**Students’ Union Representative Council Minutes – October 23rd 2016**

*Call to order 5:01pm*

Roll Call

Present: Nicholas Favero, Mikaela Henderson, Brandon Hamilton, Cassia Tremblay, Connor O’Brien, William Gatchell, Taylor Chase, Iain MacLellan, Chad Hasegawa, Joelle French, Annie Sirois, Bry Crabbe, Dr. Khoury, Sean Ryan, Mildred Syabeenzu, Victoria Sandre

Absent with Regrets: Ryley Erickson (vote proxy to Taylor Chase), Madeleine Gillmeister (vote proxy to Connor O’Brien)

Late: Rachel LeBlanc

Bry Crabbe moves to approve the agenda; Cassia Tremblay is the seconder (11-0-0 – *PASSED*).

Opening remarks

Brandon Hamilton (Chair): Welcome to our regular council meeting. Hello to everyone in the gallery! Just to let you know if you would like to speak please raise your hand.

*Mi’Kmaq Acknowledgement*

Approval of Minutes

Will Gatchell moves to approve the last council meeting minutes; Cassia Tremblay was the seconder (11-0-0 – *PASSED*).

Constituency Reports

Equity (Cassia Tremblay): Looking forward to meeting with LGBTQ+ advisor, International student advisor and Inter-faith panel to get some updates. Will be hosting an equity panel tomorrow (MONDAY) in Council Chambers from 6:30-8:30pm. Had great conversations at the event in front of the library, including positive feedback on Theatre Antigonish fee. Joelle and I met to address sexual positivity. X-projects is going to communities this week

International (Mildred Syabeenzu): Pumpkin carving and basketball tournament coming up. Having meetings regarding the new office of the International student advisor as students are not comfortable going to that location. Working on trying to get the office moved.

BOG (Connor O’Brien): Board met on Thursday to ratify the AUT agreement which was successful. Succession planning starting this week.

First Year (Iain MacLellan): Attended event outside the library and got to chat with lots of frosh and talk about the Theatre Antigonish proposal.

Science (Victoria Sandre): Great to interact with constituents at event outside the library. Some senate sub-committee meetings happening soon as next senate meeting is November 7th.

Arts (Nicholas Favero): Gathered feedback on the Antigonish theatre proposal at event and across campus and feedback on today’s Equity talk.

Graduate (Bry Crabbe): No graduate students were present at the meet and greet but got to chat with other students about what graduate students do and what I do. Have a graduate student list serve so will be sending out an email soon.

Business (Will Gatchell): Had a councillor meet and greet and had a great chance to meet some of my constituents. In discussions with Brad Long to start a business council and the faculty are on board. Will be meeting with the Chair to move forward further. Also working on getting a Facebook page up and running.

Executive Reports

President (Taylor Chase): Along with the Co-presidents of Senior class have worked on opening the nominations for candle bearers for X-ring ceremony and had great success ~60 nominations.

VP Finance & Operations (Chad Hasegawa): Have been working on actuals and putting the budget into the new accounting software. Working on society allocations which will be out tomorrow as well as consulting meeting regarding website.

VP Activities & Events (Rachel LeBlanc): World Market will be happening in November (working with the international student society), X Talks will be coming up. Working on Lounge/Hub in the SUB for students to use if not wanting to participate in drinking activities.

VP Residence Affairs (Joelle French): Had an opportunity to speak with the founder of the #mydefinition campaign and happy to report that feedback from other campuses has been overwhelmingly positive. Working with student advocates on sexual assault training.

VP External (Annie Sirois): Trick-or-Eat is under way. Student government round table in Halifax and met with Minister of Education and CFS (another lobbying organization in the province). Great meetings. Spoke with the Antigonish returning officer who reported an 8% increase in voter turnout (about 50%) and I would like to attribute that to student participation which will be confirmed with further statistics later. Taylor and I will be gone advocating for 2wks in November. I am developing the policy handbook for the policy committee (I am chair of). There are four key areas of interest for you guys. Brad Furth will hopefully be coming to campus in the next few weeks.

Faculty Representative’s Remarks

Dr. Khoury: External reviewers for new program of public policy and governance and I expect that this will go smoothly and come September the new program will be up and running. They will be meeting with students today. The Art/Science degree option was just officially passed (the first level) but probably won’t be ready for September. There is more concern expressed about programing by members of the faculty of arts and the chair of the faculty of arts will be presenting to council November 6th. UNHRC is here filming at the theatre to film about how Antigonish and the University and the community has come together to support our new neighbours!

