

**Federation of Students
STUDENTS' COUNCIL
April 2, 2017, SLC MPR**

Present: Alexander Wray† (Chair), Sacha Forstner† (Secretary), Christos Lolas, Brian Schwan, Deanna Priori, Sarah Wiley, Alexa Fuentes Valdez, Antonio Brieva, Marcus Abramovitch, Matthew Gerrits, Razan Qaoud, Tomson Tran, Tristan Potter.

Phone-In: Charlie Teasdale, Harsh Mistry, Ilia Sucholutsky, Norman Hu

Absent: Adrian Machado, Alexander Liu, Antonio Clarke*, Aryeh Fortinsky, Denton Liu, Midori Armstrong, Natasha Crasto, Patrick Melanson*, Quentin Cheung, Reba Nauth*†, Spencer Dobrik.

**Excused*

†Non-Voting Member

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of Students' Council assembled at 12:30 in the SLC MPR. Speaker Alexander Wray took the chair, and Sacha Forstner acted as Secretary. The Chair verified that the meeting was properly constituted in accordance with the Corporation's bylaws, policies, and procedures, that due notice had been given to all members, and that a quorum was present.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:46.

I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Council heard a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting.

Gerrits and Sucholutsky. Carried.

II. SPECIAL ORDER: PRESENTATION BY CAMPUS WELLNESS

Council received a presentation from Dr. Walter Mittelstaedt, Director of Campus Wellness at the University of Waterloo.

Dr. Mittelstaedt talked about the student wellness coordinating forum held in February 2017, which yielded many discussions about student wellness, and what more the university can do to improve it, including the involvement of more students in future discussions.

In 2012, there was a significant review of campus wellness, which led to the decision to integrate Health Services and Counselling Services as a single cohesive unit. Since then, a strategic plan has been developed. Councillors were provided with a brief overview of the plan's current focuses, including early intervention, wellness workshops, and attempts to create a supportive, aware, and inclusive campus climate. Efforts are ongoing to determine the nature of the campus mental health climate.

Councillors asked follow-up questions about Wellness' key priorities in the near future. Dr. Mittelstaedt expressed a desire to address the stress of academic work, including wellness-oriented curricular goals targeting interactions between instructors and students.

A follow-up question was asked about students with chronic illness and mental illness, noting that the University's Verification of Illness system is sometimes ineffective. Dr. Mittelstaedt agreed that the problem exists, and noted a commitment to simplifying the VIF process for students in particular situations.

Councillors asked about support for students who need assistance but are not seeking it. Many students who have committed suicide did not seek assistance. Potential solutions are being explored, including mandatory Year 1 meetings with advisors, or regular meetings with housing dons.

A Councillor asked about building a "culture of wellness" at the University. Dr. Mittelstaedt highlighted the importance of having every aspect of the campus experience designed to shape students into more whole, well-rounded individuals.

Councillors asked about methods to improve communication with students for the purposes of engagement. Dr. Mittelstaedt affirmed his desire to keep the students involved in conversations about campus wellness.

Councillors expressed concerns about non-standardized curriculum between courses exacerbating mental health difficulties for some students but not others. It was noted in response that there are limitations on what the University can require of professors.

Councillors asked what might be expected to change on campus in light of recent events, expressing particular concerns about wait times at Counselling Services. Efforts are underway to ensure students are more aware of campus services, and to examine existing counselling intake processes in order to improve responsiveness.

III. SPECIAL ORDER: PRESENTATION BY IMPRINT PUBLICATIONS

Council received a presentation from Jesse McGinnis, Chair of Imprint Publications.

Imprint Publications is a not-for-profit corporation on campus, with its long-term priorities set via strategic plan, and its short-term annual plan set by its Board of Directors. It runs two primary publications – Imprint Newspaper and Quetzal – and is exploring more possibilities for multi-publication in the future. Imprint's goals are to produce a high quality newspaper while providing student development opportunities.

