

# University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

## Annual General Meeting

Minutes for November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Present: Trent Evanisky (Chair), Leslee Harden (Ex-Officio), Angela Erickson (USSU Confidential Secretary), Sharla Daviduik (USSU Research & Policy Coordinator), Amanda Mitchell (USSU Accountant), Ian Potter (USSU Communications Coordinator), Jackie Swinnerton (USSU Resource Services Manager), Freda Salikin (USSU Facilities & Operations Manager), Voting Members as attached

Guests: Ray Kola, Jason Epp

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**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:09p.m.

**2. Call for Quorum**

Quorum was determined to be 23 voting members.

**3. Adoption of the Agenda**

Move to adopt the agenda as circulated.

**AGM MOTION 01:** Luke Coupal/Maggie Phillips Carried.

**4. Adoption of Minutes (November 21, 2002)**

Move to adopt the minutes as circulated.

**AGM MOTION 02:** Brett Stevenson/Robert Tanner Carried.

**5. President's Report**

President Mowat noted that the President's Report was not done last year and is unsure if it has ever been done. It is an important accountability measure and an important opportunity for the President to report directly to the membership on what activities the USSU has done this year. If there are any questions or comments it would be best to hold them until the end of the meeting. Any questions on the finance end can be asked directly after the Auditor's Report. He briefly reviewed the Annual Report. He announced that Leslee Harden, USSU General Manager, who has been with the organization for 5-years is leaving the USSU and has accepted a position with Commerce. It is a challenge to get student participation in the activities and in particular with the political issues. A Provincial and Federal challenge is to get government to respond to the needs of students and post-secondary education. He noted that working with the staff and the Councilors has been great and looks forward to finishing his term.

## 6. Auditor's Report – Ray Kola and Jason Epp, KPMG

### 6.1 Auditor's Report

The auditor's report was presented.

Jack Mason noted that it shows that the USSU runs at a deficit in the last 2 years. What kind of impact does this have ????. Is this a bad thing.

Ray Kola referred to page 2 of the auditor's report. He noted that in 2002 the revenue exceeded the expenses by \$231,000 then after that there were fixed assets that were disposed of at \$199,000. In previous years there was a building development cost that had been set up as an asset and this was for the expansion of the Student Centre. When the project didn't go ahead it couldn't be kept in the books and were written off as an expense. In the year 2002 there really wasn't a loss with the first loss coming in in 2003, which was because of changes in the operation.

VP Tupper ???

Ray Kola said that there is not any outside debt.

Jack Mason ???

Ray Kola ???

Luke Coupal asked if a change to the operations caused debt were these changes accounted for in the budget last year. He asked the Executive if going into debt was because of the budget last year and is it expected to happen again this year.

Ray Kola stated that the most significant increase was in the business operations. The Administration expenses were very similar to previous years. Amortization was up because of the fixed assets. Student services cost was a slight increase. Student governance was down from the previous year. Entertainment was a slight decrease.

Luke Coupal asked why the business operations went up \$300,000 and could it be expected to happen again next year.

Ray Kola noted that he would not anticipate it happening again next year.

VP Tupper noted that the operations went up because of the expansion at Louis' and the services were expanded. Browsers operations are significantly different than they were 2 years ago. He stated that it is not a plan to lose money but to break even. The contingency fund is in place if there is a deficit and it would then be balanced through the fund.

Brett Stevenson spoke to the loss of disposal property and asked if it was due to an error in amortization.

Ray Kola noted that what you try to do is add your initial cost and then amortize that cost over the period that it will be used. The amortization policy sometimes does not hold true with the end value when being sold.

Brett Stevenson asked if there are any trends that the organization needs to be aware of.

Ray Kola referred to the Balance Sheet. The USSU management took a prudent approach in the evaluation of the investments. The investments at market value were \$144,000 less than their cost amount. Last year the market has come back and will probably see some up selling in the next couple years. He noted that he would not be concerned looking at the statements. The statements look good. It is important for the organization to manage its cash to break even.

### **6.2 Financial Statement Resolution**

Be it resolved that the audited financial statements of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union be accepted for the year ended April 30, 2003, as presented.

**AGM MOTION 03:** Tupper/Jack Mason Carried.

### **6.3 Auditing Firm Resolution**

Be it resolved that the auditing firm of KPMG Chartered Accountants be appointed for the 2003/2004 audit.

**AGM MOTION 04:** Tupper/Robert Tanner Carried.

VP Gran asked if reappointing the same accounting firm is common practice.

VP Tupper noted that it is common practice as to what he has seen. KPMG does have a knowledge of the organization that a new firm would not have.

VP Gran asked if there is a possibility that the information being presented by KPMG is biased towards the USSU or against the USSU.

VP Tupper noted that KPMG has been the organizations accountants for the past 5 years.

