

2016 - 2017 Executive Strategic Plan



Trent Central Student Association

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A Message from the Executive



Dear constituents,

The Trent Central Student Association (TCSA) executive would like to welcome you to a new academic year.

As we begin to live, work, and study on campus for another year, we wish to acknowledge the Anishnaabe and Mississauga peoples and their traditional territory, on which we live and learn. The executive team will strive to make spaces for

indigenous student voices to be heard at not only the TCSA board level, but to the Trent University administration as well.

The following Executive Strategic Plan is a report that will aim to summarize and highlight the TCSA's goals, plans, areas of focus, and direction for the 2016-2017 year. This plan is not all-inclusive, and is meant to act as a guideline that could also include other aspects as things arise throughout the year. We acknowledge that we understand what's around us from our own personal viewpoints, and therefore encourage those with different opinions or concerns to add to these conversations.

We would like to stress that we are here to represent you, and fight for issues students are passionate about. If you ever run into any issues while at Trent please reach out to us, as we are here to assist in the betterment of student life on and off campus. We highly value your feedback so we can constantly be evolving and adjusting to meet your needs.

Myself, the Vice President of Campaigns and Equity, Ryan Newman, Vice President of Clubs and External Affairs, Pippa O'Brien, and Vice President of University and Colleges, Anna Leonova, are excited for the year to come and wish you all the best this upcoming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alaine Spiwak".

Alaine Spiwak
President
Trent Central Student Association

Association Goals and Development Strategies

Continued Accountability and Transparency

The Executive is committed to being open and transparent with the TCSA Board of Directors and our constituents at all times. This involves keeping news and promotion of activities up to date, clear reporting, and asking for opinion on direction whenever possible. To improve on our communication with both the board and our constituents, we would like to make the following improvements to our communication strategies:

- Improvements to the website:
 - Have an area put aside to list reports from large decision making bodies such as Senate, Trent University Board of Governors, Food Advisory Committee, CASSC
 - Post a list of committees the TCSA sits on and which board of director is responsible for filling that seat, with their email available for questions or concerns
 - Post a list of meetings that are open to the public that have consistent dates and times throughout the year
 - Upload the Presidents and Vice Presidents reports on the website under the “Meetings” tab
- Add TCSA Board meetings information onto TCSA app

Gather and Utilize Student Feedback

The Executive feel that increasing communication and outreach with the student population is essential in order to ensure that the student voice is being heard and represented in the best manner possible. To ensure we are in touch with student need and gathering feedback from a variety of students, the Executive will do the following:

- Improvements to tabling
 - To improve on the tabling and feedback session the Executive team started last year, this year we have created a set schedule of when and where students will be able to find us around campus.
 - Will we create questions of the week or specific survey topics
 - Improve the incentives that have people come to table (button making, snacks, food, coffee, contests etc.)
- Increased promotion of the suggestion boxes that were installed in Otonabee College and Bata Library, with a system in place to respond to or document suggestions/complaints
- Document feedback and send it out to Trent departments and the TCSA board
- Create an ‘Event Feedback Form’ to be completed by anyone in the office running an event or campaign of any size. Additionally, we would like to create feedback forms specific for big events (student leadership assembly, Dionysus etc.)

Increase Funding for Students in Financial Need

The TCSA would like to expand the ways in which we help students that are struggling financially to be successful in academic and extracurricular activities. To achieve this we are looking to:

- Increase the budget line for A.P.P.L.E. funding if possible.
- Make events and campaigns we run as financially accessible as possible by offering free events, 'pay what you can' events, and keeping participation costs as low as possible.
- For events that do require a cost, we would like to create a system or program that can subsidize students so they can attend if they are financially unstable.
- Reform Grocery Assistance application process to make the questions more clear.

Improve and build relationships between the TCSA and Trent University Alumni Association, Trent Graduate Student Association, Trent Durham Student Association, Trent University Native Association, Trent International Student Association (and regional groups), and Trent University staff unions.

