

Gateway Student Journalism Society

Meeting Minutes

June 2 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Gateway Student Journalism Society was called to order at 7:15 p.m. on June 2 2022 via Google Meets by Mitchell PAWLUK.

Present:

PAWLUK, Mitchell

KERR, Lochlann

VILLOSO, Julia

AVILA, Rebeca

KOSAK, Dan

WILLIAMS, Emily

HE, Jin

CRAIG, Lee

JEFFREY, Taylor

BROOKS, Sam

Absent:

TEELING, Katie

NARVEY, Rachel

Approval of the Agenda

BROOKS suggests a friendly amendment to strike item 5 d to g, which include committee reports as they haven't met. He also asks why the board would have both a report from the EiC as well as a vision presentation.

Pawluk explains that the report explains what has happened in the past month but the vision is what WILLIAMS wants for the rest of the year

Moved by BROOKS

Seconded by KOSAK

The board votes unanimously in favour

Approval of Minutes

PAWLUK explains that there are no minutes from April currently because Areeha MAHAL had the previous minutes on her personal email instead of her work email, but she is in London and has been asked for those as soon as possible. PAWLUK says that amendments, concerns, and approval with the minutes can be done over email.

Special Orders

PAWLUK gives a summary of the three new officer selections: chair, secretary, and treasurer. Nominations from the floor will be taken, and self-nominations will be accepted. A seconder is also required. Multiple nominees would take the vote to a secret ballot.

WILLIAMS nominates PAWLUK for Chair

Seconded by VILLOSO

CRAIG motions to acclaim PAWLUK as the Chair.

Seconded by KOSAK

The board votes unanimously in favour of the motion and PAWLUK is appointed by acclamation to the Chair position.

JEFFREY self-nominates for the Secretary position.

Seconded by WILLIAMS

KOSAK motions to acclaim JEFFREY as Secretary

Seconded by VILLOSO

The board votes unanimously in favour of the motion and JEFFREY is appointed by acclamation to the Secretary position.

WILLIAMS nominates CRAIG for Treasurer

Seconded by JEFFREY

BROOKS motions to acclaim CRAIG as Treasurer

Seconded by WILLIAMS

The board votes unanimously in favour of the motion and CRAIG is appointed by acclamation to the Treasurer position.

PAWLUK explains that the next item is selection of committee members for each of the board committees: Finance Committee, Human Resource Committee, Governance Committee, and Sexual Violence Reporting Task Force. He gives an overview of what each committee does.

PAWULK explains that CRAIG, as Treasurer, is automatically chair of the Finance Committee, as well as WILLIAMS, KERR, and VILLOSO. There is room for two more members.

WILLIAMS notes that there are two members present at the board. Because they are not present, she asks if they can still be nominated.

PAWLUK says they could nominate the absentees, but acceptance for the role is needed, which they cannot do while absent. They can, however, join the committee late, though not ideal. With no nominations, PAWLUK says that he will send out an email for nominations later on. Next up is Human Resources Committee, which he explains is made up entirely of non-staff members that meets up on an ad-hoc basis, allowing members to meet up over any potential issues. There are three members in this committee.

KOSAK self-nominates.

Seconded by WILLIAMS

CRAIG nominates BROOKS

Seconded by WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS nominates AVILA

Seconded by VILLOSO

PAWLUK decides to do nomination by acclamation in the interest of time.

WILLIAMS motions to acclaim KOSAK, BROOKS, and AVILA to Human Resources Committee.

Seconded by VILLOSO

The board votes unanimously in favour of the motion and KOSAK, BROOKS, and AVILA are appointed by acclamation to the Human Resources Committee

PAWLUK moves to the third committee — Governance Committee. This committee is not in Gateway bylaws but was struck up a few years ago to address governance issues at the board level, and refreshing bylaws.

BROOKS asks what the mandate of the Governance Committee is, and if it is still required.

PAWLUK answers that their mandate hasn't been fully filled because the bylaws have not been updated even though the governance issue at the board level has been fulfilled. There is no maximum or minimum, and there are no particular position for this committee.

KERR asks if he can sit on committees, as bylaws may have to be changed to allow the organization to host casino nights.

PAWLUK notes that although KERR is an ex-officio and non-voting member, he may still sit on committees.

