

# Gateway Student Journalism Society

Meeting Minutes  
November 15, 2023

## **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Gateway Student Journalism Society was called to order at 7:04 p.m. online and in-person by Emily WILLIAMS.

## **Present:**

BROOKS, Sam  
TEELING, Katie  
WILLIAMS, Emily  
SMITH, Jonas  
FLAMAN, Levi  
THIESSEN, Nathan  
JICKLING, Sophie  
CRAIG, Lee  
FASSONE, Lale  
WATAMANIUK, Adrian

## **Absent:**

BAJWA-ZSCHOCKE, Anna  
POLENCHUK, Lily

## **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by TEELING.

Seconded by FLAMAN.

There are no votes in opposition.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by TEELING.

Seconded by CRAIG.

There are no votes in opposition and three abstentions.

## **Reports to the Board**

TEELING presents the Editor-in-Chief report.

TEELING says that November has been really busy for staff as they've focused their efforts on organizing The Gateway awareness campaign, which is two separate weeks of putting The Gateway on the map. The first week, which occurred right before Reading Week, involved tabling with popcorn in Education and at CAB over three days, which went very well. The next will happen the week of the 20th, which will involve a series of class talks surrounding a Gateway speaker series. On top of that, TEELING says they've completed hiring for the Deputy Editors. They're are four — FASSONE in Deputy Sports, Peris Jones as Deputy News, Brooklyn Hollinger as Deputy Opinion, and Breezy Prochnau as Deputy A&C. Over the weekend, they held training, which went really well. Now, POLENCHUK and TEELING are focusing on the print edition.

TEELING presents the Managing Editor (ME) report on behalf of POLENCHUK, who is away.

TEELING says that POLENCHUK has been working on similar things as TEELING, such as organizing the Gateway awareness campaign, training deputy editors, and making sure that the line editors are set up for success, as they all started in late August, so didn't have the training period they should have.

SMITH presents the Executive Director (ED) report.

SMITH says November has been really great for advertising. In October, The Gateway hit their goal for ad sales. This November, they've doubled it, securing \$10,000, which he's really excited about. Some of these are for the paper, which if he gets one more, the paper will be fully paid for. He has secured two ads so far and is in talks with one more. He mentions that he and Katie have ordered some merchandise in the form of tote bags and stickers. He said that tabling was super successful and a lot of people came to the table. He mentioned class talks, which will be a joint effort between staff and DFU campaign members. He finishes by discussing the financial review, which should be done by the next board meeting. He says they've given everything Yates Whitaker needs, and now they're just waiting. He says that he's been really focusing on ads and that each ad space has been sold up for the entire year, except for the bottom box, which is the least valuable.

WILLIAMS says that once he's sold all the ads, SMITH should work on monetizing Campus Roundup, The Gateway's newsletter.

SMITH said that he's been trying to sell it, but it's hard to make it seem valuable to sellers. Some have said that it's too expensive, and others would rather pay for the site because the impressions are so much greater.

WILLIAMS says there is a market for it, but she sees why it may be harder to push. She mentions Taproot, and how successful they are with newsletter ads.

TEELING says that SMITH might want to consider pushing it to student groups because the ads are so much cheaper in the newsletter.

BROOKS says that a newsletter is more in your face than a website, even if people don't look at it as long as they do on the site, since it's more targeted.

SMITH agrees with BROOKS and says that he will work on pushing it, and that if it'll make money, it's worth pursuing.

WILLIAMS says that growing the subscribers would help SMITH market the newsletter to sellers.

CRAIG presents the Finance Committee report.

CRAIG says that no big issues came up during the Finance Committee meeting, which happened right before the board meeting. She said that prior issues mainly involved the bookkeeper, which has largely resolved — she's more helpful to TEELING and SMITH, and has been getting her work done on time. There are still some issues, which TEELING is pursuing, she says. She adds that the finances have looked better than they have in a long time, which is nice to see. She mentions that TEELING has been struggling with the Gateway credit and debit cards, but she will go to the bank to solve those issues. She adds that the year end will be complete by the next board meeting, which she is excited to see and talk about.

WILLIAMS presents the HR Committee report.

WILLIAMS says that her and TEELING have begun planning the performance evaluations that The Gateway does every year in December. TEELING sent out the staff's availability, so WILLIAMS will be emailing committee members to see when they're free. These board members are WILLIAMS, BROOKS, JICKLING, and FASSONE. To those who don't know, WILLIAMS says the process is that WILLIAMS and TEELING sit down and fill out a rubric on each staff member, then a committee member sits with a staff member and TEELING to go over the rubric together. Then, TEELING leaves the room and the staff member and committee member go over TEELING's performance.

