

PSAC local 901, Special General Meeting October 16th, 2019

Minutes taken by: Lesley Jamieson

1. **Quorum check was performed** by Basil Southey. "Motion to accept the quorum check report" moved by Morgan, seconded by Rohit, carried unanimously.

Quorum check report: 21 attendees; 20 from Unit 1, 1 from Unit 2

2. **Land Acknowledgment:** was given by Rohit Revi
3. **Statement on Harassment:** was given by Rohit Revi.
4. **Adoption of Agenda:** "Motion to adopt the agenda" (Basil/Morgan/carried unanimously)
5. **Approval of the Minutes:** "Motion to approve the minutes from the Spring AGM" (moved by Morgan/seconded by Basil/carried unanimously)
6. **Executive and Steward's Council Reports:**

Full report included in the SGM Meeting Package

"Motion to accept the executive and steward's council reports" (Doug/Matthew/carried unanimously)

7. **Bylaws Committee Report:**

Basil: a meeting was had in which updates were considered, meant to clarify RA position, executive transition and honorarium, and minor grammatical changes. Deputy moderator position was removed, tie-breaking mechanism was introduced.

Full report included in the SGM Meeting Package

Motion to approve the proposed changes to the bylaws (moved by Stefy/ seconded by Morgan/carried with 3 abstentions)

Discussion:

Stefy: the rationale of including RAs in unit one was to strengthen the unit, but we'd like to consider having only RA members voting on their own representation.

Morgan: the VP RA position was created to represent Ras, prior to the time in which they had formal representation in the unit. Having them empowered by RA members in particular seems appropriate.

Stefy: There is no quorum requirement, so that wouldn't be a concern in holding elections effectively if RA turnout itself was low.

Going forward, the bylaws committee will revisit the language relating to the language of "RA Bargaining Unit" to reflect the change from their status to RA members of Unit 1.

8. **Union Structure Committee Report**

Morgan: The committee was struck according to direction at our previous AGM; intent was to bring together exec and members at large in order to investigate: 1) increase to income coming from inclusion of RA members; 2) executive service compensation for servicing the collective agreement; 3) investigating bursaries offered by PSAC 901 to members.

Recommendations included: putting in a line item to support unions who go on strike, so that there could be more efficient funding of solidarity efforts with other workers; equalizing compensation among members, to shift away from a model in which the president receives a double amount under the assumption that the president would do double the work, toward a model in which a more horizontal system is in place; restructuring the childcare committee to a more general bursary allocation committee, and that research be done to investigate the ways in which bursaries could be used as part of a larger collective bargaining strategy.

Full report included in the SGM meeting package

Motion to approve the report (moved by Basil/moved by Marshall/ carried with 1 abstention)

Discussion:

Keegan: as it stands, the president receives \$800, while the others receive \$420. Why was this justified?

Morgan: The 2017 Union structure committee rationale looked at the honorariums of other academic local presidents and thought parity would be appropriate. The president was involved in bargaining during this period, and heavily involved in organizing effort.

Keegan: So, there were not additional responsibilities?

Morgan: Yes.

Keegan: Did this relate to the hours worked, as measured by the app developed by the union itself.

Morgan: The executive honorarium is “expenses without receipts”, not reflective of hours of work themselves.

Keegan: Was there a paper trail for the presidents’ claims to accrued personal costs?

Morgan: No. there is no formal trail of hours.

Keegan: Would it be appropriate for the exec to increase transparency, perhaps through the use of the app.

Stefy: When we come into this position, we are meant to average 10 hours a month. However, this is not actually reflective of what is done by exec members, generally speaking. If we moved to an hourly rate, there would be a skyrocketing of the line items.

Keegan: Public servants should have their wages scrutinized, even if this shows positively that the exec is very hardworking.

Kathleen, neuroscience: a lot of students are interested in transparency. Perhaps more information online would be helpful to members. To have both tracking of hours worked by exec and budgetary information.

Claudia: There is a danger in trying to quantify hours of work in order to justify exec honorarium. Whereas TA work is structured by hours, working in a more volunteer/public service capacity does not readily yield to this kind of quantification of work-value.

Canaan: Union activities are voluntary advocacy; it should be compensated to some extent, but we don't need a barometer to measure this.

Basil: a marker of the success of the union is not the hours worked by exec members; it is the events put on, bargaining success, mobilization, meetings, solidarity actions, and member involvement.

Morgan: more engagement on these issues could also be taken up at a future meeting of this committee.

Stefy: Note, these discussions could take place at the future meeting of the committee, where the committee could discuss time-tracking for executive.

Morgan: clarification, the approval of this report, which contains the 3 recommendations contained in this report.

Keegan: I'm not advocating a dollar/hour system. But the app seems to express a value, of tracking hours, that should apply to exec. Perhaps there could be better distributions of duties.

Kathleen: How do we involve new members, show our values/goals for public evaluations.

Claudia: I love point 3, which is badly needed by our union. One of the things this union has achieved in creating space for International Students to organize and pursuing research into member needs.

