

TRAC Union - General Assembly Minutes
Wednesday, April 10th, 2019
At 6:00 pm
Room MB-9CD, 9th floor of JMSB
1450 Guy St.

Proposed Agenda

1. Opening of the GA

Meeting called to order at 6:08pm.

2. Appointment of the chair and minute taker

Jeremy Tessier moves to appoint Marion Miller as chair

Derek seconds

Unanimous.

Derek moves to appoint Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis as minute-taker

Manon seconds

Unanimous.

3. Approval of the Agenda

TRAC Executive moves to approve tentative agenda ([link](#))

Derek seconds

Todd moves to amend the agenda to move By-Law reform item to second-last

Derek seconds

Amendment passes by majority.

Agenda as amended approved by majority.

4. Approval of the January 22nd, 2019 GA minutes ([link](#))

Derek moves to approve

Manon seconds

Approved by majority.

5. Executive updates

Jeremy Tessier presents Executive year-end report ([link](#))

Gonzalo Renato Quintana Zunino presents workload research and analysis report [\(link\)](#)

Hossein Kalbasi presents cyber infrastructure report [\(link\)](#)

Mario Iorio presents Invigilator report [\(link\)](#)

Sahar Alinezhad presents financial report [\(link\)](#)

Todd: Would like to commend TRAC on its responsible spending this year

Todd moves to have a question-answer period of 5 minutes

Vasilios seconds

Motion approved by majority.

Alex: Why did the current TRAC executive pay for a GA from a previous mandate (Fall 2017)?

Sahar: It fell to us because they didn't; the cost primarily was for catering.

6. Elections of 2019-2020 Executive Committee

Presentation of candidates and election procedures [\(link\)](#)

Mario moves that the election overseers can still vote in the elections

Vasilios seconds

Motion is approved by majority.

Yasser and Manon nominate themselves for executive election officers

Sylvana seconds

Approved by majority.

Todd and Clayton nominate themselves for auditor election officers

Rajeet seconds

Approved unanimously.

a. President

Mike Krohn: Great to see such a big turnout. PhD student in History, TA for almost 4 years, Invigilator for a year. Have been TRAC History delegate for 1.5 years, have sat on many committees. Advocating for team: focusing on future by increasing profile with membership and university. Transition year, have to keep building on what we've done, develop an even stronger bargaining basis.

b. Vice-President

Hossein Ghayour: Was the only representative at an FTQ camp; realised that we're not just students but we have to look forward to our employment in Canada in the future. Have been appointed as social delegate, have attended most Delegate meetings, have helped organise events, By-Law reform. With team looking to collaborate more with FTQ, PSAC, etc. Also want to establish TRAC office at Loyola. Special thanks to invigilator members, who want more respect as Concordia employees. After working with TRAC, want to get involved further.

Reza Khoee: Union gets its strength from its members. At least three faculties in the previous years have been routinely taking advantage of RAs and TAs. We need more concrete information and analysis so we can have a stronger basis next time bargaining. Knowledge is power, and we want to be able to pass this on to our members. Many of our members don't come from Canada or don't know where to look for resources. Want to do more collaboration. Have been TRAC Delegate for JMSB the past year, have been Orientation officer, have worked as financial assistant with TRAC. Have met with many members and have heard their concerns.

c. Secretary-Treasurer

Sahar Alinezhad: Started as Delegate, and from there got to know more about rights and the union. Encourages everyone to become a delegate. Was asked to join the executive team last year, and was elected by GA. We have opportunity to reduce union dues by 0.2% present. Our payrates are now the second-highest in Quebec. Are very happy with team and teamwork.

