ASSU Executive Meeting

Minutes

Friday, October 11th, 2024 11:00 am   
  
Present: Firdaus Sadid (President), Grace Johnson (Executive), Farida Kayed (Executive), Mia Rodrigo (Executive), Michelle Wong (Executive), Safia Zaman (Executive)

The meeting was called to order at 11:15am

1) Approval of the Agenda   
  
 MOVED (Zaman/Kayed) “To approve the agenda as presented”

CARRIED

2) Report of the President

F. Sadid reported that he looked into the Schwartz Reisman Innovation campus for the Undergrad Research Conference. The idea is to potentially book it for a Saturday one-day conference. The cost would be approximately $8800 which includes the whole space including the lobby for a potential reception.

Sadid reported that he will be meeting with representatives of the UTSU this evening to discuss the ongoing absence declaration initiative. Discussion of this item is on the agenda at item number 5.

Sadid reported that he will be meeting with Janet from the BPSU to discuss how better to support them in their continuing effort to save the BPMH program from being eliminated.

Sadid reminded the Executive that their meeting with Vice Dean, Undergraduate, Randy Boyogoda will be Oct 18th to discuss his Civil Discourse on Campus project.

3) Report of the Executive

S. Zaman reported that they met with the two co-Presidents of the Undergrad Sociology Students’ Union and Prof. Caron about issues of accessibility in the department.   
  
Prof. Caron gave context that about ⅓ of the current teaching faculty in the department are new, and therefore learning about what the requirements for accommodations are in the Faculty of Arts and Science. There is an issue of orientation for these new instructors. Zaman will follow up with Prof Caron in two weeks.

Zaman reported on the unbiased teaching project they were starting with M. Rodrigo. They are planning to start a google doc to get an idea of the types of discrimination in teaching across the departments. The doc is hopefully going to go live this upcoming monday.

M. Rodrigo reported that Anthropology students want to lobby for a mandatory ethics in research training for students across the department. Currently there is just the UofT ethics form that students have to sign before engaging in research with lived experience/narrative projects. Students feel that this is not enough training on how to navigate often difficult conversations/research topics.

Rodrigo spoke to representatives of the Lebanese Student Association about the current conflict in the south of Lebanon and any accommodations that could be made available to students affected by the conflict.   
  
The Exec were in agreement that they would send a quick note to the Dean asking for her to put out a memo reminding instructors to give consideration to students immediately affected by the ongoing conflicts in the middle-east.

F. Kayed reported that there were about 43 applications for editor positions in the Arbor journal. This was a good sample and they were certain that they would be able to select a strong team of editors from these applicants.

M. Wong reported that the Undergrad Research Conference abstract submission post will go live this upcoming monday.

4) Discussion of Dr. Uahikea Maile  
  
The Executive were approached by concerned students who were under the impression that Prof. Maile had been put on leave for comments he made on an indigenous podcast last year regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. Prof. Maile, as ASSU award winner, has taken a leave from their research lab and they are not teaching currently. The Exec will reach out for more information.

5) Discussion of Absence Declaration Initiative

F. Sadid met with the University Registrar earlier in the summer to discuss changes to the Absence Declaration process. The Registrar was open to extending the declaration from the current once a semester to twice. The Exec discussed what would be the best option to try to get this change approved by the Faculty for the winter semester potentially.

G. Johnson said that at the core of it, the absence declaration is an accessibility issue for students and making them try to track down unnecessary medical notes at a time when they are ill is unfair.  
  
Sadid would meet with the UTSU about the issue and report back to the Executive about that discussion.

6) Report of the Staff

G. Nowlan reported that he was thankful for the hard work of the Executive over the past two weeks as it was the busiest time for student tests in the office.

Nowlan reported that J. Seto had proposed a new application form for the Course Union of the Year award. Having an application form would allow course unions to understand better the criteria used by the Executive when determining the winner. The form, if approved, would go live soon so that course union leaders would have ample forewarning of the change.

G. Nowlan reported that students from the Astronomy Union have approached the office asking about their upcoming AST101 midterm scheduled for Saturday, October 19th. Saturday midterms have not been scheduled in his experience, as it was outside of regular teaching and learning time. Though final exams can be scheduled on Saturday, midterms are always scheduled during the week, even if it is outside of class time.

The Exec would reach out to the Dean’s office to see if this kind of scheduling was allowed.

7) Other Business  
  
 M. Rodrigo brought up the issues with the elections in the first council meeting of the year. There were issues of equity in the election and Rodrigo said that the fallout from those elections

demonstrated that equity language needed to be updated and improved in the ASSU constitution.

The Executive had a fulsome debate on the need to update this language in the ASSU constitution. There was also discussion on how best to manage this kind of election issues in the future. There was debate about whether the Elections Appeal Board would be empowered to look into issues beyond the actual running of the elections. There was debate about having a delay in the voting in elections and their results being announced to allow for any appeals to be heard until after the appeal window closes.

8) Adjournment

MOVED (Rodrigo/Wong) “To Adjourn”

CARRIED

the meeting adjourned at 12:25pm

Secretary to the Executive

gcn  
cupe 1281