

The Gateway Student Journalism Society — Board of Directors

December 18 2024

Attendance

Katie TEELING
Leah HENNIG
Omar HABIBZAI
Lee CRAIG
Sam BROOKS
Nathan THIESSEN
Caprice ST.PIERRE
Dylana TWITTEY

1. Call to Order

TEELING calls the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m..

2. Approval of the Agenda

THIESSEN motions to approve the agenda. HENNIG seconds. The motion passes.

3. Approval of the Minutes

BROOKS motions to approve the minutes. THIESSEN seconds. The motion passes.

4. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

a. Editor-in-Chief

HABIBZAI, the executive director, gives the report for the editor-in-chief. HABIBZAI explains that the website was down for four days earlier in the month due to confusion regarding domain renewals. The two online domains *The Gateway* ones were on two separate accounts. HABIBZAI explains that the domains were last renewed 10 years ago so they did not have knowledge about how the website was set up. With the help of the webmaster, Emily Williams, a previous EIC, and Hugh, a previous webmaster for *The Gateway* HABIBZAI says POLENCHUK was able to resolve the issue. HABIBZAI says POLENCHUK is planning to take tangible actions to ensure this does not happen again. She will link both domains to the EIC email, she has changed the renewal dates from 10 years to 1 year so it's not forgotten about, and in her transition report she will include detailed instructions on what went wrong and how to solved the issue in case it happens again.

HABIBZAI says that they were unable to secure a table at Winter Club Fair due to a University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU) rule. HABIBZAI explains that previously *The Gateway* was exempted from this rule but that this year the UASU was unable to make an exception. Instead the UASU gave *The Gateway* a table at Winter Warm Up, which takes place in the Students' Union Building (SUB). Because it is only for one day HABIBZAI says they will be extra vigilant to push the open house, volunteering, and the newsletter.

The DFU check was deposited last week. They immediately paid rent to the UASU. The ATB account has opened and HABIBZAI says POLENCHUK is in conversation about getting the account set up. Once they hear back from BMO they'll begin transferring the funds. HABIBZAI

says they're in the process of opening a line of credit with ATB and that will likely be set up in January.

HABIBZAI says that report cards, elections, and hiring for the 2025-26 school year will begin in the new year. Both the opinion editor and news editor have solidified their elections teams and are developing training. As well in the new year, four staff members will attend NASH 86 in Hamilton, Ontario. Currently, POLENCHUK is also working on the January print which will be on stands for the first day of school.

BROOKS asks if there are any other accounts or services that *The Gateway* has to renew on a semi-regular basis. He wonders if this exposes an underlying problem or if its just a one off fluke.

HABIBZAI says he doesn't think this is something to worry about. Most of *The Gateway's* subscriptions renew monthly. He says it was just a matter of not thinking the website would ever be an issue. He says the annual renewal will help *The Gateway* keep on top of it.

b. Executive Director

HABIBZAI reiterates that they were unable to get a table at Winter Clubs Fair but that they have one at Winter Warm Up. He says he will explore other ways to push their initiatives beyond this event. The first DFU check amounted to \$110,000. He says this will greatly help *The Gateway* in paying all their bills and remaining liquid. *The Gateway* is expecting two more checks from the UASU for in the upcoming academic terms. HABIBZAI reiterates that the account with ATB is being set up and that credit card setup is ongoing.

HABIBZAI says it has been difficult to sell ads for the January print edition. This is due to it being the end of the year so companies are being frugal and online being more appealing. He says he has contacted over 400 companies. So far he has sold Old Strathcona Farmers Market a quarter page ad and he should be able to sell a quarter ad to CJSR, the campus radio station. He has sent out a bunch more emails and he says he is remaining optimistic.

BROOKS asks HABIBZAI what kind of feedback he's getting in regards to the value companies do or do not see with a print ad and what steps he is taking to make print ads a more attractive product.

HABIBZAI says that in his emails he stresses that *The Gateway* offers competitive rates but that companies really want online ad space. He says the reasons companies give are: people can immediately click on the ad instead of just seeing it in a paper and maybe forgetting they ever saw the ad; people probably won't read the print multiple times but they will visit the website multiple times. He adds that print circulation is small at 1500. Previously in September it was 2000. He says maybe they could print more. He says it probably comes down to viewership differences between online and the print and small circulation.

