

MINUTES – UNBSU Council Meeting

UNB Student Union 2021/22

November 28, 2021; 7:00 PM via Zoom

Regrets: Emily Simon

Absences: Ariel Lee, Kianna Bear Heatherington



1. Call to Order

Matt Gysbers, Council Chair, calls the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

1.1 Roll Call

Matt Gysbers performs roll call.

2. Approval of Agenda

Resolution 45-21

That Council adopts the agenda for November 28, 2021.

Mover: Brennan Marks

Second: Seth Eichhorst

The motion is carried.

3. Chair's Remarks

4. Approval of Previous Minutes

Resolution 046-21

That Council approves the minutes for November 7, 2021.

Mover: Kordell Walsh

Second: Sangeeth Mylatt Veetil

The motion is carried.

5. Substantive Business

5.1 Orientation Chair and Vice Chair Hiring

Kordell Walsh, President: There are two parts to this topic. The orientation team has a set of bylaws for orientation specifically. Katelynn and I have met with the orientation folks and student services to discuss the preparations for next year. In order to hire the incoming chair and vice chair, they need a councillor representative on the hiring committee. The first order of business would be to appoint a councillor for the hiring for that. You would sit on both the committee for Chair and Vice Chair, they're staggered to hire chair in January and Vice Chair late February. Your role would be going over resumes, cover letters, interviewing, discussing candidates, and ensuring you're hiring the best candidates for each position.

The second part is to possibly review the orientation bylaws, and as such we need to assemble an ad-hoc committee of council. Part of this would be to review the pay of the roles, as they're paid at minimum wage plus \$1.00, and there's some interest from both Student Services and us in increasing that pay.

Resolution 047-21

That Council appoint Sangeeth Mylatt Veetil to the UNBSU Orientation Chair and Vice-Chair Hiring Committees for the 2022 year.

Mover: Kordell Walsh

Seconder: Brennan Marks

The motion is carried.

Resolution 048-21

That Council stroke an ad-hoc committee to review the UNBSU Orientation Bylaws as tasked by UNB Student Services and the UNBSU Orientation Chair and Vice Chair.

Mover: Kordell Walsh

Secunder: Ojaswi Joshi

The motion is carried.

5.2 NBSA Discussion

Kordell Walsh, President: Following our previous discussion about the NBSA, Advancement Committee met and had an hour-long meeting on Monday. It didn't take long to come to the conclusion that the recommendations from last year's review report were fair and reasonable, and that the financial concerns continued to persist. One of which wasn't really addressed by advancement committee because I wasn't aware of it until after the meeting was that the NBSA's phone was no longer in operation, and there's no real explanation as to why that phone bill may have not been paid. When I asked the Executive Director about this, they replied that it had been working a few weeks ago, which had raised some red flags. As well, we're 6 months into the term and there still haven't been any of the quarterly budget updates that are required by their bylaws, nor their monthly financial updates. As well, it's not just the Executive Director's responsibility, it is also the responsibility of the Chair and as such it hasn't received appropriate action. Advancement Committee's final recommendation was to sever financial ties with the NBSA, with the caveat to reapply for observer status once that has been honoured which has no financial commitments. It would be an act of good faith to show we're interested in communication and collaboration, just that we're not feeling we're getting financial value out of the organization. Another note is there won't be a motion tonight, as we're required to provide the NBSA with 2 weeks notice of intent to vote as per our External Political Representation Policy. Our next council meeting would only be 13 days from providing them notice, so I would like to know how folks would like to handle that.

Luc Bouvier, Student Senator: I'll just say that I doubt the NBSA will launch severe legal action against us, however to really make sure we dot our Is and cross our Ts an emergency meeting is the best way to go about this.

Kordell Walsh: Okay, we will call an emergency meeting. WE'll post a poll this week to find a time that works best for everybody

5.3 Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign

Kordell Walsh: They presented to us last week with a series of asks. One of which is to write a letter of support, another of which being to sign on to their open letter in development, and lastly to show social media. I will note that we restrict social media support to ratified clubs/societies in order to promote them, however I want to know what folks would like to see regarding our commitment to divestment.

Katelynn Pickel-MacDonald, Vice President Finance and Operations: Is everybody comfortable signing to an open letter?

Seth Eichhorst, Law Representative: I'm fine with an open letter, but would it be signed as UNBSU?

Kordell Walsh: Yes.

Katelynn Pickel-MacDonald: Yeah, your name individually isn't going to be there.