McGinnis provided Council with an overview of Imprint's various awards, and future plans, including: further encroachment into online publication and digital outreach, skills development workshops on writing and design, support for other campus media, and greater utilization of Imprint's alumni network of professional journalists.

Councillors asked questions about Imprint’s specific actions to increase focus on online work, including the possibility of reducing printing and heightening online advertising. The move online is operationally driven, though discussions are underway about ways to improve online presence. For the time being, the paper product continues to offset student fees via advertising revenue, so printing continues. Possible strategic shifts are being explored with respect to the use of the website vs. the paper product, for which Imprint will soon be launching a readership survey. Online advertising cannot match the revenue from paper advertising yet.

Councillors asked questions about the content of Imprint’s strategic plan, and its social media plan. The current strategic plan is focused on operational cleanup, and the next one will identify key organizational pivots, while the social media strategy is largely the purview of Editorial.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Council heard a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda for the meeting, including:

1. Approval of the minutes from the meeting on February 5, 2017; and
2. Receipt of all submitted reports for information.

With Council’s unanimous consent, an additional two motions were added to the consent agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes from the meeting on March 12, 2017; and
2. A motion to determine approval of the April 2, 2017 minutes via an online vote.

Abramovitch and Qaoud. Carried.

V. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

President Lolas

Mental health has been the priority for the past month, including daily talks with university administrators. Undergraduate Senator Hannah Beckett made a detailed speech about mental health on behalf of students at the most recent Senate meeting. A special task force is being created at the university level, though its composition and mandate remains unknown. Feds is advocating for broad student representation on the committee.

Vice President Education Wiley

The Federal Budget was released, and confirmed the government’s announcement of increased PSSSP funding for indigenous students.

The visioning statement on Feds advocacy has been approved by the Board of Directors, and will be discussed later in the meeting.

The threat of a GRT strike has been renewed; Feds had previously called for academic accommodations from the university, but matters have changed with the onset of the final exam period. Further discussion to follow later in the meeting.

Vice President Internal Priori

The General Meeting approved a fee increase to provide additional support to clubs and service coordinators. Volunteer appreciation events have recently concluded. A survey is being provided to student society presidents to allow Feds to better understand their needs.

Priori expressed disappointment in the number of councillors who were absent or non-responsive over the course of the year, and thanked those councillors in attendance who had been engaged on Council projects and committees over the past 12 months.

Vice President Operations and Finance Schwan

The commercial services have been extremely busy over the past month. Tap-to-pay has been implemented at International News and Campus Bubble, which has increased overall throughput. International News' coffee deal was an extremely successful visibility campaign. The option of iced coffee is being explored for the summer.

A Councillor asked about the potential for UPASS refunds in the event of a GRT strike. Schwan confirmed that Feds receives a per-day refund if the strike lasts longer than seven days. Feds is currently working with the University to explore options to provide individual refunds to students in such a situation.

VI. APPOINTMENT OF THE 2017-2018 BUDGET COMMITTEE

Council heard a motion to suspend the rules contained within Council Procedure 5 to allow the Board of Directors to appoint the Budget Committee for 2017-2018.

Gerrits and Lolas. Carried 12-2.

VII. CHANGES TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE

Council heard a motion to revoke and replace Procedure 26, Service Operations, as presented.

Vice President Priori provided Council with an overview of the most critical changes, including the requirements for service coordinator eligibility (must be undergraduate students except in extreme situations), and other minor changes to the rules for discipline.

Priori and Schwan. Carried unanimously.

VIII. LOCAL TRANSIT POLICY

Council heard a motion to approve the policy on Local Transit, as presented.

Wiley and Brieva.

Vice President Wiley presented the draft policy, which would call on the University to accommodate students in the event of a labour disruption, and would ask the Province to declare the GRT an essential service, with the right to binding arbitration instead of striking,

similar to the Toronto Transit Commission. Due to the short time-frame in which the policy was written, it would be set to expire after one year in the absence of a detailed review.

