

Gateway Student Journalism Society

Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2023

Opening

The regular meeting of the Gateway Student Journalism Society was called to order at 7:11 p.m. online and in-person by Emily WILLIAMS.

Present:

BROOKS, Sam
DAUM, Evan
TEELING, Katie
WILLIAMS, Emily
SMITH, Jonas
FLAMAN, Levi
THIESSEN, Nathan
POLENCHUK, Lily
CRAIG, Lee
FASSONE, Lale

Absent:

JICKLING, Sophie
KURANI, Danny
BAJWA-ZSCHOCKE, Anna

Approval of the Agenda

Moved by TEELING

Seconded by FLAMAN

There are no votes in opposition.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by TEELING

Seconded by THIESSEN

There are no votes in opposition and one abstention.

Reports to the Board

TEELING presents the Editor-in-Chief report.

TEELING says September was really busy, and the rest of the staff was hired. Anna BAJWA-ZSCHOCKE was hired as Opinion Editor, Aprajita Rahman as Staff Reporter, and Dylana Twittey as News Editor. Says her and POLENCHUK combined everything into one long training session, and Rahman and Twittey had extensive experience so they didn't need as much training. Says Week of Welcome was busy, and Clubs Fair and open house sessions were successful. Says her and POLENCHUK added a new newsletter sign up button on the website. Says that for Gateway to Cinema, SMITH and POLENCHUK opened on her behalf and there was a full house. Says that Quickbooks is all up to date, and the year-end will be done by next meeting. Says she met with Erin O'Neill from the Campus Food Bank to talk about outreach. Says that at the end of August her, POLENCHUK, and TWITTEY interviewed some members of the Indigenous Students' Union, and are currently working on a story. Says she met with the International Students' Association co-presidents, and TWITTEY will be covering ISA meetings.

BROOKS asks what the rift was with the ISU.

TEELING replies that years of accidental mistakes had been passed down institutionally. Says she apologized to Malaijah and said that those mistakes won't be repeated, and now they feel comfortable.

BROOKS says this is one of those things of being a student organization with a different staff each year and not a lot of institutional memory. Says it's important to keep having conversations like this.

WILLIAMS added that the ISU has had the same president for two years and TEELING started to build that relationship last year, which has been solid.

THIESSEN asks how the Meta news ban is impacting The Gateway.

TEELING says it's been very bad, and the Instagram shut down the second-week of August. Says she reached out to student newspapers in Australia as they went through the same thing in 2021. Says she's been doing work with CUP as well, and her and POLENCHUK have been

trying to push different ways of outreach, such as the newsletter. Says APIRG has offered to spread news as well.

WILLIAMS adds that TEELING and CUP representatives have been doing a lot of advocacy, and TEELING and others talked to CBC about the situation.

TEELING says there's no clear answer, but we must try our best, says they've been pushing X.

WILLIAM says that the newsletter is massive and that it's great TEELING and POLENCHUK tackled that. Says that last year with MailChimp because of the payment plan, years worth of subscribers had to be switched to a new platform.

THIESSEN says that the outreach with ISA is applaudable and that TWITTEY was at GFC. Asks if The Gateway has done outreach with faculties to see that their news is represented.

TEELING says that BAJWA-ZSCHOCKE has been reaching out to faculties and student groups for the guest column. Says there's been a very good response so far.

POLENCHUK presents the Managing Editor report.

POLENCHUK says that Campus Roundup, the newsletter, will be sent bi-weekly rather than monthly. Says that the volunteer sign-up form has been receiving new sign-ups almost every day, which is great news.

BROOKS asks what the masthead is doing to make sure new volunteers stay engaged.

POLENCHUK says that the first pitch meeting has been successful and staff is putting in effort to make them engaging as well as fun. Says that there are plans for socials, and volunteers that sign-up through the form are sent welcome emails with information as soon as possible.

SMITH presents the Executive Director (ED) report.

SMITH says that four slots are sold on the site, and for September all the slots are sold out. Says he's in discussions with other people for ad deals, including someone from the math department, EPL, and other early discussions. For marketing and outreach, he and Isabella Yue have been planning new merchandise. Says they used open house and Clubs Fair as a marketing test, and it's apparent people like tote bags so there will be a redesign of those. Says they're ironing out how we're going to brand ourselves this year and how Yue envisions branding. Says for finances, he and TEELING have been working away at the year-end and the financial review which is replacing the audit. Says struggles with Cindy have been ironed out.

