19th Meeting of the 48th SRC

5:00 pm, Sunday, April 03, 2022

Via Zoom (Online)

**Attendance Record**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Position | Name | Present | Regrets | Absent |
| President | Tyler MaGee | X |  |  |
| Vice President Administration | Alex Nguyen | X |  |  |
| Vice President Education | Sydona Chandon | X |  |  |
| Off-Campus Representative | Carol Alvarez | X |  |  |
| Off-Campus Representative | Gregory Robinson | X |  |  |
| Off-Campus Representative | Lindsey Graham |  |  | X |
| Harrington Hall Representative | Lauren Hayes |  |  | X |
| Indigenous Representative | Stevie DeMerchant | X |  |  |
| International Student Representative | Sony Phung | X |  |  |
| Member at Large Representative | Julia Evans | X |  |  |
| Grad Class President | Tory Desroche |  |  | X |

**Staff Present:** Kryssonia Wedderburn (Chair), Minahil Fatima (Recording Secretary)

**AQ Representatives:** N/A

**Guests Present:** N/A

**Land Acknowledgement**

St. Thomas University Students’ Union recognizes and respectfully acknowledges that it carries out its work on the traditional unceded territories of the Wolastoqiyik, and Mi’kmaq peoples. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which these nations first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of territories, but in fact recognized Mi’kmaq and Wolastoqiyik titles and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. STUSU members and staff pay respect to the elders, past and present, and descendants of this land.

**Call to Order and Quorum Call**

Meeting was called to order by Kryssonia Wedderburn at 5:01 pm.

Quorum is met with 8 voting members present.

## **Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was presented to council.

It was moved by Tyler M. to approve agenda.

Seconded by Sydona C.

The agenda was approved.

## **Approval of the Minutes from the 18th Meeting**

The minutes from last meeting were presented to council.

It was moved by Sony P. to approve minutes.

Seconded by Sydona C.

The minutes were approved.

## **Business Arising from Minutes**

## No business arising from the minutes.

## **Executive Reports**

**4.1 President’s Report – Tyler MaGee**

Hey, everyone, we made it kind of, we're almost there. There's only a couple more weeks left. So, I hope that everyone is at least having some success in managing the craziness that is this week. And next week. So hopefully the next time that we all speak will be at the end of this honestly, quite awful time of year. So, anyway, thank you all for coming in today. I'm gonna keep this really quick, just because I don't want to take up anybody's time. Basically, last week, all I did was I sat in on a budget meeting with Alex and Tina, we put together the budget that will be presented later today for us to vote on it. We'll get into the specifics of that when it comes up. I sat in on my final experiential learning committee meeting, which was at the same time as a budget meeting, actually, I think, Alex, correct me if I'm wrong. That was Wednesday, I believe Wednesday or Thursday. It was Thursday, it was in Fredericton. And then, on Friday, I attended the climate strike that was happening at the legislature and spoke on behalf of the Students Union, just reaffirming our support of divestment. And I monitored the emergency bursaries, email, those are still open, and they are running, and we are still accepting applications for that program. And that will continue just so everybody knows even though the year is coming to a close, that program is still running, and the email is still being monitored. And I also started writing my transition document that will be given to Alex here within the next few weeks. So that's it for me.

**4.2 Vice-President of Administration’s Report – Alex Nguyen**

Hi, everyone. My report for this week will be a combination of both VP Admin and VPSL. So, starting this week, we had the election, so I have been working with our CRO to ensure our elections are running smoothly. And then on Tuesday, I had a meeting with Tina and Ty to draft over our budget, which we'll touch on later on. The finance committee has approved two final funding applications for the year. And on Thursday, I had the budget townhall and a meeting with Food Bank to basically talk about the community grant which I believe Ty had touched on last week. We have a raise from 1300 to now 1500. And based on our discussion, the 1500 community grants will be distributed to international students, especially those who live in Windsor over the summer for groceries and some family stuff for students with dependents. And if we still have more leftovers, we are certainly going to expand the program. And that will be spearheaded by the food bank. And lastly, the AGM preparations is also underway. And I hope that everyone can join us for the AGM committees I know will really appreciate your help to go through our nominations and select the awards. So that's basically it. Thank you.

