



Minutes

January 4, 2023

12:30 PM EST

Zoom

Present: Courtney Cameron (Chair), Damiana Pavone, Christina Tassopoulos, Julie Choi, Zamir Fakirani, Melissa Paglialunga, Jaylene Olson, Jessica Li, Shahbaz Khan, Ayesha Khann, Quinn Stevenson, Cham Alhallak, Charlies Huang, Kyra Flomen, Emily Miranda, Eric Frydman, Johan DeNora, Vishmayaa Jeyamoorthy, and Shae-Ashleigh Owen

Regrets: Rose Wong, Hillary Song, and Danielle Landry

Call to Order (12:32pm)

President's Items

Facebook Groups

Courtney: You can see from the agenda that we have two items to deal with today. The roundtable discussion which is typically at the beginning of the meeting we will talk about after. We are going to dive right in. I am Courtney, and I am the L&L President. For the other L&L executive members, when you address individuals at the meeting today, let folks know what your position is.

Courtney: As many of you know, there was a string of incidents on the L&L Facebook pages over the break. I want to provide some context. An account called Osgoode Israel Trip posted about their initiative in the Facebook group. It was not the first time that this trip has been advertised about. They had our permission to post it. On some of the posts, we started to see a back-and-forth debate ensue. Over the break, these debates started becoming unproductive and unsafe for many of the student body members. I made the decision to remove some posts and comments.

Courtney: Anything removed was for student safety. It broke the community rules, and I ruled it as unsafe. I am very firm in my position that our role on L&L is not a political one. Our role is to represent the students and all students as best we can and the range of views.

Courtney: I also want folks to know that throughout the break, Hillary, our VP Equity, Ayesha and I had a group chat going on to monitor the Facebook pages.

Charles : People will see it as covering your mistake more than being political to be honest.

Courtney: No unilateral decisions were made in our chat; there was always another person coming on. In discussing the issue over the break, I have 3 main concerns in the Facebook group as follows:

The amount that groups can post. I was told that the amount it was being posted was contributing to the problem. We have made the decision to alter the policy to limit those posts. People are wondering why L&L hasn't said anything before the communication we posted. We wanted to hear feedback about how we can do better and build a plan with the online safety team before we went on.

Discretion of L&L to delete posts and comments. It is a broad one and it lies with L&L. Discretion is really broad, and we want everyone to know that L&L will amend those rules and firm those up. We want to do that will in collaboration with the student

body.

Bans on events and accounts bearing the Osgoode name. We don't currently have rule on this because L&L doesn't have grounds to tell folks whether they can use that name generally. I don't necessarily want to say we can't, but it is not currently within our discretion.

Courtney: If any executive members want to comment before we dive in, go for it.

Shahbaz: I wanted to say that for any Section D students, if you want to remain anonymous, you have the choice.

Zamir : I sent feedback from Section C via email.

Shae-Ashleigh Owen: The Osgoode Israel Trip said that they aren't affiliated with Osgoode but said they are Osgoode. Can anyone do that? Can you use the name even if you're not affiliated?

Courtney: I agree that that is something we need to fix. We don't have a rule on that to be completely honest. We are constantly growing and learning and that is something we are going to take back to the Online Safety Committee because we need clear bounds, so students know.

Shae-Ashleigh: Can anyone post anything in the Facebook groups? Let's say I have a party. Could I advertise it? We need more clarity on what can and can't be posted. I understand that it will happen because it is a very complex issue, but I feel as though we can express those views without accusations from either side. We all want to do good and right here and saying you're a horrible person or you're antisemitic is not productive. It is weird to be apolitical in this context but regardless, you have to have a set of rules and boundaries for this. It is not fair to be shut down – no matter what side you are, and I don't appreciate that. Thank you for listening.

Courtney: Thanks for sharing all that. I want to clarify my comments about being apolitical – in my position as President, I uphold this view. It could be that there are members of my team who don't agree and so I am not speaking on behalf of everyone. You had a great point about the party. The answer is yes, which is part of the problem. As the rules exist now, any sort of event/initiative for Osgoode students or Osgoode students can benefit from can be posted on that page. We have it like that because LexisNexis and bar prep courses go up all the time because they benefit Osgoode students. The bound of that rule is blurry but that's why it is so loose is so things that are not affiliated can still post. Does anyone from the team want to speak?

