

**Federation of Students
STUDENTS' COUNCIL
November 9, 2016, SLC MPR**

Present: Alexander Wray† (Chair), Sacha Forstner† (Secretary), Reba Nauth† (Assistant Secretary), Christos Lolas, Deanna Priori, Sarah Wiley, Alexander Liu, Antonio Brieva, Antonio Clarke, Charles Teasdale, Harsh Mistry, Hayley Barnes, Jeremy Spira, Marcus Abramovitch, Matthew Gerrits, Midori Armstrong, Norman Hu, Patrick Melanson, Razan Qaoud, Spencer Dobrik, Tomson Tran.

Phone-In: Alexa Fuentes Valdez, Brian Schwan, Ilia Sucholutsky, Tristan Potter.

Absent: Adrian Machado*, Aryeh Fortinsky*, Denton Liu*, Muhammed Tahir*, Natasha Crasto*, Quentin Cheung*.

†Non-Voting Member

**Excused*

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 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 12:38.

I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Lolas and Spira.

Wiley and Lolas move to amend the agenda such that reports precede the presentation from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, and the OUSA policy discussion immediately follows the presentation.

The Chair sought and found unanimous consent for the amendment.

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

II. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. The minutes from the October 16 2016 Council meeting;
2. All submitted reports;
3. A motion to task the Policies and Procedures Committee with developing revisions to Feds Policy 24 in accordance with feedback received from Councillors.

President Lolas clarified that any revisions made to Policy 24 by the PPC would be brought back to Council for final approval.

Brieva and Qaoud. Carried.

III. REPORTS

President Lolas

The Annual General Meeting was unable to achieve quorum. The Board is currently discussing strategies for achieving quorum reliably in the future.

FOC hiring has been completed for Orientation 2017.

Feds was recently in Ottawa lobbying the federal government, and met with over 60 politicians and staffers.

Councillors asked questions regarding the General Meeting's quorum failure, noting that the March meeting tends to achieve quorum reliably. Lolas responded that a written report is being prepared for Board, but noted his suspicions that the poor timing of the October meeting may be a factor.

Councillors requested a follow-up regarding the status of the proposed university policy on sexual violence prevention. Lolas informed Council that the policy passed, but the corresponding protocols have had their approval deferred due to minor concerns involving faculty-related processes.

Councillors asked about the way forward for the recommendations in the submitted reports from the Fall referendum committees. Lolas confirmed that the Research and Policy Officer is currently reviewing the recommendations, and the Policies and Procedures Committee will be proposing revisions at a future Council meeting.

Councillors expressed concerns about the brevity of the President's written report to Council. Lolas responded that much of the work this month has been devoted to day-to-day operational matters, and cited the importance of keeping the report confined to high-level issues.

Vice President Internal Priori

The colleges survey has concluded. Preliminary results indicate that the main knowledge gap exists with respect to the Feds commercial services.

Wrap-up week is underway, and events are thus far well-attended.

Feds hosted a panel at the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health conference, on the topic of promoting wellness on campus.

Councillors expressed minor concerns about the ability of Feds' events to meet the volume of demand for them. Priori responded that wellness-based events are targeted to weeks that students are under the most stress, and affirmed that Feds is always exploring ways to accommodate the growing number of participants.

Vice President Operations and Finance Schwan

No report was delivered at this meeting, but Councillors were encouraged to refer to the written report, and to participate in the nightlife survey at survey.feds.ca.

Vice President Education Wiley

Recently, Feds sent a delegation to the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance's Fall General Assembly, where three papers were passed.

The Education Advisory Committee passed a stance on Saturday Midterms, as per its submitted report.

Progress has been made on student housing efforts, including questions asked in the legislature by Waterloo MPPs, and a letter written to Minister Ballard at Feds' request by the University President, which received a tepid response.

Along with seven other U15 schools, Feds recently travelled to Ottawa to lobby on issues of undergraduate research and indigenous access to PSE.

Councillors asked questions regarding specific provincial policy priorities regarding student housing. Wiley responded that Feds is aiming for a review of the Residential Tenancies Act in order to protect tenants pre-occupancy and to streamline and empower the Landlord Tenant Board. The current challenge is putting the issue on the policy agenda at all.

Councillors asked for an update regarding International Tuition. Wiley responded that efforts to lobby the University have gone well, and a positive announcement is expected in the near future.

Speaker Wray

The Speaker drew Councillors' attention to the report on attendance circulated with the agenda. It was confirmed that, of the three Councillors with two unexcused absences, two had illness-related reasons for their absences, and have since been excused. However, Councillor Mistry's absences have not been excused, and thus he remains up for removal as per Council Procedure 9 and Section 12 of the Federation of Students' Bylaws.

