



The Legal & Literary Society of Osgoode Hall Law School

Minutes

4th of September 2024

12:35 to 1:37 PM EST

Zoom & In Person

Present: Julie Choi, Kelly Bilenkis, Jamie Lynn Galley, Tania Kengatharan, Brandon Connor, Yuval Shilon, Shivaansh Khanna, Karel Peters, Hamza Shahzad, Joyce Gerges, and Reagan Cockburn.

Absent:

Call to Order (12:35pm)

Julie motioned to start the meeting, and Reagan seconded

President's Items

Motion to halt yearbooks & agenda production

The gist is that people don't even pick them up and so few people contribute to the images. And then the images don't normally represent the entire class. It has everyone's grad photos but nobody seems to care about it and you already get a composite with all the grad photos.

Shiv mentioned that we don't need to stop doing the yearbook, we can just require people to pay for it themselves in advance now. We would ask them at the start of the year whether they want to purchase one.

Julie mentioned it's a little more complicated

Julie also asked last year's 1Ls whether they used the agendas and nearly everyone in the class said no, and many students also didn't pick them up.

We also have a stack of yearbooks in our office this year that people never picked up from last year.

In the past we spent about 6k to 7k on these yearbooks, so instead we could now pass those savings to the grads in other ways.

During the vote, Joyce was the only person not to vote to pass it so we inquired into whether she wants to speak to that.

Joyce spoke about how she really likes having a yearbook, the idea is wholesome, she likes sending in her photos and then seeing it later down the line memorialized forever.

We're going to pause this motion to axe yearbooks for now so we can discuss further, first.

MOTION THAT the Legal and Literary Society ceases to produce physical agendas in partnership with Frissens for the academic years 2024-2025, and 2025-2026.

(Julie motioned and Reagan seconded) CARRIED

(and)

MOTION THAT the Legal and Literary Society ceases to produce physical yearbooks partnership with Frissens for the academic years 2024-2025, and 2025-2026.

(Julie motioned, and Yuval seconded) POSTPONED

2. Motion to call a referendum re: raising L&L levy

We have been running a deficit for a while now, so we are technically in debt. We have no revenue other than the levy fee that we collect from the students every year.

In the past JCR may have made more money, but since COVID that hasn't been the case.

It's Yorks Bookstore who runs the clothing sale now so we don't get any revenue from that either.

Current levy is \$39.15 per term.

We don't have access to any of the money collected for tuition whatsoever.

We need to raise the levy in order to continue to provide the services that we've been providing (orientation, our other events, operating the JCR, insurance, etc).

Proposal is to increase it by \$17.50 or possibly \$20 per term.

We have also seen an increase in operating costs and an increase in the number of clubs at Osgoode. 10 years ago there was less than 20 clubs, now we have 65 clubs (and growing).

We essentially have the same amount of money but far more groups to spread it between. So to keep our finances sustainable, we need to increase the funding we're getting from the student body.

Shiv mentioned that for the student body to run next year, future year's L&L exec would have to cut some of the galas/formals we provide, cut funding to the summary database, and things would get messy in regards to our extracurricular life and the services provided by our student government at school.

Reagan mentioned that there needs to be clear communication to the student body why we are voting to raise our funding so people understand where the increase to their fees is going and why it is necessary.

Julie spoke about how, considering that L&L's mandate is to foster community at our school, that is why we are making this decision. We want to encourage more clubs to come into existence, we don't think it's a bad thing that we have such a rich environment with a diversity of clubs, and we don't want to take that away from future generations of Osgoode students.

Tania also mentioned that we haven't increased the levy in 20 years, so she thinks this increase is very reasonable.

Yuval agreed, she wonders if we can also start more initiatives to bring more money to L&L considering that part of the reason for this increase is because we aren't bringing as much revenue in anymore.

Julie agreed, and that's on the agenda for us to discuss today too (more ways for us to bring in income that is). She also raised the issue that when we raise money at specific events or via fundraising initiatives, we are only getting some extra funding from these events are only being provided by some JD students while our funding is meant to benefit *all* JD students, regardless of whether they participate in these events that help us raise more money for this purpose.

Yuval agrees, and she'll jump in again when we discuss fundraising later.

Joyce thinks we need to emphasize that we are raising this because of the limits that our current budget puts on us.

Shiv also noted that to keep the deficit where it is rather than have it grow, he has already had to cut some of our services. And that clubs always ask us for more money, but we literally don't have the money to give them. Every year everything gets more expensive (i.e. our accounting software went up 50% in the past two years) and we literally need to do taxes.

Kelly mentioned that considering all of the issues mentioned, maybe we should actually increase our levy by \$20, as briefly suggested by Julie? It's a marginal increase from \$17.50 to \$20, but we're greatly underfunded right now and I think if we increase it by the bare minimum now, we're just going to need to increase it again before long (like probably in the next few years even)?

To add to what Joyce said, she also wondered if we can come up with a list of the services that we provide that would need to be cut if we didn't pass this referendum, and she can attach it to the end of the meeting minutes, just to be transparent with the student body?

Julie agreed that if everyone else also agrees, we can increase it by \$20 instead.

Reagan thinks the key thing is for us to make it clear to the student body 1) what we are currently providing for them, 2) what our costs are, and 3) why we need to pass this referendum. During clubs fair, she spent most of her time just explaining to both upper years and 1Ls what L&L even does.

Shiv wants to emphasize that the first service on the chopping block because of our budget would be the summary database. And then the next thing after that would be the galas for each year.

Brandon wanted to know if we could give students options for our increase, so they can choose how much we increase it by.

But Julie didn't think it would be a good idea, that it would be over-complicating things and that the amount we are currently raising it by is the minimum.

There was some more discussion on whether it should be \$20 or \$17.50, but unanimous consensus was to pass at \$20.

MOTION THAT the Legal and Literary Society calls a Referendum with its general members with the following question: "Per Article V, 2(b) of the Legal and Literary Society's Constitution, the Executive of L&L shall be empowered to change the amount of levy by a Referendum of the Regular Members; and Regular Members are defined as any undergraduate student attending the Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, who has paid the required student activity fee (per Article II, Interpretation). Do you agree to the increase of \$20 per term for the Legal and Literary Society student levy fee? (Currently, it is \$39.15 per term).

(Julie motioned and Yuval seconded) CARRIED

3. JCR Insurance Update & JCR Revamp Plans

Julie successfully negotiated a reduction in our insurance rate for the student body.

Also our bistro no longer provides cutlery nor hot food, that's something for us to discuss in the future.

This was York's decision to make a cut, it shouldn't fall on us to rectify this situation so Julie is going to discuss the matter with the Deans.

Reagan asked when the 1L rep election is and whether a graphic needs to be made for it?

Julie informed us that the Chief Electoral Officer has commenced the 1L election process and the caucus and L&L reps are projected to be elected and ratified by the end of this month. More information with specific dates will be provided soon.

4. Tri-School Mixer

At Rendezviews, it will be a cash bar only (so people will need to bring physical cash!!).

Julie mentioned we should emphasize that it's a cash bar.

We will highlight that people should bring cash in our advertising.

5. Additional Agenda Items

There were some agenda items that we didn't get to. Those will all be discussed in our next to meetings.

Some things needed to be tabled since the All-Clubs meeting was being held immediately after, and multiple L&L members needed to attend.

Motion: to adjourn the meeting (1:27pm)

(Julie motioned/Reagan seconds) CARRIED