



**The Gateway Student Journalism Society (GSJS) Board of Directors Meeting — January 2020**

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chair, Continuity Rep	Oumar Salifou
Editor-in-Chief	Andrew McWhinney
Volunteer Representative	Nana Andoh
Community Representative	Robyn Paches
Continuity Representative	Lee Craig
Editors' Representative, Secretary	Adam Lachacz

**MEETING MINUTES:**

Meeting called to order by Chair Oumar Salifou at 6:04 p.m. on February 20, 2020.

**1.0 Approval of the minutes**

**1.1** *Motioned by Robyn Paches*

**1.2** *Seconded by Nana Andoh*

**1.2** **6/0/0**

**2.0 Approval of the agenda**

**2.1** *Motioned by Nana Andoh*

**2.2** *Seconded by Andrew McWhinney*

**2.3** **7/0/0**

**3.0 Reports**

**3.1** *Editorial*

**McWhinney:** So February is almost over. As per Oumar's email, we all know that the next EiC hired is Adam Lachacz. Congratulations to him and I am looking forward to working with him as he finishes his term as News Editor and working through

transition. *The Gateway* is in good hands. We are now going to continue with hiring the rest of the positions. We look to have the whole process completed in March to early April.

We are in the midst of SU elections coverage right now! Exciting times and always a busy few weeks for *The Gateway*. I feel we are the most well-prepared for this that we have ever been. We did strong planning, volunteer recruitment and training well in-advance on top of better social media planning.

Officially the DFU campaign will be underway next week. We have a key campaign of volunteers that are very ready and capable to deliver. Pia and I met with them a few weeks back to bring them up to speed and share our vision for *The Gateway* moving forward, especially the plan we presented to the Board and that the Board helped develop. We are not in official contact with the campaign in any way. The two coordinators for the campaign are Lochlann and Emma.

We have also put out a statement saying we will not be covering our own campaign in any way because of the perceived conflict of interest. It seems to be received pretty well so far.

We will be using Instagram more for election coverage. We want to make sure we can gain more social media coverage and engagement, while also pushing the information to a new place to drive traffic to our site and the overall SU elections engagement.

The Forum Report will be done now in a more collaborative fashion. Staff members will help write the script together so that it doesn't fall all on one person, like it did in the past. We hope this will also help get them produced faster to be published and in peoples hands quicker.

We created a website header where our typical sections go. This will help solve the problem of the cheat sheet getting buried or getting really overpopulated with information. We hope this will make it easier for people online to see our coverage and access other pieces of it.

Because of elections, hiring, and the DFU campaign it looks like we will have to be putting deputy line editors on hold. This will need to be worked on by the staff of next year. I just got caught up in everything. The good news is that it has already been to the board a few times and we have put in a bunch of work already to develop the positions. So next year the team will simply have to implement them and create a photo and illustration specific one. The project is super important and I really hope the team next year build on it.

The petition requirement also was taken care of. They changed bylaw so you only need 100 signatures. We got those and now in the future DFUs can have it be a lot easier.

### 3.2 *Magazine*

**McWhinney:** There has been a drop in magazine pickup as compared to last year. We are making changes to circulation and new box location suggestions. Returns have gone up this year. January 2019 had 524 copies returned. This year had well over 900. December returns for this year were also higher than last year with 700 copies returned. We moved boxes around a lot and experimented so this will have to continue until we find places that get better pickup. The issues are really surrounding bigger racks that have low pickup.

March files have been sent to the printer and April is in the copy-editing stages. So production is very much on-track.

The Purity Test issue is out on stands. We also launched an online form in conjunction with the printed edition. So far we have gotten 100 responses.

### 3.3 *Outreach*

**McWhinney:** The contra with Travelling Tickle Trunk is going well and we are really happy with it. The Gateway to Oscars event was a huge success. We packed the house and saw lots of people who aren't even friends of *The Gateway*. We got good feedback from people who attended. The bracket contest was also a nice addition and it went smoothly. We are paying less than half the cost of the event so all the issues we had before with the SU were smoothed over.

