



September 30, 2024

Board Meeting Minutes

GROUP	Ontario Tech Student Union (OTSU) Board of Directors
LOCATION	40 Founders Drive, SHA 136, Oshawa, Ontario/Google Meet
DATE & TIME	Monday, September 30, 2024
NOTE TAKER	Salvador Caruncho
ATTENDEES	<p>Directors: Faculty of Science & Chair, Eloghosa Avenbuan; Faculty of Graduate Studies & Vice Chair, Samuel Canonaco; Faculty of Education, Arajenthira Narenthira; Faculty of Health Science, Kashaf Awan; Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, Sifatul Mostafi; Faculty of Business and Information Technology, Arujan Parameswaran; Faculty of Social Science & Humanities, Lindsay Horner</p> <p>Executives: President, Rai Muhammad Ali; VP Student Affairs, Zainab Hussain; VP Student Life, Areej Fatima; VP Downtown, Matifadza Chidovi</p> <p>Staff: Executive Director, Brian Robson; Financial Controller, Mayooraan Thurairajah; HR Generalist & Chief Returning Officer (Salvador Caruncho)</p> <p>Guests: Ashley Treavajo, Chairperson of OTSU Bargaining Unit, UNIFOR Local 222</p>
REGRETS	None

OPENING PROCEDURES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called into order at 6:51 p.m.

2. TERRITORIAL RECOGNITION

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by A. Parameswaran. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the September 30, 2024 Board Meeting Agenda.

4. MINUTES APPROVAL

L. Horner noted that the attendance in the July 31, 2024 meeting minutes was incorrect. L Horner and A. Parameswaran to be added as having attended the meeting

RESOLUTION

Moved by Vice Chair and seconded by K. Awan. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the minutes for the July 31 Board Meeting with the noted amendments and that the August 21, 2024 meeting minutes be approved in their entirety.

AGENDA TOPICS

5. Executive Reports

President:

- Most of the month was dedicated to supporting Glo-Week events as well as Clubs & Societies week and the Blue Jays game event.
- President worked on the Executive Job descriptions to be presented today as well as proposed changes to the by-laws that allow for changes to the job descriptions. This included sitting down with the HR committee who approved the proposed job description changes.

VP Student Life:

- Glo-Week and orientation events were successful with positive feedback received from students
- The all-society presidents meeting created a channel for collaboration amongst them
- Clubs week was also successful, though the turnout may have been lower because it was the first year for this event
- Get involved fair had a great turnout as well
- Club ratification ended today with about 111 clubs, up from last year's number
- Vacancy on Clubs & Society Committee was filled

Chair asked if there were any additional vacancies on this committee, VP Student Life answered that there were not.

VP Student Affairs:

- Glo-Week was a success, VP Student Affairs attended most of the events.
- DRT Initiatives: DRT ambassador working with Kamika to bring in Presto, not able to meet with Trent yet do to conflicting schedules
- OUSA changing bylaws to ensure that delegates are undergrad students or students that recently graduated for and undergrad program
- OUSA home office staff coming to OTSU to visit on Oct 10.
- Sophia (Indigenization Strategy Intern at OUSA) is also visiting our campus early October for consultations and focus groups with students.
- Preparing for fall OUSA General Assembly

VP Downtown:

- Participated in downtown orientation programming as well as some north campus events. VP Downtown functioned as one of the scavenger hunt stops for the Education and Social Science faculty orientation event
- VP Downtown was also the University and OTSU representative for The Oshawa Orientation Experience.
- OTSU downtown orientation events had good attendance – all events ran out of supplies
- Had a meeting with campus security about expanding downtown campus walk program.
- Downtown bookstore pickups had a few hiccups when first launched but soon ran smoothly
- Went to Town and Gown Association Town hall which was mostly on housing.
- Downtown social media presence, working on Downtown Deets as well as creating working doc for blog posts.
- Housing: will be sending document to Deputy Provost, seeking support for off-campus housing coordination.

A Narenthira asked if there was an update on the printer order. President noted that timeline has been pushed back due to delays in shipping. Supplier has apologized but has not provided an updated projected time for delivery.