Communication and collaboration between different agents at Trent University will greatly improve the membership's post-secondary experience. The Executive hopes to form stronger connections, share ideas, and learn from these groups. This will not only improve the experience of the TCSA membership, but will also help these other parties succeed on campus as well. This could come in the form of meet and greets, and meetings with their teams to work on issues affecting different constituencies and cross-promote events.

Build a Sense of Community Within the TCSA Board of Directors

We hope to achieve this by:

- Encouraging board members to contribute not only at board meetings, but with events and campaigns run on campus
- Organizing more social gatherings and team bonding for board members. This could be as simple as providing food at meetings so we can sit and eat together, or low cost social outings.
- Work towards avoiding unnecessary impeachments (notify a board member if they are one meeting away from being up for impeachment). We recognize that attention needs to be paid to if there are systemic barriers present to being a successful board member, and that we need to explore how to eliminate said barriers.
- Putting more decision making power into the hands of our board

Continue to Support and Collaborate with the Colleges

The Association will work with the College Cabinets to promote student voices within the college system, in particular to advocate for student consultation within the Colleges. The Executive will work to continue two-way communication with the Colleges and attempt to integrate them more

fully into some of the campaigns that will be running throughout the year. We will strive to support the College Cabinets in any way possible and value their contributions to student life.

Provide Additional Support to Traill College

As Traill College is entering the first year back to being an undergraduate college that houses first year students, they may need additional support to feel welcomed and included in the Trent community. To do this the executive will explore:

- Strategies to help integrate the new Traill College first years into the Trent community (especially because they are off main campus)
- Hosting or partnering on events together
- Promoting Traill College activities and events
- Supporting the creation of a Traill College Cabinet if they choose to create one
- Exploring the possibilities of adding a Traill College commissioner to the TCSA board of directors

Continued Improvements and Advertisement of the TCSA App + I.M. Well App

Goals for our TCSA App:

- Increase app visibility and downloads by creating specific marketing materials advertising for students to download the app
- Update the content more often, and include a wider range of events from around campus as last year there were complaints of lack of events
- Keep external partners that have spaces on the app engaged (such as Careers and Athletics) so that they keep their content up to date

Goals for I.M. Well App:

- Work with C&C to create and distribute materials that clearly explain what this free wellness app can do for students
- Work with the Wellness Centre and Trent University partners to have them promote and share the app with students
- Use the app and it's promotion to continue and promote conversations on campus about mental health

Promotion of TCSA Elections and Involvement

Being involved with the student movement is an invaluable experience, and is one of the best ways to be directly involved with changes on our campus. The Executive would like to continue increasing the promotion of the TCSA Spring and Fall elections, in hopes of achieving a full board with no vacant positions. We would also like to increase opportunities for those not wanting to run in the elections to get involved and volunteer with the TCSA.

Continued Commitment to Improving our Health and Dental Benefits Plan

The Association has developed an impressive health plan and the Executive would like to see its continued success. This year will pose new opportunities and challenges, as we have added the Trent Graduate Student Association and the Trent Durham Association to our benefits plan. With this change, we will be required to have extra promotion and communication with our constituents. In addition, we'd like more materials and information available to students to ensure they are aware of all the health and dental benefits available to them. A greater effort will be made to make students aware of the opt-out date and how to properly utilize the benefits website.

Provide a Variety of Events and Campaigns

The Association will strive to provide a wide variety of events, campaigns, and activities to our constituents. We hope to not only engage with more of the membership, but also acknowledge that not everyone has the same access to different types of space. In particular, the Executive will try and create events, or at least spaces within them, that will be welcoming to mature students, international students, part-time students, or student mothers, acknowledging the financial and time constraints that may be imposed on these groups. The Association will also work continue to prioritize and choose physically accessible spaces, as well as creating space for people mental health concerns. In addition to providing campaigns and events geared at advocacy, education, and awareness, we also recognize the importance of events that are focused more on community building and eliminating stress.

