**Board of Directors January 2023 Meeting Minutes**

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| **Date** | Wednesday January 18th 2023 |
| **Time** | 6:00PM Atlantic Savings Time (Canada) |
| **Location** | 5th Floor Student Centre Building at Saint Mary’s University |
| **Invitees** | Alexander Wilson, (Board Chair) Ashish Ganapathy (Vice Chair), Francesca Southwell, Mihika Mihika, Sorav Sogy, Meghan Boudreau, Thomas Waithe, Nikita Nikita, Toni-Ann Bennett |
| **Resource** | Isobel Tyler (President) Rilla Barrett (Board Secretary) |

1. **Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at **6:04 AST** on January 18, 2023 by the Chair.

1. **Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair acknowledges that 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 conflicts of interest were declared.

1. **Approval of Previous meeting minutes**

**BIRT** the Board approves the meeting minutes from November 23, 2022.

Moved by Ms. Southwell

Seconded by Ms. Nikita

Motion carried

1. **Welcome Statement – Alex Wilson**

The Chair acknowledges that it’s great to see people in the audience with us at the meeting today. Everyone on the Board introduces themselves to the audience.

Ms. Mihika is joining us through Zoom tonight. The Chair wishes everyone a prosperous New Year and hopes that everyone enjoyed their holidays. Mentions the hard work already being achieved.

The Board is halfway through the school year and there’s still a lot to be done. The Board is committed to continuing to pass meaningful policies and working on behalf of students. Excited about the upcoming election and sends congratulations to all students who will be graduating.

1. **President’s Report – Isobel Tyler**
   1. **Appendix 1**

**Discussion:**

* Wellness week happened in November which included mindful meditation and therapy dogs. Welcome week was held at the beginning of the semester.
* Society expo took place and included over 70 ratified societies.
* Many events have occurred, and they have been implementing a lot of events to engage students.
* In December,The President and Dr. Summerby-Murray handed out hot chocolate to students in the quad. Monthly info booths were executed, and trivia nights have started every Wednesday night.
* SMUSA attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at Grand Parade alongside Dr. Summerby-Murray and laid wreaths to honour those who have served.
* The President and VP of Advocacy went to Ottawa with CASA for Advocacy Week.
* Gathered info from students about costs that they face and then that info was taken to Ottawa. Students are facing high costs and are finding it challenging.

**Questions:**

Ms. Boudreau asks if any past presidents participated in any of the meetings and

Ms. Tyler responds that she is not sure about previous partners.

Ms. Southwell asks about provincial advocacy week and if there were there any potential solutions to affordability.

Ms. Tyler answers that there was a one-time bursary was announced by the NS government for all NS Student assistance recipients and this was a result of Advocacy Week. They are focusing on experiential learning and other ways for textbooks to be accessible for students.

Ms. Southwell asks about wellness week and if there was a higher attendance at certain events. Ms. Tyler answers that therapy dogs had a great turnout

Mr. Ganapathy asks about engagement now as the society expo was in person vs last year when it was online. Ms. Tyler says that they are seeing a huge turnout in comparison.

Mr. Ganapathy asks about the street team and if they are creating more awareness about SMUSA events, and Ms. Tyler answers that they are.

Ms. Boudreau asked about affordability for students and if it was talked about for other students. Ms. Tyler answers that it was talked about during Advocacy Week.

1. **Reports of Standing Committees:**
   1. **Elections Committee – Nikita Nikita**

The elections committee has been very busy the last couple of months. Reviewing old policies. The new CRO/DRO have been working very hard. The Board has approved the candidates and they will be announced through social media. On January 16th the elections were announced, and a lot of interest has been shown. The presidential debate will be held on February 7 and the guest speakers are being finalized. Candidate training will take place in person in February. Hoping to increase turnout this year. Acknowledges Mr. Wilson who has been a big support to the committee chair. The Chair mentions that it’s a very stressful time and acknowledges Ms. Nikita’s hard work. Engagement numbers have been very good so far.

**Questions:**

Mr. Ganapathy asks if the Board of Directors forum and presidential debate will be in person. Ms. Nikita says yes it will be completely in person, also will be streamed and details will be finalized.

Mr. Waithe asks if they have any strategies to increase engagement. Ms. Nikita responds that they do and are working with the director of communications.

Ms Mihika asks if they’re planning to engage the help of the street team and Ms. Nikita answers that they are and that guest speakers will likely bring more engagement to the elections.

Ms. Southwell asks if there is any advice that can be provided for candidates.

Ms. Nikita redirects the question to the Chair for comment. The Chair says that engaging at any point is a very good sign and acknowledges those who have attended the meeting. If running for Board look at the policies and find issues. Put yourself out there and it is a matter of stepping outside of your comfort zone and getting involved.

* 1. **Human Resources & Governance Committee – Meghan Boudreau**

Took a break over the holidays but has a meeting coming up with full-time staff to review the HR policy. The committee will be continuing to review the policies.

* 1. **Society Committee – Thomas Waithe**

Acknowledges the hard work of the Directors of Societies. The committee took a break during holidays and exams and moving forward they will be looking at the policies to make them more efficient.

* 1. **Finance Committee – Sorav Sogy**

The committee is due for a meeting this month. Prepping to analyze the annual statements and will be looking at them regarding productivity.

1. **Any Other Business**

**Board of Governors – Francesca Southwell**

For the winter convocation, they will be attending on behalf of the Board of Governors. They are given the opportunity to attend convocations and the Chair acknowledges Ms. Southwell for stepping in for that.

Mr. Ganapathy acknowledges that it is great to see people at the meeting and hopes that their engagement will continue beyond the election period. Ms. Mihika wishes everyone luck who is planning to run in the elections.

1. **In-Camera Session**

**BIRT the Board move to an in-camera session**

Moved by Ms. Boudreau

Seconded by Mr. Sogy

Motion carried

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 AST by the Chair.