TEELING presents the Governance Committee report on behalf of POLENUCHUK.

TEELING says that POLENUCHUK reached out to committee members about meeting ahead of or after Reading Week, since she is away, but the timing didn't work out. They will be meeting after Reading Week, instead.

SMITH presents the DFU Subcommittee report.

SMITH says that they met two weeks ago where they discussed branding for merchandise and members of the committee gave feedback, which will be valuable when they discuss larger branding for the campaign. They will be meeting again next week.

FLAMAN asks if the DFU team has submitted their official proposal to the Students' Council.

WILLIAMS says yes, and that they're slated to present December 5th.

**For Approval: Ombudsperson**

WILLIAMS presents the application for Ombudsperson.

WILLIAMS says that last year, she realized that the Ombudsperson listed on the website was the Board Chair, which in previous years has been the former EiC. This means that occasionally, the Ombudsperson would be dealing with a complaint that was about them. This became a side quest of the governance committee last year, which meant that they rewrote sections of the bylaw and wrote an unpublishing policy, which the board approved. This is because many people issue requests asking for their name to be redacted or for their article to be unpublished, which typically isn't done. Even though this position was outlined and written last year, they didn't get around to hiring someone until now. She says the position is modeled after how the CBC does things. The idea is that this is a third-party person who looks at complaints and writes recommendations, which would go on the gateway site for transparency. As well, the Ombudsperson would write a report for the Annual General Meeting. This is a thorough way to explore complaints and give due justice for each side. The Ombudsperson is a two-year term, which allows for consistency. The requirements are editorial experience to help with the position's duties, and that the person can't have been on staff in the last five years.

WILLIAMS presents the floor to the one applicant, CRAIG, to explain why she applied.

CRAIG says that she would be a good fit for the position, as she has over thirty years of working as a reporter, editor, and writer for thirty years. She worked at community papers, edited books, and started her own writing and editing business. She has also served on the GSJS board, and has degrees in journalism (University of Kings College) and political science (U of A). She is

currently pursuing a master's in communications. She has been a part of Editors of Canada, the Banff Centre, the Health and Safety board for the Government of Alberta. She has experience helping on sensitive issues that require her to be fair and unbiased. She says this is something that is required of an Ombudsperson. She says this is work she has done for other organizations.

BROOKS asked if this is a conflict of interest because CRAIG is still on the board. He says that there needs to be a high degree of impartiality.

CRAIG says she thought the same thing, but wonders how it would be possible for someone to have lots of knowledge about The Gateway, its operating policies, and how the board works without being on the Board of Directors itself. She says that the important thing is that she can still be fair, even if she is in both roles. She says that there are always situations where you'll have to make decisions that require to make a judgment or decision about a coworker when at work, which although painful, she's been able to do before. She says that first and foremost, she is a journalist and a skeptic so she looks at things critically. No matter how much she cares about someone or believes in a cause, she can still look past those things. But, she says she can see where BROOKS is coming from from an optics perspective.

WILLIAMS says that the Ombudsperson would only deal with editorial complaints, not managerial or business complaints. On the board, members aren't involved in editorial matters at all. She adds that in TEELING's report, she never mentions editorial decisions or the reporting she does.

WATTAMANIUK says that the more separation, typically the better. He references the DIE board, which isn't involved in the SU at all in order to make accurate decisions. But, he says that context is important. He says that this isn't the biggest conflict of interest, because you need someone who can effectively explain operating policy to those who complain or make unpublishing requests.

BROOKS says that he wants to do his due diligence on this, because although CRAIG would be a great candidate, it's unwise that she be both the treasurer and the Ombudsperson. He says that to a lay person who is unfamiliar with board processes, someone who holds the purse would be perceived as making editorial decisions.

CRAIG says that she isn't in charge of the money, she's just in charge of the committee. Beyond looking at reports, she doesn't make financial decisions. She sees BROOKS' point, but doesn't think it has a big impact.

BROOKS says that he is only referring to the optics of the situation.

WATTAMANIUK says that someone who is upset about an editorial position wouldn't think critically when they saw that CRAIG was both the Ombudsperson and the treasurer.

CRAIG asks if this is an urgent matter.

TEELING says that she would feel more comfortable if there was an Ombudsperson, because it's tough to solve complaints as someone who has limited experience. Even though complaints are few and far between, it is pretty urgent.

CRAIG asks if she can have time to think about it, and if an email vote would be possible.

WILLIAMS says yes, and that this will be followed up with an email vote.

**Adjournment**

TEELING motions to adjourn.

WATTAMANIUK seconds.

The board unanimously votes to adjourn.

The meeting is adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Katie Teeling