Courtney: I am just going through the chat. None of the team is part of the Israel Trip. Having an authorization form non-Osgoode groups to post is a great idea Zamir. We are taking everything back to the Online Safety Committee.

Emily Miranda: I had a suggestion for transparency in deleting comments. There is a specific thread where admin has to say they delated a comment and why. I get that it is for safety but can say by this person at this time and allows us to know the reasoning that you have for deleting a comment. A comment of mine was deleted, and I am not sure why. Transparency for deleting comments they just don't like.

Courtney: A big part of this as well is being clear on who is making these decisions. Right now, we have multiple people who have access to the Facebook pages. The goal will be to tighten up that access, so we have one person making that decision and a clear reason for why we are deleting comments. During the holidays, these conversations were happening over chat and happening quickly. We were in different time zones and wanted to just keep it safe. A thread on keeping why things were delated – that is a great idea. I am adding that to my list of potential things to implement. I know you and I chatted on email as well – if a comment was deleted, it is because me or someone from the exec deemed it as unsafe. This breadth of discretion is something we are taking about.

Emily Miranda: I think that is what is considered harmful. Examples should be provided. They could find it harmful, but it doesn't make it harmful in and of itself. People should be allowed to respectfully criticize people in positions of power. I want to know who was on the online safety committee.

Courtney: I think you're totally correct that those examples would be useful. One of the biggest issues here is transparency. Both Julie and Shahbaz have put in the chat that these are all being taken to online safety committee and that we won't make any changes until we consult again with the student body. In terms of who is on the online safety committee, that has not been finalized as o yet since we are working on recruiting members in semester. I will follow up with you when that is finalized.

Courtney: In response to Charles about why rule 1 was breached in deleted thread, when I read the thread, I saw member of my team (for lack of a better word) being put on read by the thread and was concerned for that individual's online safety. If I saw a thread in which any member was getting that compounding negative commentary about them, I would delete it. I would have that made that decision whether it was an L&L executive member or an Osgoode student.

Shae-Ashleigh : I didn't feel safe as well because 1. I thought the group was for like information about Osgoode clubs and events. And I got the feeling that we were not "allowed" to feel uncomfortable about this (this happened outside the L&L fakebook group) but I feel as if people aren't allowed to feel that. Or else we would be "hypocrites" which I think is not fair.

Courtney: I am sorry that our actions made you feel silenced. We wanted to have this conversation. I understand how our actions landed that way.

Johan DeNora: Thanks for organizing this meeting. It is a super intense thing to have happen right at the end of the semester. I am disappointed in L&L. As a 1L, I think it is odd to pitch yourself as apolitical when we voted for our fellow students to represent us particularly on equity. It feels like you are trying to have your cake and eat it to - to delete the posts and then want to have a discussion. You need to have standards about how those discussions will be monitored. There has to be acceptance that criticism doesn't equate to harm. People were posting mean comments, but a lot of the comments felt like just criticism. When those comments get deleted, not having a set of rules in place that students can look to. People have lost a lot of faith in L&L after this. It bothered me that Ashley Landesman was in the group at all. LexisNexis is very clearly in our purview. Feelings about the trip aside, there were issues with transparency from the get-go. First post they ever made had comments turned off. Ashley was posting bad faith arguments. It has to be stricter rules around individuals from the outside. I don't understand why she was allowed to stay in there for so long. Thanks for listening.

Courtney: Thank you so much for all of that. Regarding that individual, I am in discussion with my team about what those rules are. It does say in those rules that it is for Osgoode students. How the group works is someone requests admission, and we have people admit you in. It is likely that one of us let her in because they thought she was an Osgoode student. At this moment, I am not sure if she has been. If any L&L members have admin access, can you check that for me? Julie says she is still a member. We will go ahead and remove that particular member because it is in our rules that you have to be an Osgoode student. That was an oversight from L&L. It breaks my heart that people have lost faith in L&L: and we are working on repairing that. We will be removing former students. We're not perfect, and we made a mistake on this one.