Wiley provided Councillors with a brief overview of the process for advocating on the policy, if passed.

A gallery member spoke in support of the motion, noting that the essential service process has worked well for the TTC, and the political climate seems permissive for such a request.

Abramovitch and Gerrits move to amend the draft policy to:

1. Strike the content after and including “while still respecting” in the first resolution clause;
2. Strike the content after “public service” in the second resolution clause; and
3. Strike the 1-year expiry proviso.

Councillor Abramovitch expressed his belief that, in order to fully represent the interests of its members, Feds should take strong policy stances, with pragmatism and compromise restricted to the lobbying process.

Debate ensued on Abramovitch’s amendment. Councillors expressed agreement that Feds’ priority must be undergraduate students, but expressed concerns that a hard policy stance would increase the difficulty of the advocacy process. Councillors also briefly discussed the nature of student priorities with respect to public transit, and the ideal way for Feds to respond in light of union action.

Abramovitch provided councillors with justification for the removal of the 1-year expiry proviso, expressing concern that once the GRT strike threat has ended the policy will subsequently be ignored.

The question was called on Abramovitch’s amendment, and it failed.

Abramovitch and Gerrits move to amend the draft policy by adding the following resolution clauses:

1. BIFRT the VP Education will create an extensive report on the subject of the GRT strike, the ramifications for University of Waterloo students, and solutions they and Feds are implementing to reduce problems for University of Waterloo students, published and delivered to all University of Waterloo students by April 7th, 2017.
2. BIFRT the VP Education will lobby to abandon the government monopoly on transportation in order to ensure that there will be transportation for all UW students regardless of the actions of one company.

Debate ensued on Councillor Abramovitch’s amendment. Abramovitch noted that the presence of multiple bus services would mean the strike would no longer matter.

Vice President Wiley expressed support for the notion of ending regional transit monopolies, but noted her concerns that the amendment would not be an effective lobbying tool due to lack of research to support its feasibility. Other Councillors expressed opposition to the motion, but general support for the notion of a report on the impact of the strike. Concerns were noted that a request to write a report might not belong in standing policy.

The question was called on Abramovitch's amendment, and it failed.

Noted In-Favour: *Abramovitch*.

The question was called on the primary motion, and it carried.

Noted In-Opposition: *Abramovitch*.

IX. PARTIAL GRADE RETURN POLICY

Council heard a motion to approve the policy on Partial Grade Return, as presented.

Wiley and Schwan.

Vice President Wiley thanked the Academic Affairs Commissioner for developing the policy. The goal of the policy is to curtail the majority-effect of final exams on student grades, and to guarantee that students receive a significant portion of their grade prior to the deadline to drop the course.

Councillors asked minor questions about the draft policy, specifically regarding the university's available implementation tools and the current course withdrawal deadline. The university could implement this policy via a regulation in the undergraduate calendar, and the WD-deadline is currently one week prior to the end of classes.

The question was called, and the motion carried.

Noted Absention: *Abramovitch*.

Lolas and Priori move for a five-minute recess. Carried.

Council recesses from 14:21-14:30.

Forstner yields primary secretarial responsibility to Vice President Priori.

X. PRESENTATION: TEACHING QUALITY AND CULTURE

Council received a presentation from Academic Affairs Commissioner Sacha Forstner on the Commission's recently-released report on Teaching Quality and Culture, circulated prior to the March meeting of Council.

Forstner provided an overview of the report, noting the importance of high-quality teaching to the University campus, and the rationale for wanting to develop a "teaching culture." Teaching

culture is defined as a set of norms and practices that promote and foster excellence in teaching.

The report examined the existence of supports for teaching on-campus, and identified key gaps and concerns, including a lack of standardized evaluations of teaching, limited incentives for teaching innovation, and the prevalence of precarious sessional appointments, in tandem with an overall low profile for teaching and a lack of outcomes-based data.