**4.3 Vice President of Education’s Report – Sydona Chan****don**

Hi, everyone. It is hard to say that this is our last meeting of the year. But I am super grateful I had the opportunity to serve you all. And I know you all will do great things in the future. So, for my report last week, we finished off the term with classes AGM Monday and Tuesday during the AGM we voted on next year's conference plan. And one of the exciting trips that will be coming up for the executive body is their Policy Conference, which will probably be held in Calgary. Then on Wednesday I answered a few emails. And on Thursday I answered questions on the NBSA AGM which is coming up this week. Then on Friday, I took the day to work on my finals. So, I really hope you are all getting through finals.

## **5. Employee Updates**

No reports available.

## **6. Representative Reports**

**6.1 Off-Campus Representatives (Carol A./Gregory R./ Lindsey G.)**

Carol: Hi, everyone. We did an Instagram survey to see if OC members would like to do a movie and what movie they would like to watch. And that's it. Thank you.

**6.2 International Student Representative (Sony P.)**

So, in the past week, I received all nominations for the International Student Leadership Award. And this year, we have a lot of strong candidates. I scheduled a meeting with Carrie on Thursday to pick out a winner it was a very difficult choice. We've got a winner for this award. And I informed them that they will receive an award with their name on it next week in a celebration that will take place on Friday. And that was it for my week. Thank you.

**6.3 Representative At-Large (Julia E.)**

Hi, everyone, I hope you're all doing well and not too busy with the chaos of the last couple of weeks of school. I don't have much to report on. I would like to mention my excitement. I have been in a lot of talks with Sydona and I'm going to be involved with the NBSA AGM coming up, but I'm also really looking forward to the AGM. And another note that I really wanted to mention because I wasn't here last meeting. So, I wanted to quickly mention it is that I had the honor this year to like work alongside Stevie and be a part of her reconciliation book club. And I just want to say, how much success that was this year. With everything coming to an end, I think that's something really important to highlight. And for those of you returning to council next year who aren't graduating, I really recommend that you get involved in the next book that we read, because it was a really great learning experience. And I think it really helps me be a better student representative. So, I just wanted to give a quick shout out Stevie. And thank you for that experience.

**6.4 Indigenous Representative (Stevie D.)**

Hi, everybody, I hope you're having a good week. Just a few updates. This week, I was able to have a conversation with Professor Josephine Cerise about possibly collaborating on a book review with her. She wants to talk about a book called coloniality and racial injustice in the university. She asks for indigenous student perspective, while she's completing her book review. So, I think that would be an awesome opportunity for some indigenous students to get involved with. Past week, we also had our last reconciliation committee meeting. And we were able to have a nice breakfast and talk about our guidelines for the committee. So, it was pretty great, but it was kind of sad to have to come to an end. And I was also able to participate in two workshops this past week, I was able to go to the Wabanaki Student Center, they held a basketmaking workshop. And Rachel Burke held a moccasin making workshop. So yeah, it's been a pretty, pretty great week.

**7. New Business**

**7.1 Operating Budget for Next Academic Year**

Alex: Okay, so this is our new operation budget for next year. A couple of things to highlight is that our enrollment has dropped about 100 students for next year. So that would mean, we have to raise our membership fees in order to keep up with our operations. So, with everything continuing to increase, we have to make some major cuts, in order to sustain ourselves for next year. And one of them would be the AGM awards.

Ty: I'm just gonna hop in first, because I know it can be scary hearing cuts first. So can you go up to the capital expenses. So, I'll run this right through the expenditures part first because I think it's very important to know what this stuff is. So, this year, small businesses are taking a lot of hits right now at the government level as far as funding goes. So, with minimum wage going up $1 now and then an additional dollar within the next few months, that increases the executive salaries go up to match minimum wage. Then our CVA agreement has some of our returning employees making a higher wage than they do when they start out. So that kind of does account to in addition to every wage increase that you get, that also ups vacation pay, and then the payments that you have to have into some of the social services, like social safety net expenditures that are paid in. So that would be like your CPP, and your EI programs that are here, all of those are mandated by the CRA, the Canadian revenue agency. So, because of that we are mandated to up those fees, we can't, like we can't change them. So that's a part of where the increased expenditures have come from. Additionally, insurance rates are skyrocketing right now across the region. So, our insurance has gone way up. And so that's where these capital expenditures have come from, which is why we had to do the increase of the fees, under our bylaw’s fees can only go up 5%, every year. So that's where that's come up. And then we're pulling from our reserve fund that we do in the form of a capital transfer. So, what that is, is we take money that had been leftover from surpluses in previous years since the 30s, when the Students Union started, so we pull some funds from those bank accounts, to try and balance out our budgets so that we don't have to overburden students with their finances. So, this year, the capital transfer will be sitting at almost $28,000. So that's just a little bit of the business side of things about where those increases are coming from. And just to let you know and get the context of how they are kind of they're outside of our control of what we can and can't set. So, with that in mind, the allocation of funding that we're going to be seeing in the next, like in the next sections of the budget is what we are able to do with the money that we're able to get from the student fees, knowing the changes that are happening on the capital expenditure side of things. So, there we go. I'll pass it back over to Alex. But I just wanted to give everybody that crucial bit of context before we start talking about where money was allocated and why.

