

AGENDA

Title of meeting: **SLS Open Meeting**

Date: October 31, 2016

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: SLS Lounge

- **Present:** President, 1L Rep, 2L Rep, 3L Rep, Academic Director, Events Director, Sports & Clubs Director, VP External, Development Director, CBA Rep, Outreach Director, Health & Wellness Rep, ILSA Rep, Alumni Director, Communications and Marketing Officer, Treasurer, VP Internal.
- **Regrets:** none.
- Motion to approve minutes by president, seconded. 3L Rep Abstention, remainder in favour. Minutes approved.

1) President Report

		<u>NOTES</u>
• Gift for professor Dhand		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have \$70 collected, understand events director may be able to get a gift to her. Events Director confirmed this is accurate. • Gift ideas? Flowers suggested by VPI, Events suggests a stuffed animal. Decided on a stuffed animal, preferably a bunny, and remainder of funds used for flowers.

(2) Reports from Internal Directors

(a) Class Representatives

		<u>NOTES</u>
1L		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns re: structure of FLS • Multiple 1Ls have raised concerns regarding FLS. Recently, the class was reprimanded for a large number of absences, attendance is now mandatory and being taken each class. • Generally, the complaint is that the class is not that great and students want the class time reduced. 1L rep has advised that likely won't occur. • Rep voiced opinion that the professor has a good heart, he's nice BUT the 1L group has had posts with links to materials from Queens Law & the FLS slides are sometimes copied verbatim, in a class learning about citations. • It was noted by another exec that this is not uncommon in our classes; profs use material from other schools. • 1L Rep is not sure whether this is being raised because people are frustrated with the course itself, or if it's actually an instruction issue, but people seem to find that he's filling time and often lets them out early. • Rep is really not sure of what to do – understand this class has also been complained of in past, perhaps it's just the course. • 3L rep notes there isn't much to do, instructors have academic freedom and can teach the curriculum as they see fit. That said, constructive criticism in course evaluations is suggested. • VPE also suggests that students may want to simply speak with the prof, respectfully raise these concerns. • Communications rep suggests that if the class has an idea they can agree on, if everyone produces it on their course evaluations that would say a lot.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Director notes that taking a macro view, a curriculum review is currently under way. Specific to 1L curriculum, it's to be redone by the end of this year to be implemented in 2 years' time – so the course will be seeing some changes. From a current perspective, if the syllabus isn't being followed, grading is arbitrary, things of that nature, bring it to academic to raise with administration. • 1L Rep suggests that content seems useful, perhaps it's the execution that is not the best. • Development notes that the course is frustrating for everyone who does it, but it's a reprieve from our other intense classes, further you brief in all of your classes and then you do a brief for credit in FLS - it's there to reinforce fundamental legal skills, if you want to do <i>more</i> work ok, but maybe consider thinking of it this way. • President advised that as 1L rep in 2014/15 similar concerns were expressed and she went to the professor and spoke to them as our rep.
2L • Merchandise order update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All orders have been collected, processing and organizing is underway and approximately 50% completed. • 2L rep intends to go over the remaining payments with the Treasurer this Wednesday, get final numbers to the book store and get a quote and order underway from there with the intention of having orders in pre-exams. • Alumni noted that getting the quote together and numbers in as quickly as possible would be good because sometimes returning the quote takes time. • 1L Rep noted that the person she'd discussed with 2L rep today has their payment coming. Also asked when we expect order to come in & 2L rep advised it should be before finals.
3L	

(b) Academic

	<u>NOTES</u>
• Exam policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving an overview, we will have a more substantive next week & that will be in camera. • The academic Planning Committee has been working on this – there's a need for a discrete policy, started with a discussion of standard in school exam & issues with length especially for accommodated students • Moving from defining in school exams to what a take home can look like. Academic has looked at policies from a bunch of other law schools and been in contact with their academic directors when possible, read the packet – there's variety of exam styles at other schools. • Academic's preference would be to move away from short spurt take homes to 48+ hours for reasons such as stimulant use, caregivers, disparity for accommodated vs non accommodated and the tension it created. • Lots of admin concerns with respect to administering in school exams & the effect of length. • Question from 1L Rep – do upper years have lots of take homes? Group reply that there are some, presently one for one section of a mandatory course, some take home mid-terms, formerly a take home option in another course as well. • Suggested (by CBA?) that with respect to scheduling we might want to look into a distinction for mandatory courses with take homes. • Response is that Heshka presently creates schedules and this can be raised with him, noted that he's alive to it as its been raised before. • In sum; turn your mind to it, look at the pdf and we'll discuss next week.