Forstner provided an overview of the report's conclusions and its ten primary recommendations. Councillors were encouraged to read the report for further information.

Council heard a motion to accept the findings of the Teaching Quality & Culture Report, and to request that the Commissioner liaise with the relevant staff to explore options for integrating the report's recommendations into the standing policies of the Corporation.

Wiley and Tran. Carried.

Priori yields primary secretarial responsibility to Secretary Forstner.

XI. OMBUDSMAN POLICY

Council heard a motion to approve the policy on the University ombudsman, as presented.

Gerrits and Wiley.

Councillor Gerrits noted that Feds has been advocating on the stance articulated in the draft policy for some time already, and expressed a desire to see the stance made permanent.

The question was called, and the motion carried.

XII. SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

Council heard a motion to approve the policy on sexual violence prevention and response, as presented.

Gerrits and Wiley.

Councillor Gerrits cited the recently-passed OUSA policy on the same topic, and explained that this policy used that as a frame as it tried to pull out key institutional-facing recommendations.

The question was called, and the motion carried.

XIII. CAMPUS FREE SPEECH STATEMENT

Council heard a motion to endorse the circulated statement on free speech, as presented.

Abramovitch and Gerrits.

Vice President Priori spoke to several items noted in the statement, emphasizing: clubs are not censored, and security requirements are set by Police Services; speakers have not been barred from campus in recent memory; Campus Police already would intervene if a protest became violent. Priori expressed further concerns with the requirement to email all students if a speaker was barred from campus, and asked who should be responsible for paying for security if not the clubs hosting the event.

Lolas and Priori move to amend the statement by striking the final resolution clause. Carried.

Lolas and Potter move to further amend the statement by striking everything including and after the phrase “and this shall be emailed” in the second-last resolution clause.

A councillor expressed discontent with the proposed amendment.

The question was called on Lolas’ amendment, and it carried.

Lolas and Priori move to further amend the statement by striking the line “clubs should not be tasked with hiring security for their events” in the third-last resolution clause.

President Lolas discussed his amendment, noting that campus policy already requires spaces booked for greater than 400 people to pay a security fee regardless, and highlighting possible options for a club to absorb such a fee. Other councillors expressed disagreement with Lolas’ amendment, expressing concern that requiring clubs to pay a security fee to protect themselves from other people was tantamount to punishing the clubs unjustly.

The question was called on Lolas’ amendment, and it carried.

The final text of the statement, as amended, read as follows:

Resolved, Feds should implement the following as well as ask the University of Waterloo to adopt the following:

Adopt the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression

A clear way for the university to show commitment to viewpoint diversity is by adopting the University of Chicago’s Principles on Freedom of Expression, which states in part:

“The University’s fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed. It is for the individual members of the University community, not for the University as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. Indeed, fostering the ability of members of the

University community to engage in such debate and deliberation in an effective and responsible manner is an essential part of the University's educational mission."

BIFRT we request that the University of Waterloo Senate endorse the "Chicago Principles" as official university policy.

BIFRT Feds should implement a non-obstruction policy for protests. We support the right of all students to protest against speakers and writers with whom they disagree, but we ask that protests be done in a way that does not deprive other students of their rights to speak and hear. When members of our community shout down a speaker, or take other actions intended to make it more difficult for a speaker to speak or for an audience to hear, they are practicing obstruction, censorship, and sometimes intimidation, not free speech. Such practices have no place in any academic community. We request that the university formulate and enforce a non-obstruction policy. As stated in the Chicago Principles: "The University has a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it."

BIFRT Feds should improve viewpoint diversity. We request that the university include viewpoint diversity, and particularly political diversity, in its diversity policies and in its efforts to diversify the faculty and the curriculum. We want to encounter a range of viewpoints in the classroom, just as we will after we graduate.