Strive to Maintain a Welcome Office Environment

Through office training and bonding activities, both within the office and using external facilitators, the Executive want to maintain an office environment where all voices will be heard and people will have the tools to constructively mediate disagreements. This will be worked on throughout the year, and will be maintained through good communication and office meetings. We are dedicated to creating a safe and inclusive working environment where all feel appreciated and valued. In addition, we would like to promote our office as a space students are welcome to enter, utilize, and feel safe in (all staff are required to take Positive Space training).

Identifying Issues on Campus

Housing & Residence

The executive team have concerns about the current residence situation on the Symons campus. While we are happy to see such positive recruitment and enrolment increases, we are alarmed at the measures the university is taking in order to accommodate a larger number of new students into pre-existing spaces. Expanding single rooms into double occupancy, and double rooms into triple occupancy, is not an ethical or sustainable way to deal with residence application increases. Students are being forced into smaller and smaller spaces every year, and are still paying the same residence fees. While the TCSA understands that the Housing Department has done everything within their power to accommodate students as best as they can, the TCSA can no longer support the university guaranteeing residence to first year students if another residence building is not built. The TCSA is against corporate residences. We do not believe that the annexes are a proper solution for the students housing crisis.

Board of Governors & Senate

As the largest decision making bodies at the university, it is important that students have their voices heard at both the Trent University Board of Governors (BoG) meetings, and Senate. To achieve this, the executive team will work on the following:

- Get students involved and interested in the university process by utilizing social media and poster campaigns.
- Create and circulate clear reports back from both these decision making bodies to the TCSA board and our membership.
- Work on the BoG caucus that was created last year to ensure that the students that hold the Trent BoG student seats (and therefore votes) understand and recognize the issues happening on campus.
- Campaign for part-time student Senate seat, as it was taken away when the Trent Part Time Student Association joined TCSA.

Tuition Fees & Trent's Structural Deficit

Tuition fees are a huge burden for both domestic and international students, and puts post-secondary education out of reach for many. International students face more challenges, even beyond the cost of \$18,000 in tuition fees alone. While some international students may have help from family and be able to pay these high costs, majority of international students do not. Many take on this debt on their own, or have multiple families from their communities pitch in to help cover the costs, which they will have to eventually pay back. The same is true for our domestic students with varying support from family, high debt loads, and family responsibilities. Indigenous students, racialized students, part-time students, mature students, student mothers, and students from low income families also face additional barriers when tackling the cost of education.

The current budget for the university projects that Trent will once again go into deficit in 2018. This is due to structural costs such as increases to staff salaries as agreed to in the collective agreements, and building costs that increase such as electricity. This kind of structural deficit puts pressure on the Trent administration to increase tuition and is also the cause behind increasing precarious employment for contract faculty. Maintaining a structural deficit not only has real costs in terms of tuition, but also in terms of our quality of education.

In response to this we shall endeavor to:

- Lobby province to increase funding to university by CPI to match CPI increases to staff salaries
- Highlight that either enrollment will have to increase, or tuition will have to increase by over 4%, resulting in dramatic increase to international student tuition
- Maintain engaged in the new Provincial Tuition Framework discussions, and when possible lobby for a lower cap on tuition increase applying to both domestic and international students
- Continue Fairness for International Students campaign
- Advocate for part-time student financial issues relating to deadlines
- Make our conversations about tuition intersectional, and engage students in discussions about how their interactions with tuition could be more fair and equitable

Indigenous Content

Beginning last year, the Indigenous Students Commissioner and TCSA Exec began work on the implementation of Mandatory Indigenous Content/Courses being integrated to all undergraduate programs at Trent. This was in response to the call for reconciliation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that had recently published its finding. It also speaks to the beginning of students deconstructing how we should all work in the university as a colonial institution. A motion was passed by the TCSA in support of this initiative, and our Indigenous Students Commissioner lobbied for a seat on the Indigenous Education Sub-committee of Senate. In the spirit of that motion and out of respect for all the work that was done last year, we would like to continue to working on this initiative while being lead by our board and in collaboration with TUNA.

