



December 16, 2024

Board Meeting Minutes

GROUP	Ontario Tech Student Union (OTSU) Board of Directors
LOCATION	Google Meet
DATE & TIME	December 16, 2024, 5:00 p.m.
NOTE TAKER	Executive Director
ATTENDEES	<p>Directors: Faculty of Science & Chair, Eloghosa Avenbuan; Faculty of Education, Arajenthira Narenthira; Faculty of Health Science, Kashaf Awan; Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, Sifatul Mostafi; Faculty of Business and Information Technology, Arujan Parameswaran.</p> <p>Executives: President, Rai Muhammad Ali; VP Student Affairs, Zainab Hussain; VP Student Life, Areej Fatima; VP Downtown, Matifadza Chidovi</p> <p>Staff: Executive Director, Brian Robson; Financial Controller, Mayooraan Thurairajah</p>
REGRETS	HR Generalist & Chief Returning Officer, Salvador Caruncho, Faculty of Social Science & Humanities, Lindsay Horner

OPENING PROCEDURES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called into order at 5:08 p.m.
Moved by S. Mostafi and seconded by K. Awan. Motion carried.

2. TERRITORIAL RECOGNITION

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

DISCUSSION

No discussion.

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by S. Mostafi. Motion carried.
BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the December 16, 2024 board meeting agenda.

4. MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran noted typographical errors and formatting issues for October; will send a list by email. He also noted that a be it resolved statement was missing for an *in-camera* session in November.

Financial Controller noted some comments for the October meeting minutes but doesn't know if they were addressed, as the minutes were not in the package.

Chair suggested tabling the approval until the next Board meeting.

A. Parameswaran requested that the Financial Controller get a copy of the minutes.

RESOLUTION

Moved by A. Parameswaran and seconded by S. Mostafi. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU of Directors table the approval of the meeting minutes.

5. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

See the full executive reports on the OTSU website.

President:

- CASA Advocacy Week
- Custom Apparel Print Shop
- UPASS Referendum

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran asked about the timeline of the opening, and not delay too much and transition documents to the next president.

President responded that once we have the business plan ready, it will be the best transition document. We want to make sure we are doing everything diligently and not rushing.

A. Parameswaran asked about an ETA for the opening.

President said it would be next semester but does not have an exact date. If you want to check it out it is where the podcast room used to be.

Chair asked about CASA, if this was the first conference the President attended. Why did you go to Ottawa instead of Scarborough?

President replied that the Ottawa conference is the larger and more important conference to attend, it should not be missed. Scarborough was not as relevant to observers, they were electing their Board of Directors. To cut down on

cost, the President attended the more important conference. The President met the Minister of Immigration on Parliament Hill. This conference was better for an observer considering joining CASA.

Chair then asked about the print shop. How many staff were trained?

President replied that Jen N, Mayooran, Salvador, and Sinthu attended most of the training. Others joined parts.

Chair asked if there would be a student position in the upcoming term?

President said he would hope so. That is the plan. We need a dedicated staff member. Once the workload comes in, the student will be hired on a contract.

Chair was concerned that this will add to the Manager of Student Engagement's workload. Will we have students supporting? The Chair noted that the Manager of Student Engagement is not running the shop, she will oversee the staff who runs it; she was part of the training. The Chair asked if the staff person will be full-time?

President indicated that the staff person would not be full-time.

A. Parameswaran commented that the hiring should be based on need.

VP Downtown said that our staff do a lot, and they are union workers, so this will have to be done in a distinctive manner, since it does not fit into any of our staff job descriptions.

VP Student Life:

- All-Society Presidents Meeting
- Update on Women-Only Gym Hours
- Carriage Cup Engagement
- End-of-Year Event Planning
- New Initiative: Student Discount Card

DISCUSSION

Chair noted that SPC reached out last year, and they decided against it because they must buy in bulk. The Chair suggested they attend the Get Involved Fair.

VP Student Life repeated that SPC is not the focus, is exploring our own card.

VP Student Affairs:

- Durham Region Transportation Advocacy
- Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)

VP Downtown:

- Understanding Student Engagement at the Downtown Campus
- OTSU Municipal Involvement
- LGBTQ+ advocacy and resources
- Collaboration

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran assumed you are starting to tackle these one by one; has the last proposal on OTSU * Oshawa been sent out?

