18th Meeting of the 48th SRC

5:00 pm, Sunday, March 27, 2022

Via Zoom (Online)

**Attendance Record**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 |  |
| Board of Governors Representative | Jessie-Lynn Cross | X |  |  |
| Grad Class President | Tory Desroche | X |  |  |

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

**AQ Representatives:** Jessica Saulnier

**Guests Present:** Ashley Thornton, Emily Green, Patrice Cammarano, Victoria Young

**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 5:06 pm.

Quorum is met with 5 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 17th Meeting**

Ty: I do not have an amendment. I just want it publicly stated as a massive thank you to Mina for taking as much time as it was to put that together. So definitely not amending it. But from all of us, thank you so much for the work you did on that.

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**

Hello, everyone. Holy cow this week has seemed a little bit lighter than last week for sure. So, following the SRC meeting on Sunday, the very first thing I did on Monday was I had a meeting with the privacy officers of the university, and we made the amendments and changes the way that our voters lists are put together. For those of you who attended the appellate board, you already know what the changes were. Essentially, what happened beforehand is that the electors list was based off of the 120-credit hour account, whereas now so basically, if you're waiting for any form of credits, or if you were overloading or any of those numbers of situations then you wouldn't have satisfied that, which is where the discrepancy in the voting list came from. So, what we're doing now is we're running it off of a likelihood scenario model. So, it's less based off of the satisfaction of credit hours and more about what year you are registered in. So, because of that, it's very, like loose on credits. But it does allow everyone regardless of your credit count, if you are in a year for distinction, then you have the ability to do that. So that's kind of that's how we changed it. Then, following that, we had an emergency executive meeting that happened on Tuesday, I believe. And in that meeting, we basically went through and drafted the press release, that came out later on in that week. I then did a couple of follow ups with the AQ regarding some election stuff, so just to make sure that the changes that we have are effectively communicated to students. And then after that, I did appellant board prep, and attended the appellant board meeting on Friday. Yesterday, I basically spent the time just like consolidating all of these different like notes, files, and record keeping of all this stuff and made sure that it was all passed forward into our Google Drives and one drives that we have within the STUSU so that way there's a very clear record that passes from this executive to the next executive. So that way everybody is aware of how it works. And then Alex and I worked with our communications employee to make sure that the elections, because nomination period for the new election for the valedictorian and the Vice President administration opens tomorrow. So, we put together the graphics and disseminating the information regarding that. So, keep an eye out, and it will work the exact same way that all of our nominations do. So, there's an online forum requires 10 signatories. And if you satisfy the 10 signatories, and the GPA requirements of 2.3, as the minimum GPA, then you are eligible to run. So yeah, more information on that will be over the next couple of weeks. Also, because of the vacancy and the VPSL position, the way that we are splitting us up is Alex is taking on all internal matters regarding the VPSL position. And I am taking on all external like things with the VPSL position because, as President, I already work with a number of our external partners. So, it's I have a little more familiarity with navigating those. So, an update from that is there is a promo event that is happening that is now open to everyone, like students are able to register. So, keep an eye out on our socials and you will be able to get your tickets from that. Additionally, Alex is working on a grant program that Victoria had started. This grant program will provide money to the Students Union for us to use for I believe it's like it's very loose on how you use it. But we have to write a report on how we use it. So, we are looking at giving it as a donation to the food bank here to help sustain students who may be staying here over the summer that might not have the same access to supports and things around here. So especially since Community Food smart usually takes a step back during the start with the new executive term. The hope is that by giving it to the food bank will be able to continue food services for students. And that's kind of what we're planning on doing there. Also, emergency bursaries, just so everyone is aware of those are still alive. So, you can send them to the emergency bursaries email, and it is being monitored. So that way that service will continue. So, I think that's it for my report and thank you.

Jessie-Lynn: Okay, so taking over the VPSL, external, is yourself. So, I'm just wondering, are there any efforts that you need to kind of have before like the term is up to kind of mend relations with some of the external bodies? And by that, I mean by that is just like some of the external bodies that the student union had worked with. Can you speak on that a little bit? And maybe possibly what the union can do about that?

Ty: You're going to have to be more specific about which external body you are referring to?

Jessie-Lynn: Specifically, like the external body with SVNB?

Ty: Yeah, it is my understanding that our relationship with them is still strong. We have taken a number of steps working with them. And we do still operate on a consultation basis. And I know that the folks over there and the folks within the Students Union maintain a very close relationship of support and mutual respect.

