

Federation of Students - Fall 2015 General Meeting

Chris Lolas: All right, can everyone hear me? All right, good. We're just going to do a count, so if you can please raise your placards in the air; blue and ... red and green, if you have them, raise them high in the air and Mas and Stefan are going to do a count.

Keep them raised the entire time, thank you.

Can everyone please sit down as well? Especially over here by the entrance. There's some chairs over here as well.

It just makes it easier for the guys to count. Thank you.

Well, they'll have to come to me and give me a total, and I'll ask them.

All right guys, we have conflicting numbers so we're going to do a recount. Sorry. Hold them high in the air.

All right everyone, the numbers don't match, but they're both over two-hundred, so we're just going to go ahead and get started then.

All right, so, before I officially start the meeting for what I think is a first FEDS, I'm going to have a special introduction to the meeting. If you want to come up ...

Amy Smoke: Thank you, thank you. So, my name is Amy Smoke, I'm the president of the Aboriginal Student Association here at the University of Waterloo. We are really honored, Emma Smith and I are both students here and we are honored to be able to open your meeting for you and do a territorial acknowledgement to the land.

So those of you that don't know, the land that you're standing on that the university is built on is actually built on Mohawk territory. The Haldimand Treaty was signed in 1784, and it was given to the Mohawk nation and each of the other five nations. Six miles wide on either side of the grand river, and running in proportion starting from Lake Erie and running all the way to the source of the river as well.

This has never been seeded. We are on unseeded territory, and as a Haudenosaunee woman I am Mohawk from six nations. I wanted to acknowledge that we are standing on Mohawk territory, and we all must live, work, and learn here together. And I'd like to introduce Emma Smith then who will do an opening prayer for you in Anishinaabemowin.

Emma Smith: [foreign language]. I'm not Mohawk, I'm Ojibwe which is Anishinaabe. And I just want to do a prayer to thank the land and the water for being here for us. [foreign language]. That's just thanking the land and the water for being all that it is and doing all it does for us as humans. But thank you for letting us be here, and we hope you guys have a good meeting. Yeah.

Chris Lolas: All right, thank you both very much for that. All right, so before we officially begin right now, I just want to say that if at any time during the meeting you don't understand what's going on, raise your hand, show it, say, "hey Chris, I don't understand what's going on. Please clarify it for me." Please, we don't want Robert's rules to interfere with anyone participating in the meeting. So with that in mind, let's get started. I'll call this meeting to order at 5:30 on this October 29th 2015. Approval of the agenda, can I have a mover? Moved by Jake, seconded by Jesse. Any discussion on the agenda? Seeing none, I'll put it to a vote. All those in favor? Those opposed? Extensions? Motion passes. All right, moving on. Approval of the minutes of the 2015 winter general meeting, can I have a mover? Moved by Mr Rondev, seconded by Mr. Coe.

Any discussion on the matter? Did you like the member chorus there?

Sacha Forstner: Thank you. My name's Sacha, it's been a couple years since being in one of these meetings. It's good to be back. I know this is the agenda, you just want to approve it so we can get to the actual meet of the meeting its self, but I think there are a few things here that need to be said.

If you've taken a look at the minutes from the March general meeting. We need to have a chat about minutes, and what they're meant for. Minutes matter; this is the highest decision making body event, it's decisions are legally binding on the corporation. Sometimes for years at a time, the things we do here are recorded in the minutes, and the minutes are often the only record of what happens here. They are certainly the only official record of what happens here. Minutes are a document written with an audience and a purpose.

There are five things you should always be able get out of minutes: you should be able to easily ascertain who is at the meeting, what the items to be discussed were, what the main arguments for and against each item were, what decisions were reached, and if your minutes are very good, who voted for and against what. Now that's not so much ... that fifth thing isn't really feasible at these kinds of meetings, but you should at least have a record of who notably abstained on motions.