(c) Events

Halloween recap	<u>NOTES</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great event, lots of positive feedback, especially about venue. Suggested that we should pre-book with Colombo as they fill up, that way it's not on the person coming in in March. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development comment that the dance floor was quite slippery. • Re: ticket sales, just under what was sold last year, still sorting out final numbers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comment from 2L student that we may want to see if price difference affected attendance. • Response, think that it really encouraged paying of fees which is good. • As of now we think we made \$1200 overall, there will be no cleaning fees required & the venue really like us.

(d) Sports/Clubs

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(3) External Reports**(a) Vice President External**

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(b) Development Director

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(c) CBA Rep

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(d) Outreach Director

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(e) Health and Wellness

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(f) ILSA

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(g) Alumni Director

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(h) Communications and Marketing Officer

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(4) Financial Report

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(5) Vice President Internal Report

- Discussion of amendments to Member Behaviour Policy (ie. ‘online conduct policy’ discussion) draft 1, see Appendix A

- NOTES
- We now have an initial draft to discuss.
 - Again, we don’t want anything sweeping, nothing too wide or broad. Not trying to eliminate criticism or critique and we can’t prevent people from acting like idiots sometimes, but we’re trying to address those times where things cross the line.
 - One suggestion, add the word ‘intimidate’ – not sure if it’s necessary, 3L rep notes that it is very subjective and agrees it may not be necessary.
 - Question from Dustin, what’s the need & how will it work? Will it reflect poorly on TRU Law?
 - Answer by VPI, as of now we would be limiting the forums it applies for to the TRU Law page and year pages, based solely on our administration of those spaces.
 - As far as reflecting poorly on our school, these are preventative measure should instances arise; don’t think it reflect poorly to have a policy in existence, seems responsible. Further, while it’s a new element to our policy it’s been drafted based on another school’s policy, these things are already in use elsewhere.
 - Comment from Melissa that it doesn’t reflect poorly, lots of institutions, schools etc. have bullying policies for example, not an issue to have pre-emptive policies.
 - Concern from Scott re: libelous, defamation content of the draft – issues with this language as they’re difficult concepts and seem as though they could be used with plenty of discretion, also notes that this doesn’t really seem necessary.
 - Alumni notes she can think of 2 that have come up this year where names are mentioned and attacks of their character, which suggests libel/defamation line might be needed
 - President commented that we’re truly talking about defamation, not criticism of the SLS
 - Also commented that the worst thing the exec has done is given these problematic posters an opportunity to continue to respond and continue their commenting by engaging in it.
 - Noted by secretary that we have a lag in the minutes but the exec have in fact set a policy for responses to things, a way to deal with this concern
 - Further, expressed a concern with respect to the lack of appeal policy.
 - Noted that there is in fact an appeal policy, dispute resolution committee exists and that’s their purpose
 - Response that this should be included
 - Clarification provided; if we look at the draft we see it’s to be inserted into the Member Behavior Policy, which already details the appeal process.
 - Comment from Melissa: this is a FB group which certain people are admin of & they admin should have the power to address the posts, delete things if needed. If there’s an issue with the actions taken then that should come to dispute resolution. Having a policy and discretion to do this doesn’t seem problematic, logical.
 - Concern from Scott that there’s a huge amount of room for abuse in the current policy, further comment that we’re far more connected with one another and likely to side with each other than the general SLS membership, so the idea that anything arising under this would come to the group for discussion isn’t helpful/effective.
 - Comment from academic director that we have a robust discussion regularly with one another, while we get along we certainly have and share very different opinions.
 - Comment from President - there’s a difference between our public fb forum and your own personal page, you can share what you want there but we need to maintain a positive, non-intimidating environment in these forums.
 - Communications response / questions, maybe appeal process needs to be mentioned in this specific policy