VP Downtown answered that this would entail changes to the job description that needs Board approval. She has been working with SSH faculty leaders as well as a contact at the Trent-Durham union. She has had meetings with the city.

A. Parameswaran noted that a job description would require approval at the AGM.

A. Narenthira noted that word of mouth used to be effective. What happened is that 61 Charles does not have space to sit down and talk, so everyone wants to leave. Bond St is not available or is not known to the students. Then word of mouth became ineffective. Students used to sit around and talk to each other and inform each other about things. But space is not there for the community to thrive. We need to figure out what our identity is down there. Why are they downtown? There is also a whole student space that exists but you need a key card to get in. A whole space is not used. What are we doing down there? There is a whole space but no one knows that it is there. Trying to figure out something with Student Life downtown. The way 61 is right now, it is built for traffic in and out; it is used to be a hangout. More open space that is now closed. No time to talk anymore. Students used to take more initiative to do things on their own because they were proud of their space. Everything you are learning is right outside your door, but students do not understand this. Communication should be specific to downtown. For education students, the best way to get to them is through the professors. Their schedules are dense and they are just going in and out. Maybe we could do something with that big area and Krysta's office. A downtown coordinator would help too.

VP Student Affairs asked A Narenthira how to reach the professors?

A. Narenthira suggests going through Advising.

VP Downtown responded to A. Narenthira and VP Student Affairs. Events that are well-attended were encouraged by professors. There was a student in Prof Frederick's class who looked at identity, looked at 35 students and a lack of identity was an issue. Space is an issue, that is more than the OTSU can advocate for. It should come from a collective voice. All societies should integrate with the faculty more; having a platform for professors and students to converse about downtown identity. Complaints about space are the same. A lot of students and faculty complain about the same thing. Most don't know about the 3rd floor. Even senior students don't know what is in the building. Student Life does not open that space to students. It is specifically for Student Life appointments.

RESOLUTION

Moved by A. Narenthira, seconded by and seconded by S. Mostafi. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the executive report for December 2024.

6. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

The Executive Director provided an update.

DISCUSSION

S. Mostafi noted that there were students who reached out for a link to this meeting. It was not on the OTSU calendar. Students were not aware.

RESOLUTION

No resolution required.

7. PRESIDENT EXPENSES

The update below is provided by the President.

Expenses were emailed to the Board, Financial Controller and Executive Director. There are two items that do not have receipts. Everything else was in the pdf.

DISCUSSION

Chair noted that only the table can be sent in the Board package, without the receipts. Those can be provided separately.

A. Narenthira asked about the purchase of the tables. Those are for the printers. Are there no receipts?

President said no, they were purchased on marketplace. They do not have to be reimbursed.

A. Parameswaran asked for a screenshot of the postings.

President said he would send over what he could find.

A. Narenthira asked for an invoice or signed document.

President offered to take it off this expense.

Chair said they could approve it provisionally and then send it to the Chair to sign. The Chair looked and said she would remove it for now from the list. So, the total would be \$1918.77 to approve for now.

RESOLUTION

Moved by S. Mostafi and seconded by K Awan. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve the President's expenses of \$1918.77.

AGENDA TOPICS

8. ELECTIONS: VACANT BOARD POSITIONS

DISCUSSION

Executive Director asked to confirm which Directors are graduating after next term?

A. Narenthira is graduating after this term, A. Parameswaran is graduating, the Chair is graduating, K. Awan is graduating. Therefore, the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Health Science and Faculty of Business & IT positions all need to be posted in the upcoming General Election.

RESOLUTION

No resolution required.

9. OTSU ELECTIONS

DISCUSSION

A. Parameswaran and K Awan received some questions. A. Parameswaran asked to share his screen. Some questions were about running for both positions. The reason you cannot is because it is a conflict of interest. How do we decide what board positions are being elected? The third student at large position needs to be hired. He also brought up the contingencies if the President is running. But what if the President is not running? Their vote will transfer to the CRO. Need to adjust the committee's ability to override the CRO interpretation. Questions about the CRO and DRO, and what the Board will do if they dismiss the CRO due to an unreported conflict of interest. Another concern is the slating. This could be an incentive for people to misuse it. Definition of slating – speaking positively about a candidate. 3 demerit points should be revisited, it is not enough of disincentive.

K. Awan asked about the authentication of the votes – will we use a two-factor authentication or just a student number? Solutions: hire the third student at large and move the elections back a month. This has not gone through the elections committee yet, then back to the Board.