Now the problem is, if you take a look at the minutes from the March general meeting, they're thirty-five pages long. They're monstrosity that covers every single word that was said at that meeting, verbatim. The real problem with those minutes is that, as someone who couldn't be at meeting, when I look at it, they're not for minutes, so I can't tell what was ... what items were being discussed when and by whom. Secondly I can't actually glean the important

information out of the minutes because it's all lost in the sea of every time the chair said, "umm," and every time the assembly got confused about what was being discussed, and every time someone made a point that had already been made three times before, but said it in very long and circular wording.

That is not good minute writing. Minutes ... a verbatim record has a purpose to serve, it does do something useful for transparency, but it's ... it is still ultimately a purposeless document because it's blind to what is, or is not, relevant. So we're the ones who approve the minutes, and quite frankly, and if we approve this thirty-five page tome, it's a shame to no one but ourselves.

I know I'm probably going to sit down, the chair will call the question, we'll all vote to approve the minutes because that's what we do, but I kind of hoped that you might join me in ... either if not voting against the minutes, at least abstaining, because frankly ... quite frankly, it would be a good idea for someone in FEDS to take these ... this verbatim transcript and go and write some actual useful minutes to come out of it. If this is what has become of our Federation of Students, then we're in dire need of better standards.

Chris Lolas:

Thank you Sacha Forstner. Is there any other discussion on the motion? Seeing none, I'll put it to the vote.

All those in favor? You up for counting? All those in favor of approving the minutes of the Winter 2015 General meeting? All those against? Okay, clearly that passes.

Any abstentions? If anyone would like their abstentions noted, if you can please come up to the front and have them noted. Otherwise we'll move on.

Seeing non-motion passes, item three; receiving the auditor's report. So just to clarify, because there has been some confusion in the past, this is not a motion to approve anything, this is purely for information for the general membership of the federation. They're just pulling it up now.

Cheryl Pflug:

Sorry everyone, it took a second for my files to load. My name's Cheryl Pflug, I'm the accounting manager for the Federation of Students. The first thing I wanted to point out in the audited statements is that the statements passed the audit, they're presented fairly, and all material respects. So that means that we've been doing our accounting properly. Yes, if you could make it bigger.

So this is the statement of financial position, also known as our balance sheet. The biggest thing to note is that from 2014 to 2015, our overall network increased by nine-hundred thousand dollars, so that's a good thing. The thing that most people are interested in is the statement of operations, also known as an income statement. A couple things to note on the income statement, we had a one-hundred thirty-one thousand dollar gain on investments, compared to ninety-three thousand last year. So, our investments did well.

You can see the bottom line, we had a four-hundred thirty-four thousand loss for the year. The main reason for that is that there is a five-hundred thousand dollar increase in operating expenses.

Those are the two big items to note really on our statements. Everything else is pretty much status quo. I'm going to ask, does anyone has any questions?

- Sacha Forstner: That gain from investments, what's the money invested in?
- Cheryl Pflug: Mutual funds. Suzanne Verdac can speak more to that. I'm not exactly sure what the types. It follows the board policy that's set out for investing. That's all I can tell you, it's mutual funds.
- Chris Lolas: Basically, if you want more info about our investments, you can come to the general office, because we don't know off hand.
- Sacha Forstner: Just in case; could you speak to what the five-hundred thousand dollar operating expense is?
- Cheryl Pflug: Sure. The first thing is that our commercial services had a combined loss of one-hundred and ninety-six thousand, our support services spent two-hundred and fifty-thousand dollars more over last year. But, to know that one-hundred and seventy-five of this is due to the hiring of two new full-time staff members, who the board agreed to use the surplus to cover. Part of the fee increase that came into effect in September is to help cover on those costs in the current year.
- Campus life department had an increase of fifty-three thousand dollars in spending. Student government actually had a decrease of twenty thousand dollars. The others we have classified as "others" had a decrease of thirty-five thousand dollars. So all together it's closer to four-hundred and thirty-eight.
- Chris Lolas: All right, we have another question. If you could just state your name as well before you start.
- Nick Guzmann: My name is Nick Guzmann. My question is, sorry, I'm not quite familiar on your net worth, by nine-hundred thousand, but you have loses of five-hundred thousand?
- Cheryl Pflug: Right, so if you combine where it says access of deficiency over revenues, if you combine that across, our ... Nope, that's not it. I can't find it [laughing]. Sorry, right there. So, in 2014 we were seven-hundred ... seven-thousand three-thousand and nineteen. In 2015 we were eight-million, two hundred and thirty-five, thirty-three. So roughly nine-hundred thousand.
- Nick Guzmann: If I might jump in here with a little bit more information as well, the loses that we are referring to just recently are out of the general fund, but we federation students also operates a health and dental plan, [inaudible 00:18:39] program,

