



# STUDENTS' COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE MINUTES

2013 – 2014

*Date: October 17<sup>th</sup> 2013*

*Time: 6.11 pm*

**In Attendance:**

*NATALIA BINCZYK (Chair)*

*MARINA BANISTER*

*DAWSON ZENG*

*SEAMUS WU*

*FABIAN EISMAN*

*LOK TO*

*BASHIR MOHAMED (proxy)*

**Excused Absence:**

*PETROS KUSMU*

*CRAIG TURNER*

*JESSICA NGUYEN*

**Others in Attendance:**

*KATHRYN ORYDZUK*

*SACHITHA KUSALADHARMA*

**1. CALL TO  
ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by BINCZYK at 6.11 pm.

**2. APPROVAL OF  
AGENDA**

BINCZYK moved to add an item to the agenda under New Business named "Establishing quorum in SCET's terms of reference".

BANISTER moved to approve the agenda for *October 17, 2013* as amended. The motion was seconded by EISMAN.

*Vote 5/0/0*

*CARRIED*

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

BINCZYK moved to approve the minutes for *October 3, 2013* as tabled.  
The motion was seconded by BANISTER.  
Vote 5/0/0  
*CARRIED*

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

Constituent Communication Structure – Kathryn Orydzuk

ORYDZUK: My job is primarily to advise student representatives, and to do research on problems that student representatives may come across. My primary reason to be here today is to talk about a project vice-president Chelen asked me to do in the summer. It was to solve student engagement. What I have come up is a virtual governance center. It could be facilitated through the Students' Union (SU) website as it is, or it could be a separate thing. The primary thing we are looking at right now is a petition system for students where any student can submit a petition online. Other students can give it their e-signatures. After it reaches a certain threshold of signatures, it will go to council. The council will then have to submit a response to the petitioner. The petition would first come to my department, *Discover Governance*. We will then forward it to the necessary authorities.

There are 3 mechanisms that ensure engagement and transparency in government. They are referendums, sunshine laws, and petitions. We have the first two already. However, we don't have petitions, and I thought it would be a good way to start. The login would be with the students' CCID. The development of the actual website is simple, and the SU has the required staff to do that. In terms of the timeline, it may take up to a year because the person who does the websites is overburdened these days. Moreover, the consultations, research, and approvals may take 3 months.

EISMAN: Is there a mechanism such that the petitions are given responses in a timely manner.

ORYDZUK: I would definitely consider including that. The reason that I haven't mentioned that the SU must do something is because there may be joke petitions. So, we can only force council to give a response.

EISMAN: Saying "No" is a response too. A lot more gets accomplished if you can say "yes" or "no".

TO: It's good if there is a personalized response as opposed to a generic one.

BINCZYK: Do you have plans for promoting this?

ORYDZUK: No. But, I would look at the SU's marketing division, and also the Faculty Associations (FAs). Furthermore, word of mouth works well in these instances. Also, a joke petition may have a marketing value too.

BINCZYK: Are all petitions public?

ORYDZUK: Yes, they will be.

BANISTER: What if there is a silly petition which gets a lot of signatures?

Can we say no to that?

ORYDZUK: Council can say no, regardless of the numbers.

TO: Can they appeal the decision?

ORYDZUK: Probably not. They would have to resubmit.

BANISTER: What ever gets petitioned, they will need our help in some capacity after it gets approved. Will you help them as *Discover Governance*? How will be the process?

ORYDZUK: It would be on a case-by-case basis. Overall, it will go to the executives, and they will take care of it.

BINCZYK: Is your main idea petitions.

ORYDZUK: Yes. We will be moving forward with petitions first.

Students' Council Visibility, Inclusivity, and Outreach to Students (Summary of the previous meeting's discussion) - Natalia Binczyk

*BINCZYK mentioned that the objectives of the meeting were to establish the priorities, identify stakeholders, and to determine the future course of action. BINCZYK identified the strengths of the SU (good visibility during elections and orientations, excellent marketing team, popularity of outreach through social media, services and advocacy), and also the visibility limitations (visibility gap between orientation and march elections, no posters / class talks, non involvement in FA and Greek community activities). Regarding the Students' Council specific facebook group, she identified several logistical challenges which exist. These were: differentiating the perspective of council and individual councilors, administrator of the account, and login details of councilors.*

*Regarding inclusivity limitations, BINCZYK identified unawareness of the election process and council proceedings, lack of awareness about international student rights, lack of a salary for councilors, group specific issues for students, lengthy election processes, and the obscure meeting location.*

*Under outreach limitations, BINCZYK touched upon students not knowing what to look for about council, lack of students' council representatives at student group events, no outreach specific to students who are already working for the SU, and not having information about councilors in the website.*

*Finally, BINCZYK identified the things to keep in mind while making changes such as institutionalizing changes, violation of SU bylaws / policies, and the committees or individuals who are responsible for specific items.*

MOHAMED: The SU website gives emails.