Comment (Nicholas Favero): The courses for the Arts/Science have been passed, but still needs to be brought to senate.

Students Union General Manager Report

Sean Ryan: Apologies for not being here last week. This week we have a Movember information session at 6:30pm Tuesday at the Inn. I am taking on running 100km in 30days for Movember if anyone wants to jump in let me know. Xavarian publication board met this week and discussed the last of a journalism course here at X and we think there might be a presentation on this in the future.

Committee Reports

Budget and Finance: Society allocations in process which will be finalized tomorrow and will be doing voting online.

Campus Affairs: Had meeting on Monday. Were able to determine the charity of choice for each house. Each HP will be submitting their goal for the year tomorrow.

Organizational Review: 6 person committee (Sean Ryan, Taylor Chase, Ryley Erickson, Will Gatchell, Maddie Gillmeister, Mikaela Henderson) and met on Wednesday. Discussed goals for the year and made some sub action groups to deal with these. Looking into equity and accessibility and hiring and transitioning currently.

Bylaw and Policy: Brought Annie in to discuss External advisory committee which will be voted on today.

Special Reports to Council

*Equity Presentation by Students at Large – Racial Minority Representatives*

*Presenters: Nayo Upshaw, Shanna Francis, Rebecca Clancy, Rebecca Mesay & Kathleen Grosicki*

Privilege tells you that you were born into, we need to think about this when talking about issues. It is our responsibility to acknowledge our privilege.

Proposition: We have met with many councillors and are proposing two new representatives on Council. Indigenous Student Representative and Students of African Descent Representative. Proposed TOR are brought together through discussions with those who have these positions at MUN and some discussions with some student representatives. Please note that these are not to be tokenized positions and also there groups continue to experience the legacy of historical disadvantage by colonization, slavery and segregation. Why? The U promised this. The U bears the responsibility of advocating on behalf of students. It is also the law. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The provincial government has also acknowledge this. We feel that a union who is for the students by the students should embody this and follow government structure. It is also what the student’s want, yes we do already have an equity representative but she represents the whole population how can she possibly do this. People feel if they can identify with someone they would be more likely to go to them with their problems. We even have student testimonies. We are asking for a seat at the table and for respect. This is happening elsewhere. We need to hold each other accountable for what we say were going to do. These are the things that have already been promised to us, this is our next step.

Question (Nicholas Favero): It seems to me that within the proposition that the traditional channels within the U are broken can you speak to this? I feel I can represent minorities.

Response (Presenters): This would infuse us into it and our face would be there. Minority groups cannot identify with you. It might not be as urgent to you.

Comment (Gallery): Nova Scotia’s justice system had racism within it. They acknowledged that there needs to be better representation and they changed the structure of the school boards to save a seat for these minority groups. Think of Trudeau’s cabinet.

Question (Mildred): Do you have any case which you could demonstrate where the council would represent these two groups?

Response (Presenters): I come from Calgary from a very culturally diverse area. I understood what I was coming too but when you walk into the classroom and you are the only visible minority it is hard. It also comes down to we cannot identify with these issues if we have not experienced. We need someone at the table to bring awareness to the students. Myself and Rachel and Katie met about issues for Orientation this year and that was good but it is sad that none of these issues were thought of before. No one asks for our perspective. I was tokenized. Are we doing things that are reflective of us? Like Harambe night?! We are not happy.

Question (Annie Sirois): I would argue that us putting these positions is us just throwing it in there. Mildred do you think that your position adequately represents international students?

Response (Mildred Syabeenzu): International students have a totally different experience and the fact that someone sits on the council gives us something that specifically concerns international students. I don’t think I would relate to Cassia if I had an international issue. It makes things easier because you speak to issues you can relate with. There is a difference in how you advocate for things.

Response (Annie Sirois): I ask that people be cognisant to the fact that it is only 1month into the school year.

Response (Presenters): We only have a short amount of time and we can make strives. We can do so much in a year. We appreciate that you have been receptive to the stuff for orientation week. But the time is now. We are graduating this isn’t for us, this is to leave behind. We want to be able to go to our towns and say that StFX is a place where people can see safe. How am I supposed to aspire to this role if I do not see myself represented? If you have nothing to propose and I am proposing this why can’t we do this?

Question (Iain MacLellan): Would these people be elected and who would be able to vote?