KERR self-nominates

Seconded by VILLOSO

WILLIAMS nominates HE

Seconded by JEFFREY

WILLIAMS self-nominates

Seconded by JEFFREY

BROOKS self-nominates

Seconded by KOSAK

VILLOSO motions to group acclaim KERR, HE, WILLIAMS, and BROOKS to Governance Committee.

Seconded by CRAIG

The board votes unanimously in favour of the motion and KERR, HE, WILLIAMS, and BROOKS are appointed by acclamation to the Governance Committee

PAWLUK explains that the Sexual Violence Reporting Task Force was struck up last year in response to historical lack of coverage on sexual violence. The purpose of this committee is to talk about best practices and better policies when it comes to reporting on sexual violence. There is also no maximum or minimum members on this committee.

JEFFREY self-nominates

Seconded by VILLOSO

KOSAK self-nominates

Seconded by JEFFREY

WILLIAMS nominates PAWLUK

Seconded by KOSAK

WILLIAMS nominates HE

Seconded by JEFFREY

WILLIAMS self-nominates

Seconded by KOSAK

VILLOSO motions to group acclaim JEFFREY, KOSAK, HE, WILLIAMS, and PAWLUK to the Sexual Violence Reporting Task Force.

Seconded by AVILA

The board votes unanimously in favour of the motion and JEFFREY, KOSAK, HE, WILLIAMS, and PAWLUK are appointed by acclamation to the Sexual Violence Reporting Task Force

Reports to the Board

WILLIAMS presents the Editor-in-Chief report.

WILLIAMS says that the month has been hectic — she is excited to start the role and feels that the team and board is strong. In editorial updates, there has been staff training in two rounds: first with paid staff, and second with the deputy editors which are being hired currently. This gives the staff the opportunity to train eager volunteers to keep them involved over the summer. She also explains that one of her goals this year is to revitalize relationships with groups on campus and met with the Indigenous Students' Union (ISU) at their Executive Meeting, along with meeting their president. She would also like to meet with members of the Students' Union more regularly than staff in the past. On the business side, WILLIAMS and KERR have been doing financial cleanup. In management, Google Drive is being monetized, and at the end of today's meeting, there will be a discussion for board input. HE and WILLIAMS developed a days-off policy.

KERR presents the Executive Director report.

KERR says it's been a busy month, and a lot of the work has been cleanup and catch-up. Because KERR is sick, he expects that those bills and receipts will be dealt with in the next two weeks. He notes that website security has been lax with login attempts, so website security plugins have been installed to lower the login attempts, which seem to be working. He mentions that the organization has been in contact with the UASU about the lease, which is up soon. KERR also mentions that the physical space of the office should be professional and accessible, so this has resulted in cleaning out the office, old office equipment — raising about \$380 with more equipment to sell, hopefully to put towards refreshing the office. A brand refresh has been on the backburner as well, but would like the brand to be more up-to-date, and expects that to be something the board to be more involved with. Old editions of the magazine that were found have been dropped off at the archives.

BROOKS says that the budget must be approved by the board by the end of the month, and asks where it is right now.

KERR notes that because financial documents haven't been in DropBox since November, and he and WILLIAMS have not gained access to the bank account until recently, that is on the agenda coming up, but hasn't been done yet.

WILLIAMS adds that meeting sometime at the end of June for the regular June board meeting could be good for getting the budget all done.

HE presents the Production Editor report.

The Top 10 pages of the month are:

1. Top 5 Taylor Swift songs to cry to, 3655
2. Homepage, 3458
3. Last year BTS snubbed Grammy, 3075
4. Swoop airlines: A cautionary tale, 1297
5. 100 indie band names we made up, 689
6. Movie Review: Turning Red, 665
7. Sex Column: Pearls, 610
8. Sexual preferences based on race still racist, 575
9. Why are millennials so obsessed with tattoos, 563
10. Hate directed towards current UASU councillor addressed, 475

HE says that the arts email has been under consideration for removal due to Google Drive monetization, and is now small enough to be combined with the online email. The Analytics account has also been moved to the new option, which should provide data for next month.

New Business:

WILLIAMS gives her vision presentation. She gives a run-down on staff structure, which included the collapse of the Marketing and Outreach role into the Executive Director role as a cost-saving role, so that the organization can hire another member of staff in the Fall — the Staff Reporter. The Staff Reporter would hopefully help timely coverage of campus news as well as addressing staff burnout. She would also like to build a stronger base of senior volunteers, which includes Deputy Editors. This has not been done in Spring alongside paid staff, and now includes the Deputy Photo Editor — interviews for these positions are happening this weekend. Part of her vision also includes freelancing work for positions that used to exist, such as the webmaster. She hopes to seek someone over the summer. Visuals contributors will be something WILLIAMS and HE will collaborate on later, to provide a small stipend for a piece of art such as for the Purity Test.