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by L Horner. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the August 2024 Executive Reports.

6. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

Executive Director:

Post-Glo-week survey was sent out the week after the end of Glo-week. So far 73 responses have been received. By far social media was the most popular channel for awareness. Campus Rec day was the largest event followed by the Roller Rink. The Lowest Ranked event was the Glow Zone Roller rink, but even that ranking (3.8) was high. 40% of respondents replied that they made friends during Glow-Week.

Also, e-sports coordinator asked to announce that we have 200 new users in the esports arena. The total now stands at 1199.

7. PRESIDENT EXPENSES

None to Report

8. UNION BOARD POSITION

Executive Director stated that there was a clause in the Collective Bargaining Agreement with unionized OTSU staff that gave a union representative leave to request an opportunity to speak to a motion to create a non-voting observer position at the OTSU board for a unionized staff member.

A Treavajo, OTSU staff and Chairperson of OTSU Bargaining Unit, UNIFOR Local 222, was not here during past negotiations, but believes that this proposal is for transparency because may board decisions can affect OTSU staff.

A Narenthira asked whether this proposal needs to go to the AGM. The Vice Chair noted that because this is an observer seat, the by-laws should be referenced.

President noted his objection to the observer position as it was not a standard among student unions. The observer would neither be a member, nor a student.

Vice Chair noted that staff still have access to the Board meeting minutes, so an observer seat would not be a large difference.

A Narenthira noted that he would also like to examine if observer positions were mentioned in the bylaws.

Vice Chair suggested the motion be tabled to allow time to research the process for deciding on Board Observer positions.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board Directors table the motion to add an observer position to the Board for a unionized staff person.

9. Financial Update

Financial Controller presented financial update – Financial statements available on OTSU website.

A Parameswaran asked whether the interest income is expected to decrease. Financial controller noted that this is the case for several reasons: The University pays 95% of the health care costs at the beginning of the year while the OTSU pays monthly premiums. Interest earned on that amount naturally decreases throughout the year as the fund decreases with more premiums being paid over time. Also, interest rates have been high, but that can change. This makes up the variable portion.

Financial controller added an additional update. Our current auditor's agreement has expired, and an RFP has been sent to 8 audit firms. We are waiting for responses to present to the finance committee.

RESOLUTION

Moved by Vice Chair and seconded by A. Parameswaran. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board Directors approve the financial update.

10. Policy Committee Recommendations

S. Mostafi proposed amendments to streamline by-laws by removing job descriptions and job titles to reflect strategic roles and responsibilities of the OTSU Executive. This would include changing By-laws 12.4 to reflect The VP roles would be VP Student Services, VP University Affairs, VP External Affairs; Removal of 12.4 to 12.79, the current detailed job descriptions so that future changes to the job descriptions would not require a by-law change.

Vice Chair noted apprehension about the change. Changing position names was not brought up previously and Vice Chair believes that VP Downtown should be retained. Vice Chair is not convinced that this change is necessary. Also notes that the bylaws may have gone from containing too much detail to containing too little detail.

L. Horner also questioned the removal of the VP Downtown position stating that students are already feeling neglected not only by the OTSU but by university itself.

A. Narenthira noted that he was not present for the policy meeting and noted further that the way the downtown campus works is distinct from the North campus and that the student experience is distinct. Representation of downtown students can only be done by a Downtown student.

President acknowledged that there is a strong need for the change and that the main purpose of the VP Downtown is advocacy. The Downtown Advisory Committee (DTAC) exist for that reason.