BROOKS suggests emphasizing that each print edition will likely be read by multiple people despite low circulation. He also suggests selling ad space on the racks.

HABIBZAI says any help is appreciated. He adds that regarding the low circulation, because the previous print company was unreliable that they wanted to decrease risk by decreasing the order. He says hopefully in the future they can look into increasing circulation.

c. Managing Editor

TWITTEY states that all the articles in the top ten for the month of November were recent articles, which is exciting to see because volunteers put a lot of effort into their articles. She says once again this month views for the website are in the green. She attributes this to the increased post count. She says work for the print is ongoing.

d. Finance Committee

THIESSSEN states that the transition to ATB is ongoing.

e. Governance Committee

HENNIG says that Gov Com did not meet in December because peoples schedules did not line up. Gov Com is going to take a closer look at the operating policies and in January they will talk about any changes that need to be made.

f. 5 Year Strategic Plan Committee

HENNIG says that they are wrapping up the interviews. They were able to secure at least four interviews so that will give them a good basis for creating a strategic plan. They will discuss the plan at the next meeting and then proceed to creating a plan.

g. HR Committee

TEELING says the HR Committee has been working on performance evaluations for staff. All performance evaluations were finished the week before the meeting, she says. Next HR Committee needs to find a time to get together and fill out POLENCHUK'S rubric.

5. For discussion: Bylaw updates

HENNIG presents on the bylaw updates for the Bylaw Committee. First off, they rearranged the definitions to be in alphabetical order. One of the bigger changes was the addition of 3.2.4 (a) which is intended to make it easier for people to renew their memberships. This addition stipulates that to renew a membership someone only has to have made one contribution, not three, in the last 365 days. A change was also made to 4.2.6. HENNIG explained that usually the vice-president (operations and finance) of the UASU sits on the GSJS board. The change would allow the vice-president (ops fi) to instead choose a delegate. This is in case the VP is not interested in the GSJS board. The change made to 4.4 stipulates that if there is a vacancy for the positions of Volunteer, Continuity, Student at Large, Community, and Alumni on the Board that the Board will pick someone to fill the position for the remainder of the term for that position. The Bylaw Committee also removed a repetitive statement from 4.8. This does not change the meaning of 4.8, just makes the wording more clear. A change was made to 5.11.1 for the same reasons and also does not change the meaning of it. 5.11.2 was removed as it was repetitive. Because that change was made all the following articles had to be renumbered. Finally, the borrowing powers article was put into the Financial Review article for organizational purposes. All the following articles were renumbered accordingly.

BROOKS says that he worries that changing the rules for membership eligibility would open *The Gateway* up to a coup. As in, people could write one article, qualify for membership, and then would be eligible for voting positions. He doesn't know if that would be an issue for *The Gateway* but says it rang alarm bells for him.

ST.PIERRE asks how many articles volunteers typically write as she doesn't think three articles is an unreasonable ask. HENNIG explains that some volunteers write tons but others only make a couple contributions. She clarifies that this bylaw change only applies to people renewing memberships. To initially gain membership a person still would have to write three articles within 365 days.

TEELING says it's really difficult to find people who fit eligibility and can vote at annual general meetings (AGMs) or special general meetings (SGMs). She explains that voting and working at *The Gateway* can be extremely stressful so most people don't do so for more than a year or two. She says she thinks its a really good idea because it targets the more passively involved members and allows for a bigger pool of people who can vote at AGMs or SGMs.

BROOKS explains that he thought that the change would change the initial threshold, not the renewal threshold, and this is where his concern came from. He agrees changing the renewal threshold is probably a good idea because it allows people to remain passively engaged with the organization.

HENNIG explains that TEELING'S explanation about the difficulty of finding voting members for AGMs and SGMs was the inspiration for the change. She also mentions that many people start volunteering early on in their degree but often stop volunteering as much further into their degrees when they get busier. She thinks this change will help a lot for finding people for AGMs.

HENNIG explains that the changes to bylaw don't need to be voted on by the board. The general membership will vote on the changes at the next AGM. Still, she wanted to bring the changes to the GSJS board to get their input.

BROOKS asks HENNIG if she would like the board to vote to endorse the changes. HENNIG says yes. BROOKS moves for the board to endorse the changes. ST.PIERRE seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

6. Adjournment

HENNIG motions to adjourn the meeting. CRAIG seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously and the meeting is adjourned at 7:36 p.m..