Shadnoosh Pashaee: What we need to stand together, mobilisation is essential. As a master's student, wants to say that TRAC belongs to all of us. Through internships have learned teamwork, accounting, filing. Then became head designer for project with filing and accounting. This isn't just about the present, but also the future. We need networks and awareness of our rights. Our team want to involve more people to enforce the collective agreement, collaborate together.

d. TAs and RAs' Representation and Grievance Officer

Zarish Abbas: Doing PhD in Neuroscience. Got involved in TRAC because saw how University was dealing with sexual misconduct in my department. Also got onto Taskforce on Sexual Violence, sees that this isn't limited to one department. In this executive role the past few months, have gotten to know more how our rights are not being respected. We are precarious because we go

contract-to-contract, but in numbers we win. Want to continue Social Delegates and Equity Committee. We can't just focus on financial issues, exploitation and oppression too. We also plan to have greater representation at Loyola. University needs to be held accountable for actions and I want to do that.

Masoumeh Zaare: Grievances cover many kinds of unfair treatment. As longtime TRAC Delegate in Education, have been able to help members in department. Have been on Arts & Science steering committee the past year. On GSA Council, have improved communication. Worked as a professional journalist for 7 years, have learned what to listen for and how to analyse information, create reports. With team, will continue monthly Delegate meetings, more paid opportunities for volunteers, bringing in everyone's perspective.

e. Communication and Mobilization Officer

Ali Zaker: BCEE PhD candidate. More pay for volunteers, involving more members in TRAC activities. Would bring mobilization experience to role (incl. ENCS mobilizing, Iranian New Year), have to expand to Loyola. A better union is possible, which is why I'm running. We want our local to be reachable and welcoming.

Jacqueline Ristola: PhD candidate in Film and Moving Image. At CUPE 903, was elected to equivalent to Comms and Mob. Was part of committees (including draft). With TRAC, have worked with Equity, By-Laws, and Bargaining committee. Want to continue to mobilise at Loyola, continue Orientation officers program (esp. At Loyola), promoting Equity initiatives (Social Delegates, Equity Committee), working with other unions and associates (eg. tuition increases). International tuition increases were what got me into this field; the union fought for me then and won and if not I wouldn't be here now. It's been an honour to work with team, commitment and professionalism.

f. Bargaining Officer

Mojtaba Hasannezhad: Why do we need bargaining officer if we don't have any TA/RA bargaining? We need to prepare for 2021 already, and we need to enforce. Data-driven approach needed; already started by Gonzalo. Collaboration with PSAC bargaining team, other universities. We need to see what can be improved with next CA. Invigilators don't have a CA; they are currently the lowest paid and deserve the highest respect. Other issues: hiring procedure, lack of respect. Departmental training sessions as an idea. For this, we need an experienced and Have been ECE delegate the past year, By-Law committee member, PSAC certified for union basics.

Mehdi Kharazmi: You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate. In Mechanical Engineering. Have been TRAC Delegate past few years, involved in many spaces. Volunteering for GA, Norooz celebration, ENCS townhall. Would like to encourage members to get as involved as much as possible. Have done Union Basics 101, negotiation experience. Looking forward to priorities: enforce TA/RA collective agreement; finalise first final agreement for Invigilators; compile demands for next round of bargaining. It will be possible by networking on both campuses.

g. Invigilators' Representation and Grievance Officer

Rouzbeh Gouchani: As an invigilator, have the lowest wage in Quebec and lack of respect. Would like to finalise Invigilators CA during mandate. Mobilising undergraduates (largest part of Concordia's income), can grieve under Quebec labour code even before CA is in place. Also want to have standards set for hiring (hiring committee, transparency, etc.), collaborating with GSA. With experience in business, can use that to develop data driven resources.

Mario Iorio: I recruited Mike as president, we invigilate together, he has passion for the union. Picked people I could work with and get along with. As strength, organises and promotes events. Members on team have volunteered hard for free, so they'll do even better paid. Have 10+ years as invigilator, 3 years on TRAC exec. Have knowledge of files, am valuable and indispensable. Am on negotiation team, and will be until the end of negotiations. Will use bylaws to help members.

h. Questions for candidates:

Raaqid: Q for Shadnoosh -- you're running for Secretary Treasure, but your LinkedIn doesn't have anything related to accounting or finance. What is your financial experience?