Ray Kola noted that there is a lot of turmoil going on in the accounting profession and it all hinges on the quality of an audit. As auditors, KPMG must be totally independent of the organization that is being audited. If the USSU was a public company the auditors could not own any of the shares of the company. Independence is very important. As a firm there is a lot of training to make sure that they are independent in perception. All of the team members will be taking a half-day training session that needs to be completed by such a time on independence. When preparing the financial statements quality is ensured. The audit team is challenged through an independent review to ensure that all the issues have been addressed. The second way to ensure quality at KPMG is through training. All of the team members attend training on current accounting and auditing standards. It is an ongoing process. They also go through an inspection process within the firm every 3 years. He noted that KPMG is pleased to be associated with the USSU. It is great to be invited out to the AGM.

**7. Ratification of Bylaw No. 1: Governance Procedures**

Be it resolved that this meeting ratify USSU Bylaw #1, as amended by University Students' Council on November 13, 2003.

**AGM MOTION 05:** Luke Coupal/Reché McKeague Carried.

President Mowat noted that there has been some changes made to the bylaw and the changes were recommend by University Students' Council. Any changes made to a bylaw need to be ratified at the AGM.

Jack Mason spoke to the amendment made to item 6.02, Operation & Procedures, where it says "the majority of the sitting members of the sitting members. He asked if it was a typo or if it was meant to be that way.

President Mowat noted that it is a typo and was not changed after it had been amended at USC. The amendment being ratified should be "the majority of all the sitting members".

**8. Ratification of Bylaw No. 2: Executive Portfolios**

Be it resolved that this meeting ratify USSU Bylaw #2, as amended by University Students' Council on November 13, 2003.

**AGM MOTION 06:** Jack Mason/Maggie Phillips Carried.

President Mowat noted that there are some minor changes of moving computing into a different portfolio as well as changing that the outgoing President will vote on the budget rather than the incoming President.

Luke Coupal made a point of information. He asked when the changes are made to the bylaw do they take effect immediately or do they have to be ratified first.

President Mowat noted that the changes to the bylaws are effective immediately but they do need to be ratified at the AGM. The bylaws have just been ratified and are enforced.

**9. Proposed Constitutional Amendments**

**9.1 Proposed Amendment to Article 4 – (Proposed Amendment #1)**

Move to remove "sustainability" and "social justice" and add "social, economic, and".

The amendment also proposes to place the list of values in alphabetical order.

**AGM MOTION 07:** Tupper/Mowat Carried.

\*\*\*Discussion on the amendment was not recorded.

Move to amend the agenda so that 9.4 is 9.2.

**AGM MOTION 08:** Luke Coupal/Gran Carried.

#### **9.4 Proposed Amendment to Article 6 – (Proposed Amendment #4)**

Move to make an addition to Article 6 “In order to ensure that the USSU operates in a manner consistent with its mission and values (as listed in Articles 3 and 4), a member may initiate action, whose result would be binding on the Executive and Legislature, if he or she is able to demonstrate, before an impartial committee...”

**AGM MOTION 09:** Martin Olszynski/Luke Coupal Defeated.

Martin Olszynski noted that it is a straightforward amendment. It may be more appropriate as a bylaw but that option is not available to him. It is an accountability mechanism that is outside the bureaucracy that is the Students' Union. There are not many direct mechanisms that students can make some kind of change. This amendment is not intended to be a direct attack on the USC or the Executive because they are doing a great job. It is not frivolous. He would encourage all to be open-minded about this. The Constitution should grow and change as needed.

Luke Coupal spoke in agreement with Martin Olszynski because this would enforce the values. It should not be in the Constitution but would fit much better in the Code of Ethics.

Jack Mason noted that it keeps the Executive and USC accountable. He disagreed with some points such as the minority of support. The proposed procedure is very time consuming. It takes time to form committees and for those committees to report back. There are other ways of keeping the USSU accountable. Any student can attend USC and bring any issues forward.

President Mowat spoke against the motion. He noted that he is in agreement with accountability of the Executive and the USSU as a whole. The structures that are already existent should be reinforced. This should be in a bylaw rather than the Constitution. The sentiment is good but would be a regression of the Constitution. The Code of Ethics can look into any complaint.

Wadena Burnett spoke against the motion. The process would take very long. The Code of Ethics committee should be viewing the amendment, as it has no place in the Constitution.

Brett Stevenson spoke against the motion. Issues could go straight to the Code of Ethics committee. Accountability is important.

VP Gran spoke for the motion. He noted that students are unable to attend Executive Committee meetings. The motion increases accountability and puts students into the political process even more than currently. Even though the Executive and MSC's are elected there must be a measure placed in the Constitution.

Jeff MacDonald noted that the process is not too long and it is valuable to have something separate from the Code of Ethics.

