



**University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union
Annual General Meeting
Zoom Meeting Tuesday, December
1st, 2020 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

UTGSU Staff

Andre Fast (Executive Director)
Gail Fernando (Membership & Advocacy Coordinator)
Hamish Russell (Chair)
Hujma Chowdhury (Secretary)
Nusrat Huq (Finance Administrator)

UTGSU Executive Team

An-Noûra Compaoré (Finance Commissioner)
Ben Hjorth (Executive-At-Large)
Danielle Karakas (Civics and Environment Commissioner)
Dhanela Sivaparan (Academics and Funding Commissioner: Divisions 1 and 2)
Jacqui Spencer (External Commissioner)
June Li (Academics and Funding Commissioner: Divisions 3 and 4)
Lwanga Musisi (University Governance Commissioner)
Sarah Alam (Internal Commissioner)

Quorum: 100

1. Meeting comes to order

- a. Equity Statement**
- b. Introductions and Rules of Order**
- c. Adoption of Agenda**

1.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU adopt the agenda. Moved by Ben H (Executive-At-Large), seconded by Molly H (Medical Science).

2.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU amend the agenda to include seating guests as item 1 (e). Moved by Lwanga M (Governance Commissioner), seconded by Juliana A (Psychology). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

d. Approval of Minutes from the 2019 AGM

3.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU move to approve the minutes from the 2019 AGM. Moved by Ben H (Executive-At-Large), seconded by Saif A (Earth Science).

Lynne A (OISE) would like to make an edit to the 2019 January AGM minutes to include this sentence because she states she had presented the problem to the Policy and Operations Committee and had a document outlining the steps that should have been taken. She also believes the report by the Investigation Committee took only and exclusively the side of the complainants, thus the process was unfair. The additional statements are needed to contextualize the meeting.

4.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU edit the minutes to reflect that Lynne A (HSSJE) believes the process of disaffiliation did not meet the requirements of the disaffiliation by law point presented. The Policy and Operations Committee and the Investigation Committee presented the report of the complainants and exclusively took the side of the complainants. Moved by Lynne A (OISE), seconded by Molly H (Medical Science). MOTION CARRIES with opposition and abstentions.

3.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU move to approve the minutes from the 2019 AGM as amended. Moved by Ben H (Executive-At-Large), seconded by Saif A (Earth Science). MOTION CARRIES with opposition and abstentions.

e. Seating Guests

5.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU seat Hannah C (Guest) from The Varsity with speaking rights. Moved by Lynne A (OISE), seconded by Diana B (OISE). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

Hannah C (Guest) from The Varsity is here to speak to the media motion that is presented on the agenda.

2. Reports

a. Executive Committee Report

Each member of the Executive Committee presents a brief report on their work so far and their plans for the remainder of their term.

There is a question about the criteria of the Blacks Graduate Students Excellence Bursary, Jacqui S (EC) notes that all the details are on the UTGSU website and that it is a needs-based bursary.

Lynn A (OISE) asks a question about the referendum that the union held in the '80s where a motion was passed that council would need to revisit the membership fee every year, and determine whether to increase it. It can only be increased by no more than 5% according to the cost of living (COLA) and has to be approved by the university's governing council before any changes happen. There is no language in either the bylaw or the policy, as it is right now.

Andre F (ED) answers that that referendum mentioned does allow for the cost of living increase to our fees. That needs to be approved by our governing council which is like our board of directors. This year General Counsel did decide to pass a motion for the fee increases, those are then passed to the university who has accepted the costs of living increases for this year.

b. Standing Committees, Ad-hoc Committees, and Caucuses

June L (AFC3&4) and Samantha S (Medicine) who is the student lead at the Faculty of Medicine introduce an ad hoc committee that they are hoping to develop in the coming year. They will be addressing a graduate base funding initiative using a data-driven approach, this requires buy-in from across faculties, at the university, so that they can collect data to see where funding discrepancies exist in the university. They can then use this information to raise the base funding for all students within the university. This committee is based on the cross-departmental committee in the Faculty of Medicine. This committee ran extensive surveys to get data on student finances and cost of living. From this data, they were able to communicate to faculty and advocate for financially accurate stipends that reflected the real cost of living of graduate students. This approach has been a successful model to advocate for change in the Faculty of Medicine. Through these quantifiable methods, they hope to bring about positive change with this new proposed ad hoc committee.

c. CUPE 3902

Farhana I (Pharmacology) who is the Internal Liaison Officer for CUPE 3902 gives an update on the membership. She is speaking to students who work as teaching assistants, course instructors, invigilators, peer assistants, and so forth, their collective agreement with the university is set to expire on December 31. As their union, CUPE 3902 has been preparing to negotiate a new

collective agreement that will govern the terms of work and is electing its bargaining team this week. Feel free to contact Farhana I (Pharmacology) with any questions about these updates.