Sean Mackenzie, Student Senator: To make sure we cover everything, do we know the background of RAVEN? Are they a political/religious organization?

Kordell Walsh: I haven't looked into that. I don't think so, but I'll look and bring that back to council. I'll also note that their open letter is in development, so we can express intent to sign but the letter itself

would be brought back to council before we become a signatory to make sure we're in agreeance with everything in it.

Brennan Marks, Vice President Student Life: I think we should also reach out and ask them to be recognized just for consistency sake.

Katelynn Pickel-MacDonald: Just for those that don't know the difference between ratification and recognition, recognition doesn't receive funding. Otherwise it's the same process

5.4 Faculty Councillor Updates

Seth Eichhorst, Law Councillor has no updates.

Khanh Nguyen, Science Councillor: I'm just planning my councillor project and the science gala.

Spencer MacDonald, Computer Science Councillor has no updates.

Meghan Budd, Administration Councillor, has no updates.

Abbie Delaney, Kinesiology Councillor, has no updates.

Stacie Smith, Education Councillor, has no updates.

Houda El Hajjaoui, Engineering Councillor: I met with Angela from the Science PAL Center about how we can apply that to engineering. I created a plan for winter 2022 pilot project to collect data and sent that to Ridhi.

Reports to Council

6.1 Vice President – Student Life

- I took Wednesday off this week, so there's a little less in my update this week
- A lot of small safe ride concerns that needed addressing. For example the red van lost a headlight, so we needed to put the black van into rotation.
- My letter was sent to Kent and I'm hoping to hear back soon

- I met with Student Price Cards (SPC), which if you haven't heard of them are discount cards. They were hoping we would sell them at the welcome centre, which we used to do, but they're not really worth it for us since they're so widely accessible. We may promote them on our website, but won't likely sell them
- Met with Food Coordinator to discuss ETF application with the Garden Coordinator
- Met with the Libraries to discuss a kitchenette they want stocked on third floor to address food accessibility. Things like a kettle, microwave, etc.
- Met with some engineering students regarding a downtown scavenger hunt. They were hoping orientation could take this over. It's QR codes and gets you to learn more about Fredericton and get off campus
- Met with Nick from the REDS about potential partnerships with Campus Events to pool resources and create bigger and more impactful events. The goal would be to have it at Winter Carnival for a concert, and there'll be more details later. That would happen late January as long as COVID stays at bay.
- Interviews for VP Communications happened this week.

6.2 Vice President – Finance & Operations

- I took VP Communications interviews virtually due to a COVID scare
- I had a meeting with Sara and Gillian about orientation hiring. We decided a longer application period was best to get better applications.
- Clubs and Societies funding requests were sent out and approved
- We had a SERC meeting about Pillar Pubs and the role of us and risk management in them in the future
- We're working on a package to provide resources to clubs and societies about how they can use the Libraries
- There was an HR conflict with a club, so I worked to resolve that
- Lastly, I met with Gillian about PEO training voiceovers and the updating of that

6.3 Vice President – Internal

- We had a pre-senate meeting; we raised some questions in senate about the Biology Psychology Program. We will be meeting next week to discuss this further.
- Met with Julie regarding committee appointments, specifically with vacancies and the appointments from past executives.

- Honoraria forms: please send me your forms by December 3rd
- I'm doing checkins with councillors, please reach out to me if you can
- We did council transition tonight for councillors elected in the by-election
- If you don't know what committees you are in, or aren't in enough, please re-submit the typeform
- Working on the Menstrual Product Dispenser proposal with Kate and Caroline and I'm working on ordering councillor merchandise

6.4 Vice-President – Advocacy

- I started the week with the MCI, Anajose. She's working on a multicultural exhibit on Monday and Wednesday. We also discussed changing international week to cultural week, as we're settlers and have the opportunity to include Indigenous culture. We want to get more volunteers starting in January.
- I also met with Savannah the Wellness coordinator. We finalized the Wellness Week schedule, we don't need lots of volunteers but if you're interested we're happy to help you. If you can't volunteer please promote the event. We're hoping to do dog therapy which will be our biggest event.
- I attended NBSA Advocacy Week training and met with Wasiimah about advocacy week. I also wanted her perspective on what she has been doing and my concerns over whether other board members are worried about the potential exit or not
- I also had a coffee chat with Kalin and Emma from CASA. I got to know about their background and the work they are doing. We talked about CASA's advocacy week, and Kalin gave me information about CASA committees.
- We attended Sodexo's event on Thursday and had some great food