Food Services

One of the factors affecting the academic success of students is the quality of food available and their eating habits. Throughout the summer and the previous year we have gotten lots of negative feedback and concerns about the food on campus. This year we will be actively representing student voice primary focusing on the following urgent issues by taking the following steps:

- Support the implementation of Halal, Kosher, and other options for students with dietary restrictions

- Work with Chartwells to better communicate changes/improvements made to food services
- Work with Chartwells to look into minimizing or eliminating deep-frying foods on campus
- Promote active lifestyle and healthy eating habits
- Get feedback about food from students while tabling, bring information to Chartwells

Academic Advocacy

Students are fundamentally committed to the idea of academics and graduation. In light of this the TCSA is committed to advocating on behalf of students to when it comes to academic policy and other advocacy issues. The TCSA is also committed to the creation of student-led academic focused spaces, such as those that are created by the academic clubs.

- Advocate for the students that are losing their opportunity to graduate with a minor in a Modern Languages (because of closure of the programs)
- Create a space for students to address their curricular concerns and prospective Graduate programs of interest
- Increase collaboration with the clubs and groups representing different academic streams and the faculty
- Advocate for student athletes in terms of potential scholarships and academic help

Clubs and External Affairs

Clubs and External Affairs Vice President Position

As Vice President Clubs and External Affairs is a new executive position beginning this year, the executive would like to pay additional attention to the functioning of this role to ensure its future success. To do this, we will create a framework for the next person coming into this role, including leaving behind a robust transition documents for them. We will also let the student body, university, and community, know about the new position and try to increase people engaging with the portfolio. In addition to the above, we would like to highlight the following goals and functions of this position:

Clubs and Groups

Clubs Policy

- Update the existing clubs policy to reflect current practices
- Create a terms of reference for the Clubs Funding Committee
- Make the Clubs Funding Committee a standing committee of the association
- Create a framework for the Green Dishes program
- Talk to the university about how we should be enforcing the Antidiscrimination and Harassment Policy and the Trent Crest Policy
- Create a more robust resource guide for external club training and support
- Create a more robust guild for how risk management works for sport clubs

Club Engagement

- Gather more feedback from the clubs about how they need support from us
- Engage clubs about the club space within the student centre
- Begin creating a framework for how the club space and storage in the student centre will be distributed
- Continue discussions about other storage spaces for clubs across campus
- Increase club usage of the TCSA App

Club Advocacy Work

- Continue advocating for the Risk Assessment process to be streamlined and brought under the Risk Management department
- Continue advocating for club autonomy and self governance at the university level
- Continue conversations with the College Offices about how they are supporting the clubs

Club Administration

- Aim and plan for a week long turnaround on club funding requests
- Aim for a quick turnaround on all club registration packages
- Create an efficient system for the VP Clubs & External Affairs and the Clubs Coordinator to split the work under the new system

- Continue to investigate possible new club benefits

External Affairs

Events

- Work on at least four events over the year with different stakeholders under the VP Clubs & External Affairs portfolio such as the TDSA, TGSA, local unions, clubs, and levy groups
- Promote collaboration between the aforementioned groups

Levy Groups

- Build a system where smaller levy groups in need of guidance can receive it (currently they have no official help from the TCSA or anyone)
- Continue discussions around a Levy Council as proactive solution to when levy groups become unaccountable to students
- Continue to advocate for levy group autonomy and self governance whenever necessary
- Whenever possible try to promote and collaborate on events with other levy groups

Local Unions

- Work to increase conversation about workers right and unions on campus
- Distribute resources to educate students about their rights in internships

TDSA

- Continue communication with the TDSA board and promote collaboration on policy and campaign initiatives when appropriate
- Continue to support each other over email about how we can learn from our respective experiences, such as planning orientation week etc.

TGSA

- Work to maintain a good relationship with the graduate students on campus
- Explore the possibility of events for undergraduate students who wish to continue with graduate studies

Fleming College

- Begin more active communication between the Fleming Student Association and the TCSA

City of Peterborough

- Work to increase student engagement with city issues
- Provide information to students about relevant events around the city
- Provide relevant information to students from city council and public meetings
- Begin to promote students issues and activism among community based groups

Equity Campaigns

Mental Health

Lobbying & Advocacy

Advocating for, and providing opportunities for improving mental health, destigmatizing mental health issues, and suicide prevention awareness will be central to all of our mental health campaigns. We will continue to lobby the administration for improved counselling services on campus (more counsellors to reduce wait times, improvements to current counselling offices), and will work with Trent towards a sustainable peer-to-peer support system which is professional and accountable.