Hamish R (Chair) adds that the CUPE 3902 bargaining committee is posting updates on its Facebook page as well.

d. Motion to Receive Reports

6.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU move to receive the reports. Moved by Habib H (French), seconded by Alexandre O (Physics). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

3. Financial Business

a. Audited Financial Statement FY 2019-2020

Lawanga M (UGC) speaks on the audited financial statements, he states that the audit went well without any issues. As of August 31st, 2020 the operations and cash flows of the UTGSU ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not for profit organization according to external auditors.

7.MOTION: BIRT the Members of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union receive the Audited Financial Statement for the UTGSU, as prepared by MNP LLP for the fiscal year 2019 - 2020.

Lynne A (OISE) notes that there is no indication of the firm that prepared the audits reports, it is not introduced by the executive and it is not on the letterhead. If you go the previous three AGM minutes on the UTGSU website they all include the letterhead of the firm that was hired but this one does not have any identification of the firm that was used.

Hamish R (Chair) sees the value of an official letterhead but also clarifies that that there is a note of the company in the initial motion prepared by the General Council and that it is fully in order.

8.MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU call the question. Moved by Joshua W (Cinema Studies), seconded by Ashley S (Anthropology). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

MOTION (7) CARRIES with abstentions. Noted abstentions: Branden R (Anthropology), Sophie M (Physics) and Lynne A (OISE).

b. Appointment of Auditors for FY 2020-2021

9.MOTION: BIRT the Members of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union appoint MNP LLP as the auditors for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and pay them remuneration.

There is a question asking for clarification on page 29 of the mailout and page 1 of the audit report. Under unrestricted net asset assets at the end of year it has about one and a half million dollars as the assets for the end of the year for the Union and the unrestricted fund. How much of that is associated with the health and dental insurance plan and how much of that is available to the union to use for upcoming initiatives? How much of that surplus is related to the UTGSU fee, how much of it is associated with the health and dental insurance premiums and administration fee that is collected? How much of that is actually available to put into restricted funds for future planning?

Nusrat H (Finance Administrator) answers that a lot of that surplus comes from unused funds due to COVID related restrictions. One plan is to replenish internal restricted bursaries and funds that were dispersed to the graduate body but also strengthen reserves so that they can function in a scenario where they are prevented from receiving fees from the university because they are very vulnerable to the administration. The funds are received in a pool, all in one; the surplus is not divided according to whether it's from health and dental or any other area.

MOTION (9) CARRIES with abstentions.

c. Bursaries and Awards

Lawanga M (UGC) updates that his last duty as Finance Commissioner was updating the GCDF instruction forms on the website which has been completed. With regards to the conference bursary, the full cycle application was open until the 15th, and now they are in the selections process. Lawanga M (UGC) is also in the process of transitioning An-Noûra, into the new role of Finance Commissioner.

4. Bylaw Amendments

Hamish R (Chairs) summarizes these are all the bylaw amendments that have been passed in the 11 months since the last AGM. There are 4 bylaw amendments, the first relates to changes in executive duties in relation to the management of staff and creating some additional

subcommittees for that purpose. The second relates to turning the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Standing Committee (BDS) into a caucus. The third amendment concerns changing rules around who may serve as a CRO or on the elections and referenda committee of the Union. Lastly, the fourth amendment is applying consistent capitalization to the word member, as it appears in the bylaws to avoid confusion.

10.MOTION: BIRT the Members of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union move to approve the bylaw amendments. Moved by Ben H (Executive-At-Large), seconded by Zack J (English).

Sophie M (Physics) recommends a tracks changes section for the next round, so that it is easier to understand what changes have been made.

Lynn A (OISE) notes inconsistencies with the version that has been sent out and the version that is presented online. She recommends excluding this first set of amendments as the before and after texts look identical.

11.MOTION: BIRT the Members of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union call the question. Moved by Joshua W (Cinema Studies), seconded by Amy C (Social Work). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

MOTION (10) CARRIES with abstentions. Noted abstentions: Adam Hill (OISE) and Sophie M (Physics).