6.5 President

- Met with Gillian, Sara, Ellen and Evan as Katelynn mentioned
- Met with Advancement Committee to discuss the NBSA review, and then we discussed the potential bus pass

- Met with the NBSA Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Director to discuss the recommendation and timelines, it was a good discussion. They seemed to accept this is Council's choice and were willing to work with us.
- Self Isolation Committee meeting where we discussed potential regulation changes in preparation for winter term break
- Met with the Deputy Minister of PETL to discuss some of NBSA's advocacy proposals and learn more about the university funding formula and the renewal of the Universities memorandums of understanding for funding
- As Ojaswi mentioned we had NBSA advocacy training and as Ridhi mentioned we had councillor transition
- I met with Becky, Gillian, and Tim to talk about a pancake dinner to celebrate the semester, we're hoping to have Kathy Wilson present for that. We were sorting out the logistics of how the event can run given COVID restrictions.
- Karen and I have been working away with ALPS stuff, and trying to get everything back into our possession. The biggest issue is the need for multiple signing authorities, but one is in Fredericton and another is in BC so it's going to be slow
- I dropped the ball on policy committee, but I will send out a poll for policy committee soon
- Hiring for council secretary has closed and we'll meet if we need to for selections
- And lastly, I'll pass the floor to Amanda, our new VP Communications, to do a quick introduction

6. Announcements

7. Question Period

Kordell Walsh: The executive director of the NBSA requested an opportunity to present to council. I'll note that the NBSA presented to council at the end of last year, and for me at least, it wasn't the most productive presentation. But I would be doing this process a disservice to not provide council with that opportunity or at least open it up to past councillors to share their experience.

Ojaswi Joshi: I met with Wasiimah and during that she stressed that she had not gotten the opportunity to present her side and share her improvements. So I think we should get her point of view.

Sean MacKenzie: So I was here last year, and we had a similar presentation. In the end, Council really didn't change their minds. Council still made a unanimous decision to look at the steps that are now being taken. And in terms of improvement, we stressed at the time financial accountability, and hearing that there's not the bylaw mandated financial presentations it tells me that there's not a lot of improvement given that's one of the most important issues we raised. Personally, I believe after last year's presentation, Council unanimously agreed that didn't change anything and I know it's a new council but I don't think it is going to change anything, it is only going to burn council's time.

Katelynn Pickel-MacDonald: They also presented to council the year before that as well. I personally think we should let them present so everyone can sow their oats and make the decision themselves. Then that way council has all the information so if it does change anybody's mind they have that right. But also if they cannot come to our set meetings before Christmas, I don't think we should be holding off either.

Brennan Marks: I'm very frustrated by this issue. I don't think we should let them present again, I think it's become such a waste of time. The only reason we're still here is because of technicalities in their bylaws, so if they still don't take us seriously then I don't know. I haven't seen changes. We also talked last year about how not a lot of students or even folks on council know about what the NBSA does and it's a \$40,000 expense for our students – our students pay that, and I think we can do a lot more impactful

work with that money. My heart is in events, but there's also a lot of great policy things we can do too and I'm sure there's a lot of other events.

Vishnu Vardhan: Kordell, you had a meeting with the executive director, right?

Kordell Walsh: Yes.

Vishnu Vardhan: Last year we did list out some action items for them to follow with a loosely based plan, because being honest there's a huge lack of communication from their any to any of their member schools. So we laid out our plan for action items for them to address, did this meeting address any of those action items?

Kordell Walsh: The executive director expressed they had made progress on the concerns council had last year that they would like council to see, but when I outlined Advancement Committee's concerns, the response was essentially 'well, it has only been 6 months and that's not a lot of time to make progress.' So the answer was in a sense that they were aware but didn't feel they had the time to make the progress.

Vishnu Vardhan: I just wanted to know if in your judgement it was enough? Last year was the first time council took really strong action against this, there's always been talks but this could break down with this council. Last year we started it and this year we really should finish it. As much as I think an audience is good, I don't think it's necessary at this point.

Jillian Carson: Sitting on advancement committee, it didn't look like they had improved. I just also wanted to raise that we have a deadline to leave, and they may just be buying time, so I just wanted everyone to be aware of that if that's something we potentially go into.

Ojaswi Joshi: My only concern is that I have a disadvantage coming late. I personally am an active member of the UNB community and had never heard of this organization. The thing is I personally need a bit more time to make the decision, and I think a presentation will help give me a better idea.

Spencer MacDonald: I'm caught in between both Brennan and Katelynn's suggestions. I agree that it would be great to hear the presentation, but I'm also at the point where I think it's gone on long enough. If they can come present next council meeting that would be great, but if not, let's not wait.