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

Ty: So, for Alex's reports, they have noted that they oversaw some of the appellant board proceedings, basically, they just helped them navigate some bylaw stuff and answer any questions that they had regarding the technical navigations of those policies. Then they prepared for the upcoming elections, which again, and the way that we are going to be handling that nomination period and everything and how we were communicating that. They also worked on a budget update, which I will be delivering later. And we have entered the process of planning the budget for the next fiscal year. So that will be available at our next SRC meeting as the last thing that this SRC does is approve the budget for next year. Upcoming, there is a STUSU Budget Town Hall, which is set to be on March 31, via zoom. So, this gives an opportunity for all students to come in, ask your questions and see where your student union fees will be going and, and how they will be allotted within our budgetary lines. As I have previously mentioned, Alex is taking on a number of the internal tasks of the VPSL. So, a few of the updates that they have here is that committees will be operating as usual under their current chairs so that we all know who's chairing these committees, Alex will be taking on the remainder of the committee's that I am not chairing right now. Evie is running as usual. They're also working on the AGM. So, an ad hoc AGM committee will be formed this coming week. The AGM is set to be online on April 15. So, nominations for STUSU awards will open on March 31. And will close on April 8, and the deadline to join the ad hoc committee will be April 4. As I previously mentioned, there is a community grant that's in the process of being worked through, and it will be a food bank donation, and the hope is that they will be able to provide us with the report. So, the grant will be in the amount of $1,500. So that's a very sizable donation to go to our food bank to ensure that students do have some food security for them. There's also an employee update. So, the Help Desk coordinator and Activities Coordinator are both under Alex's direct supervision. So that's just a little update from our employees, which I think is actually following this. But anyway, I throw it into this report now.

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

So, this week has been just a lot of preparation to transition into the next term. On Monday I answered emails then on Tuesday, we had an emergency executive meeting. I then took Wednesday as a day off as I needed a mental break and to get some of my coursework done. However, I still attended our remote learning roundtable at 7pm, which Julia put so much time into planning. Unfortunately, we didn't have much of a turnout granted students are probably tired and preparing for finals. On Thursday I attended our NBSA meeting, we are currently planning our AGM with a team which is a bit sad since it will be our last get together. Waseema also announced some of our asks that will be funded by the government and she'll be posting this throughout this week, I believe. Then on Friday, I had an exec meeting with Ty, where we discuss the STUSU's upcoming AGM and possible dates. So that's been my week. I hope you are all taking time for yourself and getting a break before finals as well. Thanks.

## **5. Employee Updates**

**5.1 Recording Secretary (Minahil F.)**

Hi, everyone. I hope you're having a good day. This is just to put on the record that I worked 20 hours this week.

Ty: Yeah, just to clarify to everybody. So, our contracts are very specific about how many hours our employee’s work. So, I asked Mina to track the hours over what the time limit is and that way, deliver them in the employee update. So that way we have a record of it so that we're able to ensure that proper compensation is given.

## **6. Representative Reports**

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

Carol: I hope your week is going great. So basically, this week we haven't had like a lot of updates. We have like different schedules but hopefully we are able to have our movie night that coming week. We're so excited. So, if you have the time and want to relax a little bit, just come for the movie night it would be super, super nice to have everyone. And I answered a question regarding COVID test availability through ResLife for an OC member. I just directed them to email ResLife and yeah, that's it.

**6.2 Grad Class President (Tori D.)**

I am still reminding people to pick up their clothing orders. About the giveaway winner, there were two prizes. So, one person came to get theirs. And then the other one, I'm waiting for them to come next week. And besides that, I've just had a lot of emails about graduation.

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

Hello, everyone. Last week, I was mostly communicating back and forth with international office to make sure that the International Leadership Award was out and about. And that was not an eventful week for me. Next week, I will plan on having meetings with the office and our advisor to pick out a winner for this award. Thank you.

**6. 5 Indigenous Representative (Stevie D.)**

There's not really much to update. The student’s reconciliation committee just finished up their book club. And that went super, super well. So, I'm really happy with how that turned out this semester. And hopefully we're going to be able to do that again next year. Last week, we were able to complete the guidelines/bylaws for the committee. Just so we have a platform for the next group to come. And hopefully by this upcoming week, we're going to have that finalized. So, I'll be able to bring it to SRC to present. But that's it for me.

Ty: I really just wanted to say how cool of an initiative that book club was. And I attended a couple of meetings. Unfortunately, my attendance couldn't be as strong as I would have hoped. But I did read along, and I did follow the notes. And it was a really amazing learning experience. So, I would love to see that continue. And I'm sure the STUSU would like to help support that in any way that we can next year. So really good initiative. Congratulations with that one.

