



**University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Zoom Meeting Monday, March 20, 2023 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Directors must register by emailing [register@utgsu.ca](mailto:register@utgsu.ca) before the meeting.**

**1. Meeting Comes to Order**

Meeting called to order by Danielle K. at 5:38pm.

**BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors appoint Alice Wu to chair the meeting. Moved by Lwanga M., seconded by Avinash M. Motion carries with no oppositions and abstentions.**

a. Equity Statement (Commitment) (Page 3)

**The Chair** asks everyone to conduct themselves with respect towards their colleagues and address their comments to the Chair. You may challenge the Chair if you disagree with their interpretation of the bylaws. We will have a 2-strike system in this meeting for violations of the equity statement. Chair asks for volunteers to read out the statement. Everyone agrees to the statement by raising their hand on Zoom.

b. Adoption of Agenda (Discussion & Decision)<sup>1</sup>

**Danielle K.** would like to motivate an amendment. To be more specific, she wants to move Item 6 above Item 5 as the in-camera item is time-sensitive.

**MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors adopt the March 20, 2023, meeting agenda as presented or amended. Moved by Danielle, seconded by Jesse. Motion carries.**

c. Seating Guests (Discussion & Decision)<sup>2</sup>

**Levi Clarkson** introduces themselves as UTGSU Executive Director, attending in that capacity.

**Emma Livingstone** is from The Varsity Newspaper.

**Gadfly Stratton** is the Equity Officer to help everyone feel safe and supported in the space.

**Shain Abdulla** is the health and dental plan administrator.

**Lynne Alexandrova** is a general member from SJE department/OISE and Access for Wellbeing.

---

<sup>1</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors adopt the March 20, 2023, meeting agenda as presented or amended.

<sup>2</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors move to seat all guests with speaking rights.



**MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors move to seat all guests with speaking rights. Moved by Danielle K., seconded by Lwanga M. Motion carries.**

d. Approval of Minutes from February 21, 2023 (Discussion & Decision)<sup>3</sup>

**Lynne A.** asks where the minutes from the last meeting are available for general members.

**Levi C.** confirms that once the minutes are approved, then they would be uploaded to the website.

**MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approve the minutes from the February 21, 2023 Board of Directors meeting. Moved by Lwanga M., seconded by Danielle K. Motion carries.**

## **2. Reports**

a. Executive Committee Reports<sup>4</sup>

**Lwanga M.** likes to add to the report that the next day the UTGSU has an in-person finance literacy workshop that starts at 12.30-1.30pm. It will be held at the Multi-Faith Centre.

**Danielle K** gives a verbal report, as she missed the report deadline due to academic commitments.

**Neelofar, A.:** says that she has been engaged in financial affairs and overviewed the financial matters.

**Lynne A.** asks for an update about the Governance Committee to reach Quorum with 2 general members and 2 executives Chair and Vice Chair. They submitted the motions to the ED email and the Equity Officer email. The question is about the length of the term, and the timeline for the term of committees. Lynne also asks about advertising the CASAS space applications.

**Danielle K.** answers that in terms of appointment concern, they got Lynne's email. To her understanding, if the Executive Director has not replied to Lynne, they will do so promptly.

Secondly, regarding anything advertisement related, Lynne can just email to

[communications@utgsu.ca](mailto:communications@utgsu.ca).

---

<sup>3</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approve the minutes from the February 21, 2023 Board of Directors meeting.

<sup>4</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors accept the Executive Committee reports up until March 14, 2023.



**MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors accept the Executive Committee reports up until March 14, 2023. Moved by Danielle K., seconded by Lwanga M. Motion carries.**

### **3. Levy Fee Changes for FY2024<sup>5</sup>**

**Lwanga M.** would like to motivate in favour of this motion. Each year levy groups at UTGSU receive a cost of living increase in accordance with their individual referendums, which the membership voted to approve. He would like to remind everyone that this is a housekeeping item, and the BOD approves motions like this each year, in accordance with the referendums so that they can go to the University's Governing Board for approval.

**Lynne A.** says some fees which Lwanga pointed out are already voted on according to referendums. They are not subject to change. They automatically have to go up. But for the membership fee for example and maybe some levies, the increase is not automatic. Therefore, it may make sense to discuss and vote separately on those 2 groups. Some increase and some stay as they are. For example, they have not failed to increase everything due to the pandemic and the engagement. So maybe it makes sense to allow some fees to stay the same.

**BIRT the UTGSU Board-of-Directors approve the UTGSU and levy fees presented for the**

---

<sup>5</sup> BIRT the UTGSU Board-of-Directors approve the UTGSU and levy fees presented for the Financial Year 2024:

Bikechain:

BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.0% cost of living increase to the Bikechain portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$ 1.26 ( $\$1.19 + 0.07 = \$ 1.26$ ); and BIFRT that this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.

SEC:

BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.0% cost of living increase to the University of Toronto Sexual Education Centre portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$ 1.24 ( $\$1.17 + 0.07 = \$ 1.24$ ); and BIFRT that this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.