5. Motions by Members

12. Whereas The COVID-19 crisis has elevated food insecurity among postsecondary students, many of whom have lost jobs and access to on-campus food services;

Whereas rates of food insecurity are highest among international students and BIPOC students;

Whereas food banks are a short term fix to a systemic food crisis.

BIRT the UTGSU engage in advocacy efforts with the University and Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments to address the impact of food insecurity at the University of Toronto.

BIFRT the UTGSU commit to supporting the U of T student led Emergency Food Bank that has filled the crucial need of supporting those facing food insecurity during the shutdown of the university sanctioned food bank. Moved by Danielle K (CEC), seconded by Carlos A (East Asian Studies). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

Interest has been expressed about pursuing a financial commitment to support the Emergency Food Bank.

COVID Crisis Graduate Student Safety and Support

(As passed at UTGSU General Council, 28 July 2020)

13. Whereas the COVID crisis continues to take a massive toll on the personal and academic lives of *all* graduate students at the University of Toronto (hereafter “the University”), who have been unable to access essential resources for coursework, exam preparation, data collection, thesis research at home and abroad, and conference presentations, without which substantial progress in their programs cannot realistically be achieved;

Whereas the isolation, uncertainty and increased costs brought on by the COVID crisis have added to and exacerbated already existing strains on *all* graduate students’ financial wellbeing, including the precarity they experience while pursuing graduate work on funding packages that place them around, or in many cases well below, the current federal and provincial poverty lines (“market basket measure”);

Whereas *all* graduate students therefore require extensions to their timelines, and corresponding extended funding support, as a minimal mitigation strategy in the COVID crisis, as indicated by recent initiatives taken by the Tri-Council agencies (SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR) and other institutions such as Brock University;

Whereas the COVID crisis is disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous and People of colour (BIPOC) communities and individuals, as well as other racialized peoples, women, students with dependents, with disabilities, low-income (including students on minimal or zero- figure funding packages), LGBTQ+ and other marginalized groups—evidence of deep-rooted and ongoing systemic racism, inequality and violence;

Whereas international students, who make up around one quarter of all graduate students at UofT, are currently ineligible for the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), which acknowledges the universality of student financial need in the COVID crisis by the blanket provision of funds to all citizen and permanent resident students;

Whereas the individualized, “case by case” approach to COVID-related financial relief (thus far limited to \$500 handouts and tuition exemptions for which students must apply) thus far adopted the University fails to acknowledge the universality of graduate student need in the crisis, and would make sense if only *some*—and not *all*—graduate students had been and continue to be deeply affected;

Whereas racialized students, international students and other highly-impacted groups have thus far seen no targeted financial supports from the University, fuelling concern that some students will continue to experience particular hardship just because of their citizenship status, ethnic or other statistical background; and

Whereas numerous surveys, collective letters (at both departmental and divisional levels) and other public statements by graduate students groups, course unions, labour unions and faculty have called out the inadequacy of current University policies on COVID-related relief and procedure, evidence of the need for a set of measures for the graduate student body as a whole, to make sure that no-one in our community is left behind;

Be it resolved that the UTGSU General Council call upon the School of Graduate Studies and the broader University of Toronto administration (“the University”) to immediately enact the following urgently necessary measures for student relief in the COVID crisis:

1. As guiding principles, the University must recognize, and act practically to redress, the disproportionate racialized and gendered burden of the COVID crisis on the academic, financial and personal wellbeing of graduate students, whilst also acknowledging that *all* graduate students have been affected, thus necessitating broad- based and inclusive approaches to financial relief and extensions that do not place the burden on the individual to “prove” need in a situation where the universality of that need is otherwise widely acknowledged (e.g. by the Federal Government’s CESB funds), and the University must work directly with graduate students to address these educational, work and health inequities through justice-based solutions.

2. The University must provide full, automatic and guaranteed extensions to timelines and funding packages (including the *addition* of funding for students who were un- or under- funded, or beyond the funded cohort) equivalent to one year for all students, regardless of department, program, year or degree, and longer if research and study remain significantly disrupted beyond 2020.

3. The University must immediately freeze tuition fees at the 2019-2020 rate and extend tuition relief for the duration of the pandemic, particularly for those students whose funding does not cover full tuition costs, and for students who are no longer in the funded cohort, and make this relief automatically applicable (rather than requiring application).