Response (Presenters): Yes, it would be like that and they need a nomination from the advisors.

Question (Connor O’Brien): I think it would be important to get a list of the other unions who have these positions and see what the feedback is.

Response (Presenters): We have contacts. The universities who have these positions seem to have more diversity within their executive. These position gives people an in which can lead to their positions on the Executive.

Question (Chad Hasegawa): This would be in addition to the Equity Rep?

Response (Presenters): Yes, if we took these minority groups out of that that position could focus on the other groups.

Question (Chad Hasegawa): This is because they can’t relate to Cassia?

Response (Presenters): This is about representation, there is only so much she can do when she has to represent 100% of people and gives them a person to be related to.

Question (Chad Hasegawa): What about the minority groups, we can’t have every single ethnic minority.

Response (Presenters): I think we can agree that this is the largest minorities.

Question (Chad Hasegawa): Can we confirm this?

Response (Presenters): No, the university doesn’t keep track of this. But think of our heritage.

Question (Chad Hasegawa): You don’t think that these people would get drowned out by adding more people like what we were trying to get away from.

Response (Presenters): If you think that way then yes, but in talking with these students we feel it is necessary.

Question (Gallery): How can we better communicate hiring and stuff, how can we reach you guys better?

Response (Presenters): You guys don’t know we exist. You guys don’t know us. We don’t see you guys. A lot of feel we are feared and hand out with ourselves. If you don’t know them how can you approach them?

Question (Gallery): How can we use our channels better?

Response (Presenters): Having these voices will be able to speak to culturally unresponsive practices that you might not see. One small tip: put people of colour on your posters.

Comment (Cassia Tremblay): Clearly this is important to my constituencies. I have been sitting in Michael’s office and I am talking to people. I am trying but maybe if people don’t see themselves in me then it isn’t working. Maybe all of us sitting around as white people need to realize that just saying we are trying isn’t enough.

Question (Rachel LeBlanc): For the positions, how can we ensure that their constituents are the ones voting?

Response (Presenters): That would have to be hashed out.

Question (Gallery): I think this is just a small part of it. I feel like I come to this university and a lot of people from my home do not want to come here because they do not feel representative. It was hard coming here because I didn’t feel represented by you guys. I feel like everything we put up always gets argued against. My family mattered. My grandmother was born on this land and were thrown out. How am I supposed to be proud when they won’t even raise the flag? How am I supposed to be so vulnerable when you guys don’t understand? I want to encourage people to come here because I want to feel like I have a voice, I am tired of being silent.

Comment (Annie Sirois): Just to point out there are visible minorities in the Mount A and Acadia executives.

Question (Connor O’Brien): There is a need for more racial representation in all positions in the U. Do you see this small step of having a spillover effect? Do you feel as if this happened when you were coming up through here you would have gotten more involved?

Response (Presenters): Yes, I had a hard first few days. Even in my frosh kit there was nothing that represented me. I just wish that one person in my undergrad came to me so I could have gotten involved. When I came here I was shocked and didn’t know what to do. Going up to a white person and asking for help is hard. Us even presenting to you shows we have to work 10 times harder. I have had positions through the U because I looked up to the other females in the U.

Question (Nicholas Favero): Do you think these positions would be sustainable?

Response (Presenters): Yes, we have interest and if you don’t try how do you know?

Comment (Nicholas Favero): It seems that selecting who is allowed to vote or run would be problematic and is something we need to consider.

Question (Bry Crabbe): To cassia, do you feel that this would be beneficial? Do you feel overwhelmed?

Response (Cassia Tremblay): I feel this would be an opportunity as my job is difficult. There are infinite equity issues across campus.

Comment (Gallery): Unions are about solidarity, unions have been beneficial to helping women and people with disability. I hope you guys don’t delay this and remember that this is what unions are for.

Question (Gallery): I am a RO, it might be an admissions problem with the not identifying the demographic. If we know that these demographics are coming into university we can have these resources ready.

Response (Presenters): Look at the new scholarships, we will be having more of these students coming.

Comment (Dr. Khory): Just to point a fact, the university now has a 15million scholarship fund to target these minority groups so there will be more student incoming.

