

# Gateway Student Journalism Society

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 17, 2020

### Opening

The regular meeting of the Gateway Student Journalism Society was called to order at 7:06pm on December 17, 2020, remotely over Google Meet by Mitchell Pawluk.

### Present

- Adam Lachacz
- Damian Lachacz
- Mitchell Pawluk
- Sezvo-ndinemwi M'pfunya
- Alana Krahn
- Robyn Paches
- Kate Turner
- Lee Craig
- Jonn Kmech

### Approval of the Agenda

Adam Lachacz motioned to approve the agenda. Robyn Paches seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

### Approval of Minutes

Lee Craig motioned to approve last meeting's minutes. Seconded by Sezvo-ndinemwi M'pfunya. The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

Action Items: Mitchell will revise the times by one hour.

### Reports

- Editor-in-chief/Acting Executive Director

Adam Lachacz took his report as listed.

Deputy Editorships calling closed. Most applicants were for Opinion Section (4), 3 for News and Arts & Culture respectively. Interviews taking place in the next two weeks. In future years could look at expanding to Photography and other sections, and possibly having more than one deputy editor for each.

Still searching for a replacement executive director. A number of overqualified and non-student applicants were received. 3 student applications, interviews will be starting next week.

**Executive director report.** Still trying to get ads. Almost doubled the advertisements sold last month. Best relationships made with organizations that have a stake in the University of Alberta. They are more likely to buy ads because they are looking for new ways to engage with students.

Canadian federal bursaries will continue to support the Gateway during decreased advertising revenue.

- Online

Adam Lachacz reported in lieu of Pia Co.

Received a number of views in November. Most top articles are news and throwbacks to Gateway posts in previous years.

- Magazine

Adam Lachacz reported in lieu of Tina Tai.

Magazine production proceeding slower than normal. Our current printing company is limited to number of workers due to COVID-19 restrictions. Production for January is behind due to midterms and finals. The focus and theme will be on resilient communities.

Pickup is low due to new COVID-19 restrictions and less people going to campus. Less people seen in Student's Union Building and U of A admin seeing less people going to Cameron Library.

Will be re-evaluating distribution plan to ensure that magazines are still proliferated.

- Outreach

Adam Lachacz reported in lieu of Emma Jones.

Beginning to approach volunteers for the DFU campaign. An online dominated campaign will look much differently. Planning to reach out to online classes and asynchronous classes (link on eclass or have a video in PowerPoint lecture)

CRO clarified that staff are free of any conflict of interest. The Gateway is clear to have Adam Lachacz as the forum representative. He will have more organizational legitimacy and make concrete statements about the future of the Gateway.

Big plans for winter outreach. Will be organizing social media contests and promotions on UASU Perks app.

### Floor Questions

- 1.) Lee Craig asked about why the CRO allowed the Gateway to have the editor-in-chief as the forum representative and if there is a trend away from distancing the Gateway from DFU campaigning.
  - a.) Adam Lachacz replied, saying that there has been a set precedent in previous campaigns and vagaries leave it up to the CRO to decide. The Gateway has been told that they will not be challenged, as other platforms are engaging in these same practices. They have been advised to separate staff working hours from DFU campaigning which has already been put in to place by Gateway staff. DFU campaigning is outside of office hours (time made up later).
  - b.) Alana Krahn confirmed Adam's points. It is possible that the precedent established for this year will allow staff to remain an active part of campaigning.
- 2.) Jonn Kmech asked about the DFU presentation to council and if there is anything to report.
  - a.) Adam Lachacz presented to council about the DFU plan, lessons learned from last year, and consultation. Was approved without need for plebiscite.
  - b.) The question wording submitted was different from what was approved. The DFU question was sent without Board approval.
  - c.) He reported that the presentation went well. The important feedback gained is that the Gateway needs to improve financial transparency, transparency about training staff and volunteers as well as concerns about prior coverage of elections and minority groups on campus. He plans to outline these concerns in the DFU campaign and that they can only be achieved through the funding granted by the DFU. These improvements will be handled internally through Gateway staff operations. There were no issues raised that require Board discussion.
- 3.) Jonn Kmech believes the Board should have approved the question before being submitted.
  - a.) Robyn Paches did not think that the bylaws state that the Board should review the DFU question.
- 4.) Jonn Kmech asked if the DFU question could be sent to the board.
  - a.) Action Item: Mitchell Pawluk will send that information to the Board
- 5.) Robyn Paches asked about sharing what was originally submitted and what was revised.

