

Brock University Students' Administrative Council



Meeting: 14
Date: April 5, 2017, 7:00 pm

Speaker: Istafa Sufi
Deputy Speaker: Jeremy Steinhausen
Recording Secretary: Kaitlyn Daw

OVERVIEW

Opening Procedures

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2 Territorial Recognition	Administrative
3 Approval of the Agenda	Administrative
4 Adoption of the Minutes (Meeting 13)	Administrative
5 Open Question Period	Information
6 Notes from the Speaker	Administrative

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8 Governance Committee Report (Mover – Sheikh)	Action Item
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Adjournment

1.0

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:14 p.m.

2.0

Territorial Recognition

3.0

Approval of the Agenda

BIRT BUSAC approves the agenda for the April 5, 2017 meeting.

Campbell, Cousins

-In favor

-Against

-Abstain

Passes by general consent

4.0

Adoption of the Minutes

BIRT BUSAC approves the March 29, 2017 minutes.

Banava, Stark

-In favor

-Against

-Abstain

Passes by general consent

5.0

Open Question Period

6.0

Notes from the Speaker

This is our last meeting of the year, and this is my very last meeting at this council. We have 15 people in attendance tonight, so please don't leave or we will lose quorum.

Presentation – BUSAC

Stark: Under the new system, faculty representatives are running at the same time as the BUSU executives, which hinders their ability to run for certain positions if they lose their campaign. Why was it done this way?

Ventura: Faculty representatives carry significantly more weight than Student At Large representatives; they are held accountable to the constituents like your BUSU executives, which is why they were grouped together during the same election period. I hear what you're saying, however, they still have the opportunity to run for a Student at Large position on BUSAC during March. We did that on purpose.

Verrier: Why one faculty seat instead of two?

Ventura: The research shows that there were only a handful of councilors speaking during BUSAC meetings, despite having multiple representatives for each faculty based on population. If a councilor isn't speaking during meetings, are they really representing their faculty well? Additionally, having one faculty representative makes it less confusing for students to figure out who to reach out to with their concerns. If they email 4 people, there is lesser accountability to the faculty representatives to respond. The Graduate Students Association (GSA) is set up the same way, except they have a back up person to show up to meetings but they only get one vote per faculty at each meeting.

Verrier: But there is a seat for the BSA president, and a seat for the Goodman School of Business, so they're technically getting double the representation. This confused me when it was passed.

Ventura: The Goodman School is a faculty. The BSA, on the other hand, is a student group and they are mandated by their MOU to be on BUSAC.

Calder: The report you shared talked about how frequently representatives were talking on council. Do you know how frequently the reps were contacted by email?

Ventura: I didn't have access to student emails, but I would love to know the answer to that question. It's hard to balance the carrots and the sticks, you can't constantly be engaging because you're students and have your own work and lives to tend to. When I was a Humanities councilor, I did my engagement piece before lectures and seminars. I think it would be great to run town halls with the faculty to have those conversations with students and faculty members, but we [BUSU] can't mandate that.

Speaker: For the first two years as a councilor I received maybe two or three emails from constituents. Most of my conversations with constituents were done in person. In my last year I received more than 10 emails to speak with the Dean of the faculty. It varies each year.

Verrier: This is my second year being the sole representative of the Humanities Faculty. Last year I was able to have my own BUSU email, but we changed it this

year, which has been difficult. One of the issues I find is that students don't have other faculty representatives to discuss their issues with. When we had 4 representatives, I had 3 other people I could talk to. They were part of different departments and were able to reach those students more easily. I know drama and history, but music, art, and English are not my area of study and so I'm not as engaged in those areas. I raised this as a concern to last year's council. It's very difficult being the sole representative to so many voices on campus. I wish to have two councilors on council. What is your response to that?

Ventura: Did you try to reach out to the English department? I know they have an English Students' Association that you could connect with.