CFS National:

Draft Motion: BIRT UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.3% cost-of- living increase in the Canadian Federation of Students - National portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to 10.55 ( $\$9.92 + 0.63 = \$10.55$ ); and BIFRT these fees be collected as two equal sessional amounts.

CFS Ontario:

BIFRT UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.3% cost-of-living increase in Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$8.78 ( $\$8.26 + 0.52 = \$8.78$ ); and BIFRT these fees be collected as two equal sessional amounts.

UTGSU Fees:

BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 5.0% cost of living increase of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$71.41 ( $\$68.01 + 3.40 = \$71.41$ ); and BIFRT that this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.



**Financial Year 2024. Moved by Lwanga M., seconded by Danielle K. Motion carries.**

**Bikechain:**

**BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.0% cost of living increase to the Bikechain portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$ 1.26 ( $\$1.19 + 0.07 = \$ 1.26$ ); and BIFRT that this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.**

**SEC:**

**BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.0% cost of living increase to the University of Toronto Sexual Education Centre portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$ 1.24 ( $\$1.17 + 0.07 = \$ 1.24$ ); and BIFRT that this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.**

**CFS National:**

**BIRT UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.3% cost-of- living increase in the Canadian Federation of Students - National portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to 10.55 ( $\$9.92 + 0.63 = \$10.55$ ); and BIFRT these fees be collected as two equal sessional amounts.**

**CFS Ontario:**

**BIFRT UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 6.3% cost-of-living increase in Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario portion of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$8.78 ( $\$8.26 + 0.52 = \$8.78$ ); and BIFRT these fees be collected as two equal sessional amounts.**

**UTGSU Fees:**

**BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 5.0% cost of living increase of the UTGSU fee for FY2024 to \$71.41 ( $\$68.01 + 3.40 = \$71.41$ ); and BIFRT that this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.**

#### **4. Health and Dental Plan Fee Renewal<sup>67</sup>**

---

<sup>6</sup> Health Insurance Plan:

BIRT that the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 16.85% increase to the UTGSU Health Plan fees ( $\$501.24 + \text{UTGSU Admin Fee of } \$10.00$ ) for a total of \$511.24 for FY2024 with no changes to the plan; and BIFRT this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.

<sup>7</sup> Dental Insurance Plan:

BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 10.91% increase to the UTGSU Dental Plan fees ( $\$249.35 + \text{UTGSU Admin Fee of } \$10.00$ ) for a total of \$259.35 for FY2024 with no changes to the plan; and BIFRT this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts.



**Lwanga, M.** says that each year the UTGSU adjusts the health and dental plan fees. There are a number of factors that go into determining the cost of the plan. The biggest factor is claims usage. Last year the UTGSU made the decision to increase the plans, insured coverage for mental health practitioners to 100% per visit up to an annual maximum of \$750 claims for this specific benefit. They are already increasing at a substantial price. That was prior to the benefit change, and the change, therefore, accelerated the pace of mental health claims. They have seen a huge increase in mental health claims from their members. As a response to this benefit, when comparing the five month, from September to January period in the current 2022 to 2023 plan year with the previous comparable period, claims of mental health have already increased by substantial 38% in total, surpassing the \$709,000 per capita claims for the current 5 month period have increased by 34% to \$39.32 cents per capita with 7 months remaining, so they are estimated to exceed the \$74 plus mark by the policy years end. And this is just for mental health claims. Prescription drug claims have also increased significantly, and this has been particularly for antidepressants.

**Neelofar A.** says this is based on the pretext that this agreement was approved by the BOD last year, and even at that time she doesn't see that there was a comparative made or brought forward to the BOD as to what other options are available to the UTGSU use. For example, in this case they are paying insurance and they are getting claims. They are also paying for the administrative charges which is about \$10 per person, which in this case is about 18,000 people. They are only getting back the claims that they are incurring. So this is one of the very important points and the BOD should take note of why and how this was approved last year. She has requested this with the Executive Committee to look into how this can be improved and she is giving this notion that this will be done over the summer. She says they should clearly give a set deadline as to when the comparative will be done because essentially they are in the middle of the policy.

**Levi C.:** clarifies that as Lwanga said they are seeing this increase, which is similar to last year. Last year BOD approved changes to the mental health benefit to greatly increase the benefit for the UTGSU membership, so that resulted in seeing extremely high claims usage for mental health benefits. The UTGSU increased the amount that people could claim and students are using those benefits for their mental health. So that's the reason you are seeing that jump as well. Regarding points around the administrative fee that is charged, the administrative fee is fixed. It doesn't change year to year. Each year the increase that they are talking about is purely



related to claims usage. The amount that members are claiming in healthcare. The UTGSU is on a refund accounting model with the health and dental plan. This means that the UTGSU retains full responsibility for any deficits in the plan and receives any surpluses. This year they will see a large deficit due to the increased mental health claims usage. As with any health plan on a refund accounting model, an increase to benefits and claims usage will impact the cost of the plan in order to account for the significant increase in the mental health benefits that their members are using. They are seeing a similar increase to last year, when those benefits were initially increased. Therefore, these increases are necessary to continue to provide this mental health benefit coverage to our members and to keep in good financial standing.