L. Horner noted that the VP Downtown does this function and brings concerns to the Executive.

President noted that the VP Downtown is to advocate for downtown campus and we do need that. He Further notes that the VP Student Affairs will chair DTAC and that the VP University Affairs can advocate on behalf of the DTAC. President

also noted that the VP Downtown position can only be voted on by downtown students and that it is more appropriate if every student could vote for every member of the executive especially since downtown student voter turnout is low. President stated further that this change does not limit downtown students' ability to run for any of the executive offices and notes that the current model North Campus students can only vote for 3 of the executive positions whereas downtown students can vote for all 4. The change would make it so that all students can vote for all positions. President also stated that the OTSU has outgrown the current model: The President is no longer capable of handling all the external affairs, necessitating a VP External Affairs. This change is required to fulfill our current obligations and to grow in the future. The President's role should be to oversee the organization, not to have an outsized portion of the portfolio be external affairs such as advocacy through groups like OUSA. In fact, OTSU is one of the only groups that sends its president to OUSA. Finally, the President noted that the recommendation came from the Policy Committee which had student-at-large members and OTSU staff were also consulted.

A Narenthira stated that it was unfair to offload the responsibility of downtown representation to the DTAC which are largely made up of volunteers. In terms of voter representation, the current model establishes equity, and states that the OTSU does not adequately promote elections and that the turnout is not good at the north campus either.

President noted that the DTAC is also represent by downtown board members which is adequate representation.

K. Awan posited whether a position can be added rather than shuffling duties among existing positions.

The Chair noted that there may be budget constraints.

The Vice Chair suggested looking at increasing working hours for the VP Student Affairs and VP Student Life, perhaps making the full-time positions. Vice Chair believes that the representing downtown requires a unique perspective that North Campus students cannot get.

VP Downtown has a lot of concerns have to do with infrastructure within the OTSU noting that if we look at student life and student services right now, maybe we should look at how the organization is structured. Downtown campus has a decrease in student enrollment. The university has set a tone, they don't care about the downtown campus.

President agreed that most of the issues with the downtown campus are university issues that are outside the scope of the student union. The role of the VP Downtown within the OTSU is to advocate. That can also be done by the DTAC and advocacy will improve if all executives should oversee both campuses.

Vice Chair stated that before the VP Downtown position can be eliminated, it must be proven whether the downtown campus can be represented by other executives.

VP Student life noted that there is currently confusion as to what the executives' roles are regarding the downtown campus. If the VP Downtown is already taking care of executive functions, what roles do the other executives have?

L Horner noted that there will be resistance to this change and that removal of representation is hurtful.

President asked what meaningful change the VP Downtown has brought in the last four years.

VP Downtown noted that the YMCA partnership took years to get running as did providing bookstore services.

President noted that the VP Downtown role is limited, and their influence is unduly outsized. Last year fewer people voted for the VP Downtown than the number of nominations required to become a candidate.

A Narenthira note that this change will create new conflicts. Under the new model, if there is a conflict between downtown and north campuses, who will the executives represent?

President stated that under the new roles every executive will be responsible for the downtown campus, not just one.

VP Downtown noted that under the current model, the VP Downtown has done a lot of overstepping. VP Downtown's focus for the year are student engagement, community and partnership student advocacy. The thing with student

engagement at downtown campus, the university treats dt student engagement the same as north and it expect the same outcomes. The downtown campus works differently. The north campus can remain insulated do everything by itself and still work, but the downtown campus cannot.

VP Student Life stated that most of the issues that VP Downtown mentioned were university concerns. It is our responsibility to advocate. There is currently an unclear division in the team this year: student engagement falls under me, and I'm supposed to represent downtown students, but VP Downtown is currently taking on much of the same portfolio, which makes it unclear what VP Student life and VP Student Affairs have to do Downtown.

K. Awan notes that all executives are going downtown but that communication among the executives likely must improve.

S. Mostafi said it was notable that OTSU has a VP Downtown position and not a VP North Campus, also suggesting the problem may not be binary and that there may be a solution such as a transition period between different models.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board table the motion pending review and investigation.

S Mostafi presented part two of item 10 is regarding changing By-law 3.2 to provide for an AGM later in the calendar year.

Vice Chair noted that this change would not comply with the regulations of the Act.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board does not approve changes to By-law 3.2.

11. HR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board tables discussion of the HR Committee recommendations.

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by A. Narenthira. Motion carried.

12. NEW BUSINESS

None

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

We have a second Board of Directors training session scheduled to go over AGM expectations.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:11pm. Moved by L. Horner and seconded by Vice Chair.