**6.6 Board of Governors Representative (Jessie-Lyn C.)**

Ty and I had our last board meeting like last month. And that went really well. And it was just really incredible for me because I've been on the board now for two years. So, I have attended a lot of those board meetings. And I've known quite a lot of people who are on the board for several years. Half my degree in fact, so it was just kind of like really surreal to like, know that that was like my last meeting and just say goodbye to everybody. But my term and everybody else's ends on May 1, and there will not be another board meeting before then. So, I really have nothing else to report. Thank you.

**7. New Business**

**7.1 Budget Update**

Ty: So, this is our budget and where we are right now. So, I'll just run through all the big changes. So, this is all the same from our last budget update. This is what we got left in the salary line, just to let you know. SRC general, so we are currently in negative $211 here. But the good news about this is because we didn't have an in-person retreat, these two grands here will balance out that no problem. So, the main things that these were spent on were reconciliation committee stuff, grad class accounts, like those types of things. Coming down here, under activities, this $3,000 is what we got back from the Winter Formal. So that's where that number came from. Because we sold a lot of tickets. Under emergency bursaries. This is where our emergency bursaries line is right now, it's $5,800. Roughly, which for where we are left in the year, to the end of the semester, that's very normal. STUgenda is currently again in the negatives, that's because we are still waiting some sponsorship stuff. But in the event that that is still negative, these three grands here will cover that. Welcome Week, we ran a surplus in welcome week. So that's surplus is still there. These installments for CASA and the NBSA, they come out right at the end of April, the beginning of May. So that's why those are still there. But that will be a net 0. Oh, and in the clubs and societies line we still have $2,800 left and so again, for where we are on the year that is perfectly normal. So that's our little mini budget update. So, I will stop screen sharing so I can see all of you and then take any questions.

Tori: I'm wondering why there was a negative $50 beside the grad class? And I emailed Tina about that a while ago. But what happens if we have negative amounts of money, but we need more money?

Ty: Need more money? In what sense?

Tori: There was a little bit of a mistake that happened with a closing order, and I had to reorder one sweater, it's only $66. But if we already have negative dollars, I don't know what I should do.

Ty: Well, the way that our budgetary lines work is that they're not like fixed. So, we can do interline transfers, which will balance all that out. So just because the line says that it's negative doesn't actually mean that that line is negative, it's just the amount of money that we typically allot for that amount or for that purpose has been exhausted. So, for example, with the welcome we surplus that we have, we can move that into any of the lines as they as needed to balance out all those negatives, because for every negative that you see there's a surplus somewhere else. So, we usually just pull from those surpluses to get them to net zero by the end of the year.

Tori: Okay, should I send an email or something to you? Or should I still communicate that with Tina?

Ty: Both. CC me in it.

Sydona: I wanted to know for some students if you're still taking like orders for sweaters and merch for the grad class.

Tori: So unfortunately, we did our last order around January, but there are a few things left over. Any questions about that and if anyone wants to buy something that we have leftover, I know we have four, or maybe three dad hats leftover, and then a few T shirts of all sizes. So, we have one large, one medium, and then two small, maybe leftover. So, if anybody is interested in purchasing one of those, they're more than welcome to. I just been trying to break down the story sale posts so that some people don't miss them in the 24 hours. But if anybody really, really wants something, and they didn't get the chance to order it, they can order it through Stay Golden, or they can contact me to do that. The only thing is they might have to pay a little bit more money. Because when you buy them in bulk, it's getting a little bit cheaper.