Verrier: I did. It was difficult to be in charge of so many different departments. I was in my third year of study then and now I'm in my fourth year so it's even harder. It's been difficult to represent a vast number of students. The social sciences must have a hard time as well. I want to ensure all voices are heard.

Ventura: We tried representation by population for 20 years, and that didn't appear to be the most effective way to govern council based on the research. Adding more seats isn't the answer. Every other level of government functions in a similar way. I work for a Member of Parliament, and she is responsible for representing thousands of people in Ottawa from her riding. If you're the faculty representative, you have to take the time to do that outreach. Being a BUSAC councilor is difficult, it's not a gravy job. While it's challenging, I think this model will improve the way we can interact with students and establish a closer relationship with students. Don't forget, some of the Student At Large representatives can do some of the outreach as well. It's hard to mandate when you're busy people, but if you want to capture that dialogue the answer isn't putting more people in seats—it's about making a stronger council.

Calder: When you were conducting this review did you look at turnout as a factor to representation?

Ventura: I don't think we did, since there are too many variables and not enough statistics to make conclusive connections.

Stark: You mentioned bringing back an Accessibility seat on council, could you speak more to that?

Ventura: Up until 2015 we had an accessibility councilor seat. There was no formal process to select individuals for non-elected seats, like the Accessibility seat or the International Students' Association. Governance put together a process, which resulted in the removal of the Accessibility seat. The campus still has several issues with accessibility; working as a bartender opened my eyes to some of these challenges. Needless to say I was disappointed to see that seat go. I just finished my Masters and part of my research was about persons living with disabilities.

Wood: I was wondering if there was other research done about what other schools are doing, or if you know what other schools are doing with marginalized groups that are represented on councils?

Ventura: I think McMaster does a pretty good job with ex-officio seats on their council, but I can't recall specifics at this time. Perhaps Mr. Osazuwa could speak to McMaster's council better. For my Masters project, my thesis was about persons living with disabilities having a voting seat at the decision making table and I developed a process around that. I would love to see BUSAC be a leader in this sort of initiative. Consultation is important, but I also encourage you to consider the need for meaningful participating for each group you want to give representation to.

Osazuwa: Only faculty representatives have voting seats on McMaster's council. All presidents, coordinators, the indigenous association, and accessibility seats on campus have non-voting speaking seats.

Verrier: Having so many seats is something that I was proud of as a councilor because we were giving so many people a voice. Why was the number of seats such a big factor?

Ventura: I'm willing to admit that I think BUSAC is still too big. There's an argument for a large council, but when we broke down the numbers, 60% did not actually speak. Laurentian has a 12 person Board as their council, which values efficiency over accountability. There are arguments for and against that kind of model. I think you need to balance efficiency and accountability. When you get up to 50 seats for 15,000 people it's a bit too high. It's important for students to be able to contact you and that they see you as a body they can count on. Having 48 people around the table was not an efficient way of governing. We didn't change the structure of council to align with our neighbours, we did it do make it more efficient while still maintaining accountability. Having more bums in seats wasn't doing that.

8.0

Governance Committee Report

Sheikh: Governance felt the best course of action was to make a recommendation to add the seat as non-voting to ensure they had a guaranteed avenue to voice concerns without adding additional voting power over other faculties.

Verrier: Speaking to the recommendation, this was looking at giving them a voice without giving them another voting member in the same way that the Hamilton campus seat works. We looked at the BSA seat in the same way. We were also looking at other positions, such as off-campus, residence, and ISA to an extent as being non-voting seats. We're willing to open up the conversation about this. But this is the second reading of the elections bylaw.

Sheikh: To clarify, these are recommendations for next year to be reviewed.

Calder: On that, is it going to be tabled for the chair and they'll review the recommendation?

Sheikh: Every committee is required to make recommendations. Governance committee goes based off of the previous committee's recommendations. We're recommending the prioritization of the elections bylaw.

Speaker: There's no official way to force next year's council to do it, but returning councilors can bring it up.