**Danielle K.** says that they are open to feedback and they understand that if next year the BOD decides they do not want these increases, we can always revisit our health and dental insurance. However, that is not something that will happen overnight, so the perspective that the majority of the executive share is we can revisit the fees and increases if that is the will of the membership. For now, they need to increase the insurance, they can't go without insurance. That's the way insurance works. She wanted to flag that it's not that they are opposed to revisiting. Their understanding is the members want this increase as it is for mental health and there obviously is a demand for coverage.

**Neelofar, A.** asks firstly, what the other alternative models that they have in insurance to provide better benefits to their membership are. Secondly, if they are going for any referendum or if they are seeking membership approval on this increase and third timelines for the next year plans to review the existing insurance agreements.

**The Chair** answers that the role of BOD are elected to represent their constituency or caucus, or the role of positions that everyone does hold. That's the role of directors to represent their constituency in these spaces.

**Levi C.** says that if everyone may want to have larger questions on this topic or larger report on health plan usage, that is something that they've said to the executives. Danielle mentioned it and that can certainly happen. But we are talking about today and what's being proposed today is there is a deadline that the university has for us to bring forward fee adjustments. There are direct consequences if this does not move forward to the university's governing bodies in time. If we are not able to increase the amount that we would like to make substantial cuts to the benefits that we are offering our members. If we are not able to keep up with that, there is a



possibility that claims can be denied. They would like to offer a distinction between what they are talking about and what a larger conversation would look like.

**Lynne A.** supports the idea to have broader consultation about what is happening with. It is not so much but it's a larger increase than any other fees.

**Neelofar A.** says she thinks it would have been more appropriate to have looked at other modules they are all available for insurance.

**Danielle K.** calls to question. There is no one else on the speakers list, so the Chair says there is no need to call the question.

#### **Health Insurance Plan:**

**BIRT that the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 16.85% increase to the UTGSU Health Plan fees (\$501.24 + UTGSU Admin Fee of \$10.00) for a total of \$511.24 for FY2024 with no changes to the plan; and BIFRT this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts. Moved by Lwanga M., seconded by Danielle K. Motion carries.**

#### **Dental Insurance Plan:**

**BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves a 10.91% increase to the UTGSU Dental Plan fees (\$249.35 + UTGSU Admin Fee of \$10.00) for a total of \$259.35 for FY2024 with no changes to the plan; and BIFRT this fee be collected in two equal sessional amounts. Moved by Lwanga M., seconded by Danielle K. Motion carries.**

### **6. In-camera Discussion**

**Danielle K.** moves a motion to extend the meeting to 7.30pm as she would like to give more than 10 minutes. She wouldn't want to limit any discussions and questions.

Motion moved by Danielle, seconded by Lwanga. Motion fails.

**BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors move in-camera with the Executive Director. Moved by Lwanga M., seconded by Danielle K. Motion carries.**

The Board of Directors move out of camera at 7:13pm.

### **5. Appointments**



- a. Appointment to the Chair Nominating Committee<sup>8</sup>
- b. Appointments to the following committees: Elections and Referenda Committee, Finance Committee, Governance Committee, Graduate Affairs Committee (Discussion & Decision)<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup><sup>11</sup><sup>12</sup>

## 7. Other Business

## 8. Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 7:15pm.

---

<sup>8</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to the Chair Nominating Committee.

<sup>9</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves \_\_\_\_\_ for appointment to the Elections & Referenda Committee for the 2023 general election.

<sup>10</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for appointment to the Finance Committee.

<sup>11</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for appointment to the Governance Committee.

<sup>12</sup> DRAFT MOTION: BIRT the UTGSU Board of Directors approves \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for appointment to the Graduate Affairs Committee.





## **G.9.2 Equity Statement**

G.9.2.1 The following statement expresses the Union's commitments to equity and informs the way in which we conduct business of the Union. The statement will be read aloud during the opening address of meetings of the membership, the Board of Directors, and at UTGSU events:

As many of our members are settlers on Turtle Island, the Union directly benefits from the colonization and genocide of the indigenous peoples of this land. It is imperative that the Union acknowledge that it is on occupied land and that to engage in acts of decolonization is an important aspect of equity work in Canada.

Student Union solidarity is based on the principle that all members deserve to be equal, respected and should be understood. As members of the Union, mutual respect, cooperation and understanding are our goals. We do not condone or tolerate behavior that undermines the dignity of any individual. Expressions of hate such as intimidation, harassment, offensiveness or hostility will not be tolerated.

We will struggle against all forms of discrimination and harassment, including but not limited to: Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, sexist, racist, classist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist sentiments and/or remarks. We all have an obligation to ensure that an open and inclusive space, free of hate is established.

We support growth and understanding and believe in providing opportunities for individuals to acknowledge the impact of their remarks, with the understanding that the experiences of those impacted by discriminatory sentiments or remarks will be privileged.

If you are not here in an understanding of good faith or you have violated this understanding, you will be asked to leave. Do you agree?