- a.) He also asked Mitchell to get in touch with The Gateway's council representative.
  - b.) Action Item: Mitchell will get in touch with The Gateway's council representative.
  - c.) Adam Lachacz emailed the Board what was originally submitted and what was revised. Question wording had to be changed because of lack of precedent and bias. SU bylaw stipulated that governance had to be included in the question. They also asked to condense because of the precedent of past questions that were too long. Lastly, grammar mistakes were found in the original iteration of the question which was revised.
- 6.) Jonn Kmech asked for a clarification about the binding nature of the vote.
- a.) Alana Krahn replied saying that the vote is non-binding.
  - b.) Adam Lachacz said that if the referendum fails by a large margin, council will not approve the DFU. He brought up the example of CJSR and that there is precedent. The 50% majority vote and campaign should be able to speak for itself.
  - c.) Alana Krahn responded saying that the SU bylaw DFUs are reviewed every five years by plebiscite and then a referendum the next year if needed.
- 7.) Kate Turner asked if the revisions to the wording changed the DFU question.
- a.) Mitchell Pawluk said that most items were kept in.
- 8.) Robyn Paches said that links should be allowed to be included in the question to take care of voter attrition.
- a.) Alana Krahn admitted that some changes need to be made in the Bylaw Committee as well. She said that she is against links in the question due to the various ways the voting platform is accessed. Depending on the way certain links are opened, if people are directed to a separate information page and the voting forum closes, it would cause more problems. She added that a short profile could be added on uasuvotes.ca, similar to the bios of candidates.

- Finance Committee

Robyn Paches reported about the Finance Committee meeting that took place before the Board meeting. No issues with finance reports. Requested update on executive director recruitment. How to more effectively sell ads and improve relationships with clients.

- Human Resources Committee

Alana Krahn reported that the committee has been following operating policy as per bylaws. A member of the committee will be sitting in on performance evaluations of Gateway staff.

- Governance Committee

Adam Lachacz reported that Governance Committee will be meeting in the next month. The first meeting will set priorities for amendments such as bylaw reviews, board membership review, volunteer agreement review, etc. All other ideas have been written down so that the next committee can take them.

## **Special Orders**

- For Approval: 2019-20 Financial Statements Audit

Adam Lachacz summarized the confidential correspondence received from the auditors.

The 2019-20 audit was passed. It costed \$8,925. Discount from quote was due to speed. If audit recommendations are taken seriously, larger discounts could be provided. Significant shortfalls to accounting and financial reporting were revealed. It was a difficult audit. Audit was more thorough than past years. Only started digital and physical archive in March. The Gateway archive is now fully digital and physical.

Reimbursement testing and payroll testing was difficult. Former staff had to be contacted.

4 deficiencies identified. Deficiencies involve payroll documentation (staff did not sign actual contracts), insufficient financial reporting, documentation for cash/cheque deposits, and expenses reports were not used to reimburse employees for business related expenses. The last 2 deficiencies are of biggest concern to the Board.

Actions have been taken by the editor-in-chief and the former executive director to mitigate future risk for each deficiency and are continuing to be taken.

Adam Lachacz and Shayla Breen were able to get back 8,000 of lost 11,000. Additionally, student fees were underreported. Lastly, even though COVID aid was retroactive August, they count for the last fiscal year even though it will be spent this year.

## Floor Questions

- 1.) Damian Lachacz asked if a future precedent could be established in EIC training so that they understand the consequences
  - a.) Adam Lachacz would like to codify operating policy and ensure that there is a package the EIC has to read on top of the transition report. This would include resources such as how Alberta society board functions work, etc. This will be brought up in the Governance Committee as well.

- 2.) Robyn Paches says that these deficiencies and recommendations were not raised in the last 4 years. He advised writing to the audit agency and asking about the change in precedent.
- 3.) Sezvo-ndinemwi M'pfunya gave praise for the actions taken already to mitigate future risk. She asked about which staff member has access to the transition reports.
  - a.) Adam Lachacz replied, saying that these documents would be privy only to the EIC. Other section editors would only receive what is relevant to them. He is looking towards making transition reports and documents accessible to anyone. As soon as this audit is passed, it will be published as well as past audits as per the SU and Societies Alberta.
- 4.) Robyn Paches said that the Gateway should be strategic about posting this audit. He believes it is a significant risk to the DFU vote.
  - a.) Adam Lachacz responded that only audited financial statements will be posted. Confidential documents are strictly confidential and cannot be posted outside of the Board.
- 5.) Lee Craig addressed the difficult financial history of the Gateway, and praised the current DFU campaign as well as staff efforts for the audit.
- 6.) Mitchell Pawluk and Adam Lachacz praised Gateway staff and B-unit on their work.