orientation program, the student refugee program, and the society squad. So, over the entire ... all of the account that we have, it was the increase that Cheryl talked about in the beginning.

Recently we've just been talking about the specific general fund. Any other questions?

Male speaker: At a high level, could you tell what are things that work well for us this term, because we got like on one side, but what are things that went well financially for us?

Cheryl Pflug: We had a decrease in spending through the student government areas, which means our 3 VP's and our president, they all spent less last year than they did the year before. And in the other areas they also have a decrease in spending of \$35,000, so these things work well for us. Book store did well again, as usual. Down from the year before, but still did well. Our sales have increased, but costs have increased, as well.

Chris Lolas: I don't see any other hands, so we'll move on. Thank you very much, Cheryl.

You could talk to Linda.

So next item we have approval of the auditors for the 2015-2016 year. Could you just scroll down a bit?

So motion is being resolved that MNP be approved as auditors for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Do I have a mover? Moved by vice president Yassif. Seconded by Alexander Ray. Any discussion on this item? Seeing none, I'll put it to a vote. Oh, sorry, did we have a commentator? Just a second.

Nick Guzmann: Do I have to say my name again? Nick Guzmann, and my question is, can you specify exactly what BIRT MNP stands for, and a bit of background on that?

Chris Lolas: Sorry, BIRT is just short form for "Be It Resolved That," which is just a common place for the start of motions at meetings. And MNP is the name of the auditors. All right, any more questions or clarifications?

Cheryl Pflug: MNP's a local thing. They operate, not internationally, they operate across Canada. But there's a local office here in town. They've been our auditors for many years. They've gone through some changes and some buyouts. They were called Meyers Norris Penny. They've decided to shorten it down to MNP. Their offices are on North Field Drive. They just moved their from their Weaver Street location. I'm not sure what else you would like to know about them.

Chris Lolas: All right, any other questions? All right, we have one here.

Kirk: I'm Kirk. I just wanted to know how many different auditors are considered in this. What was the determining factor to continue with MNP versus going to a different business?

Cheryl Pflug: In order to use another auditing firm, we'd have to put out a request for proposal. We did not have time to do that this year. There was a car accident in July, or late June, and not working for six weeks. And then on reduced hours for six weeks. So, we're just going with the same firm, because I haven't had the time to go out and do the 4-5 months for some leg work to look into another firm.

Chris Lolas: Thank you. Any more questions, comments? Seeing none, I'll put it to a vote. All those in favor of the motion? Thank you. Those against? And abstainces? All right, if you would like any of your votes noted, please come up to the front. Otherwise we'll move on, motion passes.

So food's getting ... we can start stirring the food. So I'm just going to say people on this side of the room can start getting so we don't have all the people come up at once. Sorry to the people on the other side of the room.

So the next item on the agenda is the ratification of amendment bi-laws. So we're going to do them as a package to start with. So, the motion is there on the screen. Resolved, Section 5, General Meetings, Subsection D for Core Members be amended by our placing, and you can see on the screen, and Resolved, Subsection F, agenda 2, section 5, General Meetings be amended by adding ... and you can see it up there as well. Before we start discussion, can I have a mover for this motion? Moved by member McGinnis. Secunder? Seconded by member Kermani.

All right. We can now debate the point of order.

Sacha Forstner: Are we voting on both of these amendments together as a single motion?

Chris Lolas: They are presented as a single motion, but if you would like to split the motion, that is a motion I will entertain.