WILLIAMS introduces the current new staff. Some of the ideas WILLIAMS had for the role included: building on work done by previous staff to make the office a more welcoming space, building stronger relationships through guest columns and more regular meetings, seeking alternative revenue, and capitalizing on the organization's history to get continuity of the organization's image as well as branding.

WILLIAMS brings up the next topic of discussion. She mentions that she and KERR have thought about the future of the organization after losing the DFU funding, and would like the help of the board to answer the problem of being “at the end of the rope.” She thinks that a fee would be good going forward, and starting a new plan would be good, especially because if a DFU is not held this year, it must be held next year. She would like a committee to form a long-term strategic plan.

PAWLUK notes that previously, the organization prepared the campaign worked one year ahead, and presentations were made to the board but the board was not as involved in the past. The contingency plan was not put in motion, but the plan was originally to slash the EiC salary and to have a paid staff reporter, and switching the other roles entirely to volunteer-based work. He says that in terms of contingency and planning, there wasn’t as much work done, so when WILLIAMS brought it up, PAWLUK thought it was a good idea to discuss it with the board.

BROOKS asks about the last two DFU campaigns: what did you hear in response for why people voted no? He also asks how the brand reputation has improved on campus since the DFU failed in 2020-21.

KERR, previously campaign manager for the DFUs, answers that the big three responses were: what is The Gateway, if they knew the organization — only able to name one infamous article, and after 30 seconds of talking about the basics, they’re more accepting and open to voting ‘yes.’ He adds that this is backed up by the Readership Surveys, which says that people who know a few of the organization’s articles, such as Notes from Council, budget coverage, editorials, etc. have a generally positive view of the organization. The campaign was to push the basics: who can be involved, and what are the services that the organization provides? Increase of voters voting ‘yes’ was 10 - 12% from the first DFU was run, and he has found that younger students have had a better view of the brand, likely from better journalistic policies.

PAWLUK adds that it’s a hard time for some DFUs, as it was rare that DFUs failed in previous years, but it has become more common since. He notes that some of this is because there were some poorly done articles in the past that are well-remembered but also that students are under financial pressure.

VILLOSO adds that APIRG’s plebiscite failed in the 2021-22 year, and notes that the organization’s situation is quite different from theirs. She isn’t sure if it’s a good use of the organization’s resources to run another DFU this year, but there may not be another choice. She agrees with KERR that new students on campus are more likely to have a positive view of the organization, and this year presents a new challenge with hybrid students. VILLOSO also suggests that in the future, the r/UAlberta Reddit page will be looking into limiting what will be allowed to be posted during elections season.

CRAIG adds a comment that the organization is facing institutional mistrust, and must tackle to overcome that.

PAWLUK notes that in the interest of time, the discussion will be paused until next meeting, and he will send out an email for those interested in the committee.

KERR notes that the organization has been exploring the possibility of doing a charity night via casino, but it has been a very long process. The organization has to submit a lot of proof of what they do and the structure, they tell the organization if they are eligible and their category — which affects the wait period, and this is a long wait period (average 28 month wait in Edmonton). So the organization will be collecting things like bylaws and leases to apply. Some time down the line, the board must have in minutes that KERR is allowed to apply for eligibility. There would also need to be changes to the bylaws and the board, but the help for application is not very good until already rejected. KERR is also doing some training, but notes it is not very helpful.

BROOKS speaks in favour of this idea, as many non-profits use this route to fundraise. He notes he is in favour of providing KERR with everything he needs to get this in motion.

PAWLUK asks why the bylaws do not abide by the Societies Alberta. He adds that casinos have been looked at by the board in the past, but the opportunity and taking the initiative to go forward with exploring the idea has not happened until now, which he is grateful for.

KERR answers that he could not find the proof that bylaws are approved by Societies Alberta. Operating Policies are, but could not find any for bylaws. The proof must be a physical stamp.

KOSAK asks if the organization has the ability to sell alcohol to raise funds.

KERR answers that the application process to sell alcohol is similar to casino nights, so they can try to do both and get approval for both. As long as the organization does not make changes, the approval is indefinite once given.