Courtney: I want to clarify my apolitical comment. I am saying that being apolitical is my personal stance. The team does not necessarily share that. It does not mean that the Facebook group is not for political discussion. All I mean is that in my actions in that Facebook group, I was not responding due to my own politics. Any decision I made to remove, mute, etc. was made because I believed the Facebook rules were breached.

Courtney: Many students were told that this discussion was over. By no means is this discussion over in any way whatever; this is a continuing discussion. There was also misinformation that to complain about L&L, you have to be a student group but that's not the case. If you have any issues with L&L or a club ratified under L&L, you can come to us as an individual. You can make a complaint against a member of our team; you can do so by emailing it to the Equity officer. If the complaint is against the Equity Officer, you can forward that complaint to your year rep. We will have procedures in place to information gather and make a decision.

Courtney: Regarding Johan's comment, I will take ownership about not responding. I was travelling for a lot of the break and didn't see it escalating until it got to a really bad point.

Courtney : You can absolutely file a complaint. You have to formally submit your complaint against them to your 1L rep. For you, it would be Rose Wang.

Emily Miranda: A second ago you said a complaint should be sent to the equity officer. But you said if it were against the Equity Officer, it would be forwarded along. Does someone else have access to the Equity Officer's email?

Courtney: Only the equity officer has access to that email. If you have a concern, you can always cc the general email or the secretary. If the complaint is a complaint against the Equity Officer, send it to your year or section rep and that person forwards it to me and the VP Internal except if the complaint is against one of us.

Zamir: It doesn't sit right with me that we can't access their emails. If they are under investigation, we should be able to access the inbox.

Courtney: That's a really great point. The system is new. The bylaw is new as of November. So, the first time implementing the bylaw so we certainly might have to change it along the way. It is a great point that if someone is under investigation, transparency is of ultimate importance. All these big overarching decisions take time, so I don't want people to think I'm putting them off.

Cham: I want to say that with the actions of L&L, it is hard to say we can have any more faith in you. You said you removed comments that violated your rule, but there were comments where I was accused of antisemitism that were not deleted or comments when I was responding to those accusations that were. I don't think you were being apolitical. I would say it was a delicate attempt to silence someone and to have defamatory comments being made against them without being able to respond. I was accused many times of being antisemitic – I provided a lot of quotes, videos, etc. saying otherwise. I have been in contact with Faisal Bhabha, and he found the actions of L&L very troubling and it could be in conflict with the York's Human Rights Code. L&L needs a lot of cleansing, and it seems like racialized folks have suffered the most.

Courtney: Thank you for all of that. I want to start off by saying that you being attacked was not acceptable. For context, I was travelling for 3 weeks during our time off and had spotty WIFI so things were up there longer than they should have been. The Online Safety Committee is meant to be the first line of defence. Before the break, we only had 2 people sign up. They remained pretty inactive. We saw the hole in needing more ways to regulate the Facebook pages. We headed into the break having only 3 exec members having access to removing and patrolling; 2 out of those 3 were travelling with spotty WIFI. I hope this event inspires people to join that online safety community. This is why things slipped through the cracks and I apologize it was up for as long as it was. We hope we have more sign-ups for the safety committee going forward.

Courtney: As for your concerns about L&L, it is a democracy, and you vote us in and have the decision to not vote us in again or to impeach us or suspend us – myself included. It is ultimately your student government and if you think we were not representing you, you have the right to deal with that. Does anyone else on the L&L team want their voice on this? Anyone else from the student body have any other contributions on this topic? I have been gathering quite a few pieces of feedback and suggestions – all fantastic ways we can make the online space safer for us. We still have the application for the online safety committee open, and we encourage you to join it. We're going to have a meeting with that committee – want to firm up those rules. We will post online what meeting that will be happening at so you can attend and have your feedback heard. Julie is asking in the chat if it will be same application, and the answer is yes. Thank you to everyone for coming out!

Roundtable Updates

Courtney: The discussion we just had has been what was dominating my L&L world over the break. My main concern is creating a safer space for students and preserving faith in L&L to be frank. I am going to share Danielle and Hillary's updates as well. Danielle has a bunch of pub nights planned with dates for the rest of the semester. The two she wanted to highlight are as follows: January 12 will be the first one back and January 26 will be the U o T collab. For Hillary, a big update will be the online safety committee. Her priority is to build that committee. Some of the comments were up longer than they should have been because we only had 3 of us. I will own my contributions.