The art show is booked in Dewey's for April 3. Pia is in contact with Peter and Helen to just make sure all the details are taken care of. Pia has also been in touch with some other community galleries to see if there is the option of displaying our work there for a week.

For reader appreciation I was able to contact some friends at the Sowing Machine Factory. It is tentatively booked for now. We have partnered with some local musicians as well to be at the event in exchange for contra ad space or honorariums. Still working out the details there.

Volunteer appreciation is looking to be at a board game cafe instead of a bar or club. We want to make sure this event is accessible to everyone. We are thinking about Hexagon or Board n' Brew.

For our planned partnership with EVO there was a snafu. There was confusion about expectations and unclear communication. We resolved the issue but we are now working for a student deal but probably won't be a full on launch party but discounted entry.

Pia has been in contact with Print Machine for the merch store. We will have dad hats,

t-shirts, socks, and hoodies available. We are just waiting on their end. We hope to have that up soon.

### 3.4 *Business and Ads*

**McWhinney:** For January the printing fee was the highest expense. We had some volunteer events as well so we did some reimbursements for pizza.

Our outstanding balance to the SU stands at \$127,000. Those represent the only accounts payable.

Our accounts receivable sits at just over \$5,500.

Piero and I met with our auditors last week. We unfortunately couldn't get them to attend our board meeting due to some difficulties but we spent a lot of time asking how we could make our fees lower in the future and more efficient. Gave us a lot of helpful tips. We hope to renegotiate the terms of future audits as well. All of our taxes have been sorted as well which is a huge bonus. We received our GST return cheque which will help us balance some of the other expenses that have run higher than expected.

I will make sure the GST and taxes stuff is included in Piero's transition report so that info doesn't get lost since that was the first time we had done it in a long while.

One DFU cheque for spring and summer has come in. We need to follow up with Luke about the big DFU cheque.

Our goal for ads revenue is to meet what F-Media did for us. We are at \$21,500, or 60% of that goal. 70% of our monthly goal has been reached. Big impetus is going to be needed to get us as close to our goal as possible.

This means we will likely run a \$10,000 deficit unfortunately, depending on how many ads are booked. We shouldn't have to take money out of the savings account. It will just mean next year will be tighter and more pressure on ad sales. It will need to be the last deficit we run for at least a few years.

### 3.5 *Online*

**McWhinney:** Our page views were lower than to be expected. We got started with post count later after NASH so we saw less articles on the site. The majority of views were for breaking news, again shoutouts to Adam. We covered the unfortunate tragedy of Flight PS 752. There was also the breaking article on performance-based funding. The breaking article on Budget 2019 article from October is also consistently on the top ten list still. We will have to make up for the lost posts at the end of the year.

### 3.6 *Discussion*

**Lachacz:** It seems like ad sales have stalled a little bit. I think at the last meeting we

were also sitting at 60% or close to that for our yearly goal. Is something wrong, should we be worried here, or is it just growing pains?

**McWhinney:** I think we are doing as well as we can. I have full faith in Piero and the systems he's put in place. I will try to push more from my end to ensure we can get as close to the goal as possible though.

**Craig:** I think we just need to put it in context though, the new ad sale mechanism in-house. That was completely new and not expected. We just need to streamline the process for sales and make sure we continue to push them as much as possible.

#### 4.0 **Gateway 2020-21 Goals and Proposed Employee Changes**

##### 4.1 *Presentation by Adam Lachacz*

**Lachacz:** So this presentation is just for the board's context and to generate some discussion. We won't be voting on this today but depending on the feedback it could be something we approve at a board meeting in the near future.

I am very excited to be taking on the position of EiC. Never in my Gateway journey did I expect to end up there but here we are. I am also excited to be taking on the role in such a challenging time for *The Gateway* with the DFU campaign coming up and changes to our online coverage to continue our legacy into the 110th anniversary. I want to celebrate that milestone and then set the momentum for the next 110 years and beyond.

