

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE held at the University of Toronto Students' Law Society Office (P322) at 78 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C5 at 12:34 p.m. EST October 9th 2018.

Members in attendance:

Solomon McKenzie, SLS President
Morgan Watkins, VP Student Affairs and Governance
Catherine Ma, 3L Representative
Zachary Biech, 3L Representative
Benjamin Bouwman, 3L Representative
Alison Durran, 3L Representative
Robert Nanni, 2L Representative
Sarah Kanko, 2L Representative
Renuka Koilpillai, 1L Representative
Rachael Girolametto-Prosen, 1L Representative
Daniel Poliwoda, Equity Officer
Shamus Slaunwhite, Communications Director

Call to order 12:34 p.m.

I. Organization

Morgan Watkins chaired. Notice of the meeting was duly given. Rachael GP took minutes.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve October 2, 2018 minutes by Robert, seconded by Sarah. Consensus approval. Catherine and Rachael abstaining.

III. Policy

A. Law Society of Ontario (LSO) Licensing Submission

Morgan: There seems to be consensus (or indifference) among Faculty Council about the LSO's proposals. The Dean suggested SLS draft a submission. We are asking for volunteers to help with drafting. We would like to aim to have an initial draft of the paper by October 16th.

Sol: Can we please get a few volunteers to help with this?

Megan: We will draft two submissions. The first will be from SLS and will have aggregate data from the survey and provide what we disagree with and other general concerns.

Sol: I will provide an outline for that. It will contain the headings and data.

Morgan: Ideally, it should be no more than 2-3 pages. The second submission is the Faculty Council submission, and should be a 1-page summary of the FC's position, and expressing general support for the SLS submission.

Volunteers: Sarah, Renuka

Takeaway: Everyone to review drafts and add input if possible.

B. Dean's Committees

Curriculum Committee -- Intersession Consultations:

Zach: No updates.

Upcoming Meetings:

Sol: Financial Aid & Tuition Committee will be meeting about the post grad debt relief program tomorrow. We will be starting the process of reviewing the program.

Other Dean Committee Updates:

Morgan: Please email your Chairs for an update on the first meeting.

IV. Strengthening SLS' Relationship with the Indigenous Community

Introduction

Morgan: The rest of this meeting is to continue the discussion of SLS' relationship with the Indigenous community that was started at our SLS retreat. We can also discuss as a group how we want to have this conversation.

Zach: I see there being two broad focuses for this discussion. One: What do we want this relationship to look like? And two: What do we want this to accomplish? Let's start by discussing each of our experiences with Indigenous learning and knowledge.

Ali: I worked at a company that was implementing a plan of "Indigenizing" the workplace. They started with the small things, such as putting Indigenous art on the walls, but I believe it is making a positive impact. I took Bob Rae's class on Issues in Aboriginal Law and Policy and had the opportunity to do some work on Musqueam Reserve during undergrad. (@Alison, can you confirm these? :))

Ben: I personally don't feel as knowledgeable on this topic. I feel that it's not my place to have a vision, but it can be my place to help implement a vision.

Sol: I still think we should be proactive instead of, for example, asking for the Indigenous Law Students' Association (ILSA) to give us all policies and us implementing them. I

I think the SSMU policy (Students' Society of McGill University) is a good place to start. I suggest we start by thinking about procedural work that can lead to meaningful long-term changes.

[Indigenous Solidarity Policy - SSMU](#)

Robert: A lot of what's in that document is about referring questions to ISLA.

Sol: There are some substantive responsibilities in there that do create longevity that I think are important. For example, they mention updates to the by-laws.

Zach: We do want to make it meaningful. That policy is mainly a consultation policy.

Sol: My goal is simply to use that document to ground our thinking and form an aim.

Sarah: How can we go beyond that document and the small things, such as putting up art?

Zach: A process of learning needs to be engaged with. I think of this as a functionally living process - something which in itself is rooted in Indigenous tradition and principles. For us, from a by-law perspective, this could mean building an education process for SLS in the future. It becomes a generating, living, engaged experience that transcends year over year. We have to make sure it's not just 'ticking a box.'

Sarah: Is that something SLS can do alone?