BROOKS says that anything that positively displays The Gateway will pay dividends for DFU. Asks if there's efforts toward being very visible.

SMITH says that tote bags will be very visible around campus, and there will be lanyards and other pieces of merchandise that will be visible to others. Says merch should be ordered soon.

WILLIAMS says that she'd like to advocate for laptop stickers.

CRAIG says that the online ad success is really encouraging.

THIESSEN asks about monthly revenue from ads.

SMITH lists prices, and by selling out all four slots a month that totals \$2150 a month.

CRAIG presents the Finance Committee report.

CRAIG says at the meeting today, Quickbooks reports have been updated sufficiently, and if things continue that's good. Says the year-end review is on track to be done for the next board meeting. Says Cindy and Doug, the accountant, are working together. Says that the online ads are a good addition for the balance sheet, and so far everything is where it should be with expenses. Says the Quickbooks reports are looking much better than they have been.

WILLIAMS presents the HR Committee report.

WILLIAMS says it hasn't met, and she's hoping to have the members at a board meeting all together to nominate a chair. Says it's not super time-sensitive, and really comes into play for performance reviews in December. Says the chair decision will probably be sent over email.

BROOKS says he'll be a seconder on the chair motion to motion WILLIAMS as chair.

WILLIAMS presents the Governance Committee report.

WILLIAMS says it hasn't met, and half of the committee resigned with staff resignations. Says she's had some conversations with two staff members and there's a plan in place.

SMITH presents the DFU Subcommittee report.

SMITH says the first meeting happened yesterday with CRAIG, BROOKS, and DAUME. Says they'll be meeting once every two weeks for effective responsiveness between all aspects at play, and meeting monthly would be ineffective. Says they caught the subcommittee up on the

highlights of the actions of the DFU team over the summer including timeline, research, connections. Says they talked about what the upcoming months for the DFU team looks like, and the subcommittee has given a lot of great feedback.

For discussion:

WILLIAM presents the selection of Governance Committee members.

WILLIAMS motions to nominate BAJWA-ZSCHOCKE to Staff Representative.

TEELING seconds.

There are no votes in opposition.

WILLIAMS motions to nominate POLENCHUK to Interim Chair.

TEELING seconds.

There are no votes in opposition.

WILLIAMS presents the Student-at-Large Representative for approval.

WILLIAMS says the student-at-large representative resigned, and that the posting was posted on the site as well as students' digest.

BROOKS motions to move-in camera.

TEELING seconds.

There are no votes in opposition.

BROOKS motions to move x-camera.

FLAMAN seconds.

There are no votes in opposition.

BROOKS motions to repost the position until October 6, 2023.

TEELING seconds.

FLAMAN says that because the next board meeting isn't until October 18, and perhaps the job posting could be left open longer.

BROOKS says that with Gateway to Cinema on October 12, that is a great opportunity for real boots-on-the ground in-person outreach for the position, and he fully supports moving the deadline.

WILLIAMS proposes a friendly amendment for October 16 as the closing date.

There are no votes in opposition.

WILLIAMS presents the DFU Fee Amount for approval.

WILLIAMS says this is a continuation of the last meeting.

TEELING presents on the DFU Fee Amount proposal.

TEELING says that the goals and objectives of the DFU are to continue Gateway operation, which is the primary goal. Says the second goal is growth, because if the fee wins Gateway operations could grow a little bit. Says that the final price set by the DFU campaign and the final number by SMITH and TEELING is \$2.64. Says that the fee will be opt-outable to appease groups against The Gateway and for those who cannot afford the fee. Says the fee would be the same price for both undergraduate and graduate students, and a spring fee would be charged at \$1.32. Says that it was felt anything under \$2.50 would be too low, and setting the cent too high would make students round up to \$3. Says that the DFU campaign team did a lot of research and debating, and that's why this is the final fee amount. Says one of the strategies is shooting below other fees running. Says one of the concerns was making sure The Gateway could grow if it wins, which \$2.64 would allow for bringing the budget in the realm of \$195k. Says that in consultations people said they'd pay closer to \$25.20, and lastly the priority is making sure that The Gateway survives. Says that consultations with students not affiliated with The Gateway were consulted, as well as Gateway volunteers, student politicians, other student papers, current Gateway staff, other DFUs, and her and SMITH have done research on other fees done across the country.

THIESSEN says that this is wonderful work and the price is something he's willing to pay for award-winning student journalism.