BIFRT Feds should not censor any of its affiliates and clubs from holding events. Clubs should not be tasked with hiring security for their events.

BIFRT Feds should publicly disclose of any speaker it bars from speaking at the University.

The question was called on the primary motion as amended, and it carried.

XIV. STATEMENT ON FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Council heard a motion to request that the VP Operations and Finance make the council portion of the budget to actuals available to the membership, to proactively acknowledge spending overages, and to involve the membership in the budgeting process to the fullest extent allowable.

Abramovitch and Schwan.

Vice President Schwan provided councillors with a brief overview of the budget process. He expressed general support for financial disclosure, but expressed concern that numbers released without context could result in mistaken conclusions about Feds' financial management practices.

Schwan and Lolas move to amend the motion by replacing “make available to the membership the Council portion” with “proactively explore methods to make available the council portion.”
Carried.

The final text of the motion, as amended, read as follows:

Resolved, Council requests the Vice President, Operations and Finance proactively explore methods to make available the council portion of the budget-to-actuals each term. Further, the VPOF should proactively acknowledge actual spending that exceeds the budgeted amount by Council. Finally, Feds should actively involve the membership in the budgeting process, and disclose information about financial decisions when there is no legal, fiduciary, or excessive risk impediment.

The question was called on the primary motion as amended, and it carried.

XV. CENSURE OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATION AND CAREER ACTION

Council heard a motion to censure the department of cooperative education and career action, and to task the incoming VP Education with developing and reporting on the results of a deep-dive into the co-op fee.

Qaoud and Fuentes Valdez.

Debate ensued on the motion, originally submitted to the March 2017 General Meeting. A member from the gallery expressed support for the motion, noting that many students on-campus seem upset with CECA and WaterlooWorks, and were disappointed with the fact the AGM did not resolve this item.

Councillors expressed general concerns with the item, noting that there might be more creative solutions to the problem at hand.

Gerrits and Lolas move to refer the motion to Coop Students’ Council to study and report back with a recommendation by the second meeting of the Spring 2017 term.

Debate ensued on the motion to refer. Councillors expressed mixed opinion on the proposal. It was noted that a censure had limited effect, and that it might be more effective to table the motion to the next general meeting. It was further noted that internal policy change in CECA is the ultimate goal, and that Feds’ requests over the years appear to consistently fall on deaf ears. Other councillors expressed concerns that referring the motion would interfere with the plans of the incoming executive.

Gerrits and Lolas request that the motion to refer be altered to apply only to the motion to censure, and not the remaining resolution clauses of the motion.

The Chair found the proposed amendment to be friendly, and deemed it adopted.

The question was called on the primary motion, with the exception of the portion referred, and it carried.

XVI. ADVOCACY STRATEGY PLAN

Vice President Wiley provided Council with an overview of the Advocacy Visioning document approved by the Board of Directors on March 7th 2017, noting that the document was originally intended to come before Council for feedback at its meeting on March 5th.

The visioning document will provide Feds with a long-term perspective on advocacy, tied to the Feds Long-Range Plan. It is based on an assessment of campus needs and the political climate, and is intended to address areas where ongoing action is critical.

Wiley provided Council with an overview of some of the plan's key points, including better student engagement in grassroots advocacy, student mental health, cooperative education, domestic tuition, sexual violence, campus indigenization, international student access, and off-campus housing.

XVII. FEDERATION OF STUDENTS FEE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

This discussion item was withdrawn by the councillor requesting it.

XVIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Vice President Priori noted that an incoming councillor had contacted her to indicate his strong desire to see online voting implemented at general meetings.

Council heard a motion to set "online voting at general meetings" as a discussion item for the May 2017 Council meeting.

Priori and Fuentes Valdez. Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment was moved at 15:58.

Lolas and Schwan. Carried.

Minutes approved on April 28, 2017, by electronic vote.