Kordell Walsh: In the meeting that I had with them, I informed them their only chance would be next council meeting, there would be no delays or second chances. I gave them the date and time to keep it on hold and told them I would update them after tonight's decision. I will also note though, this coming week is advocacy week for the NBSA. I think they are going to be very busy, and I can't imagine they are going to have a lot of time to dedicate to making a new and effective presentation to council. It's just a consideration, but if they don't have a presentation already ready to give council whatever we ask for, I don't know if they're going to have time to give us the quality of presentation we may be looking for.

Seth Eichhorst: Can we just ask them to submit a written document, as long as they have it submitted by next meeting, we can then all read it on our own time?

Kordell Walsh: Yes if that's Council's request.

Sean MacKenzie: I think that is a fair compromise, but I just want to note that last year I sat with the Executive Director and Chair and requested we have the chance to move down to associate status and they said no. I'm just not inclined to let them present for the third or fourth year in a row. Every year this

is a discussion, every year there is a presentation, and every year there is hope things will change. And it sucks because there's so many better ways to spend it.

Kordell Walsh: The NBSA is also very vocal itself that it does not do as well under Conservative governments, and we have a Conservative majority right now so we can expect at least 3 more years of them being vocal about not being as effective as they should be. And that's \$120,000 that we know isn't going to result in change that they're content with themselves. So to me, making this decision sooner rather than later is important.

Katelynn Pickel-MacDonald: Also real quick, as much as Brennan may love that money to be going to events, we would be looking to replace it with other advocacy efforts. There's a hole right now that they're supposed to be doing that we should be looking to fill.

Amanda Smith: I know I'm new but hearing 6 months is not enough time is hard. We're giving them \$40,000 and time is money.

Ojaswi Joshi: Kordell, you were part of Advocacy Week last year, have there been improvements to that?

Kordell Walsh: In my experience, none of the asks from last year's week have resulted in tangible changes. One of the most useful pieces I received last year was a briefing document that outlined how to tackle each issue, here's some questions you'll likely receive, and such. We have yet to receive that. I don't feel all that confident that it's better structured this year than last, but I also wasn't involved in last year's planning to know. But I am concerned that yesterday meetings were still being added to the calendar, we're getting close to advocacy week starting and I don't feel like we have as many meetings as I remember last year, but I don't have those numbers on hand. Some of the asks are great, some of them

I'm not confident in. All that is to say I'm not more confident, and I may be less confident just given I'm seeing the short timeline we're working on.

Sean Mackenzie: Is there a meeting scheduled with the Premier?

Kordell Walsh: There's not one scheduled, and I don't even know if an invite was sent out.

Sean Mackenzie: Something that was raised last year was that there's not a meeting scheduled with the Premier. As some of you may know, this Premier micromanages the finances, and investments in post-secondary education would be a large part of what he's looking at. So if there is no meeting with the Premier, it's also concerning. Last year there were also spelling errors within documents, and things of that nature which were embarrassing. There was also not enough training for delegates, I personally even felt there still wasn't enough training and I was a board member. CASA had a Home Office member come in and do an effective simulation where they would play a random MP from a random riding and ask questions, make you stay within your set time limit, etc.

Kordell Walsh: I can say where I had experience in politics myself, I didn't get a lot out of the training but I also didn't feel unprepared – I signed up because I was comfortable with the premise. So I think it would be doing a disservice to talk to how effective the training was, because I had an advantage, so I can't say for sure. Last year we did have a session where folks from the Board played an MLA and we didn't have that session this year. I'm just looking and the NBSA advocacy week master list, and it shows where invitations are sent even if the meeting isn't scheduled. For the Office of the Premier, there's not even a contact listed. I will give them credit though that there are meetings scheduled with Minister of Postsecondary Education Training and Labour, Trevor Holder, both before and after advocacy week.

Seth Eichhorst: We're getting a bit off topic, so I would like to motion to direct the NBSA to provide written documentation before our next council meeting.

Resolution 049-21

That the NBSA be invited to provide written documentation by December 5, 2021 outlining their successes and reasons UNBSU should maintain membership status.

Mover: Seth Eichhorst

Seconder: Kordell Walsh

The motion is carried.

8. Other Business

9. Adjournment

Resolution 050-21

That Council adjourns the meeting.

Mover: Katelynn Pickel-MacDonald

Seconder: Brennan Marks

The motion is carried.

The meeting is adjourned at 8:37 P.M.