Provost, Students), David Newman (Director, Student Life), Meredith Strong (Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students & Student Policy Advisor)

Regrets: Brendan Stevens (SLS), Nishi Kumar (UCLit)

Welcome

Prof. Desloges welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of the Summit, thanked everyone for their feedback and participation, and provided an overview of the agenda.

Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (salient points)

David Newman provided an overview of the changes in the Canada Not-for-Profit Act as it relates to student organizations and points requiring clarification thus far. The presentation is posted to the Portal.

Of the participants present, four student societies identified that they are incorporated and fall under this legislation. Groups who have this status are advised to seek their own legal counsel to ensure that their bylaws are in compliance.

U of T Policy on Recognized Campus Groups (Clubs)

David Newman provided an overview of the structure and organization of student societies, clubs, and organizations at the University, along with information on the

services, programs, and supports offered to these groups. The presentation is posted to the Portal.

Prof. Desloges then opened the floor for questions, comments and discussion about the complexity of the landscape of student organizations at the U of T. The following general point were made:

- Some student societies recognize clubs through very formal and official procedures; funding and access to resources is often tied to the expectations of clubs
- Some student societies are currently reviewing and assessing whether or not they should continue to recognize clubs, while some other student societies are considering developing processes to recognize clubs
- Student societies that also have levy groups vary in their practices; some levy groups are reconsidered for funding through scheduled member referenda, while others are committed to funding in perpetuity. In some cases, students can opt-out of levy group fees.

Breakout Group Discussion

Student participants were broken out into 4 groups to consider the past several meetings and discuss in what ways their views have changed regarding the U of T student governance structure, definitions of good governance, and representation and roles. Each group was asked to assign a recorder/reporter, who was then asked to highlight one key point of their group's discussion to the larger group.

Group 1

- There is general disagreement between divisional student societies and central student societies about who has responsibility and authority for specific types of work and governance.

Group 2

- There might be space for fractionation of certain student societies but this would need very careful consideration as there are many issues that could benefit from a collective student voice.

Group 3

- There are minority issues within such a large governance structure and the current organization makes it challenging for smaller groups and groups with other constraints (shorter lengths of academic programs, etc.) to engage in a meaningful way.

Group 4

- There might be a place for middle ground that could be agreeable to all parties in defining roles and responsibilities. A difference of opinion still exists on how central governance could work.

Each recorder/reporter was asked to put their notes together and share them with the Faculty member that participated in the small group so that deeper information can be shared more fulsomely at the next Summit meeting.

Other Topics for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Summit will start with a continuation of the discussion above.

Prof. Desloges noted that the future meetings were scheduled in an attempt to get as many participants to the meetings as possible.

The next meetings have been scheduled on the following dates (locations TBA):

- January 15: 10:00am-12:00pm
- January 27: 1:00-3:00pm
- February 10: 2:00-4:00pm
- March 5: 10:00am-12:00pm
- March 13: 10:00-12:00pm

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm, followed by a lunch provided by the Vice-Provost, Students & First-Entry Divisions.