Council heard a motion to remove Councillor Harsh Mistry from his seat pursuant to Section 12 of the Bylaws.

Armstrong and Tran.

Councillor Mistry spoke in his own defence, citing the fact that he was on coop in the Spring outside of the travel bubble, and efforts made to reach out to constituents and contribute to Council activities in spite of the distance.

The question was called via secret ballot, and the motion failed.

IV. SPECIAL ORDER – PRESENTATION BY THE ONTARIO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ALLIANCE

Council received a presentation from Zak Rose and Jamie Cleary, Executive Director and President (respectively) of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA).

OUSA is a non-profit in which Feds holds membership and a voting Board seat. Other than Waterloo, its other members include the undergraduate student unions from Brock University, Laurentian University, McMaster University, Queens University, Trent University – Durham, and Western University. OUSA is a government relations organization that operates on the principles of student-driven operations, evidence-based research and policy, easy membership, and full member autonomy. Its core activities involve research, policy development, and sector-wide lobbying of the Ontario Government, with which it maintains a high profile. All OUSA

advocacy is based on the principles of accessibility, affordability, accountability, and quality, and only occurs based on OUSA's established policies passed by its student members. The advocacy process uses proven government relations practices intended to produce results. It is governed by a student Board of Directors, which meets monthly, a General Assembly which meets twice a year to approve policy, and a Home Office staff of five that conduct research, maintain lobbying relationships, and produce OUSA's publications.

Rose and Cleary updated Council on OUSA's recent achievements, including: OUAC and eInfo updates, OSAP modernization, the OSG creation, tuition regulation, and a \$12 million MHIF extension. OUSA is currently participating in negotiations regarding the new tuition framework, advising the Funding Formula Reporting Team, and sitting on the boards of various government agencies and affiliates, including the CICMH, the eCampus Ontario Student Advisory Committee, the ONCAT Student Advisory Committee, and the Sexual Violence Reporting Advisory Committee. Priorities for the year include oversight of OSG implementation, the new tuition framework, data collection & reporting, student supports and services improvement, sexual violence prevention & response, and Work Integrated Learning Expansion.

Councillors asked questions regarding OUSA's specific goals for data collection from Universities. Rose explained that current discussions are in relation to what can be done to collect and report all categories of data efficiently across the province.

Councillors asked questions regarding OUSA's priorities with respect to student financial aid, expressing concerns that the recent removal of the tuition and textbook tax credits might disenfranchise Waterloo students. Rose responded by highlighting OUSA's concerns with the tax credits, specifically their underuse, non-refundable status, and classification as financial aid in the absence of means testing. OUSA's research indicated that the majority of students, particularly those in need of financial aid, would gain financially if the credits were repurposed to fund direct student grants. OUSA is current scrutinizing the implementation of the Ontario Student Grant with a view to ease of access.

Councillors asked questions regarding OUSA's policy stances on ancillary fees and third party organizations, highlighting the potentially predatory nature of such organizations. Rose responded by emphasizing the need for a transparent, accountable framework for fee initiation, collection, and evaluation.

A gallery member asked questions regarding the evidence underlying OUSA's policy stance on sexual violence prevention training. Rose responded by drawing attention to the research involved in the policy process.

Council was encouraged to bring further questions to Vice President Wiley. Students wishing to get involved in OUSA may contribute by writing posts for the OUSA blog, participating in the #myWILis campaign, and applying to attend the General Assembly in March.

Wray yields the Chair to Vice President Priori with Council's consent, and leaves the meeting.

Forstner yields primary secretarial responsibility to Assistant Secretary Nauth.

V. OUSA POLICY DISCUSSION

Councillor Mistry led a discussion regarding the Ontario Student Grant, noting that most of his questions and concerns regarding the grant had been addressed during the earlier presentation. A Councillor asked whether OUSA lobbied against tax credits for coop students and employers, and was informed that is not the case.

Councillors noted that the OUSA policies regarding student financial aid were primarily authored by representatives from Feds, including the previous VP Education. It was noted that Feds usually gets the things it asks for from OUSA, and subsequently suggested that there may be a benefit to later discussions regarding the process by which advocacy priorities are set within Feds.

Nauth yields primary secretarial responsibility to Secretary Forstner.

VI. CENSURE OF THE PRESIDENT

Council heard a motion to censure President Lolas based on his actions following the referendum on the WPIRG fee.

Mistry and Clarke.