Ale: Yeah, the majority of the changes would happen within our operational line just because we don't want to have major changes under Student Affairs since most of the line Student Affairs is for students, so they pay for the services. So, wherever he can do to reduce the costs on operational, the rest of them will go straight to services. So, one of them is the AGM. So unfortunately, in order to sustain our operation, and without cutting any line of duty for Student Affairs, we have to withdraw funds from the AGM, and we allocated into our Student Affairs line in order to keep up the operations. So, for next year, AGM will be virtual. A lot of things can change. However, this is what we come up with in order to balance out our budget. So, like Ty said, executive salaries also going up because we get paid minimum wage of all this year, we get paid $11.75 per hour, next year, the minimum wage of the entire province is gonna go up $13.75. So, we make the adjustment accordingly. And these are basically our employee salaries. So, our CVA stipulates that second tiers employees have a minimum wage of $19.83-, and first-year employees have 16.54. And this is a tax that we have to pay for all of the salary stuff which has also gone up because everything is going up. So, this also one of the major cuts for us. So, the conference line was originally 11 grand. However, since we need to make some cuts, we decided to reduce the line down by half and only send primary delegates.

Ty: I was just going to clarify why the reduction was there. So, in the past, it was kind of tradition that both the primary and secondary delegate, which would be the president, vice president education, would travel to represent students at the various conferences that we have, but now that the locations of our conferences are getting farther and farther away. And then in addition to that, flight rates and everything are getting higher and higher. We've also crossed this budget with some other budgets of similar unions in the province, and they typically only allocate money for their primary delegates. So, we decided to do the same, which means that the Vice President education will be the sole delegate that travels to conferences to represent the Students Union.

Alex: Okay, moving on to Student Affairs. So, this has remained the same. So, we didn't touch anything. These are student services, and they should be the same amount every year. So, we have some major changes for these two lines specifically. So, for off campus, we feel then we can we try to reallocate the line, and we find one solution is to merge with the campus engagement. So originally, campus engagement would be 2500. We have increased it to 3750. The access to funding remained the same. So, you would notify VP admin, they'll bring it up to finance committees or the SRC depending on the amount and the money will be accessed with the same purposes for mental health. So, we have this line for our mental health committees considering that we recently passed for a jack.org chapter, I suggested that we remove the funding because jack.org is its own organization that has its own funding so we will be covered when it comes to that. Final is that the Mental Health Line which specifically hasn't been touched for years now. So that's why we decided to merge it into different lines instead of having it anymore. And, okay, one more line is the campaign line. So based on our bylaws, each candidate is allowed to have reimbursement, maximum $20. So, we reduce the line just because after talking with our general manager, this line had not been touched for years. So, its 720 instead of a 1000.