So if you would like to speak for this motion, please come up here. If you would like to speak against the motion, please come to my left.

No, this is all the motion that's there on the screen. All right?

Sacha Forstner: While both are these are bi-law amendments, they are amending two very different things. Therefore I am moving to split the motion so that we debate these two separately.

Chris Lolas: All right, so we have a motion to split the motion into the two motions that you can see on the screen. Do I have a seconder? Seconded by member ...

Matthew Garrets: Matthew Garrets.

Chris Lolas: Matthew Garrets. All right. Any discussion on splitting the motion? Not the motion itself, just on whether or not we will split it. All right, I don't see any, so I will take it to a vote. All those in favor of splitting the motion please raise your placards. Raise them high. All right, thank you. And those voting against splitting the motion please raise your placards. All right, the motion passes. So we'll now be looking at these two motions separately.

So first up is Resolved, Section 5, General Meetings, Subsection D, Core Members be amended by replacing ... so basically this is the motion to increase core from fifty to two-hundred. So again if you would like to speak in favor of this motion please come up to my right. If you would like to speak against this motion please come up to my left. All right, so if no one's coming up then I guess we'll just take this to a vote. So, all those in favor of the bi-law amendment as presented please raise your placards. Point of Order, full arm.

Sacha Forstner: Can I request that the count on this vote be made public?

Chris Lolas: Yes, we will do that.

All right, so again, those in favor of the bi-law amendment as presented please raise your placards. All right, you can lower your placards. All those voting against this motion as presented. All those voting against. All right, so you can lower your placards. And all abstentions. Any abstentions? So the motion passes 110-28-1.

All right, so we'll now entertain the second motion. So this is the motion, as you can see on the screen, basically setting the order of priority for the agendas of the general meetings. So, again, if you would like to speak in favor of this motion you can come to my right. If you would like to speak against this motion you would come to my left.

You've got a lot to say here today, Sacha.

Sacha Forstner: It's been two years, of course I do. I like this motion. I think it makes sense setting some kind of order of priority for the things that always have to happen in general meetings. I just think that there are a couple of things that are missing here. Specifically, for example, there are two general meetings in here for anyone whose not completely familiar with the process. October always has the approval of the audit. March always has a couple of other things that aren't on this order of priority.

So specifically I would like to move to amend this motion to insert two lines underneath motion to appoint the auditors. The first line would say, "Election of the Board of Directors." And the next line would say, "Ratification of Election Results."

Chris Lolas: All right, so we have a motion to amend. Do I have a Secunder. Seconded by Member McGinnis. Any discussion on this item? All right, seeing none. So now we're going to vote on the amendment to the amendment to the bi-laws. Is everyone clear on what we're voting for right now? All right, good.

So, all those in favor of Member Forstner's amendment to the amendment please raise your placards. All right, you can lower your placards. All those against. And those abstentions. Thank you, motion passes.

So now we'll be moving onto the bi-law amendment as a whole. So keep in mind that this now includes the election of the directors and the ratification of the new executives after motion to appoint the auditors. Any further discussion on this motion?

Allison Jenning: Hi, so I'm Allison Jennings. I was just wondering, is this a change from a different order of priority? Or is this just something new to be added.

Chris Lolas: I can answer that right now. Currently there is no order of priority. This is a kind of convention that we usually follow, but there is no forced order of priority year to year.

Any other questions or comments? All right, seeing none. I'll put this to a vote. All those in favor of this bi-law amendment please raise your placards. All those opposed. Thank you. And those abstaining. Thank you. As always, if you would like your vote noted please come up to the front and do so. Otherwise, motion passes. Thank you, very much.

People on the other side of the room, if you'd like to come get breakfast you are more than welcome to do so. Otherwise I will entertain a motion to adjourn. Moved by Vice President Yassin. Seconded by Member Patel. All those in favor. And those opposed. All right. Abstentions?. Motion passes, we are adjourned. We'll allow those people up at the front to go get their food, and then we'll proceed with the town hall.

Thank you very much for attending the 2015 ...