

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 12:30pm EST, September 12, 2018

Members in attendance: Solomon McKenzie, SLS President (Sol)
Morgan Watkins, VP Student Affairs (Morgan)
Catherine Ma, 3L Representative (Catherine)
Zachary Biech, 3L Representative (Zach)
Benjamin Bouwman, 3L Representative (Ben)
Brendan Cassidy, 2L Representative (Brendan)
Robert Nanni, 2L Representative (Robert)
Shamus Slaunwhite, Communications Director (Shamus)

Call to order 12:46pm

I. Organization

- Morgan Watkins chaired. Notice of the meeting was duly given.
- Catherine Ma took minutes.

II. Procedural

A. Approval of the Minutes

- September 5, 2018 – Motion to approve by Sol, seconded by Zach.
 - Approved by Sol, Catherine, Zach, and Ben
 - Abstentions by Brendan and Robert

III. Policy

A. Law Students' Society of Ontario (LSSO) Update

- **Sol:** I met with the Law Students' Society of Ontario. LSSO indicated that it would like to take a position that reflects the feedback and position(s) from the individual student societies across law schools. This proposal is good since it increases the voice that the SLS has, but may be complex as since our interests may be different than those of other schools. The crisis that other schools face is even getting articles, ours for the most part seem to be the quality and nature of articles.

B. LSO Lawyer Licencing Consultation

- **Sol:** I chatted with some Bay Street recruiters who indicated that the LSO reform would barely impact their current student programs. I have scheduled meetings with the CDO and the Graduate Student Law Association to discuss the changes as well. I met with the Dean who signalled his willingness to align the Faculty's position with SLS's one if we can crystallize and then present our position at the Faculty Council. My own instinct is that no one wants the LPP program and the abolishment of articles. I suspect that our position will be that we have diverse concerns and don't support a particular option. We should encourage everyone to attend the Town Hall as it is a way to get students engaged in this issue. I would like our survey sent to the student body before and after the Town Hall, and also circulate a separate survey to alumni from past years.

- **Robert:** It appears that most students are generally uninformed about the proposed changes. Once students find out the changes, then they are generally opposed. The idea of an additional portion of the bar is not the worst thing, but its cost is a concern. Most people seem to support the third option.
- **Sol:** The Dean and big law firms have suggested that abolishing articles would make no difference. Graduating students would secure a one-year contract as an associate, and then the firms would decide whether to renew contracts after a year. The question is whether the cost/benefit analysis changes for smaller firms?
- **Robert:** Firms could start with lower salaries for first-year associate and then offer a massive increase after the first year.
- **Catherine:** Some students have expressed concerns regarding the timeline for these reforms, especially the repercussions if the current 3L and 2L classes are called to the bar at the same time.
- **Ben:** I'm not sure that would be an issue for 3Ls, as they would have more experience than the 2Ls.
- **Sol:** The issue arises if someone is not hired back after articles though. The increase in new calls could affect the relationship between new hires and their employers too.
- **Shamus:** It seems that the LSO is responding to the issue of too many students. There could be other ways to mitigate the issue, such as greater oversight and management of law schools in terms of their admission process and enrolment numbers.
- **Sol:** Has everyone had a chance to review the survey? Does anyone have feedback? My goal is to have all feedback by Friday in order to roll-out the survey.
- **Catherine:** My only suggestion would be changing Question #2 to add the "new skills examination" to options 2, 3, and 4.
- **Sol:** Does anyone else have feedback? If you haven't looked at the survey yet, please give your feedback by tomorrow night. You can use the comment function in the draft survey, and it should send your revisions to me.
- **Catherine:** Returning to general concerns about the LSO reforms, the proposed skills examination is a written test. I'm concerned that this proposal doesn't ensure the same practical experience as articling, specifically the experience gained by handling client interactions or motions.
- **Robert:** It's not guaranteed that articling students go to court though. What if you don't want to do litigation?
- **Sol:** Some students still attend and observe court, even if they don't actively appear. This issue goes to the question about what skills are necessary to become a lawyer. Perhaps LSO would be open to letting lawyers distinguish specializations in particular areas.
- **Ben:** LSO appears opposed to letting lawyers claim that they are better than others in particular areas though.
- **Sol:** In terms of action items, everyone should promote the townhall next week. I would like to circulate the survey right before the townhall.
- **Robert:** The survey should be circulated after the townhall. What if a student's opinion changes after the townhall? It's important to educate everyone, so that they can give an informed opinion.