- Response from secretary to clarify, this will be within the full behavior policy, so the structure looks odd now but it will flow better and the process is mentioned in the policy as a whole, which we'll see once its all together
- Comment from president, maybe we could have a member of the dispute resolution committee as an admin.
- From VPI, (b) should be read together with section 4 which facilitates discussion with the member and has mechanisms to go with it – this provision does not stand alone without a process.
- Question from Melissa, does this have to wait until March AGM? And as the Dispute Resolution Committee wants to add two members, perhaps that would be a time to add someone to deal with the FB stuff specifically.
 - President response, doesn't need to wait until March as it's a policy and not a constitution issue.
- 3L Rep Question for Scott, do you have any sites that aren't self moderated? TRU Law is essentially a news tool, and also a place where discussion occurs. Most websites have some sort of moderator control
 - Scott noted a site for political discussion which does have a moderator but where divergent views expressed without moderator interference
 - Noted that that page is the SLS' primary conduit of communication, also the means by which SLS members are able to voice concern/criticism and discuss the same, shouldn't be preventing that
 - Shouldn't have the ability to get rid of what we disagree with
- Comment from Development Director – We're in law school, we critique every day without using sexist things, names, homophobia etc. The wording of the provision doesn't stifle anything, there continues to be nothing wrong with saying 'there's a problem with X' under this policy.
- 1L Rep comments that concerns have been expressed by the 1L class that this policy is maybe too narrow, too specific OR that maybe its not specific enough... this issue being that it doesn't seem to deal with the comments/threads like those that have come up in the last 24hours in the 1L group.
 - Follow up explanation of this; separate from anything to do with SLS, a thread came up on the 1L class page
 - it was comments back and forth about someone running in a separate election and it became aggressive and veered towards personal attack
 - 1L rep expressed that a policy would be really helpful for her, as a the year rep and that group's admin, to guide in what's appropriate and what's not, and guide about what to do in that situation
 - Noted that some parties have been talked to privately and it appears the conversation has become a private one
- 2L Rep comments that this policy is useful because it makes things NOT arbitrary; presently we can just do what we want, now this gives us a guideline and demonstrates for others what will and will not be allowed, how to post in a manner that will be permitted
- Comment from Scott that the defamatory and libelous sections are still the problematic ones, its so broad, the courts struggle with it, don't trust that the executive can really sort out what that looks like
- Communications comments that it seems the general concern with the policy is that it can be abused and will eliminate opportunity to voice issues, but communications notes that the FB group is not the only means of communication or bringing forward these concerns and critiques ...

- President Comment, in favor of some kind of policy. The example of our 1L rep, who has been here 2 months, how does she know what to do in the above scenario? Also, we're all elected in, so if people elect us in, it would be better to have a formal policy so they know what we can do and consider that in their vote.
- Comment from Scott, every year has a firecracker, he can see someone censoring everything they post, but at end of day those are the people to be most careful around as they have legitimate criticism to be heard - they are people who would never get on the SLS but their opinions should be valued
- Comment from Melissa, discussed intimidation before, this conversation / policy seems to also be about the things that someone says which makes other students uncomfortable & maybe that should be reflected in the policy's language
- Question from Secretary, what were the actual concerns that have been brought to us? That might help us with language.
 - VPI response, the trail the threads take, the personal attacks braided in etc.
- Comment from VPI, Libelous & Defamation language is important in her view because misinformation needs to be dealt with because again, this is an important channel for the rest of the student body.
- Comment from Clubs, thinks this is a boiler plate section standard among all law schools, we're not talking about questionable cases of defamation or slander but clearly problematic ones. Also, whether we include it here or not it's already illegal in our country.
 - Comment from Scott is that there's discomfort with having anyone in this room say which comments are defamation. Same concerns as before.
 - Response from Clubs, we're not elected to represent ourselves, we're elected to represent the larger body of students & if we can't be trusted to delete posts when needed then we have much bigger problems here. Again, only talking about clear cut cases.
- Comment from Scott to VPI's point, correcting misinformation with SLS, isn't responding and correcting then not responding further a better way to address that than labeling as defamation/libel and deleting?
 - Comment from President – let's clarify, things like 'SLS is lazy' opinion, that's not getting deleted; things like 'banned from Golf course' false, deleted.
- Comment from VPE, there's an appropriate way to address concerns, and we need to ensure everyone feels comfortable in voicing concerns, opinion, thoughts etc. & if we don't have a way to deal with these things, how are we fostering a good environment for that?
- Comment from Melissa, suggests that we can address concerns with the wording, maybe add a conflict of interest provision, use may instead of will etc.
- Comment from Events, to clarify, sole problem is the defamatory & libelous line? And concern is that we're unable to decide on these things?
 - Yes. Even if able to deal with these concepts, involvement causes bias.
- President notes that we need to wrap this portion and deal with the agenda's other items.
- Thank you to all for coming and providing feedback. We'll continue to collect feedback until the 4th and continue from there.

(6) Other Business

	<u>NOTES</u>
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APPENDIX A

The following amendments are proposed to be added to the existing **SLS Member Behaviour Policy**:

October 30, 2016

[To be inserted after section 2 of the current **SLS Member Behaviour Policy**]

3. All members are expected to keep online SLS administered spaces free from discriminatory remarks or harassment in any form.
 - a. This includes, but is not limited to: remarks or images that are based on racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic, or transphobic sentiments; comments that attempt to demean, humiliate or threaten any individual or group based on any of the grounds listed above; and defamatory or libelous statements against any individual or group.
 - b. Comments or posts that do not comply with these rules will be removed and reasons for the removal will be discussed with the offending member.
 - c. Instances of harassment, threats or other criminal behaviour may be reported to the police, the University, the British Columbia Human Rights Commission, or any other regulatory body deemed appropriate in the circumstances.