Adam Lachacz motioned to approve The Gateway 2019-20 audited financial statements. Seconded by Robyn Paches. The vote unanimously passes.

### **Unfinished Business and General Orders**

- For Approval: Revised Multimedia specialist job description

Adam Lachacz expanded on the revised draft of the multimedia specialist which received feedback from the Board. Job title has been changed from multimedia specialist to digital media specialist.

### Floor Questions

- 1.) Kate Turner asked whether the Essential Duties and Responsibilities differentiate enough between a design or business marketing job.
  - a.) Adam Lachacz clarified, stating that the job description should specify the Gateway is searching for a student with a design background.
- 2.) Mitchell Pawluk said that further revisions should be made over email so that recruitment can begin as soon as possible.

Adam Lachacz motioned to approve the Digital Media Specialist job description. Seconded by Alana Krahn. The vote unanimously passes.

Action Items: Job Application will be posted to The Gateway website.

### **New Business**

- Action Items: Mitchell Pawluk will send board agenda items emails a week ahead of time and the Monday of the week's meeting.
- For Approval: Casino Charitable Gaming Application

Adam Lachacz brought the idea of applying for Charitable Gaming through the AGLC forward based on the Finance Committee and inspired by the past 2017 EIC recommendations.

The Gateway meets the eligibility criteria, but it requires a high level of commitment. Paid staff are not allowed to work. A Casino Manager would have to have a large degree of responsibility and not a staff member. Shifts require approximately 12 people or more over two days. The Gateway volunteers this year numbers around 100, not including Board members.

This could be a useful source of revenue and diversify away from student fees and advertising.

### Floor Questions

- 1.) Robyn Paches suggests that it would be a useful way to provide revenue, predictable source of income, and the amount of volunteer time and money received is worthwhile.
- 2.) Lee Craig says that it is difficult to convince volunteers to participate, but it is only for a couple days every few years.
- 3.) Mitchell Pawluk reinforces that is a good source of revenue and that the volunteer engagement exists to supply positions for a casino.
- 4.) Robyn Paches provides clarification about which casino roles the volunteers are responsible for. He added that there are organizations that can fill in vacant volunteer positions.
- 5.) Damian Lachacz opened the discussion about who would be the Casino Manager.
  - a.) Adam Lachacz feels that it should be privy to the staff and Board of the first administration that gets a casino
  - b.) Robyn Paches added that organizations receive enough notice and echoed Adam's comments.

Adam Lachacz motioned to initiate application for Charitable Gaming through the AGLC. Seconded by Robyn Paches. The vote unanimously passes.

- For Discussion: Purpose Document

Adam Lachacz brought forward the most recent iteration of the purpose document and encouraged Board members to review it and provide feedback. Can be easily approved through email ballot or next meeting as long as it's before the DFU vote.

- For Discussion: Magazine Distribution Plan for Winter 2020-21

Would still stock racks on campus. Also working on a contra deal with farmer's markets to have a rack, and adding on to U of A libraries curbside pickup.

Adam Lachacz brought the idea of rethinking magazine distribution for Winter due to COVID-19.

One of the things staff want to implement is free curbside pickup on campus, delivery service in the greater Edmonton area (\$5-\$7 for individual, discount for entire year) and domestic/international delivery service that only covers shipping. Could create a Square marketplace dedicated to magazine distribution.

### Floor Questions

- 1.) Damian Lachacz emphasized that adding on to U of A libraries would be a good idea.
- 2.) Robyn Paches supports the subscription model, from the perspective of an alumni student.
- 3.) Mitchell Pawluk encouraged Board members to bring magazine distribution suggestions to the EIC.

### **Agenda for Next Meeting**

- Purpose Document
- Magazine Distribution Plan for Winter 2020-21

### **Adjournment**

Motion for Meeting to adjourn by Mitchell Pawluk. Seconded by Adam Lachacz. Meeting was adjourned at 9:11pm by Mitchell Pawluk. The next general meeting will be at 7:00pm on January 21, 2021 remotely over Google Meet.



Minutes submitted by: Damian Lachacz

Approved by: