

Minutes

St. FX Students' Union Representative Council Meeting Sunday, October 4th 2015 Council Chambers

Call to order time: 7:03pm

Attendance: Megan MacDonald, Taylor Chase, Cassia Tremblay, Katherine Dodsworth, William Phillipoff, Isaac Turner, Danny Pink, Nick Carpenter, Hillary Elliott, Hannah Stordy, Troy Mrazek, Alexandra Carney, Bridget Burgess, Emily Gale, Kunle Idris, Ryan Finn, Shelby MacLennan, Anne Sirois, Janet Tait, Delaney Watling, Mike Massery, Sean Ryan

Absent with regrets: David Rankin, Mikaela Henderson

Opening Remarks:

Hello everyone, I would like to formally acknowledge that we are on unceded Mi'kmaq territory.

Review Minutes from Last Meeting:

Minutes reviewed from last week.

Move to approve minutes.

Second.

Unanimously approved.

Business Arising

Isaac moves to ratify Travis Daag as student advocate and Meghan Hawkins as Vice President of O'Reagan

Constituency Reports

Business: Met with students, introduced themselves to their constituents and promoted Frosh Councillor and Senator

Science: Made it to the nursing café to meet new students also promoted frosh councillor and senator

Arts: went into some first year classes to introduce themselves to some students. Isaac discusses upcoming events

Graduate: Last Thursday was the first of a series of seminars, PhD presentation, another seminar this upcoming Friday. Also spoke about grad interactions and a common area on campus for grads

International: discussed with international students their living situations, received mixed feedback, work in progress

Upper Campus: office hours on Tuesday, posted on Sunday to introduce themselves to constituents, issues in MacIsaac especially, O'Reagan and O'Riley running smoothly, Lane has also had issues. Both MacIsaac and Lane placed on sanctions but tension remains between second years and RA's

Lower Campus: planning to make an official introduction tonight on lower campus Facebook groups

Govs/Apartment Style: different environment this year than previous, issue with someone collecting money for future events, issues with unsanctioned events. Working toward building a society within Govs. Unfortunately 2 ambulances were called to Govs this weekend during homecoming.

Off-Campus: not too busy of a week. Attended community BBQ last week, considered a success. Other than this looking forward to the upcoming weeks and getting to know more constituents

Executive Reports

Troy: received good feedback from the Board of Governors to move document forward hopefully by December. Renewal/renovation meeting for Bloomfield center took place. Negotiating with Phramasave, working toward an agreement and concise timeline for the future. Rick Mercer report this Tuesday evening.

Hannah: First meeting of Senate is this upcoming Tuesday, hoping to promote more discussion between councillors and senates this year. Another highlight is the events that took place in regard to sexual violence, both considered huge successes. Progress being made with new sexualized violence policy, difficulty in soliciting feedback since the draft is still confidential. Equity Advocate job applications are due tomorrow, reminder to promote this as much as possible.

Alex Carney: Nothing to add, happy to answer any questions.

Nick Carp: Nothing to add, happy to answer any questions.

Hillary: nothing to add, happy to answer any questions.

Bridgett: Apologize for missing previous meeting. Has been working on creating a Govs society in order to help first years and international students placed there. Meetings with res life has been occurring, dealing with building communities in the residences as well as eliminating unsanctioned events.

Emily Gale: Rick Mercer episode premieres on Tuesday, looking into a live showing on campus. X-Talks, October 13th people will be speaking about their experience with democracy etc. The Golden X Inn will be opening on October 19th from 9-possibly 2 to watch the election results roll in.

Faculty Representative Remarks:
Working toward finding an advisor still.

Student Union General Manager Report:
Nothing to add, happy to answer any questions

Committee Reports:

Unfortunately due to the weather and a lack of knowledge a lot of ambulances were called to campus. There were a couple of arrests on campus of predominately guests and non-students. A lot of write-ups occurred.

Frosh are unsure of whether they can confide in their RA's or not. Also issues of being wrote up without warnings.

Looking into getting licenced lounges. Unsanctioned events becoming an increasing issue.

Special Reports to Council

Budget Presentation:

More detail can be found online if anyone would like to know more. To begin would like to discuss last year before moving into this upcoming year and discussion about debt problem.

\$1.4 million deficit last year. Fortunate with changes in oil prices that was beneficial to us. We ended the year with a deficit of \$98,000.

In terms of 2015/2016 budget we have a budgeted deficit of 1.9 million dollars, working toward developing a new approach to bring us back to balance in the upcoming years.

The decision making progress in these situations can take up to 2-5 years.

Enrolment numbers: first year enrolment took a significant increase this year which was necessary due to the large graduating class from the previous year.

A number of changes were made to the scholarship program this past year and the acceptance rate of students accepting the scholarships increased.

Repairs and Maintenance: at this stage it looks fairly on track.

Residence Occupancy: initially overbooked but by September at 97% but it has been budgeted for 92-93%.

For tuition fees and revenue it is predicted to see 3% increase in the upcoming years.

Expense Size: 75% personnel related.

Working to reduce deficit to 1.4 million by next year and hopefully break even the next year. Finance said this was not good enough and to reduce this by at least 1 million each year so working towards this now.

We will continue to see increases in enrolment

New programming and increasing international students

Student faculty ratio. Looking at low occupancy classes with 8 students or below because they are very costly

Also looking at energy management over the past few months in order to save energy on campus. Hoping to be known as a "green campus" sometime in the new future to hopefully attract new students. While expensive we believe it will pay for itself in the long run.