The Secretary provided background information for Councillors regarding the meaning and general purpose of a censure.

Councillor Mistry presented his motion, citing a perceived lack of action by the President following the recent referendum, and the announcement that the WPIRG fee will not be removed from students' fee statements until the Spring term, rather than the Winter one.

President Lolas spoke in his own defence, noting that he has been in contact with many senior university administrators, who have all insisted there is not enough time to remove the fee for the Winter. Based on his experience, he informed Council that nobody else could have achieved an alternate result.

Councillors discussed the motion. It was noted by some that even if there was more the President might have been able to do, that might not be a reason to censure. Others pointed out that the issue at hand may be one of miscommunication or the lack of communication, rather than mismanagement. Councillors asked for and were provided with clarification regarding the standard process for fee changes.

Dobrik and Abramovitch move to call the question. Carried unanimously.

The question was called, and the motion failed.

Noted opposition: *Clarke, Fuentes Valdez, Potter, Sucholutsky.*

Noted abstention: *Mistry.*

Lolas and Gerrits move to recess for five minutes. *Carried.*
Council recesses from 14:39 until 14:49.

VII. APPOINTMENT OF THE ELECTIONS & REFERENDA OFFICER

Council heard a motion to ratify the appointment of Reba Nauth as Elections & Referenda Officer for the 2017 General Election, pursuant to Council Procedure 10.
Lolas and Abramovitch. Carried.

VIII. GENERAL ELECTION DATES 2017

Council heard a motion to set the dates for the 2017 election as presented in the agenda.

Lolas and Wiley.

President Lolas explained that the dates previously set by Council may not be used since those dates required bylaw changes that were not ratified by the Annual General Meeting due to the meeting's lack of quorum.

Councillors asked questions regarding the promotion of the election dates and the timing of the elections debates. Lolas committed to attempts to maximize elections engagement.

The question was called, and the motion carried.

IX. GENERAL MEETING PROXIES

Council heard a motion to recommend that the Board amend the bylaws to allow Councillors to carry multiple proxy votes at General Meetings of the Corporation.

Clarke and Armstrong.

Councillor Clarke noted the recent General Meeting's failure to take place, and suggested his motion would allow Councillors, as representatives, to ensure that far more student voices were heard in a way that preserves proportionality between Faculties. He noted that certain Faculties are often underrepresented at General Meetings, and suggested his motion as a potential solution.

Councillors expressed concerns with the motion, noting the risk of selection bias by Councillors, and the difficulty of tracking proxies. Attention was drawn to the more general problem of low student engagement in general meetings, and it was suggested that remote participation and after-the-fact voting could be effective.

Mistry and Melanson move to amend the motion to change "student councillors" to "students" and to delete "for students within their constituencies."

Councillor Mistry suggested his amendment would be fairer than only allowing Councillors to hold multiple proxy votes.

Councillors expressed significant concerns with the amendment, highlighting the risk of special interest groups “hijacking” general meetings, and the ease with which multiple proxies may be collected.

It was agreed that a higher degree of background information is required to discuss the issue further.

Lolas and Tran move to table the motion and proposed amendment to the December 4th meeting of Students’ Council. *Carried.*

X. DISCUSSION ON STUDENT RENTALS OF UNFINISHED BUILDINGS

Councillor Abramovitch expressed concerns about rental agencies leasing apartments to students in unfinished buildings, and suggested that Feds should post ads in the SLC specifying which buildings in Waterloo are currently incomplete. He further suggested that the VP Education should engage in student awareness campaigns.

Vice President Wiley confirmed that awareness campaigns are underway, and will be repeated in the Winter.

President Lolas specified that companies have been successfully told in past years not to talk about unfinished buildings. Abramovitch reiterated that activity in the SLC is implicitly endorsed by Feds, and thus Feds should control what is discussed.

XI. GENERAL MEETING PROXY DISCUSSION

Councillors discussed perceived issues with the collection of General Meeting proxies, specifically the fact that they must be submitted physically, and that the information collected on them is often personal.

President Lolas committed to looking into possible reforms and reporting back in December.

XII. UNIVERSITY BUILDING NAMING CRITERIA DISCUSSION

President Lolas outlined the University’s current criteria for the naming of buildings, and asked Councillors if they had any preference regarding how students ought to be involved in the process.

Councillors were predominantly of the opinion that the process by which campus buildings are named is of low priority for students.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS – DESTRUCTION OF BALLOTS

Council heard a motion to destroy the ballots cast during the meeting.

Gerrits and Abramovitch. *Carried.*

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment was moved at 15:49.

Lolas and Melanson. *Carried.*