My three big themes for next year, which I presented to the hiring board are as follows:

##### 1) *Redefine The Gateway*

I would like to change the face of *The Gateway* by changing how our business is conducted by re-creating a Business Unit. We used to have a B-Unit but it disappeared over time to the current form of just the Director of Marketing & Outreach and Director of Finance & Administration.

I want to create a unit, complete with a supervisor and who would manage two people directly and provide oversight as well as strategic direction.

The B-Unit would have an Executive Director at the head and then a Marketing and Outreach Coordinator and Business Administrator. The ED would be a managing position that would be part of the managing team. Marketing & Outreach and BAdmin would report to the ED who would then report to the EiC. This structure was developed by myself, in conjunction with consultation with the current Director of Finance & Admin and Marketing & Outreach. Because of the in-house ad situation being forced upon us, we decided as a board on an ad-hoc solution to meet the need. This proposal will build a lasting structure and clear up some of the problems we experienced this year. The Marketing & Outreach position would continue the role as it is, by putting out *The Gateway* name as

much as possible on-campus to drive readership and brand awareness. The B-Admin job would be to support the day-to-day operations of the B-Unit through overseeing the accounts payable and receivable, sending invoices and insertion orders, reimbursements, and payroll. That way the ED could focus solely on selling ads and strategic initiatives, in conjunction with the EiC support.

Additionally, I want to redefine and do a name change for some of the managing roles. I am not getting rid of any jobs here, I just want to clarify their roles and responsibilities to make it a lot clearer for staff. A better management structure will help make day-to-day experience a lot smoother for staff and ultimately volunteers. This includes renaming Managing Editor to Magazine Editor.

Now I wanted to hire a sports reporter. Since hearing that we may be running a deficit, I will hold off on hiring that spot so to free up operating revenue to cover the loss.

Lastly for this theme, I want to create a lasting purpose document for *The Gateway* to help showcase what our purpose is on campus, some of our history, and to be more transparent about our processes and values. The sport analogy I use to describe this is, *The Gateway* as a whole would have the goal posts set by the document. Then incoming staff, as soccer players, would have the ability to still have autonomy to decide how to play on the field and how to score goals, but the limits and boundaries are set by the purpose doc or the goal posts. There is a baseline set. I hope to also create section missions and visions as well. Having that alongside transition reports and more concrete and professionalized staff training will just help bring staff up to speed when they are hired so much better.

## 2) Empower *The Gateway*

This is all about making us more efficient and well-oiled. I already mentioned changing staff training. Over the past few years there have been production week to simulate what it would look like to simulate production during a normal week during the school year and post count. That was a very valuable idea. Based on feedback from staff this year and my own experience, I hope to have training sessions and workshops first and then have one production week in August so people can use it to their fullest potential. We have expected a lot from staff from the get-go after hiring, like learning wordpress, managing volunteers, and knowing the ins and outs of CP Style. I think we owe it to ourselves to actually give training and not just assume this is knowledge all people have.

I want to work with the board to create an editorial board and a clear code of ethics. We need to find a way to put forward what is in policy, bylaw, and the code of conduct in a straightforward and easy to understand manner. This is also just good practice to release on our site so people can hold us accountable. We also have a lot of unwritten rules around COIs and things. We should codify this.

The greatest strength of *The Gateway* is our staff transition every year. The biggest weakness is also our staff transition so regularly. We tend to lose a lot of institutional knowledge when it comes to our coverage or content. That's why I want to have an editorial board so that we can codify some of this expertise and a standing body of experts for staff to consult in difficult or unprecedented situations while writing a story. This will democratize the process of how we cover communities on campus and the process of administering complaints or grievances for our stakeholders.

Lastly for this, I want to implement our five-year vision outlined in the DFU campaign. I think it is a good launching off point and is an agreement between us and voters that has to be respected. If we lose, knock on wood we don't, then I commit to ensuring we run a solid DFU campaign that is accounted for well in-advance. I will also resolve to do a very thorough debrief with staff and the DFU team to find out what went wrong so we can implement lessons learned.