4. **The University must make available adequate and easily-accessible needs-based funds and grants, available to all students (including full-time and part-time, unfunded domestic and international students), with significant attention to a justice-based, targeted approach to BIPOC and racialized students, international students, and other disproportionately affected groups.**
5. **The University must immediately reimburse all fees charged for facilities and services that have been, or remain, significantly impacted in terms of accessibility, safety or availability for student use.** ^[SEP]
6. **The University must provide rent relief (retrospective, where necessary) for all University- run housing for the affected period(s), and place an immediate freeze on rent increases for the academic year 2020-2021.**
7. **The University must take steps to increase opportunities for academic employment, in collaboration with CUPE 3902 & 3907 and USW 1998 (positions with health and dental benefits), for all students including international students, who should be able to access these opportunities from a distance where required.**
8. **The University must engage with students, staff and faculty in occupational and environmental health and safety at all stages of development and implementation of University operations guidance as it relates to the COVID crisis, including the immediate re-activation of the Joint Health & Safety Committees (JHSC) as required under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.**
9. **Going forward, the University must commit to full financial transparency across all departments and units, with multi-year comparisons regarding sources of funding and how it is being spent,**

BIFRT the UTGSU Executive, Council representatives and general Members undertake to collaborate on ongoing grassroots organizing around the COVID crisis, including holding regular broad-based surveys, consultations and town halls, and engage in building coalitions with various other groups (including the labour Unions CUPE 3902 & 3907 and USW 1998), on shared points of concern towards greater solidarity in the ongoing crisis.

Moved by Ben H (Executive-At-Large), seconded by Joshua W (Cinema Studies).

MOTION CARRIES.

Adam H (OISE) wonders about the timeline of these mandates, when will they be addressed?

Ben H (Executive-At-Large) is hoping to see some resolution of a number of these by the end of the academic year, by the end of the current term of the GSU executive and by the end term of various other executives of student governance on campus.

14.MOTION: BIRT the Members of the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union call the question. Moved by Amy C (Social Work), seconded by Mariam K (Information). MOTION CARRIES with abstentions.

15.MOTION: Project Description:"radical equity" Legislative Program i was proposing for the Policy and Operations Committee back in the Fall of 2018 (moving on all equity points, as much as possible simultaneously) and the campaigns i was proposing for the current year 2020-2021.

Martin Luther King Jr put it well: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Thus, the UTGSU Council should be hearing about and contributing to the activities of CFS Ontario and National (including lobbying provincial and federal governments on the right COVID19 measures), and looking for representation on international student associations. UTGSU should have had by now statements about the genocide of Uyghurs in China, the struggles of Kurds, the additional annexation of Palestinian territories by Israel this past summer....--on which we have been completely silent, despite the occasional proposal that i've heard now and then since 2012.

And the project of making the 16 Bancroft building "accessible", as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), should be well underway by now--to negotiate with UofT, to look for sponsors (200,000 in Budget is nothing, millions needed), to have benchmarks to be compliant by 2022, as required of Not-for-profit Corporations (or else, fines).

BIRT the UTGSU members gathered at this year's AGM authorize Council, including executives, and encourage general members of the Union to join the Access and Wellness project for the development of principled policies and practices across diverse backgrounds and interests by generating and leveraging: beneficial knowledge and experience; community-sustaining reciprocity and fairness; and, as the need arises, restorative justice.

BIFRT participating domestic and international fellow students enjoy the Union's due attention in catering to the needs and aspirations of our 19,000+ membership, as well as in exercising academic agency and civic engagement regarding the larger university and the larger society--overall, building on the best equitably democratic traditions of student organizing at the University of Toronto. Moved by Sarah A (IC), seconded by Mohammad J (Italian Studies). MOTION FAILS with abstentions.

Lynne A (OISE) who has submitted the motion has left the meeting therefore, she is not present to motivate it. There are concerns that the motion is unclear, with grammatical errors, it should be rewritten and revisited at another time.

16. Whereas the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU) is an autonomous Student Union consisting of its own bylaws;

Whereas the UTGSU is incorporated under the Ontario Corporations Act as a not-for-profit organization;

Whereas to represent students, the UTGSU may choose to oppose decisions made by the University and Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments and must be autonomous to do so.

BIRT the membership of the UTGSU strongly oppose any infringement on the UTGSU's autonomy from the University and or government(s);

BIFRT the UTGSU continue to oppose the Student Choice Initiative and the Complaint and Resolution Council for Student Societies, as these policies directly infringe on the autonomy of the UTGSU and its ability to advocate for the membership at large. Moved by Lawanga M (UGC), seconded by June L (AFC3&4).

17. MOTION: BIRT the Annual General Meeting of the UTGSU call the question. Moved by Oscar A (Information), seconded by Diana B (OISE).

Quorum has been lost before a vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.