

**Council on Student Services (COSS)**  
**Minutes of Meeting – September 23, 2019**

President's Boardroom, Simcoe Hall, Room 132  
3:00 – 5:00 pm

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Voting Members:**

*Present:*

- Beth Ali, Executive Director, Athletics & Physical Activity, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Heather Kelly, Executive Director, Student Life Programs & Services, Student Life St. George
- John Monahan, Warden, Hart House
- David Newman, Executive Director, Student Experience, Student Life St. George
- Meredith Strong, Director, Office of the Vice-Provost, Students
- Desmond Pouyat, Dean of Student Affairs, UTSC
- Richie Pyne, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
- Jaime Kearns, Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
- Arjun Kaul, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Joshua Bowman, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Avani Singh, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Ameera Karim, University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU)
- Sophie McGibbon-Gardner, Graduate Students' Union (GSU)

*Absent:*

- Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs and Assistant Principal, Student Services, UTM
- TBD, Quality Service to Students (QSS)
- Tebat Kadhem, Council on Student Services (CSS)
- Lwanga Musisi, Graduate Students' Union (GSU)

**Non-voting Members:**

- Julia Smeed (Secretary)
- Kim Elias (incoming Secretary)
- Fran Dobbin
- Allison Burgess
- Serena Persaud (CAO, Student Life)

*Guests:*

- Sandy Welsh (Vice Provost, Students)
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*Chair:*

- Hanie Yousefi

*Recording Secretary:*

- Sarah Matias

## AGENDA ITEMS

### **1. Introductions**

Chair Yousefi welcomed the members and guests, and everyone introduced themselves.

### **2. Meeting Called to Order**

Chair called the meeting to order at 3:14 pm.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

Chair sought mover to approve agenda. Singh motioned, McGibbon-Gardner seconded. All in favour, none opposed. The motion passed.

### **4. Approval of Minutes from Meeting #7 of COSS 2018-19**

Chair sought mover to approve the minutes from the meeting of March 29, 2019. Newman motioned, Kaul seconded. All approved, none opposed. The motion passed.

Chair Yousefi provided a brief overview of the minutes from the March 29, 2019 meeting. Chair asked if there were any discussions on the minutes from Meeting 7. Pyne clarifies that Munib, guest listed, was from UTM not UTSC. Vote on revised minutes, all in favour, none opposed, 2 abstentions. Revised minutes passed.

### **5. COSS Orientation**

Smeed reviewed a PowerPoint presentation and provided an overview of the COSS protocol/procedure to the membership present.

Welsh followed by providing an overview of the Student Choice Initiative and the opt-out portal which opened on July 15, 2019. The initiative applies to Student Services Fees (or Campus Services fees) and Student Society Fees.

The University received the final framework and guidelines from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on March 29th that identified the categories of fees considered essential and therefore compulsory.

They are:

- Athletics and recreation
- Career services
- Student buildings
- Health and counselling
- Academic support
- Student ID cards
- Student achievement and records

- Financial aid offices
- Campus safety programs
- Health and Dental plans are compulsory but must allow students to opt-out if they provide proof or pre-existing coverage
- Existing compulsory transit passes

All other non-tuition fees are therefore non-essential and must be optional.

Welsh expressed gratitude to the student society leaders and the student services staff for their assistance and support through this process as well as to staff across the University who worked to have the opt-out portal ready on time

Currently UofT has 523 optional fees. This includes fees that are different for full-time and part-time student fees.

As of the end of August, the opt-out median rate was 15.3%. This was calculated by determining the opt-out rate of each of the 523 optional fees based on the number of students assessed the fee.

As fees vary by student based on their program and registration status (Graduate/undergraduate, part-time/full time), the optional fees also vary. Students in some divisions have over 30 optional fees to select from.

The total value of the opt-out fees range from \$15 to a maximum of \$380 per term. In percentages, the minimum is 3% and max is 36% of the total incidental fees. These numbers do not include refunds for the health and dental coverage. The health and dental coverage is mandatory, but students may apply for a refund through their student union with proof of similar coverage. When including the potential refund of the health and dental fees, the range increases to \$150-\$570 per term or 28-78% of fees.

Welsh noted that the numbers are preliminary and that the opt-out system for the fall term will not close until September 19. The winter opt-out will begin on November 1st - prior to the fee deadline dates. Welsh notes that she is happy to answer any questions at the end of the meeting relating to the Student Choice Initiative.

Smeed continued with logistics; a list of all future meetings are presented and Bourinot's Rules of Order is explained to the members.

Smeed encouraged members to ask any questions they may have relating to COSS, or for Professor Welsh surrounding the Student Choice Initiative.

McGibbon-Gardner asked Welsh about whether students would be hearing about rates and receiving cheques mid-October and whether this would still be the case; Welsh responded that it was.

Bowman requested clarity on the opt-out median calculation. Welsh responded and said that the opt-out rate is calculated by "the median of the median" meaning that they take the 523 optional fees, determine the opt out rate for each one, and then find the median for each of the 523 fees.

Smeed reminded the members that as of last year COSS is recognized, and has the co-curricular record (CCR) approval, for student participation and can be validated through the CCR.

## **6. Scheduling of Future Meetings**

Doodle Polls were sent out and members were able to choose the day that was best suitable for their schedules. All seven meetings have been scheduled – list available on the PowerPoint for reference.

## **7. Other Business**

Chair requests if any other business required discussion.

Smeed requested that the guidelines/options for remote meeting participation be discussed and reviewed by this year's membership, at the request of last year's COSS membership committee, as the document was quite outdated and attendance was an ongoing issue. Smeed presented the group with a draft, with tracked changes and revisions, of the current remote participation document. The following options were proposed:

Virtual attendance instead of teleconferencing (Zoom or Skype, possibly), no limit to the number of individuals who can join remotely (emphasizing that in person is preferred). We require a motion to make these changes before we would be able to change the format and guidelines to participation.

McGibbon-Gardner requested that a change in language be made to point #8 indicating that the guidelines will be reviewed annually and any changes can be made at that time/made at the first cycle meeting.

Pyne clarified that last year last year's COSS membership requested these changes and wanted to make COSS meetings more accessible.

Monahan acknowledged the responsiveness of the updated guidelines as it reflects the request of last year's membership; he also asked for clarification on voting and whether verbally voting would still be required. Smeed confirms that she would be looking for the advice of all members on COSS; updating the guidelines was solely to widen the scope of opportunities for the group to connect online. Newman responded to this by offering a suggestion that members participating virtually would still need to indicate their vote, depending on the platform (chat feature etc.).

Pouyat noted that verbal voting (over phone) is used in many governance meetings and can be done via virtual attendance too.

McGibbon-Gardner suggested that when votes are called the Chair asks members participating remotely to indicate verbally, or otherwise, yes, no or abstention so that we encompass all possibilities.

Smeed summarized the 2 proposed changes. Point 7 regarding voting and Point 8 regarding reviewing changes annually. Chair sought mover to approve the revised guidelines for remote participation with the revisions discussed. Singh motioned, Kaul seconded. All approved, none opposed. The motion passed.

Newman noted that he and Persaud are in the process of finalizing the terms of reference for the Student Life Budget Committee, this will be circulated to everyone and representative student members of COSS will be asked to participate on that committee.

Adjournment

Chair Yousefi asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Monahan motioned to adjourn, seconded by Pyne. Meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.