Shadnoosh: As mentioned, I have worked for a municipality for three years and did Secretary Treasurer. For a big international project as well. Was also chosen as head designer.

Leila: Q for Mario -- why haven't invigilators gotten higher pay yet under your time at TRAC?

Mario: University has been delaying, issues with negotiation and arbitration. TRAC Exec did everything possible (we were outside in minus -20oC for protest for instance).

Carolina: Q for Shadnoosh -- to be a Secretary Treasurer for a municipality you

need to have CPA; do you have this certification?

Shadnoosh: Did accounting for these jobs as part of my general tasks.

Golnaz: Q for Mario -- All of us have seen the effect of last year's work on our paycheques for TA/RAs, but as an Invigilator for three years I haven't seen anything. What is your *new* plan?

Mario: Math department, on their own has raised their midterm invigilator wage to retain employees. This will spread to other departments. However, this has nothing to do with arbitration, which we are currently in process of.

Hossein: Q for Reza -- most of your speech was about your program, but what are your qualifications.

Reza: I am a TRAC delegate member for JMSB, have been part of lots of committees, know pretty well by know how the union works and what the issues and problems are. I am passionate, I really care about the union

Donald: Q for Sahar -- how will you do better for next year?

Sahar: When I started mandate, I submitted docs from 2017/18 (Donald was one of auditors). This year, was dealing with finances and tenders, moving towards QuickBooks, changed bank from Laurentien to Desjardains, supporting more unions and coops.

Sindy: Q for Reza's team -- Passion is important in negotiations, but data is essential. How will you use this data?

Rouzbeh: In my ECON PhD, I use numbers and data analysis is all the time.

Reza: As said in my speech, my first priority will be collect data. I also have an MBA.

Alex: Q for Mojtaba -- Do you have any experience bargaining?

Mojtaba: We're going to use the data that TRAC has already collected and analysed, we can look at the collective agreements of other universities, get more information from the School.

Eunbyul motions to extend question people to finish members in current line
Neil seconds

Approved by majority.

Probir: Q for Rouzbeh -- I know the background and qualifications for the rest of the team; for particular why Rouzbeh thinks he can take over Invigilators' Grievance at such a sensitive time?

Rouzbeh: There are actions we can take now that we haven't been taking.

Pia: Q for Reza -- Your speech did not mention Invigilators; what do we mean to

you?

Reza: I actually did mention Invigilators in my speech; I have been an invigilator since 2017. I know how hard it is to grieve, and the lack of respect. We want to be able to defend Invigilators though Quebec Labour Code

Eunbyul: Q to Mike's team -- What does equity mean to you? (Not all faculties represented, no one from Loyola, was not quite at gender parity).

Mike: Is difficult to get dedicated people to step forward; more mobilisation will mean that more people can't get involved. I shouldn't be running unacclaimed.

Jeremy: Q to Mike's team -- When I started at the union, it was very Engineer-focused and Collective Agreement reflected that. How do you plan on representing *all* of Concordia?

Masoumeh: Mike and I are with A&S, I sit on steering for the faculty. I talk about the problems that graduate students deal with in our faculty.

Vasilios: Q for all teams -- how to increase respect for Invigilators?

Rouzbeh: I didn't even know that we could grieve without CA, planning on doing so if elected.

Mario: I have office hours every week, I want to be able to help you.

Hossein: With a union there is a difference between personal and organisational interests; how do you manage with conflict resolution and putting the team before self-interest?

Zarish: Union interest over self-interest; should there be a split slate we can still be professional with each other, move forward in interest of the union.

Hossein: I am friends with most people across teams, so should be fine to do so.

Carmine: Q for Mario -- what discrepancies do you have with what the other slate said?

Mario: We can't do Invigilators hiring committee until done with negotiation; Invigilators don't pay dues.