Basil: Time tracker isn't mandatory for students or shared publicly; it would be disproportionate to apply this to executive members with a publicity requirement. This would be overly onerous. As these are only recommendations in a report, not binding motions that would change bylaws or budgets.

Kathleen: How would we identify the structure of bursary committee?

Morgan: This is a further question, beyond the approval of the recommendation to strike one. The hope is that we can have an individual designated to research the needs students have and what is currently available, and not rely on the dispersed work of a committee.

9. Budget Committee Report

Marshall: committees met and have made recommendations; some money has come in with new members joining the union and examined surpluses to see how it could be better allocated. The surpluses were underestimated on the basis of not knowing how many members there will be in the coming year. Projections are made without information, only on the basis of previous years. The proposals being made by the budget committee must be understood against the backdrop of this consideration as well as our past underspending trends.

Full report included in SGM meeting package

Motion to approve the budget committee report (moved by Morgan, seconded by Doug, carried with 1 abstention)

Discussion:

Kathleen: Why the increase to audit?

Marshall: The bookkeeping is done primarily by Emily, our bookkeeper. We hire outside help to do our audits and go over our statements as a double check on an occasional basis.

Kathleen: Are they publicly available?

Marshall: Historically, the auditing reports are not public. Budget updates are given at stewards' council and AGM/SGM.

Hannah: What is the steward network budget?

Marshall: This network is to fund the monthly meetings held by stewards' council, including food expenses.

Morgan: It can be used at the discretion of that body; the additional \$2500 is based on looking at how other organizations run. We saw that other academic locals offer honoraria and considered that we could encourage more stewards to get involved.

Kathleen: How much was the line previously?

Marshall: It was \$1500 before. If approved it would go up to \$4000.

Kathleen: How would the spending of that be determined?

Morgan: Right now, we have 25 stewards, but there are in fact closer to 80. We hoped to budget as if we attained full participation. The spending could be determined by the executive council, not those who would potentially be receiving it.

Kathleen: That still seems like it would still leave us with a surplus

Morgan: New initiatives can also come from stewards' council; for example, suppose at February we see underspending, it might encourage new initiatives, such as to support on campus solidarity initiatives.

Josh: Has that amount ever been spent in the past?

Morgan: Historically, it's been underspent since it's only been used to run meetings/food. The thought is that we want to encourage more use of the fund.

Josh: Is there one steward per department?

Morgan: Typically, yes, but there are exceptions made for very large ones. When there is not one elected, there can be a steward appointed by the council.

Kathleen: Could the budget and auditing be made publicly available?

Stefy: We need to take some concern with what information we make available, given the need to avoid the employer using budgets against the union in bargaining. Ex. health and safety and collective agreement servicing. There needs to be a trade-off, given this consideration and our own political context.

Kathleen: Shouldn't we use the fact of the surplus to empower members?

Marshall: We definitely can and should be more ambitious in what we do as advocates.

Hannah: It's rolled over each year?

Marshall: It adds to a cumulative cash surplus each year.

Morgan: The research that we want the bursary committee to do is to research what could be done with the surplus to strengthen the local, help members, mobilize.

Josh: Might we add it to the strike fund?

Marshall: Our funds are substantial, but this could be a consideration.

10. Election of VP RA

Ryan, the CRO, announced the vacancy of the Vice President Research Assistants position.

Floor was opened to nominations and was announced thrice.

First nomination was given in advance, from Hannah Hunter, seconded by Morgan Oddie.

Second nomination from Rohit, seconded by Morgan

Third nomination from Kathleen, seconded by Morgan

Nominations were closed, and candidates were invited to address the room in reverse order of nomination.

The question arose of who could run for the position; whether GRAFs, especially those who are misclassified by the employer, should be included among possible candidates.

CRO/chair: Ruled that they should not be, on the basis of the wording of the bylaws.

Marshall: Challenged the chair's ruling to include GRAFs in the possible nominees.

Seconded by Morgan

Kathleen: We should not except the classifications of the employer that would seek to have potential members excluded from the union and representation.

Josh: Should we allow non-members to vote though?

Maryanne: There is an expectation that GRAFs will become members in good standing pending the results of a grievance.

Motion to challenge the chair (moved by Marshall, seconded by Morgan, carried with one abstention)

The election was conducted by secret ballot and candidates were invited to elect a scrutineer.

The CRO and chair counted the ballots.

Hannah was elected VP RA

Motion to destroy the ballots (moved by Basil, seconded by Morgan, carried unanimously)

11. Announcements

Claudia: Requesting having international student representatives on each departmental council.

Doug: Social Justice and Political Action Committees will be meeting on Monday to discuss mobilization efforts and ways of responding the racist and homophobic note. Monday at 4pm in Robert Sutherland 551 (the PSAC 901 boardroom)

Rohit: Thursday at 4pm, the social justice committee has organized a panel about Turkish intervention in northern Syria, with speakers from Rojava, 901 members, and faculty members speaking to what's happening.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn (moved by Marshall, and seconded by Morgan, carried unanimously).

Meeting Adjourned at 8:42pm.