**7.2 Discussion of President’s Letter**

Ty: This is an open letter to the Students’ Representative Council of the St. Thomas University Students’ Union regarding institutional shortcomings of the St. Thomas University Students’ Union. I know that all of you have a lot of unanswered questions, and there are a lot of rumours circulating, so I wanted to give you all my view of current events. A friend of mine wisely said once that as activists and as people we need ask ourselves where we can make the biggest difference, is it from the inside of a system that is designed to uphold itself, or is it to abandon that system all together, and create a new one? At the time I never fully understood that proposal, but the last few months have led me to consider that question more closely. The past four years of my role in advocacy has largely been from the ‘insider’ perspective, I got involved in institutional advocacy because I thought that by picking away at barriers and having influence over policy would – albeit slowly – create meaningful change to the systems that affect all of us. This is the consideration that kept me involved in student government and formalized activism, its why I chose to run for the positions I have, in an attempt to gain the ability to make the changes that desperately needed to me made: putting individuals before the system, rather than the inverse. I want to make it clear that in my time working with various organizations, I have seen first-hand the good people who truly care about those they represent and serve, they maintain the same mentality that I had, the ‘insider’ advocate, and I am forever grateful to call many of them friends, colleagues, and confidants. These words are in no way reflective of any individual, but rather the institution that we are all subjected to navigate. Over the years, I have been present to a number of situations where the decisions between representing students and upholding the system, most of the time it was the students that won, and the few times that they didn’t have been well documented. Recent events have followed the same pattern, and, when considering the initial question of how to effectively advocate, my views have changed. It is clear that the current institutional setup of our student government is failing some of the most marginalized groups of students, arguably directly involved in re-traumatizing rather than empowering them. A system that allows for individuals to breach its own clauses, only to have those same clauses condone said behaviours is flawed from the start. A system that concerns more for its image than its integrity, and the structural constraints on those within from challenging and encouraging difference is bound to fail from the start, and I cannot see how the ‘insider’ path I started down will maintain its effectiveness. If the system has the ability to constrain its chief executives, then it can resist all ‘insider’ changes. I chose principal over policy, and it led to the system choosing its image. So, when the time came that a similar choice needed to be made, it was already decided for me. This is reality of current governance doctrines, one that only becomes known when issues of significance arise. Unfortunately, the timeframe for this year is ending, consequentially, I am left with only recommendations to the next set of student leaders. As you are all new to these roles, you have the ability to change the system from the ground up. To change the approach rather than a simple by-law or interpret a policy differently. Think outside of the box and be bold because the box is broken and strive for integrity over image. I promised in my welcome address to lead with integrity and represent students to the best of my ability. Where I was unable to contend with the rigid system and its flaws, I still have the ability to represent the student body and defend its interests. Our students are hurt, they are lost, and they are tired of being on their own. They cannot and should not be subjected to trauma from the institution that claims to be and encourages other organizations to stive for equity. I encourage this organization to practice what it preaches and reorganize itself, so these events do not resurface. Do not allow this pattern to continue, and truly put the students first – a task that will not be possible without top-to-bottom institutional change. I encourage all incomings to take the outsider approach to advocacy and student representation, break the cycle and resist the trap of the status-quo. It is a lot of work in a short period of time, that’s why so many of us fail to enact meaningful internal change but stay strong and resilient and you just might be the ones to do it. Be different. Be bold. Be the outsider. Because this current path is no longer effective. And then I signed it. So that's the letter that I wrote. I will say that, you know, I don't often mention this in open meetings, at least but when I first got involved in the Students Union, it was the second semester of my first year at university. And the reason why I had only just been elected as the sexuality and gender diversity rep. And I was the incoming and didn't take office until May 1, the only reason why I was placed in a position to advocate for students and appear at meetings is because my predecessor made the bold decision to step up and challenge the advocacy path that the university was going down or the Students Union was going down. Specifically, the work that CASA was doing at the time, as it was before they had implemented any equity pathways to advocacy. Rather than contend with and ensure that that voice was heard, and those perspectives were heard specifically from queer students, the group at the time saw fit to essentially push them out of the position of advocacy. They labeled them a radical, and the system itself would like had very strict ways of leaving an advocacy partner. So, because of all of the bylaw constraints that were in place at the time, it was deemed implausible to take on those students concerns. And to have the even just the conversation regarding whether or not one should stay or leave one of our partner organizations from happening. In my second year, we had an impeachment removal process that's been very well documented. And in this instance, it was the system that allowed for an individual to be left on their own and face intensive media scrutiny and backlash from individual groups of students that were outsides that didn't know what was going on. And in turn it ended up producing trauma and mental health issues for that individual. You know, a lot of a lot of times we often think that our elected officials are free game and open to all scrutiny, and we forget that they are people because the system that was working there and the time didn't offer them any protections or privacy. In my fourth or third year, we see a massive up taking in sexual assault survivors sharing their stories. And the reason why the Students Union, this Students Union could not do more is because there was no way of verifying what number of anonymous students that were reporting, were still students. The fact that this system required individuals to state explicitly what institution they were a part of before action was given, shows another flaw in the system that we are currently running. This year, we've seen the elections. And we've seen issues that are internal to our committees, we've also seen issues within our HR proceedings. All of these are results of what a policy says can and can't be done, and what directions can and can't be explored. So again, we see these scenarios where the system that is supposed to be working for students doesn't. And the part that is so I guess, frustrating and disheartening for me. And I'm sure for so many others, too, they're seeing this is that it's not until you get into a position such as an executive position. And until you find yourself in one of these situations where a system is failing, that you fully recognize it. This is a pattern that's existed for four years, it's existed beyond that. But it wasn't until now that I'm able to draw that line of pattern because it's only now that I have the knowledge of how our bylaws works. And that's something that I think needs to be shared and needs to be explicitly stated to not just the student body, but also to the incoming and future representatives that we have here. Because from May to August, you essentially have the ability to do whatever it is you want with the bylaws, you can change it, you can build that new wall, tear down the old one. And when September rolls around, your SRC can pass all of it. So that's a lot of freedom to do what you need to do. And the other thing, too, is that a student's union is supposed to be the most adaptable and open and equitable and changeable institution out there. We have the ability to experiment, we have the ability to switch things up. We don't need to do Robert's rules all the time if we choose not to. We don't need to follow the book as closely as we do. If a situation arises that might intentionally or unintentionally be traumatic to the individual that's going through it. Right. Like I really strongly believe that if you bring the standpoint of this union, from being the helper to being the listener. I think that's the key change that needs to come forward. And that takes our perspective from being one that is we are a union, we are an image, we are a public entity, to being one that is we are adaptable, and we are experimental. And we are here to help our students. So, I'll leave it there because I know that's a lot. And I'll open the floor for absolutely anyone.