Greg Florizone spoke against the motion. He sees the 30% being a problem because that is a lot of people. He noted that he doesn't see anyone taking this route if it was in place as it would take much longer. MSC's are the route to USC. There is not enough time to strike up committees, call for nominations and promoting. It is difficult to find a time that all 13 people can meet. This amendment does not accomplish anything.

Stephen Zdunich spoke in favor of the motion. If avenues are already available then there may be a problem if they are not being used effectively. The amendment is about providing an avenue to students who are directed to Council. It does not add bureaucracy it eliminates it.

Steven Dribnenki spoke against the motion. He is unsure as to whether the amendment would be effective. If it is too effective people could just sign up others.

Jack Mason spoke to the issue that arose about the committee being independent. USC is responsible for striking the committee and would therefore not be independent of USC.

Martin Olszynski stated that he picked 30% because it keeps it more reasonable. A third of the voting turnout reflects a broad diversity of views and interests in the student body. This is a mechanism for the accountability of both the Executive and USC. The mechanisms currently in place are not being used and are not working.

Jeff MacDonald noted that the amendment does get more people involved. It does not hurt the Constitution to have the amendment there.

VP Diduck spoke against the motion. She noted that in the last USSU election there was over 30% in abstentions. This is something that should be brought forward to Council. There should be an avenue for students to make it easier to talk and to get more information out to the members.

Ryan Meili spoke in favor of the motion. He clarified that it is not intended to be a recall mechanism. It is intended to correct the conduct of Councilors to better respect the values in the Constitution and to not replace.

Move to call the question.

**AGM MOTION 10:** Gran/Brett Stevenson

Carried.

## **9.2 Proposed Amendment to Article 4 – (Proposed Amendment #2)**

Motion died.

## **9.3 Proposed Amendment to Article 5 – (Proposed Amendment #3)**

Move to make an amendment to Article 5 to read "...who have been assessed student union fees and...and all individuals..."

**AGM MOTION 11:** Mowat/Steven Dribnenki

Carried.

President Mowat noted that the amendment is meant to clarify who is a member of the USSU and who is not. Members are the students who do pay the fees and do come to the U of S. It is important to increase the value to our members and to inform members what their privileges are.

VP Gran spoke against the motion. He referred to the mission statement such that the USSU is here to represent undergraduate students at the U of S.

Greg Florizone stated that in the mission statement it does say that the USSU will represent all undergraduate students. It does restrict who the services are being offered to. The students have a voice and who have access to the services is reduced to the ones who are paying for those services.

VP Gran noted that if an individual is not part of the USSU they do not have a vote.

President Mowat stated that there are students that are given a student number but not physically located in the city (i.e. NEPS students). It is important to build value to the members that participate, are on campus and pay for the services.

Nancy Ross spoke against the motion. She noted that students in Nursing are forced to be off campus and they should be able to have a say in things that will affect them in 2 years. They should be included as members.

Jack Mason noted that from his interpretation you don't have to actually be an undergraduate student to pay fees.

**9.5 Proposed Amendment to Article 8 (Proposed Amendment #5)**

Move to strike the entire elections section as is and in its place Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 and Part 4 with the subsequent information under each heading.

**AGM MOTION 12:** Gran/Diduck

Carried.

VP Gran noted that it is a housekeeping item. Move procedural portion to the bylaws.

**9.6 Proposed Amendment to Article 11 (Proposed Amendment #6)**

Move to strike, "A referendum, solely for the purposes of establishing or eliminating a dedicated student fee, may be held in the following circumstances." And add, "Subject to the criteria set out below, a referendum must be held for the purposes of establishing or eliminating a dedicated student fee, and shall be binding upon the Executive and USC. All referenda shall be held in the following circumstances." And to strike, "If passed, such a referendum would be binding upon the Executive and the University Students' Council." And add, "Such a referendum shall pass by simple majority."

**AGM MOTION 13:** Mowat/Diduck

Carried.

President Mowat noted that it makes a referendum mandatory for any change to a fee structure. It should have the students' approval first.

VP Tupper stated that it is in respect to new fees.

**10. Questions and Comments for Executive (30 minutes)**

Move to have questions and comments for 30 minutes.

**AGM MOTION 14:** Steven Dribnenki/Martin Olszynski Carried.

Greg Florizone expressed his concern with the poor timing of the AGM this year.

President Mowat noted that the timing did not work but learned from the mistake. It was suggested that the time and place be run by Council first. He thanked all who asked questions of the auditors. He encouraged that any concerns be brought forth to himself and he would make a motion on their behalf at USC.

Move to close questions and comments.

**AGM MOTION 15:** Reché McKeague/Wadena Burnett Carried.

**12. Any Other Business**

No other business.

**13. Adjournment**

Move to adjourn at 5:20p.m.

**AGM MOTION 16:** Marlaina Hauser/Jeff MacDonald Carried.