#mydefinition Campaign

Striving to expand on a culture of inclusivity among our membership, the TCSA will work to further destigmatize mental illness on campus through our #mydefinition campaign. This campaign aims to create avenues through which students can discuss mental health so that Trent can become a space where the topic can be discussed openly. While doing so, we aim to create greater access to training and professional development for student in the area of counselling and suicide prevention. Programs such as SAFEtalk, ASSIST, and others will be incorporated into our campaign with subsidies provided so that cost is not barrier.

Friendship Bench Project

The Friendship Bench is an exciting program coming to Trent in early November that will promote our Trent Wellness Centre and local mental health resources. Named after a Carleton student that lost his battle with depression, The Lucas Fiorella Friendship Bench was started by his father, Sam Foirella. The project is centred around a bright yellow bench, which is installed in a visible and high-traffic location on campus (most likely Bata Podium) and serves as a daily visual reminder to students to think, talk, and learn more about mental health.

The bench also comes with a program called #YelloIsForHello. Through a custom plaque embedded in the bench, we connect students to local on and off campus support services (www.yellowisforhello.org) via the student's mobile or desktop devices. The website uses your IP address to ensure you see your on and off campus support services unique to your school on the www.yellowisforhello.org page. It will also contain the #yellowisforhello hashtag, which will encourage students to discuss mental health awareness in their favourite social media networks while reminding them of its purpose. Getting the help you need or making the difference in the life of someone struggling starts with a simple "hello."

Consent Campaign/ Addressing Rape Culture on Campus

After working with Trent on amending the campus sexual assault policy, the Association will continue to educate and advocate against sexual violence, assault, and harassment, while implementing more education about consent. This means fighting for better support for

survivors, and ensuring Trent's policies and systems are clear and non-intrusive. Part of this campaign will also focus on bystander intervention, as brought forward by Draw the Line poster and upstander workshops. We will provide tools to those who seek empowerment through self defence and training. Finally, the TCSA will take an intersectional approach in working towards consent culture and in opposition to rape culture, through hosting workshops that promote healthier masculinities. We wish to continue our relationship with community partners such as KSAC and PARN. We will continue to work with these groups to promote consent culture at Trent and across the Peterborough area.

Tuition

Tuition fees are a huge burden for both domestic and international students, and puts post-secondary education out of reach for many. Leading up to the National Day of Action this November 2nd, the TCSA will seek to engage the membership in discussion around tuition fees. Our approach is to lobby the province for the freeze of tuition fees. We will join our partners at the Canadian Federation of Student in hosting letter writing sessions and banner drops on our campus. We will also take part in rallies across the province on the National Day of Action. The TCSA will work on a local and provincial scale - with both campus clubs and member locals - to advocate for accessible education.

Sustainability

The TCSA is committed to working towards environmentally sustainable practices within our association, Trent, and our communities. The awareness campaign will focus on the importance of reducing and reusing waste, beyond just recycling. By partnering with groups on and off campus, we will advocate for the divestment from fossil fuels while pushing for the implementation of renewable energy at Trent. The TCSA will challenge students to consider their carbon footprint and how we can all tackle environmental issues on an individual level. Finally, the TCSA will take a stance against pipelines which threaten the health of the environment and the health of people across Turtle Island.

Healthy Active Living

The Healthy Active Living campaign will communicate to students the importance of healthy food choices, consistent dietary habits, and exercise. This will be highlighted in a series of workshops. The balance between activity and diet will culminate into a week long campaign this November, and will continue throughout the year. Finally, we will continue to advocate on behalf of our membership for more affordable healthy food options and lower athletics fees, thereby reducing barriers which prevent students from enjoying healthy lifestyles.