PAWLUK adds that in the lease, alcohol is not allowed to be in the office. He says that this does not eliminate opportunities to fundraise with alcohol off-campus or on other campus locations.

BROOKS moves to approve his motion:

WHEREAS it is a potential valuable source of revenue currently under exploration; and
WHEREAS there are no current budget implications for the upcoming fiscal year; and

WHEREAS authorization to share Board minutes with Alberta Gaming Liquor and Cannabis is required to continue to this exploratory process

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board authorize the Executive Director to provide the AGLC with minutes and any other pertinent information to continue to exploring casino fundraisers as a future revenue source for the Gateway Student Journalism Society

Seconded by VILLOSO

The motion passes unanimously.

WILLIAMS shares that because Google Drive is undergoing monetization, she wanted to run the decision by the board because it deals with how the organization's data storage. She notes that there are lots of physical hard drives and old tech around the office, so the data storage is in a patchwork. The current plan ends in June, and if the payment is not made by August 1, all accounts will be removed. The organization had 40 users, and the team has been trimming it down, bringing it to 20 users. WILLIAMS adds that there should be bare-bones, one for each staff member. There are two plans being considered: business standard at \$15.60 per month per user, and business starter at \$7.80 per month per user. Google is offering a discount for the first year. If the team only gets the bare-bones options with the upgraded and more expensive plan, valuable emails like the webmaster one will be removed. Email aliases will be used going forward, and backing things up online or on hard drives.

WILLIAMS presents the case for each plan: the starter plan would be cheapest, but there may not be room for old data that is still important and there is no option to add more storage, only more users. The other option is the standard option, which costs double (over \$1000 per year) but the discount for the first year is good, and a long-term storage archive could be made for future years. She says that she is in favour of having things backed up in a cloud, but acknowledges that data is not free.

BROOKS says that the standard (more expensive) plan is worth it, and adds that hard drives are fallible and not a way to manage long-term legacy data. He asks, has anyone talked to U of A campus IT about it? The organization does not own their own domain, and is under the U of A account, and a case could be made to keep the six emails and their data.

WILLIAMS says that it's worth talking to someone at the U of A, but has spoken to someone at Google. The organization is on a workspace, and not education. The university is education, and the organization is a workspace, and based on her conversation with the Google employee, the organization cannot be looped in.

PAWLUK mentions that even if the organization is saving money, having accessible storage is worth paying for and would have benefits in the future. He also mentions that if the organization has premium Google Meets, cancel Zoom to save money

CRAIG agrees that the data is very important and it needs to be kept in a way that's better in a hard drive so that people can access the data in a way that's easy and safe. She says that the issue now is how to get the money — perhaps someone from the alumni would be able to talk to Google or knows enough about computers to deal with this better.

PAWLUK mentions that several alumni work with data now and still love the organization, so it could be kept in mind for later.

BROOKS adds that there are a couple of months of runway to get the U of A to help. He would like to move that the staff member whose purview it is, to leverage the relationship with the U of A to include the organization in the suite that they already pay for.

WILLIAMS mentions that there's a possibility that the organization may lose the custom domain if the U of A includes it in the suit.

BROOKS says that if there is a redirect (alias) and that's the annoyance to deal with, then it's a small enough thing to endure. He also adds that while there should be separation between the administration and journalists, tech stuff has a lot more leniency in the public eye.

PAWLUK mentions that there are remaining board vacancies. PAWLUK adds that NARVEY resigned from the board, which means that there is a student-at-large vacancy as well as an alumni vacancy. There were no applicants for the student-at-large vacancy, so the deadline was expanded to the next board meeting to give time for a bigger push and hopefully more applicants. He adds that those who know interested alumni should let them know about the alumni vacancy.

PAWLUK also adds that the board should set a regular meeting time to approve the budget in time and get a student-at-large member on the board. He suggests that the board meeting be the last week of June, with the dates sent through email to gauge availability. He also mentions that standing time is needed for the board to continue, and suggests 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, as this is the traditional time for board meetings.

KERR adds that he would not be able to make those meetings.

PAWLUK says that he will send another poll out for members to fill as if it was an average week, and will let members know what the meeting time will be

Adjournment:

BROOKS moves to adjourn.

Seconded by VILLOSO

Meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m. by PAWLUK. The next general meeting will held via Google Meets in June.

Minutes submitted by: Jin He