



October 21, 2024

Board Meeting Minutes

GROUP	Ontario Tech Student Union (OTSU) Board of Directors
LOCATION	Google Meet
DATE & TIME	Monday, October 21, 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, Mayooran Thurairajah; HR Generalist & Chief Returning Officer, Salvador Caruncho</p>
REGRETS	None

OPENING PROCEDURES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called into order at 7:01 p.m.

2. TERRITORIAL RECOGNITION

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

DISCUSSION

No discussion.

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by S. Canonaco. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the agenda for October 21, 2024 Board Meeting.

4. MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran noted typo on page 6 (“emotion” instead of “Motion”) and inconsistencies in how the Vice Chair is referred to.

RESOLUTION

Moved by L Horner and seconded by A. Parameswaran. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the minutes for the September 30, 2024 be amended to fix typo on page 6 and to fix inconsistencies in references to Vice Chair.

5. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

See the full executive reports on the OTSU website.

President:

- Worked on Executive Job descriptions to be discussed at this meeting
- Print shop update, everything should be in by the end of this month and may start printing operations before the end of next semester
- Looking into cancellation of Palestinian Youth Association event on October 11. Currently no update from the university, but a meeting is scheduled
- Discussed ex officio seat on academic council with President Murphy, but it requires a by-law change so the process may take some time
- Also spoke with President Murphy about assisting with lowering internet costs associated with the esports arena
- Policy Committee reviewed and approved the by-law amendments regarding the removal of job descriptions in the by-laws
- Elections committee met to integrate Board’s suggestions into revised election policy proposal
- Finance committee met to review options for external auditing firm

VP Student Life:

- This month has been heavy on planning including Frost Week, figuring out whether we want another club week brainstorming for year-end events and planning for Pangea.
- All Society Presidents meeting will be held by the end of the month to see if they would like to be involved
- OUSA fall general assembly – all execs are attending on Thursday and will be back in Sunday.

VP Student Affairs:

- DRT Advocacy Conducted quick survey on survey improvement to give feedback for contract renewal
- OUSA visited the office, met with senior leadership and went over advocacy priorities
- OUSA also tables at the University and conducted focus group service session
- OUSA fall general assembly this weekend
- OTSU’s OUSA winter paper will be “Tech Enabled Learning”
- In collaboration with VP Downtown, met with Housing Our University Student Equitably (HOUSE) a non-profit advocacy group. Not feasible to partner with them at this time as this would require a vote on increasing levy fees
- Collaborating with Durham College, Trent and studentcare to give talk in mid-November about tenant rights.
- Later this month will be meeting with Student Price Card to see if there is opportunity for partnership
- Also hiring for Student Advisory Committee position

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran asked for an update on DRT special drop-off locations. VP Affairs noted that the focus is currently on contract renewal and will bring up new pickup locations when the contract is settled.

Chair noted that partnership with SPC was rejected last year because of expense and asked what kind of partnership was being pursued. VP Affairs noted that the meeting was just an initial meeting.

VP Downtown:

- Noted that engagement on downtown campus is different. There is no analytical information, just anecdotal as VP Downtown asks students in casual conversation at events because sending forms after events has low response rate. Also looking not just at OTSU events but also faculty and club events: how did they hear about the events, how many students at the event.
- Has also been conversing with grad students as there were many events hosted downtown by grad students in the past few weeks. Talked about what the OTSU can do to enhance student experience. Noted that we don't have graduate student representation on the executive and only have one graduate student on the board and that it has not been the norm to have them on the board.
- Met with Trent Durham Student Association regarding town and gown and avoiding pitfalls of previous town and gown committees
- Is also looking at the Trent housing situation as she continues to advocate for off-campus housing coordinator
- Has had many opportunities to talk about the OTSU in unconventional situations such as the university fair. We shape student life and should discuss this more with students. Will have another opportunity to do this at the October 26 open house.
- Will also be attending the OUSA General assembly starting Thursday.
- Met with Downtown Advisory Committee to discuss next steps.

DISCUSSION

HR Generalist noted a quick correction that we have two graduate students on the board.

A Parameswaran asked whether downtown students had been incentivized to provide feedback when surveyed. VP Downtown stated that downtown students were different in that they don't engage with a lot of what goes on which is why VP Downtown uses the stated approach.

A Parameswaran suggested that perhaps clubs can have mandatory surveys. VP Downtown said that the suggestion would be looked into.

RESOLUTION

Moved by L. Horner and seconded by S. Mostafi. Motion carried.

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

6. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

The update below is provided by the Executive Director.