Sol: ISLA and SLS has somewhat different roles in facilitating events and the success of events. SLS can play a role in supporting the institutionalization of these actions and principles within SLS.

Ali: There can also be a sense of paralysis, if you asked yourself too much "Is this meaningful enough?" Even with a land acknowledgement, there will always be people who think it's just a small act, but for others it's very meaningful. You have to start somewhere. The first step is the small things.

Zach: The key is emphasizing learning about it. This should be a process-oriented project, For example, a better approach to a written land acknowledgement is discussing the land in an SLS meeting and then speaking from memory and heart instead of from paper, it's about learning and growing and letting the knowledge impact you. If we are to put up art, it's the "putting" that matters. If you learn about the art and the artist before putting it up, that is key. If students are going to take part in SLS, Indigenous knowledges and principles will become a part of their lives and how they do things.

It is important to note that sometimes ILSA members do not want to be in charge of all policy. The office of Indigenous initiatives is a good way to start the program. We have faculty and staff/administrative offices at the law school who will also be allies in this. These are the places we can start getting the help in building an education program.

Sol: There are huge amounts of programming outside of UofT that would be available to us. There is no reason why this cannot be a contingent requirement -- why someone in the VP role cannot have the responsibility of learning of all the existing programming. This can be built into our policy, like it is in the SSMU policy. We do not need to create an education for ourselves, we just need to tap into the existing education sources.

Morgan: I agree and think that there is no reason why we should feel we need to reinvent the wheel on the education piece. I also think that anything we do must be supplemented with a reflective piece. For example, if we are putting up art, coming together with a blurb that explains our reflection on why we are doing that, what we learned from it. And then combining the programming and reflection into an institutional package.

Sol: There are also currently two UofT Law staff whose jobs are looking into these initiatives.

Question of Institutionalization:

Morgan: How can we use principles from Indigenous culture in how we operate?

Sol: It would require a referendum to change the constitutional document. And I am not sure how I feel about a referendum for equity-based concerns. The other is by updating the by-laws. By-laws are easier, because they are based on an SLS-wide vote.

Morgan: Or you could just use a parallel policy. Or, we can use both tools -- by-law updates and policies. For example, if we're adding responsibilities of VP role with the aim of institutionalizing that, we can update the by-law. If it's about Indigenous principles we can have a policy.

Zach: I agree with that. This year, we can make the changes. In the future, it can be a process that continues. SLS members in future years can experience the processes and principles we put into action this year.

Question of Operationalization:

Sol: I have some questions regarding the operationalization of this. First, what are some generally areas we want to work within? And second, how do we want to do it? Let's start with question one.

Robert: I think a complementary policy makes the most sense right now. It avoids a vote at the moment and if we do a policy then this can be a trial year of what works. Next year once we know for sure what makes sense, we can put it into by-laws.

Morgan: Right now, I see this as being grouped into three parts: (1) Policy that integrates Indigenous principles into how SLS operates, (2) the educational pieces, and (3) a list of short term action points (e.g., land acknowledgements, art, mandatory blanket exercise) with reflection.

Zach: I agree. Right now we have some broad thoughts and narrower action points. I imagine a group leader community and building cooperation and connectivity between the clubs at the school. Perhaps a meeting per semester where club leaders can discuss policy objectives, standard setting, and foster a holistic sharing space. Each meeting could involve knowledge sharing. SLS social could help facilitate this (see One Dish One Spoon Network discussed below).

Sol: Definitely something we should discuss. It is important to note though, that we cannot bind SLS social. The decision is up to them.

Robert: I do like how that is an example of how we can implement these Indigenous principles into specific items.

Zach: I have a few other broad ideas. One is a project I am working on with some other student leaders of clubs and associations, called the One Dish One Spoon Network. It is essentially a network of student leaders whose organizing principles would be based on One Dish One Spoon wampum principles of sharing a common pot of resources in a way which builds up all involved. A similar direction for StAG would be the Two RowTwo-Row Wampum principles: peace, love, and respect. We can use these principles, or the similar principles of the Seven Grandfather teachings, as the basis for action items. For example, implementing principles into our meeting structure. If we are putting these principles into action, it would also extend to our relationship with the Indigenous Initiatives Office for example - instead of just working with the IIO, SLS members would be building a real friendship on a deeper level. (***@Zach, I had trouble getting this down in its entirety. So please update to best show what you meant! Thanks***)

Catherine: We envision it as an iterative process that doesn't have to be perfect from the beginning. It can constantly be evolving and improved.

