



STUDENTS' COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE MINUTES

2013 – 2014

Date: November 14th 2013

Time: 6.09 pm

In Attendance:

NATALIA BINCZYK (Chair)

PETROS KUSMU

KELSEY MILLS

SEAMUS WU

LOK TO

DAWSON ZENG

JESSICA NGUYEN

Excused Absence:

FABIAN EISMAN

MARINA BANISTER

Others in Attendance:

BASHIR MOHAMED

WILLIAM LAU

SACHITHA KUSALADHARMA

**1. CALL TO
ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by BINCZYK at 6.09 pm.

**2. APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

BINCZYK moved to move the presentation "Addressing the gap in SC's presence between the Orientation and Elections", below the one titled "International Students' Association", in the agenda.

The motion was seconded by ZENG

Vote 6/0/0

CARRIED

BINCZYK moved to approve the agenda for *November 14, 2013* as amended. The motion was seconded by ZENG.

Vote 6/0/0

CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

KUSMU amended the minutes to correct Natalia Binczyk's and Kathryn Orydzuk's names.

KUSMU moved to approve the minutes for *October 31, 2013* as amended.

The motion was seconded by BINCZYK.

Vote 5/0/1 (*Abstention by MILLS*)

CARRIED

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

BINCZYK informed the Student Council Engagement Task Force (SCET) about the future meeting schedule, and the members informed their availability for the proposed dates. In addition, BINCZYK said that the task force had until the end of January to submit their recommendations.

5. PRESENTATIONS

International Students' Association

LAU made a brief presentation about the International Students' Association (ISA). He said that there is a need to make international students more involved, and more comfortable with Canadian culture. Furthermore, he mentioned that having conversations with different international student groups had been tough due to the difficulty in getting together. After getting together, work on developing the constitution would start, and discussions will be held on the function of the ISA besides advocacy. Moreover, LAU said that the role of the ISA would be consultative.

LAU said that a petition outlining questions faced by international students had been submitted. In this endeavor, the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), the General Faculties Council (GFC) had showed support to the Students' Union (SU).

It was also mentioned by LAU that a student documentary about interaction between students was planned, and that the Dean of Students office was willing to fund it if a proposal was made.

LAU stated that the first project would be to fight the proposed tuition increase.

6. DISCUSSION

Engaging International Students with the Students' Council

BINCZYK started the discussion by questioning SCET on whether a broad change should be made at Students' Council (SC), and whether a representative from SC is needed for the ISA once it's created.

MOHAMED said that 15-17% of the undergraduates are international students, and that there is only 1 international student present in the SC. Therefore, his opinion was that several seats of the SC should be allocated for international students. BINCZYK and KUSMU replied that if so, other types of students such as aboriginal students, females, and LGBT students should also be allocated seats. MOHAMED said that the divide between international students and domestic students was comparatively clearer than the other types mentioned.

KUSMU said that the ISA could be treated similar to a Faculty Association (FA). Also, he said that many students involved in FAs and residence associations get involved with the Students' Union (SU), and similarly, students involved with the ISA can also become further involved with the SU.

MOHAMED said that ISA members should be able to come to council as observers, with limited governance powers. MILLS questioned the point of this if there were more international students than domestic students on council. MOHAMED said that it would cease to exist if the international student percentage on SC rises. BINCZYK said that this could be analogous with FA representatives coming to council and giving updates. MILLS said that while FA members represent their respective faculties, ISA members will be representing all faculties. KUSMU said that it would be possible to ensure that if there was an observer seat, it will be filled by an undergraduate student.

MILLS said that something like Council on Student Affairs (COSA), which is outside the SU would be great in order to include the ISA. WU said that the ISA would not be a mature organization within a short time, and thus would not need a complicated structure with many positions. He further said that there were many international student groups on the university, and that a big ISA would be difficult to organize.

BINCZYK pushed forward the idea of having a non-voting position at the SC for an ISA representative. MILLS disagreed with the idea, and said that the best option would be to treat the ISA as an FA. She further said that this will slowly funnel international students to council.

BINCZYK explained to the committee that there were 2 main options with regards to the ISA. These were 1) having a seat on the ISA for a councillor,

and 2) having a non-voting seat on council for a representative from the ISA. ZENG agreed with option 1, but said that DFU (Dedicated Fee Unit) representatives from council don't have an allocated time to speak. MILLS said that if something controversial comes up, it will get reported to council, and nothing being reported means that business is happening as usual. She further said that the SU could make a recommendation to the ISA that they have a councillor on their board. WU added that this person can be a non-voting member. ZENG said that the ISA may run into several logistical difficulties in representing all international students.

TO asked SCET whether ISA could encourage students to run for council. MILLS replied that the ISA can act like FAs in funnelling students to council.

KUSMU highlighted the language barrier faced by many international students. He asked whether election related materials should be translated. He also said that there is a misconception that international students are not eligible to vote. He said that the ISA could help in alleviating these problems. NGUYEN added that there was definitely a demand for translation. WU asked the languages which will be used if translation was performed. He further said that some people might get offended seeing other languages while their language was not present. ZENG mentioned that translated advertisements would be eye-catching for students who spoke that language.

BINCZYK summarized that translation could be something that the ISA could look into, and that the international student orientation could be used to educate international students about council. Furthermore, she said that having a councillor at ISA, who will be strongly encouraged to give a presentation about council, would be recommended.

MILLS asked whether a grouping of associations similar to COSA is hard to organize. BINCZYK questioned the purpose of such a grouping where different associations have their own agendas. MILLS replied that it would be a good place to have the ISA in, and that there may be common issues for the different organizations.

NGUYEN suggested that a central group to include all representative groups would be beneficial in working towards common goals. However, she also said that too many different groups should not be created. While admitting that this would be beneficial in engaging different groups, BINCZYK asked whether such a grouping would benefit the other participating groups. MILLS replied that Council of Faculty Associations (CoFA) has been extremely beneficial to the FAs.

The task force discussed on the issue of engaging with FAs. BINCZYK said that a council representative could sit on the boards of FAs. MILLS replied

that the Collective Body for Arts Students (CBAS) already incorporates this within their bylaws. Having an FA board member reporting to the SC was also discussed. MILLS pointed that this may be difficult for FAs with few members. BINCZYK said that the reporting need not be done every meeting, and that it could be performed every month or every two months. KUSMU stated that it would be easier for a councilor to sit on the FA. He further said that his own experience on the board of CBAS was extremely beneficial.

NGUYEN said that while each councilor has his/her own goals, there should be a structure for them to follow group goals. She added that this would be more sustainable moving forward. BINCZYK also raised a point about the accountability of councilors regarding their goals. KUSMU also agreed that it would be beneficial if councilors drafted their goals.

BINCZYK mentioned that in the next meeting, SCET would discuss about council presence in social media, and the numerous unanswered questions relating to it.

7. REPORTS *None*

8. CLOSED SESSION *NIL*

9. NEXT MEETING *November 28, 2013 at 6 pm.*

10. ADJOURNMENT BINCZYK moved to adjourn the meeting.
The motion was seconded by NGUYEN.
Vote 7/0/0
CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7.47 pm.