BROOKS says that he will be voting in favour for the motion due to the research and work done, and he wants to be on the side that can win. Says that within consideration of allowing for slight

growth, he asks what The Gateway wants to build. Says he wonders if this is an opportunity to dream a little bigger. Asks if there is any clause or if it's possible to put in a clause that the DFU is indexed to CPI, so that there's a DFU in three years that can't pay the bills.

TEELING says that there is a hesitancy to dream too much, but there are some tiny dreams. Says that they need to show students what The Gateway can be. Says that they are planning to tie the DFU to CPI so that it raises naturally.

WILLIAMS says that the U of A has big ambitions for enrolment, so within that that's really good for The Gateway. Says that as enrollment expansion comes that will provide for more spending money, which is something to think about later on.

FLAMAN says he will be voting against \$2.64 as it's too low. Says there's a lot of emphasis being placed on being under most of the current DFUs, such as CJSR at \$2.45 and ISU at \$1.08. Says that we don't necessarily have to come in under everyone else, but the value is better. Says that he thinks we should be showing the value of The Gateway, and for the last two lost campaigns there was a strong bias from people who have left except for some lingering alumni. Says that people and organizations change and that The Gateway has shown it's changed and is doing better. Says that while he agrees with the sentiment that The Gateway needs just enough to survive, there's a strong argument to do more than just that.

THIESSEN says he strongly disagrees, and there are people with lingering feelings against The Gateway. Says that \$2.64 would show students what The Gateway can do when funded.

TEELING says she agrees with THIESSEN and this is a time of extreme apathy on campuses. Says newspapers across the country are laying off people en masse, and it would be hard to justify a large fee to students. Says that there are less people going out to vote as well.

SMITH says that the issue isn't with the people with lingering distaste, but those who have no opinion. Says there are peak levels of apathy among students and there is a disconnected campus, so essentially for a lot of these people the only shot that we have is through the campaign. POLENCHUK says that amidst the affordability crisis, there is more apathy from students when it comes to paying for anything.

CRAIG says that The Gateway's brand has suffered in the last few years. Says it's something that people aren't always aware of The Gateway, and looking at the pool of voters, it has to be very targeted. Says that when the DFU is successful that will build the brand back up, bringing more attention to it. Says that the \$2.64 is a good place to land.

BROOKS says that he wants to respond to the affordability argument, and that it's interesting to talk about the affordability crisis when the group of people we're asking to pay have already agreed to spend money on tuition. Says people don't look at this as an add-in fee but as part of the total. Says that most students see this as a choice between funding The Gateway or not, and the price is irrelevant. Says that we should be less hung up on the price and how we get there. Says that every moment there's a captive audience, such as Gateway to Cinema, the opportunity should be taken to say to vote for the DFU. Says that he'd love the fee to be higher, but it's not, and he says that's fine. Says that for more students, the price is pretty irrelevant.

THIESSEN says that he agrees with all sentiments made by BROOKS but students aren't going to be looking at the tuition when they go to vote, but all the other DFUs running along with The Gateway. Says that faculty associations, their presidents and executives are older and still remember The Gateway, and some don't know what The Gateway is. Says that people aren't going to want to invest \$5.00 in something they don't know, and the alternative is losing the current operating standard. Says that fiscal restraint is on people's minds.

FASSONE asks if students will know that The Gateway is dying otherwise.

TEELING said that the campaign team has decided not to go that route because students will come to the conclusion of 'so is everyone else.'

WILLIAMS adds that in consultations they're honest about it. Says they're not going to lead with a negative campaign.

FASSONE asks if students will know the fee will increase with CPI.

WILLIAMS says yes, it will be on the voting screen.

FASSON says starting off at a low price would be good then.

FLAMAN says that with the DFU being opt-outable this time, students aren't necessarily looking at a big increase when voting. Says that it would be much harder to ask if it was mandatory.

FASSONE says that the student voter percentage is low as most students are unaware of elections in the first place. Says that it's going to even be hard to reach a following on social media, and those who do vote are involved and often know of The Gateway. Says that people who vote will know The Gateway, and with the opt-out people often just opt-out without looking at what it is. Says that there should be a concern about how many people opt-out.

BROOKS motions to call the question.

DAUM seconds.

There are no votes in opposition.

The original motion to approve the DFU Fee Amount passes with seven in favour. FLAMAN opposed.

Adjournment

BROOKS motions to adjourn.

TEELING seconds.

The board unanimously votes to adjourn.

The meeting is adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Lily Polenchuk