Ty: So, under the external affairs, these are our membership fees. So, as you all know, both CASA and the NBSA are membership-based organizations that do externalized advocacy for us. So that means we pay into their membership, the same way that our students pay in the SU for theirs. So, CASA announced that their rates are being frozen for the year. So, it's exactly the same as last year. But with the UNBSU dropping out of the NBSA, those rates had to go up to account for the loss of income from there. So, both Syd and I have sat on the NBSA board meetings where they have discussed, you know, how we want to increase fees, where we can make our cuts, all those different things very similar to what we had to do this year for this budget. And the NBSA, membership fees increased by me believe it was $1 per student. So, it's $7.50 per student, is what the membership fee will be for the NBSA this year, so that accounts for that increase. To offset those increases, we looked at our lobbying line. And the feeling within the executive team was that lobbying is supposed to be a part of what these two organizations do and where our membership fees should be going. So as a way of, I guess, holding our advocacy partners accountable to their role as our advocacy partners, we are going to be withdrawing the internalized lobbying funds. And we can pull from, like SRC general and like all those other things for the initiatives that we do within internal to our campus. But for all major lobbying campaigns, we're going to be pushing CASA and the NBSA to take on the bulk of those roles and rely on our advocacy partners to ensure that we have effective lobbying as a whole unit, not just internal to us. So that's a little bit about where that lobbying fee went, we thought it was a little redundant, that we were paying to advocacy groups, honestly, quite a bit of money to then have an internal lobbying line. So that's why that was the justification for just removing it in general. Now, one thing that I did want to note too, because I do realize that the university released their budget as well, a few days before we had our town hall. One thing that they noted in, in their budget is that the decline that we're seeing in students because this number that you're seeing: 1650. That is the number of full-time fee-paying students that we have coming into the university that is down from this year last year it was projected to be roughly 1750. So, it's 100 students less this time round. That is not uncommon with all other universities. So, in the province, there is a decline in New Brunswick students graduating high school. And since this is a small university that is within this province, the bulk of the students coming that we're seeing, like the bulk of that drop that we're seeing are domestic New Brunswick students. And that's a trend that we're seeing across the province. So, this year, we may be a little bit tighter on money than we were last year. But it's not an uncommon trend that we're seeing. And the hope is that with the university's direction, towards outside of province recruitment and international recruitment, that we'll see these numbers balance out over the next few years. So that's a big trend that we're seeing on the government level. And right now, is they're looking at externalizing, their recruitments because of the decline that we're seeing in New Brunswick graduates. So that's just a little bit of context to if you're wondering where these students are going or why we have less students, it is a trend that we're seeing New Brunswick wide and the government themselves have admitted that it's most likely got something to do with the decline in high school graduates.

Alex: Yeah, I just want to quickly add on to is that our membership fees have remained the same level for the past two years, and with the university increasing their tuition fees last year and also, I believe next year as well. So is circumstantial for us to increase ours as well, in order to keep up with all the operations with everything going up. So, we raise it from $160.36 to one $171 For next year.

**Motion has been moved by the Vice-President Administration that it be resolved that the operating budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 be approved.**

**Seconded by Sydona C.**

**That motion has been approved by 8 present voting members of council.**

**7.2 The New Reconciliation Committee Guidelines**

Stevie: I don't think I'm gonna read the whole guideline over obviously, but I hope everyone was able to take a look. This is a project that the committee has been working on for this semester to just kind of solidify our committee and solidify our meaning to campus and to continue reconciliation through St. Thomas for the years to come. So, we were able to solidify a mission, vision, and values for our committee. And with that, we put into words kind of the structure of our meetings, what each executive position would be doing throughout the semester. What it is to be a committee member. And having these guidelines would just be a good tool for the committee to continue on with its missions, and hopefully motivate reconciliation for the years to come. And, yeah, there's not really much else to talk about, I guess. But if there's any questions or anything that anyone would like to point out, I would love to have some extra set of eyes. And yeah. Thank you.

Ty: Stevie, I am very impressed. One thing I find very interesting is that this document is set up very similar to what a club and societies document would be. And I think that might be something that we might want to take into account for our other committees. Just because it's a very straightforward and has structure that I believe, some of our committees are lacking. So, thank you for bringing this forward and I guess with the consent of the reconciliation committee I would like to see this be used as a template for documents for our other committees. Yes, it's you think that would be something that they're comfortable with.

Stevie: Yes sure. Thank you.

**8. Questions, Announcements & Notices**

## Ty: So, if everyone has availability after the exam, we will be sending out a zoom link for sort of a mini hangout thing. Just sort of an end of the year thing where we can all come and chat and do sort of like mock awards. So, keep an eye out in your emails. It will be the very last thing I organize as the president. So, thank you everybody for all the work that you have done this year. I know it has been not easy balancing this with schoolwork so thank you for making it such a fun year.

## Alex: So, a quick announcement regarding our AGM. The nomination period will end on April 8th. So, if you know someone who will be a suitable candidate for our AGM award, do nominate them. And if you would like to join the committee, it is super fun, super chill so you're more than welcome to. Contact our activities coordinator, Valeria for that.

## **9. Adjournment**

Motion for adjournment was moved by Tyler M.

Seconded by ­­Sony P.

Motion for adjournment was carried.

Adjournment at 5:35 pm.

**Submission:**

The minutes were respectfully submitted to the Vice-President of Administration on April 13th, 2022.

Minahil Fatima

su\_secretary@stu.ca

Recording Secretary

STUSU Student Representative Council