Melissa: I will send out the first newsletter this Sunday. I will also post the minutes from our last meeting once they are approved by consent.

Christina: I don't have too many updates. I have been trying to book grad photos since September, and I am hoping for that to be resolved soon. The 3L formal venue is officially booked – Eglinton Grand on March 16th.

Ayesha: My updates are around the JCR in addition to the stuff we just discussed. January 11 will be the first JCR night back. Hall & Hall was able to sponsor the JCR so that night will be a hot chocolate bar. We will have some Baileys and Kahlua to spike their hot chocolate. Hall & Hall has sent us the money for that and have picked up pretty much all that stuff. I spoke to catering at York, and they are able to provide us with vegan hot chocolate. The next event will be January 25 – it will be a little market with local vendors.

Julie: We have started taking about 1L formal. We are going to meet with Christina about it. We are also hoping to do section B and D event for next Thursday but now that we realize Danielle is planning a pub night, I don't want it to conflict. We were hoping to do trivia/karaoke in JCR before the ethics class ends because then 1L recruit applications are due the following week.

Courtney: The rule is that we can't have events on Friday.

Melissa: You could always stack the events.

Ayesha: Maybe we can help with karaoke through the JCR as there seems to be a more general interest there.

Shahbaz: I have a friend in a band who has access to PA systems. We just need microphones

Julie: Maybe we could reach out to the York music department?

Courtney: I can see if my partner can get them.

Shahbaz: I got an official complaint sent to my email about the Equity Officer. I don't really know what to do. I guess I just forward it to you Courtney.

Courtney: Ayesha will post the updated constitution. You would start by forwarding it to me and Ayesha within 72 hours so send it ASAP. Under our new bylaw, you must respond in writing and cc-Ayesha and myself to the complainant letting them know the timeline and what happens next. The accused party needs to be notified within the 7 days and 10 days before the complaint is to be addressed. The next step is for you to follow up with the complainant. The complaint needs to be shared with the whole executive and it is within your discretion if anything needs to be redacted. It is probably fine because it happened on Facebook. At our next meeting, you are going to present the complaint to the executive team, and they can ask questions. Hillary will have 1 hour to address the executive in response of the complaint. The individual complaining can also attend this meeting and have the floor. Following that, any member of the executive may move to suspend or impeach the Equity Officer. 2/3 majority needs to be in favour. Equity Officer has opportunity to respond. I will send you what is required by the bylaw. I'm going to forward to our whole team the text of that new bylaw. I suspect the complaints aren't going to end there. If a complaint comes in against me, forward it to Ayesha. I am also okay with another 1L jumping in to help you. Make sure Hillary knows it was filed against her, and we will go from there. Has anyone else received another complaint?

Julie: In the bylaw, does it say what constitutes suspension or impeachment?

Courtney: If a person hasn't fulfilled the duties of their office as per the constitution, that would constitute suspension or impeachment.

Julie: It would be helpful to review the equity officer role.

Courtney: I am weary that more might be coming in. Any other updates?

Quinn: I looked into getting Section A a tour of Osgoode downtown, but it is still not allowed because of COVID. I am talking with the Student Caucus rep for some ideas.

Jess: I have some updates regarding clubs. Damiana and I have been in talks and are looking to set budget approval for January 16th. We will be ratifying some new clubs this semester – just 3 or 4 that were interested in starting a new club and we will have to do that as a collective. That's kind of it for now.

Jaylene: No real update at this point. At the start of this term, we are going to be looking at building resources with the requirements of their degree.

Courtney: We also need to set new office hours. Email me two potential office hour slots. I am also fine with you hosting them on Zoom if you prefer.

Other Business

**There was no other business to discuss. **

Adjournment (1:55pm)

Motion: THAT we adjourn.

(Cameron / Tassopoulos) CARRIED

Consent Agenda

The item on the Consent Agenda, the Minutes of the meeting of 30 November, 2022 was deemed approved.