Question (Gallery): You guys are looking at things at too much of a structural way. You guys need this. I have never voted because I don’t feel like my voice is never heard. Why should I vote? I am the president of the Aboriginal student society and there are a minimum of 70 students that identify this way. I feel that these two positions would allow for beautiful things to happen. We put on events that I do not see any of you guys ever come to. As marginalized people we have come to meet you at the line and we really shouldn’t have to. Yea it might be a little messy but StFX that is on unseeded Mi’kmaq territory and you guys need to be progressive. These women have brought is amazing. If I had the power I would say let’s do it right now. You guys have already done amazing things. This is the first time we were offered to open up to frosh. We don’t know what it feels like to have an opportunity to sit at this table. I hope you guys take this seriously and connect with it. I hope we can have a mutual respect. What an amazing opportunity for a legacy and something that is so progressive and wonderful.

Comment (Cassia Tremblay): In talking with constituents some feel that they don’t feel that this would solve their problems. Michael Fisher and I were thinking that there should be a cultural competency committee that might oversee some of the decisions and help keep us in track.

Comment (Mildred Syabeenzu): It is easy the way international students vote, we vote for ourselves. Through the discussion I noticed that we are looking at individuals when we need to look at positions. My position might not always be a black women, tomorrow it could be an Asian or a German. I also wanted to emphasize that sometimes it is hard when you are in a group of people who you feel that they can’t even relate. It is tough. It worries me because when it comes to making decisions we use different lenses. I feel that if we had a union who was more diverse people would feel more comfortable. I saw a video last year from X about diversity and I was sad because it was all white. At that time I decided to run for council, I need to do things about it. I see that gap and the need. It is not because the equity rep doesn’t want to put things on the priority list but maybe she can’t relate.

Comment (Gallery): I am the vice president of the aboriginal society and I wanted to reemphasize that this is a moral obligation give our history. I walked into this room and didn’t know what to expect. I realize that I am privileged although I am aboriginal. My father went to a residential school yet I am here. I want to use my voice. If I could sit at that table I would represent every student. This is not a fight I feel like I am being pushed against the wall.

Comment (Annie Sirois): When you go to make your decision does that benefit outweigh the harm?

Comment (Gallery): Just got a tweet and the new university online application will have an option for people to self-identify their minority group.

Chair: I think what was suggested is that Organizational Review would take this back and do some research and logistics then bring it back to the table. So organizational review committee please keep us in the loop. Thank you for taking the time presenters and gallery members for sharing and opening up, I am glad we could make a space that felt safe for everyone in this room. I would say a vote would have to happen around January. Just so you know that it will not be lost in the weeds.

Old Business

None.

New Business

*Addition of External Advisory Committee*

Annie Sirois: Please see mandate.

Nicholas Favero: When appointing the two positions what would be the process of appointing the two students?

Annie Sirois: I think we need to discuss this more, I am looking for 2 students at large I am looking for diversity. The decision is up to the discretion of the VP External Affairs.

Iain MacLellan: Would it be application?

Annie Sirois: Yes, application first.

Victoria Sandre: You would take their feedback at to these meetings? Why only two students?

Annie Sirois: Yes. I originally wanted a larger number but I was advised by Bylaw and policy that more than two would be too many.

Nicholas Favero: Should there be something in the bylaw which would eliminate the subjectivity.

Chair: We could add that they must be ratified by council.

Nicholas Favero: Perhaps we could include in the description that would set up some sort of objective way to select these students.

Annie Sirois: If I may, I disagree with community involvement to be a criteria as I want all students.

Connor O’Brien: The original proposal was 8 students at large which was too many, the reason the word diversity isn’t in the description because it is 2 students at large, that language is not appropriate.

Sean Ryan: If you have concerns it comes down to how the application is created. Maybe there is a way to structure the application form.

Cassia Tremblay: Are there often specific issues that are brought up international students?

Annie Sirois: Yes, they are co-chair of the committee.

Rachel LeBlanc: Is there a magic number between 2 and 8?

Connor O’Brien: As it stands now there are 6 people on this committee and we felt that any more than that would be too much and impossible to get everyone in the meetings.

Dr. Khoury: The international student rep is on the committee so that is representation. But the 2 students at large could end up being two students in the same faculty.

Annie Sirois: We are looking for items that doesn’t pertain to a degree here but to general student issues.

Dr. Khoury: But what about funding issues that pertain to academics.

Annie Sirois: That is something that the student could identify in their application. I feel that the goal is to keep this committee small, so where do we draw the line and there is so much we could do with the application process. Maybe this should be approved pending the application.

Taylor Chase: When we added the international student rep as a co-chair, why did we do that?

Annie Sirois: All members are voting members and those issues all come up.