Sol: Catherine, you mentioned you have some suggestions for short term action items?

Catherine: Yes, my suggestions included: Tobacco teachings, sourcing tobacco or having tobacco ties in the SLS office, land acknowledgements before SLS events, SLS office art/poster about grandfather teachings, regular check-ins on the CTA from the

TRC, monthly check-ins with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and more programming like the blanket exercise.

Zach: ILSA is in the process of developing a long-term plan. If we want this to be a long-term thing at SLS, maybe we can have a three year trial run for these policies. At the end of the three years we can see what changes or updates we should make with these.

Sol: What leans me toward by-laws is that we can set them with more longevity. If it doesn't take a structurally or institutionally change then we can't ensure it stays for the coming years. It could lead to disconnection between years.

Morgan: That makes sense. Another alternative is to have a by-law that refers to policies. For example, the by-law could reference the policy and state that the SLS must discuss and update the Indigenous policies on an annual basis. But let's have a separate discussion of the mechanism we use after we decide what our goals are.

Robert: We can also start implementing principles before we're done the official changes. So it's okay if it's more than a 2 week process for official changes to occur.

Sol: For example, starting land acknowledgments is a quick thing to start. Also, is it good for us to come up with an SLS position to focus on this?

Robert: I wonder if it's better to have an Indigenous affairs officer or to ensure there are Indigenous students within the group of StAG reps.

Sol: SSMU recommends that, however we cannot choose who is elected. Therefore, either way it's good to make sure there's a role that exists within the Indigenous portfolio. That way we can ensure there's a check-in.

Robert: An officer only provides recommendations. That's why I would prefer to make sure that student has a voting role instead of a recommendation role. So I believe this is something we should be actively thinking about and promoting.

Renuka: Could it be that we have an executive position that is voted in but not as a StAG rep. Like an Indigenous affairs representative. We could have a member who has checking in on how SLS is reaching its Indigenous relations as part their officer obligations.

Morgan: Good idea. But it is important to note that there could be push back from the administration on this as it will be another voting member at Faculty Council.

Action Items:

Morgan: So, let's think about where we want to start now.

Sol: We need a person to be the resource collector for this.

Robert: We perhaps need to have an info session where we can all find out what resources exist.

Sol: Although, that may be a tad time intensive. I think we should start by making working groups. I imagine there being two different working groups:

- (1) One group would flag areas in the by-laws/Constitution that could be changed and consider some tangible policy changes.
- (2) The second would work on generating ideas for policy and immediate implementable things.

Who is interested? *Sarah, Robert, Morgan, Alison, Renuka, Zach, Catherine, Rachael volunteer. **Takeaway:** Morgan to send around Google Doc with sign-up for StAG members to sign up for 1 of these 2 working groups.

Robert: So one from more overview policy and one for more action items? And they'll be in discussion with each other?

Morgan: One for review of procedure for governance documents amendments (or policy drafting, if we choose that mechanism), and the other for overview policy and action items.

Sol: Yup. And at StAG meeting we can ensure we can meld their ideas into one.

Takeaway: Let's meet in a week and half regarding initial by-law changes. And we can go from there to figure out what those changes would look like.

Morgan: And let's aim to have our tangible initiatives laid out by the end of the semester.

Sol: **Motion to start meetings with a land acknowledgement with reflection.**
Seconded by Sarah and Benjamin. Approval by consensus.

V. Building Business

Tea Kettle

Ali: A student told me the tea kettle in the student kitchen is broken.

Catherine: I can email Sara Marni (**Takeaway**)

Dish Soap

Sol: SLS now has the dish soap in the SLS office. Can someone post in Facebook groups informing the classes that if there is no dish soap message an SLS exec and come get some from the office?

Sarah: I can (**Takeaway**)

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.