I want to also create a Gateway merchandise store to act as another source of brand awareness and buy-in plus additional revenue. While it won't surpass advertising revenue or our DFU, it can build up our financial capacity and lay the groundwork for diversifying our revenue streams.

I want to continue deputy line editorships as well. Those are great ideas put forward by Andrew and this year's team. It will serve an important purpose and fill a really valid need.

### 3) Maintain *The Gateway*

That is a lot of changes, or at least it might seem that way. Honestly, most of these are just fine tunings or developments that will build off of our current success and incorporate lessons learned to be better as an institution for our volunteers, staff, and most importantly our readers.

Ultimately though, the role of EiC is all about maintaining day-to-day operations and overseeing the functioning of *The Gateway*. So I will continue to do those tasks.

## 4.2 Discussion

**Craig:** I can fully see the need for a Business Administrator. We've heard firsthand how Piero is working hard this year. I like that idea because it allows for an ads-focused person to really spearhead that without worrying about keeping track or getting bogged down in day-to-day things.

Now you said this year that the two current business positions had significant overlap and it led to some problems with performance. I don't see how this proposal changes that?

**Lachacz:** What was decided this year is that the role of ads would be shared amongst the two positions. First of all, marketing and outreach has so much on their plate already. Adding ads onto them limited the ability to push our brand or do things like focus groups. Secondly, having two people looking after ads complicated things more than it needed to be. They shared an ads email and sometimes would open an email but not respond. The other person then didn't read the opened ones so clients would get missed. Or deals agreed by one person weren't shared or recorded so when it came to the other person supporting, they were lost. Having one dedicated person selling ads lets them oversee the whole portfolio, keep track of all clients, and never have to assume the other ads seller took care of something when in reality they didn't. Then taking ads away from marketing means they can actually fulfill what is in their portfolio. Plus under the new proposal the ED, can then have a BAdmin as support or backup. So they have unlimited potential in reaching out to clients knowing that once a deal is secured, they just forward the details and client to the B-Admin who will process payment and everything.

**Craig:** Definitely see how that streamlines everything for sure. It makes everything a lot smoother and efficient and less duplication. I like that for sure.

**Lachacz:** I think building that structure for smooth B-Unit functioning is important. It will enhance client experience and hopefully make them more likely to buy again from us.

**Craig:** All of these will be full-time positions?

**Lachacz:** B-Admin could be part-time but Marketing & Outreach and ED would have to be full-time. In the future we could even look at making ED a full-time non-student so we don't lose that institutional knowledge, like how the SU general manager stays year-after-year to maintain relationships with clients and guide the executive.

**McWhinney:** I think the B-Unit idea is great. The big thing with magazine and online I think we have to keep in mind is the dynamics of who is EiC and who holds those positions. Using this year's experience may not necessarily be the best model.

**Salifou:** I think there is merit to the proposal. The big thing is the money consideration. How much more is this going to cost and are we going to be deciding on something before the campaign is even run?

**Lachacz:** Definitely good points to consider. The way I modelled salary is assuming no DFU campaign and the same level of staff compensation being paid as this year. So I am not spending a single penny more. I am just re-shuffling salaries a little bit to create room to make it from 12 staff to 14 staff. I have a breakdown of changes to salary. Now I made this assuming hiring a sports reporter. I apologize, I didn't know about the potential deficit. So by eliminating sports reporter some of the positions who I gave pay decreases to make room for the ED and sports reporter will have to be remade. So I can show what



I've prepared but know that will be changing. I will have updated figures for the board for the next meeting for sure.

**Craig:** Wow, you managed to fit two extra staff but using the same staff salary budget line as this year. That is impressive. I have no doubt then that the financial feasibility for this is within reach for us.

**Paches:** I am definitely in favour of something like this. I think having a structure that enables a person to move from one position to another next year is massive. It builds institutional depth and is more likely to attract people because there is career progression. Someone can go from BAdmin to ED. Plus that keeps institutional knowledge here longer. The overall vision is great. I think working up to having a permanent ED is necessary. So putting this structure together is a first step to that.

Meeting ended by Chair Oumar Salifou at 7:16 p.m. on February 20, 2020.