Taylor Chase: The voice needs to be there, but does making it co-chair elevate that issue over others?

Connor O’Brien: Would you recommend just having them as additional membership and having the co-chair elected by the committee.

Chair: We had chosen international rep as co-chair because a large portion of the SNS lobbying if going towards the tuition differentiation. Because we send two delegates to these meetings without consulting council.

Taylor Chase: I would say social access is also very topical and we could argue equity would be a good co-chair.

Chair: It would be best practice to review every committee so we can change this if we find this is ineffective. Everyone has an equal voice on the committee and the co-chair just informs council on what’s going on.

Taylor Chase: Why is this the only one that is different?

Annie Sirois: This is new and we are trying something. This is a place where these issues comes up again and again. I think right now it has been a reoccurring topic.

Mildred Syabeenzu: Even seeing the word co-chair, I should be able to chair a meeting without people thinking what this is. It creates a whole new environment.

Chair: other committees don’t have set councillors so it is unable to give certain reps a co-chair title in the bylaws. This is a trial and of it is ineffective we can change it.

Nicholas Favero: Is it kind of a chicken and egg where we could outline objective criteria when the application goes through council at a later date?

Chair: Yes

Connor O’Brien: The purpose of the language is to be vague within reason so it is not restrictive. It is purposefully vague but within reason that it is clear.

Annie Sirois: I like to think that whoever is in this position moving forward would have the discretion to choose appropriate candidates.

Nicholas Favero: Perhaps add the application will have criteria laid out that will be ratified by council at the beginning of each academic year?

Connor O’Brien: Do applications have to be ratified by council every year?

Chair: It’s up to us.

Connor O’Brien: Then I think the language should be “the application will be ratified by council at the beginning of each academic year”.

Annie Sirois: I would rather have consistent application is better.

Sean Ryan: The goals of the committee are going to change each year, so the application is going to have to change. So your office would bring forward the issue and people apply.

Annie Sirois: But the students at large should be the ones discussing this it shouldn’t be predetermined.

Iain MacLellan: Could it be a potential that the VP External Affairs, international rep and the equity rep all pick the students at large to make it more like a hiring panel?

Connor O’Brien: I would second that. Adding: “Applicants shall be appointed by the VP External Affairs, International student representative and the equity student representative”.

Nicholas Favero: This alleviates the concerns I mentioned previously.

Annie Sirois: I think this has become a collective document which is good and I am happy with this.

Connor O’Brien moves to approves External Advisory Committee as presented on the screen; Iain MacLellan is the seconder (11-0-0 – *PASSED*).

*Ratification of StFX for Safe*

Nicholas Favero moves to ratify StFX for Safe; Cassia Tremblay is the seconder. Nicholas adds: They meet all the criteria and have been doing great work around campus. Cassia has nothing to add.

Question (Connor): Was this a committee last year and is SAFE the same thing?

Response (Sean Ryan): It was a committee last year and this society is separate from SAFE (community group) but is joint and help each other.

Taylor Chase calls to question; Will Gatchell is the seconder (11-0-0 – *PASSED*).

*Ratification of StFX Sociology Society*

Connor O’Brien moves to ratify the StFX Sociology Society; Bry Crabbe is the seconder. Connor and Bry have nothing to add. Chair adds: they have ERC training and all their documents.

Will Gatchell calls to question; Iain MacLellan is seconder. (10-0-1 – *PASSED*). – Abstention via Nicholas Favero due to being VP of the society.

*MPHEC Student Representative*

Annie Sirois: Maritime Province Higher Education Commission that I am a board member of. I received an email requesting having a student on the commission that would attend meetings in Moncton or telephone, requiring a few hours a month. I am opening up to council to see if they have any names of people who would be a good fit for this committee.

Chair: What would the business be for council right now?

Annie Sirois: Looking for suggestions for me to reach out to.

Iain MacLellan: Is this position for the duration of the school year.

Connor O’Brien: Who else sits on the committee?

Annie Sirois: Not totally sure but definitely students and the minister of education. Also note this is not a guarantee to be on the committee other select but we are just submitting names of those that would be interested.

Suggestions:

Rebecca Mesay

*Considered friendly.*

Closing Remarks of Chair

Brandon Hamilton (Chair): Thank you for coming!

Adjournment

Taylor Chase moves to adjourn the meeting; Nicholas Favero is seconder (*UNANIMOUSLY PASSED*)

*Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm*