**Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**

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| **Date** | Sunday, January 28th 2024 |
| **Time** | 1:00 PM Atlantic Daylight Time (Canada) |
| **Location** | 5th Floor Student Centre Building at Saint Mary’s University  Join Zoom Meeting  https://smu-ca.zoom.us/j/6603590826 |
| **Invitees** | Ashish Ganapathy (Board Chair), Shaneika Carter (Vice Chair), Meghan Boudreau, Francesca Southwell, Thomas Waithe, Toni-Ann Bennett, Tyler Hutchinson, Anushka Kalantri, Naima Hodge |
| **Resource** | Shiray Tan (President), Afif Tahsin (Board Secretary) |
| **Regrets** | N/A |

1. Call to order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 1:09 PM ADT, on January 28, 2024.

The Chair welcomes the SMU community and SMUSA members.

1. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair provides a land acknowledgment. We are on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq people, covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We are all treaty people.

1. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflict of interest declared.

1. Approval of November meeting minutes (Appendix 1)

BIRT the Board approves the previous meeting minutes from November 15, 2023

Moved by Ms. Southwell

Seconded by Ms. Bennett

Motion passed unanimously.

1. President’s Report – Shiray Tan (Appendix 2)

The SMUSA President's Report highlighted significant advancements and initiatives by the Saint Mary’s University Student Association. Shiray Tan, the President & CEO, reported on the successful launch of the Zero Textbook Cost Course List with around 50 submissions, enhancing post-secondary education accessibility. Advocacy efforts preserved the Pass/No Credit option for students, while progress was made towards implementing a Final Exam Weightage Cap to limit exam impact on course grades. The Society Calendar was streamlined for event submissions directly to the SMUSA website, and internal course evaluation processes were reformed to improve education quality. Additionally, a new communication channel, the Talk to You board in Loyola, was introduced to keep students informed. The SMUSA Open Survey indicated strong student engagement and provided critical feedback, while Winter 2024 Welcome Weeks events warmly greeted new students. A roundtable with society executives was planned to discuss support needs, and executive office hours were published on the SMUSA website to improve accessibility and transparency.

The Chair provided members of the Board the opportunity to ask questions, and a discussion followed.

Ms. Southwell thanked the President and inquired that for how long the Pass/No credit option is valid. The President replied that the policy is in force, but it has to be propagated to the concerned authority whenever any issue arises.

Ms. Southwell asked about the maximum percentage for the final exam. The President replied that discussion is still ongoing, and a definite percentage has not been fixed yet.

Ms. Southwell asked if the academic poster board was fixed or not. The President replied that she will provide an update in the next meeting.

Ms. Southwell inquired about the top feedback from the open survey. The President replied that the first one was that the students wanted more events from SMUSA. Secondly, the societies informed that how SMUSA can support the societies better.

Ms. Boudreau asked that what are all the information which will be presented in the academic board. The President informed that for now it will only be the activities done by SMUSA. Later, a provision of student feedback can also be incorporated.

Ms. Boudreau asked when the SMUSA open survey is going to be closed. The President replied that it will be closing in the upcoming week hopefully, if the targeted number of responses is achieved.

The Chair inquired if the President received any new insights of any challenges from the societies that they were facing. The President informed that there were some incidents which she were unaware about and needed to be taken care of.

* 1. Motion to Approve

BIRT the Board approves the President’s Report

Moved by Ms. Southwell

Seconded by Ms. Carter

Motion passed unanimously.

1. Chief Governance Report – Ashish Ganapathy

In the Chief Governance Report, it was emphasized that student feedback and concerns are highly valued, acknowledging their pivotal role in shaping the priorities and actions of the board to enhance student life and society engagement. Efforts are ongoing to address the issues raised, with the society committee chair expected to provide further details. Additionally, the board has focused on evaluating the president's performance, prioritizing transparency and accountability, which are seen as crucial for improving the student experience. With elections approaching, the increased student participation and the efforts of the elections team were highlighted, expressing optimism for a successful election period. The report underscores a commitment to support and engage with students throughout their journey at the university.

1. Reports of Standing Committees:
   1. Elections Committee – Francesca Southwell

Ms. southwell reported that significant progress and planning are underway for the election cycle. The fall information session on November 26, 2023, and the winter session on January 11, 2024, each attracted approximately 30 attendees, with a notable portion being new participants. The nomination period, highlighted as an opportunity for students to run for president or board positions, runs until January 30. An alumni roundtable was held, featuring a diverse group of past members spanning over a decade, emphasizing the continuity and engagement of the alumni community. Looking ahead, several key events are scheduled to ensure the smooth running and engagement of the election process. Mandatory candidate training is set for January 30, marking the beginning of the formal campaign period on February 2. This will be followed by a series of events including interviews, debates, forums, and social gatherings, aimed at providing platforms for candidates to engage with the student body. The campaign period concludes on February 13, with voting on February 14 and 15, culminating in a results announcement and celebration at the Gorge Brook on February 16. The update concluded with a commitment to transparency and involvement throughout the election process.

The Chair aske the committee if they received any interesting insights from the roundtable with the alumni that may inspire to join. The committee replied that there were a lot of enlightened information.

* 1. Human Resources & Governance Committee – Meghan Boudreau

Ms. Boudreau shared that a meeting took place in December with a governance advisor to discuss and develop a succession plan for the organization's full-time staff members. This initiative aims to ensure organizational stability for any future contingencies. Progress is being made, although the committee awaits further meetings with certain individuals to advance the plan. Additionally, a policy proposed by one of the board's committees has been approved and is set to be presented to the board for further action. The update concluded with a positive note on the initial stages of creating the succession plan, indicating an ongoing commitment to organizational preparedness and governance.

* 1. Society Committee – Toni-Ann Bennett

Ms. Bennett provided an update highlighting their efforts to address issues affecting society operations and improvement strategies for both immediate and long-term benefits. A significant mention was the success of the Society Roundtable held on January 26, where engaging discussions with society executives led to valuable insights and highlighted concerns to be addressed. Appreciation was extended to attending board members, and society executives for their contributions, input, and honesty throughout the Roundtable, emphasizing collaborative efforts towards enhancing society activities and student engagement.

* 1. Finance Committee – Thomas Waithe

Mr. Waithe stated that the committee met in December and have been working on individual components of the policy. Also, they are making sure that the operational expenses commensurate with the goals of SMUSA.

Ms. Southwell asked that on what points of the policy the committee worked on. The committee replied that they broke down the policy in individual components and worked on that.

The Chair asked if the committee is continuing consultations with other stakeholders not on the board to guide their work or not. The committee replied that the have been working with only one stakeholder so far.

1. Reports of ad-hoc Committees:
   1. Sustainability Policy Committee – Anushka Kalantri

Ms Kalantri provided an update on their progress, noting that their last meeting occurred in December. They had planned to meet in January but were awaiting a meeting with a key internal staff member for additional input, which was deemed necessary after a previous discussion. This input is crucial for the committee to finalize potential changes to their policy. The committee is optimistic about receiving this feedback soon, which will enable them to have a clearer outlook on the amendments needed for their sustainability policy. This is the primary focus remaining for the policy revision.

1. Motion – Society Policy Fee Amendment (proposed by Meghan)

A motion was proposed to amend the society's policy, specifically in section five under society criteria, section F. The amendment changes the policy from requiring societies to collect a membership fee of at least $5 from each member to granting societies the right to collect membership fees if they choose to do so. This change, aimed at providing societies with more flexibility regarding membership fees, has already received approval from both the society's committee and the HR committee. It is now being presented to the board for final approval.

* 1. Motion to Approve

BIRT the Board approves the Society Policy Fee Amendment

Moved by Ms. Francessca

Seconded by Mr. Hutchinson

Motion passed unanimously.

1. Any Other Business
2. In-Camera Session

BIRT the Board move in-camera

Moved by Ms. Bennett

Seconded by Ms. Boudreau

Motion passed unanimously.

1. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 PM by the Chair.