Mike elected as President, Reza elected as Vice-President, Sahar elected as Secretary-Treasurer, Zarish elected as TAs and RAs' Representation and Grievance Officer, Jacqueline elected as Mobilisation and Communication Officer, Mojtaba elected as Bargaining Officer, Mario elected as Invigilators' Representation and Grievance Officer (majority vote; secret ballot).

7. Election of financial auditing committee

Donald Chambers, Tina Mohammadbeygy, Sakait Bagchi, Alex Ocheoha, Probir Krishna

Gupta, nominate themselves as financial auditors.

Donald: BComm from Concordia, lots of experience, have served on plenty of committees, have done employment at Concordia for 30+ years, very dedicated and detail-oriented, have done oversight committees, was one of two auditors last year.

Tina: PhD student in Geo/Enviro. Before studies, did auditing quality management systems (working with accounting, finance in several companies). Am not familiar with any of the current/future TRAC execs, will be easy to remove myself personally to audit the union responsibly.

Alex: Have been involved with TRAC for a long time, know how TRAC works, know all the exec and all candidates, used to be President of the GSA. GSA appointed first auditor under mandate. Have been involved in accountancy, know a lot about financial statements and how they should be presented.

Saikat: In Engineering, have worked in project maintenance, also am an association President. I know how TRAC works but I don't know the people which is an advantage, I know I can do this.

Probir: My qualifications for auditor: I've been with TRAC for more than a decade, I have extensive knowledge, have been in banking for over 20 years in New York and Wall Street, I have been in charge of multi-million and multi-billion dollar deals. MBA, McGill psychology, Have done lots of volunteering for TRAC.

Tina and Alex elected as auditors by plurality vote through secret ballot.

8. Equity Committee Report

Jacqueline presents Equity Committee report ([link](#))

- a. Approval of Equity Working Group motion ([link](#))

Vasilios calls for quorum

Quorum fails

Recess

Jeremy moves to reopen meeting

Clayton seconds

Approved by majority.

Neil: Typo in motion (“conditions”)

Mario: How will these people be selected, how will they be paid, et cetera.

Jacqueline: As delineated in motion, much will be up to Executive Committee

Eunbyul: Expands on Jacqueline’s answer. This working group is TRAC putting in the resources to be able to implement our anti-oppression framework..

Jeremy: This committee came about because members wanted to be better represented, after a year it is obvious that the structure needs to be reformed to lift of the voices that need to be uplifted, recognise the work of people and have this union be more inclusive. Though some may disagree, this is important.

Hossein: Regarding pay, we have honourariums for Delegates...should this motion be adopted, the logistics around honourariums should be as transparent as possible.

Mario moves to extend discussion by 10 minutes

Neil seconds

Motion fails by majority.

Hossein moves to extend discussion by 5 minutes

Neil seconds

Motion passes by majority.

Mario: We figured out a salary amount per hour, for transparency we should ask that no former or current exec sit on it.

Jacqueline: Regarding honourarium, this is an ambitious project and it will be hard work and emotional labour. So we want to advocate to have a good honourarium; this motion does not include dollar numbers (to be determined later). This motion already excludes any current Executive. We’re getting auditors right now, and the transparency will come from there.

Eunbyul: Rumours that I wanted to place myself in this position through the creation of this group; I absolutely do not.

Jeremy: Compensation is already in the written motion; will be the decision of the Executive group.

Hossein: If the pay becomes hourly salaried instead of bulk honourarium, it should be reflected in budget reports.

Alex: I think there should be a fixed dollar amount, should not be left to Executive.

Alex calls for quorum

Quorum fails

Recess

Zarish calls to reopen meeting

Nageet seconds
Motion passes by majority.

Equity committee motion passes by majority.

9. Approval of by-laws reform

Jeremy moves to table By-Law Reform

Gonzalo seconds

Tabling passes by majority.

10. Approval of position on Bill 9

Jeremy moves to approve motion for official position on Bill 9 ([link](#))

Jacqueline seconds

Approved by majority

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourns at 9:15pm.