C. SLS Office Policy

- **Sol:** The school would like to come up with an office policy regarding how to use SLS resources, maintain this office space, etc. Does anyone have strong feelings on what the policy should look like, or can we leave this task with the administrative director?
- **Morgan:** Reba is the SLS administrative director, so she might want to be involved.

D. Dean's Committees

- **Sol:** Developments have already occurred with particular Dean Committees, specifically the curriculum committee, financial aid and tuition, and GAD. Financial aid needs to meet soon in order to review 1L appeals. SLS assignments are coming out shortly. If you have a committee that is meeting, please take notes in the meetings. If asked for a SLS position, state that SLS does not have a position but then give an opinion, based on your best knowledge.

IV. Student Concerns

A. Graduate Student Law Association

- **Sol:** The Graduate Student Law Association suggested that SLS and GSLA coordinate on some programming and positions. I haven't received a mandate to move forward.

B. Exchange Students & Transfer Students

- **Sol:** The Faculty provides limited support to exchange students and transfer students. These students independently created their own list-serv, and I've added them to SLS Weekly and provided other resources. Is there anything else that we would like to do?
- **Robert:** Didn't the Faculty hold a session for transfer students?
- **Sol:** The transfer students had a lunch, and I believe that it was organized by a 3L transfer student.
- **Robert:** It would be nice to have a comprehensive document that describes resources and programs, sessional dates, reading week, and general information about Toronto.
- **Sol:** It sounds like you are advocating for a more accessible version of the Student Handbook, tailored to exchange students and transfer students.
- **Ben:** The resource should link to summaries database, so that exchange students can easily access information about the common law system.
- **Sol:** Morgan and I will take these suggestions to our meeting with the Associate Deans and Assistant Deans.

C. OCIs

- **Morgan:** OCI results came out last week. I haven't been hearing about major issues, but wanted to check whether we think we need to provide any supports.
- **Brendan:** No one is talking about OCIs right now.
- **Robert:** There is too much going on right now.
- **Morgan:** We should keep our eye on this and whether supports are needed. Did we ever post the message from last year?
- **Catherine:** Yes, we did.
- **Robert:** Maybe we can pin it to the top of the Facebook group.
- **Morgan:** Sure. Can the 3Ls reps get their friends to comment on it too? E.g., people who did not get OCIs, went through the articling recruit, and are very happy with their results. It might be helpful to hear those kinds of things.

D. OSAP / Financial Aid

- **Morgan:** OSAP is now sent to the school institution, not the student. Did we know this change was happening? I talked to the financial aid office, and the office said that multiple other students had the same question.
- **Shamus:** OSAP just changed its system this year.

- **Catherine:** I believe that OSAP sent out an email last week or two weeks ago.
- **Ben:** OSAP sent these emails to students' personal emails connected to their OSAP.
- **Morgan:** Okay, I wanted to be sure. The financial aid assessments are being released in the next week or so. The assessments should come out before the tuition deadline for students who deferred their payment.

E. **SLS Retreat**

- **Morgan:** We circulated the schedule for the SLS retreat. There are break-out groups for the individual Dean Committees, and then we come back together and discuss our collective goals for the year.
- **Robert:** Do we need to do anything in advance?
- **Morgan:** Read the documents linked in the retreat schedule and come with ideas for the events calendar.

V. **Building Business**

A. **Building Issues**

- **Zach:** The plug next to the garbage can by Goodman's Café is not working. The library has a new printer set-up, and I know that some students were having issues with that. I sent the set-up instructions to Sol, who emailed the library staff asking them to send out these instructions. The instructions are not available online.
- **Brendan:** I think that under the new system, you lose the old balance on your card.
- **Ben:** The soap dispenser is broken in the men's bathroom in the Falconer basement.
- **Robert:** The right door to enter Torys Hall is still locked, so it makes a loud noise when you leave the room. The automatic door to enter the library itself is really squeaky.

VI. **Other Topics**

None.

Meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.