Executive Director:

Noted that there was an *in-camera* item in of the operational report which will be discussed *in-camera*. Also noted that staff are preparing for AGM. Also noted that HR Generalist and Wellness and Support Services Coordinator are attending the AMICUS-C regional conference in Waterloo.

DISCUSSION

No discussion.

RESOLUTION

No resolution required.

AGENDA TOPICS

7. IN-CAMERA

Moved by Vice Chair and seconded by K. Awan. Motion carried. Moved *in-camera* at 7:34 p.m.

In-camera meeting minutes stored separately.

Board moves out-of-camera at 7:49 p.m.

8. UNION BOARD POSITION

DISCUSSION

No discussion.

RESOLUTION

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board Directors does not approve of the board observer position for staff members represented by Unifor Local 222.

9. ELECTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran presented changes to elections policy as recommended by the board in July 2024.

A. Narenthira raised concerns about a non-member having a vote during the election process.

Vice Chair express support for changes but was concerned about having a separate Society elections document.

CRO noted that the intention was to have a single combined document, but that there was insufficient time to make those changes as it was pressing to have revised policies in time for next round of elections. CRO noted that elections committee can make further recommendations to clean up the document.

Chair asked whether society executives had to take a leave of absence during the election period as well.

A. Parameswaran confirmed that this was the case.

RESOLUTION

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board Directors approve the Elections Committee recommended changes to the Election Policy and Procedure documents.

10. POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

A. Narenthira presented updated recommendation on job description changes in the bylaws. Noted that this recommendation follows the President's recommendations with the addition of a VP Downtown position. The main area of consideration is the cost implication of adding an additional executive position.

Vice Chair asked for additional information about financial impact.

Financial controller noted that the financial implication would be around \$33-35000 per year. Board would have to approve this change due to cost. The board would also have to decide if it was it going to be a reallocation or fee increase. If it was going to depend entirely on ancillary fee increase, cost would be \$3.50 per student.

VP Downtown asked if it could be done without a fee increase.

Financial Controller stated that yes, but the funds would have to be reallocated from other area.

Chair asked what services the reallocation would come from.

Financial controller said it would depend on where we remove the funds from, but there would be an impact on some service funding unless the ancillary increase was decided on.

A.Narenthira proposed that having an extra position would be very beneficial and would help with executive workload. On the other hand, A Narenthira feels the is not good as it would result in reduced funds that our services are getting and increasing fees.

VP Downtown suggested that another increase this year is not favourable given the recent increase for the my virtual doctor service.

Vice Chair noted that we are able to pay for this without a special ancillary fee increase and that this change may actually increase the OTSU's ability to serve its students.

President making it a priority to reallocate the fund and manage the cost and sees increasing fee as a backup option.

A. Parameswaran asks whether the automatic increase of ancillary fees is in response to inflation. Financial Controller confirmed this to be the case, maximum up to 2%. He estimates 2% increase to be around \$4 per student for inflation increase.

A. Parameswaran asked if there was a forecast of student enrollment. Financial controller noted that the cost estimate is based on the current number, next year it could be more or less.

L. Horner suggests that if fees continue to increase, students will question OTSU spending, and the OTSU may incur resentment.

Vice Chair suggests it is good to add an executive position as we've had same number for a long time, we're growing so much, and this gives students more access to executives. Chair countered that there are other universities that are bigger and have the same number of executives.

A. Narenthira asked for a mockup of financials to review feasibility. Financial Controller stated that it was feasible, but that the cost was a ballpark number. As long as we are not planning any new major projects, we should be ok.

A. Narenthira asked if this was approved, would it have to be ratified at the AGM. President confirmed this

VP Affairs notes that as someone who does advocacy and external affairs, it makes sense to add a position for external affairs.

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by S. Mostafi. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board approves the Policy Committee recommendations.

11. FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding external auditor recommendation, since the inception of the student association, we have been with Baker Tilley. This is the time for proposal because we were on extended contract. We extended RFP to 8 firms, two came back: Baker Tilley and MNP. Based on fees and other areas, finance committee decided on MNP, so seeking formal approval from board to appoint MNP.

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran noted that fees at Baker Tilley are a lot higher and in addition we have been with Baker Tilley for the last 7 years, and it is a good idea to have external eyes.

Financial Controller noted the cost for Baker Tilley would be around \$35,000 while MNP would be around \$18750.

RESOLUTION

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board approves the Finance Committee recommendation for external auditor.

12. NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION

Chair asked that agenda for AGM be approved by the board.

RESOLUTION

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

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board approves the AGM agenda.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

AGM Happening on October 28 at 5:30pm.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Moved by Vice Chair and seconded by K. Awan. Motion carried.