Also looking at space utilization on campus in order to save money.

Feels very optimistic that we will be able to balance our budget in the upcoming couple of years.

Tuition Fees: hoping by sometime early this week there will be a budget discussion paper out.

General Questions, how much of an increase should we be doing? (we are 600-800 cheaper than other NS schools and varies depending on program) Want to make it very clear that we do not want to have a high tuition but we do have financial problems and will likely need to make changes to tuition in the upcoming years

Should probably consider going to a credit based fee in the future.

Differential fees depending on programs: some students pay additional fees when classes involve labs etc.

Question has been raised in regard to classes where the student/faculty ratio is low.

Question raised whether fees should be raised for high demand programs.

Response: No decision made yet. Inviting input for the remainder of the month before finalizing the report throughout November

Tuition fee in comparison to other universities discussed

In terms of capital projects, energy management will be a major focus.

Nicholson hall, discussion on adding another piece to the building as well as renovating the classrooms. There has been significant private money raised for this project, waiting to see results of election in the upcoming weeks to know more about provincial budget

Looking at possibility of renovating Mount Saint Bernard. (5mill)

Looking at also creating academic living spaces.

More flexible living arrangements for nurses or education students who are not on campus for the full 8 months

We are also looking at issues of parking on campus. May lose parking in front of Nicholson due to renovations, looking at expanding behind lane parking and on West St. and by the Keating centre

Also looking at if not some, then all campus on parking being paid in the upcoming years

Open to Questions:

Question raised about overnight parking for lower campus as well as upper campus.

Questions about expansion of student enrolment in the future

Response: believe an increase of about 800-100 students is likely to occur and enhance the St.FX community. Recognize that St.FX is known as a small school and are trying to accommodate this moving forward – don't want to jeopardize the character of the university

Question Raised: international students pay almost double, why and where is this money invested?

Response: common in universities to pay double or even more for international students, International students don't contribute to the income tax base and therefore the paying double fees recognize the fact that taxpayers. If we want to increase our international students we have to offer more support to them. Don't believe we are doing enough to the investment we should be making for these students

Questions raised about Divest at McGill.

Response: usually targeted around endowment funds, discussion a lot of talk about divest.

Expect within the next few months we will look at it and review the idea

Question raised to define unfunded debts and deferred maintenance

Response: when buildings on campus are not taken care of this is deferred maintenance. Unfunded debt that money needs to be found to offset it and currently the interest on it is just being paid

Question raised about how small classes are a staple of St.FX, how can you cut back on small classes but maintain the intimacy of our classrooms?

Response: we don't want to take away from our student's experience. We are working toward finding the right balance

Question raised about energy management, is this something that other small schools on the east coast are doing? And how long will it take to pay itself off?

Response: other schools are looking at this. Because of our size we may have better opportunities than other schools to work toward energy management.

Question raised about rise in number of enrolments → will we have enough space on campus?

Response: with renovations to the mount we should be able to accommodate. Work with the town of Antigonish as well to expand housing

Questions raised about anticipating any additional fees in the near future?

Response: discusses areas that have been invested in as well as the deferred maintenance. In terms of other fees, not wholly supportive of them. Possible that additional fees may be charged to the students it directly affects.

Question raised about where the bursary factors in with out of province students?

Why are other schools fees higher than ours?

Response: Bursary is not included in the government grant. In regards to fees, due to initial caps put in by the province. Each university was at different stages at this point which affected it.

Questions raised about why do international students pay late fee charges considering factors that are outside their control (time changes, bank transfer fees etc)

Response: have never heard of this issue, will look into it.

Questions raised about the switch of the laundry fee this year?

Response: Felt this was economical and less of a demand on the washers and dryers as well as promotional to encourage students to do their laundry more often.

Question raised if we are increasing students are we going to be increasing personnel on campus for student services?

Response: We have been losing many students who make it to their degree in recent years we are trying to investigate what is causing this first before undertaking any specific action.

Question Period over.

Mission, Vision, Values Presentation

No official presentation to give but brief description and background information given.

Open to questions from council who have reviewed the report.

Question raised about how do we go about submitting a response to this?

Response: easiest way is to go through the president's office.

Question raised about the inclusion of the word spiritual in the mission?

Response: Nature of the discussion is how broad the term spiritual is used and interpreted.

Concerns raised over students feeling included at St.FX if they practice another religion other than Catholicism.

Response: even with a strong catholic heritage on campus it is still crucial that students feel safe and included here.

Question raised about what was the turnout for the focus groups?

Response: very little due to timing.

No further questions.

Old Business

Minutes from April still missing.

New Business

Move to ratify Megan Hawkins for VP of O'Reagan.

Move seconded.

Call to Question.

Move ratified.

Move to ratify Travis Daag as student advocate.

Move seconded.

Call to Question.

Move ratified.

Move to ratify Patrick McKinnon as chief returning officer.

Move seconded.

Call to question.

Move ratified.

Move to ratify Alma and Bry as returning officers.

Move seconded.

Call to Question.

Move ratified.

Move to ratify the remaining societies.

Move seconded.

Call to question.

Move ratified.

Closing Remarks

Motion to adjure

Seconded

Motion passed

Adjournment: 8:43