BIRT BUSAC approves the changes to Bylaw 400 (Elections By-Laws) in its second reading.

Sheikh, Verrier

14-In favor 0-Against 1-Abstain

9.0

Ratification of Election Results

Stark: Are there 5 Student At Large positions available for the October elections?

Speaker: Yes.

BIRT BUSAC Ratifies the March 2017 election results.
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Wood, Haidon

15-In favor (Verrier) 0-Against 0-Abstain

10.0

Power Transfer

Motion to amend "BIRT BUSAC approves the transfer of powers to the Board of Directors until the first BUSAC meeting of the 2017 summer upon completion of the April 5, 2017 BUSAC meeting."

Verrier, Calder

BIRT BUSAC approves the transfer of powers to the Board of Directors until the first BUSAC meeting of the 2017 summer upon completion of the April 5, 2017 BUSAC meeting.

Hejazi, Sheikh

14-In favor 0-Against 1-Abstain

11.0

Report - General Manager

Stark: Could you speak more to the meeting you had with CUFSA?

Green: We had about an hour and a half meeting with CUFSA talking about contracts, student unions, and best practices. They're all self-operated where the university runs all food on the campus. It was interesting to see what insight they had to offer in regards to how they got into and out of Sodexo agreements.

Hejazi: Our Sodexo contract negotiations are coming up in 2019-20, so we called Peter to have this conversation. He's been passionate about the subject and gave some good feedback. He did a good job.

Verrier: Can you tell us what's going on with transit?

Green: There will be some transit changes coming. I included specific routes in my report. We have to cut 500k of funding [because of the operational deficit]. No decisions have been made about what routes will be removed yet, but we need to have the decision made by May 1. There will be some alterations for sure, some students will have to get used to the new system. We're trying to make changes with as little impact on ridership. For example, the 216 bus will likely be removed because it had only 30,000 rides a year compared to 100,000 for other routes, plus it's less than a 200-meter walk from another bus route.

Verrier: Speaking to the 216 bus, I was opposed to putting this bus in because it goes downtown and stays there for a while, then goes to the school, waits for a bit, and then goes to Brock. It doesn't serve a purpose the same way as other bus routes do. When I went on the 216 recently during a peak hour I didn't have anyone else sitting beside me. I have talked to different dramatic arts students about it and many of them were in agreement that this bus is not needed.

12.0

Report – VP Student Services

13.0

Report – VP External Affairs

14.0

Report – VP Finance & Administration

15.0

Report – President

Calder: When is the new logo coming out?

Foster: We are taking the new logo to Board tomorrow, and after board we'll unveil it. It's the best, most amazing logo out of Canadian universities. You're going to want this on a t-shirt. Support the logo, follow social media and you'll see it soon.

16.0

Closed Question Period

17.0

Information and Reminders

Wood: Tomorrow is the last Isaacs night of the year. I hope you'll all be there.

Verrier: The DART 456 performance is going on soon. They've put their heart and soul into this so make an effort to go out and see it. There was an art exhibition on today too. Mr. Nasser told me to see it three times today. We have some history lectures coming up, talk to me for more details.

Campbell: Thank you all for an amazing year.

Speaker: Thank you everyone, particularly Brock TV for filming these meetings for years. You do a great job. I want to thank all of the executives, BUSAC members, Senators, and Board of Directors I had the privilege of working with over the past 4 years, especially Verrier and Campbell. Thank you to Josh Doan, and Chris Ventura for setting a good example of what a Speaker should be. Thank you to the GM, formerly Juliette Prouse and now Chris Green. I've had the pleasure of working with BUSU in various capacities over the years and I want to thank BUSU for providing me with these opportunities. I'd also like to thank the two individuals I'm happy to have sitting beside me here, Jeremy and Kaitlyn. Kaitlyn and I started working together when we were on Brock Eco Club during our first year of university, so it's ironic we're ending this together.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Passes by general consent.

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.