Jessi-Lynn: Such a powerful piece and displays both the pain that vulnerable people suffer from the union as an institution and the members it protects from sanctions.

Ashley: I definitely really resonated with Ty's letter, and I really appreciated it. I think that the Students Union or like unions everywhere are designed to want to help students and I think everyone that is part of an SRC wants to make meaningful change. But sometimes we are constrained by these really difficult bylaws that prohibit change from happening. And this definitely is something I thought about in my first or my second year. And unfortunately, in my third year, I experienced pretty intense bullying, stalking and harassment by a member of the SRC. And that is when I realized how constraining those bylaws can be for students. And when I would show up to you know, HR hearing bawling my eyes out and only to be told there's nothing they can do for me. I think that's when I started to realize and of course, like, I've dealt this year with issues to, of disrespect. But I don't think for me it was until that moment when I realized that even people who, who may want to help me are constrained by these, these bylaws that allow for individuals who are causing harm to get away with this term. And that's definitely not something we as an institution want to condone. And I know I'm graduating; I know Ty's graduating. And so, this really, it's not a selfish change. I think that we're hoping to enact but I think it's more of a change that I think will sincerely impact students who are put in similar situations of at least that I have. I know that if those changes have been implemented, when I was seeking help, which would have made my life a lot easier. And I'm sure if any of you have experienced anything similar to that, you probably have felt the same way. I know that there got to a point when all this was happening for me that I didn't want to go to school anymore. And for anyone who knows me, you know that I love school. I love St. Thomas, I love going to school, I love studying, and there was like probably a three-week period where I wouldn't get out of my bed. So, this change is really meaningful. And I really hope that everyone on this call sees value of that. And I just wanted to add a personal example. So, it's not just kind of like talking vaguely about, you know, oh, does this ever happen? It definitely does. It's happened to me twice. So, thank you, Ty. I really appreciate your letter.

**8. Questions, Announcements & Notices**

Ty: Just a reminder for everyone that if you would like to sit on the AGM awards committee and help select who is getting all of our STUSU awards, that deadline to register is on April 4. Again, our AGM will be virtual, and it will be on the 15th. And exact time will be given once the planning committee gets a little bit further underway. And I also wanted to let everybody know that like you are obviously all welcome to the AGM. AGM has an open meeting, so it normally allows our SRC members, the executive branch, employees, and university stakeholders. So those would be like partnership organizations, anyone who kind of has interest in the Students Union. With zoom, our zoom accounts have a limit of I believe it's 100 people that were able to house. So, I will be sending out a formalized invitation to all SRC members first, for all of you to kind of accept just so I have an idea about which ones are which if you can attend, then it will go out to all of our employees and then it will go to a stakeholder. And then with whatever's left within the capacity of what our Zoom account can handle. Those will go to plus ones for any of you. And that is it.

## **9. Adjournment**

Motion for adjournment was moved by Tyler M.

Seconded by ­­Sony P.

Motion for adjournment was carried.

Adjournment at 5:56 pm.

**Submission:**

The minutes were respectfully submitted to the Vice-President of Administration on March 31st, 2022.

Minahil Fatima

su\_secretary@stu.ca

Recording Secretary

STUSU Student Representative Council