President noted that the dates of the election were set to allow for Execs to run for Academic Council elections. Also, holding the elections later will impact the transition period so this needs to be considered carefully by the committee. The President also spoke to the transfer of the vote to the CRO.

A. Parameswaran raised the problem of the CRO having a vote in the Elections Committee – this is not independent. CRO should be independent of the committee's votes. For the timeline, there are certainly implications. Will the Academic council ex officio seat be obtained in time to mitigate this? We are not sure.

President noted that the committee needs to discuss these proposed changes, which can be done during the nomination period.

A. Parameswaran recommends having those discussions prior to the elections starting, because we would need to inform the candidates about the changes and give them enough time to process them. If that can be done before the start of the election, then that will be okay.

President agreed, let's meet in early January. Let's follow the process.

A. Parameswaran noted that the committee makes recommendations to the Board, so the Board makes the decisions and approves it.

President noted that if the Board wants these changes, it should be back to the committee.

A. Parameswaran noted that a date for the election committee to meet in January has not been finalized yet. The Elections Committee needs time to work on this, so A. Parameswaran wants to bring it up and show here to ask for more time.

President asked if this is being voted on now?

A. Parameswaran clarified that no, he is bringing up the time issue. Recommending to give the election committee more time to process these concerns.

President suggested the recommendations be emailed to the committee members. Timeline is an issue; we are in a tight timeline. But this is better than the elections needing to be redone. The President noted that this is last minute.

A. Parameswaran said that this was the best he could do.

Chair stepped in to stop the discussion.

VP Downtown asked when the Board approved the election period, was that *in camera*?

President and A. Parameswaran answered that is was not.

VP Downtown also asked if the previous recommendations were tabled?

A. Parameswaran said it was tabled but then brought back, in October if he remembers correctly.

VP Downtown thirdly noted that the CRO impartiality is a major concern among some students. Transparency is key.

A. Narenthira expressed concern that we will need to pause our election material until after this is resolved.

VP Student Affairs noted that the referendum will also be impacted by this. OUSA has dates about next committee members that need to be considered, changes need to be communicated to them immediately.

President repeated some of the suggestions that need to be revisited, but he doesn't think we have time for it. Postponing elections may not be practical.

A. Parameswaran responded that if we can do it in a week, then we are okay. But one month was thought to be an appropriate suggestion. A Parameswaran went back to the three demerit points. What do we do if this happens? These need to be addressed before the elections commence.

President explained what the rationale was, and the committee discussed it.

A. Parameswaran noted that he has reflected further and changed his mind. They continued to discuss this at length and repeated previous points. This should go to the committee.

K. Awan asked about appointing the third student at large committee – should this be *in-camera*?

Board agreed to do so.

A. Parameswaran asked if the elections should be postponed.

K. Awan believes they should.

Chair asked if there was a certain date to start elections?

A. Parameswaran suggested Feb 13th.

President said if the Board wants to move the Elections that is okay, as long as the Board is okay with the OTSU elections not meshing with the Academic council elections.

VP Student Life brought up that the proposed change will conflict with Reading Week and then midterms and projects.

VP Downtown asked how observers can join after the *in-camera* sessions.

Chair replied.

President repeated that if the Board wants to move the elections, that's okay but there is the Academic council and then the staff need to be aware. Let the election committee meet first before the dates are changed.

A. Parameswaran asked what if the Elections Committee or the Board cannot meet?

President said we could call a special Board meeting.

A Parameswaran said that might not be possible.

President noted again that this is last minute.

A. Parameswaran said this is all part of due process, and improvements can be made.

Chair said the dates of the election can be done now and the staff notified.

Chair suggested to put this to a vote.

All in favour of moving the elections by an undecided amount. K. Awan said to make it 2 to 4 weeks. The Chair proposed this instead.

Three members voted in favour and one abstained.

RESOLUTION

Moved by K. Awan and seconded by S. Mostafi. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OTSU Board of Directors approve moving the 2025 Elections between two and four weeks later than scheduled.

10. IN-CAMERA

Moved *in-camera* at 7:09 p.m.

In-camera meeting minutes stored separately.

Board moves out-of-camera at 9:08 p.m.

11. NEW BUSINESS

None to comment on.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None to comment on.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. Moved by S. Mostafi and seconded by A. Parameswaran. Motion carried.