BINCZYK: The emails are not working. Kathryn, is this your portfolio as well?

ORYDZUK: No. But I know who to talk to.

BINCZYK: Would you be the person to contact if we have specific changes for the SU website?

ORYDZUK: Yes. I have editing access. You can either ask me or the speaker Craig Turner.

### Establishment of Priorities and Identification of Stakeholders

BINCZYK: What are the priorities? What do we need to do quickly?

ORYDZUK: *Discover Governance* can facilitate a facebook page. Regards to councilor salary, we can call it an honorarium.

BANISTER: For the honorarium, we can bring it to the Council Administration Committee (CAC). We are not responsible for it.

BINCZYK: We have to recommend changes. We can't do the changes ourselves. Regarding the facebook group, who would be setting up the rules and governing procedures?

ORYDZUK: It would be you guys.

BANISTER: I wouldn't be opposed to a simple facebook page. However, I wouldn't want to have intense debates there. The speaker should be the person behind this.

BINCZYK: Would it be a good idea to ask the speaker to administer a facebook page? Is it within his responsibility?

ORYDZUK: I'm not sure. It should be either him or my manager Rebecca.

BANISTER: It's good to have a returning member administer the page for consistency.

BINCZYK: Would a facebook page be useful?

EISMAN: There may be no end of arguing if people are left to put forward their opinion. Also, if we can't give any input, it would be useless for us to have it in our feed.

BINCZYK: What students say will be biased. It is good to have those biased opinions in order to understand what they think.

EISMAN: In that case, a facebook group would be better. Also, there should be more accountability within the page.

BANISTER: Would it be appropriate to do polls within the facebook groups?

ORYDZUK: Yes. It will be a good idea.

MOHAMED: There's also a SU facebook page. Can we have our updates there?

ORYDZUK: The speaker Craig Turner would know who is in charge of that.

EISMAN: One of the reasons that councilors aren't getting paid is to prevent them from playing up to certain constituents. There are certain communities who have more power to elect people.

BINCZYK: Introducing an honorarium is a very lengthy process. The idea has been out there. It has been brought up that many talented individuals are

not able to join council because they have to work.  
The priorities we have come up with are the facebook group and the website.  
Do you guys have anything else?

BANISTER: We have to be in liaison with CAC to make these changes.

BINCZYK: Yes, they would be the contact point. We will only be doing recommendations. We have to establish the things we are doing in the fall semester as we cannot tackle all.

EISMAN: The easiest thing which can be done is the facebook group. We can also have virtual meetings there.

BINCZYK: Do you see the visibility gap between the orientation and the march election as a big issue?

Do they still have any responsibility after the orientation?

ORYDZUK: You will have to contact Tim Ira.

BANISTER: Erin Borden was the facilitator for the week of welcome. You can contact her too.

BINCZYK: Do you think the lack of Students' Council representation in campus wide events is something we have to give priority?

EISMAN: The concept is good. There should be some value in the contribution. They should not go just for the sake of going.

BINCZYK: How about the branding of councilors? Do you think that there should be jackets? No?

BANISTER: It's on CAC. If they have not prioritized it, we may not get it for a while.

EISMAN: A pin would be good.

BINCZYK: Do you want us to look at different backgrounds students are coming from, and how we can make their transition easier?

BANISTER: There are already 2 presentations about getting involved with student governance during orientations. It's not something which is not getting addressed.

BINCZYK: I think the lack of awareness about international student rights is important to address. Seamus, do you think international students are informed about election processes etc.?

WU: If you need information, there is a lot of stuff available online. However, some students don't care.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### Establishing Quorum in SCET's Terms of Reference

BINCZYK moved to establish quorum as 6/9 SCET members.

The motion was seconded by EISMAN.

Vote 6/0/0

*CARRIED*

**6. REPORTS**      *None*

**7. CLOSED SESSION**   *NIL*

**8. NEXT MEETING**   *October 31, 2013 at 6 pm.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**    BINCZYK moved to adjourn the meeting.  
The motion was seconded by ZENG.  
Vote 6/0/0  
*CARRIED*

The meeting was adjourned at 7.07 pm.