

April 25th, 2017

Dear Trent University Durham Students,

This marks our last week as your 2016-17 TDSA Executive Team. We believe that it has been a great year, and we have accomplished many things to help improve your campus experience. We want to share with you what we have accomplished and point out gains made in our Long-Term Plan.

Community

We started off our year with a community event. We fulfilled our goal to increase a sense of community on campus and involve all students. We invited speakers from the community to our campus to collaborate and build relationships. We ended our year in a similar fashion through a Fair Trade Market, that aimed to build relationships and collaborate with local businesses.

Elections

The elections process this year was a bit different than normal, with more than one contended position for the first time in TDSA History. We also had two separate elections this year, with the purpose of increasing competition for Executive roles and providing unsuccessful candidates a second opportunity to engage in the TDSA. Although the thought behind this idea seemed good, the second election did not have as much engagement as originally hoped. It will be up to our successors to decide whether implementing this a second time would be a good idea.

Administration Relations

On campus, we continued to develop good relations with Trent staff and administration as well as implement an Alumni Wall with the Graduating Class composites from the past six years. Outside our office door, we also now have a sign that represents the TDSA as an independent and professional organization.

Another one of our goals this year was to intentionally market and communicate events and campaigns to increase student engagement.

June Orientation

In 2016 we partnered with the University, as we do for all of the orientation events, to host our first ever summer pre-orientation student gathering. It took shape as a "Beach Day" event for new students to meet and play games at the Oshawa lakefront. Our turnout was great and students seemed to really enjoy it. We would recommend doing more summer programming in the future as it's a great way to kick off orientation and grab the attention of our incoming students.

September Orientation

As has been typical in past years, the TDSA co-ran orientation programming and events with Trent University. The orientation programming was fairly consistent with what had been done in the past, and things ran smoothly as usual over the 2-day span of events. The Student Association has made recommendations for the University to change up the second day of programming, which is primarily academic and quite a heavy day, and we believe they plan on revamping this over the coming summer.

Born Ruffians Concert

As per usual, the TDSA's main contribution to the orientation programming was our larger-scale event. This year, we followed suit with what had been done in 2015 and hosted another concert; giving free tickets to all new students and charging \$10.00 for returning students. To increase turnout to this event

we changed a few things about the way that it was marketed; most importantly arranging for the event to take place during the first week of classes on campus in hope that more returning students would attend. While the event itself ran smoothly and the students who came enjoyed themselves, we believe that this event could be changed in following years. Concerts are expensive to run and the student attendance was not sufficient to justify the cost of such a large event.

Stressbusting

This year we focused greatly on stress-busting and mental wellness initiatives. We left adult colouring books out in the hallways for midterm and exam weeks, as well hosting a bubble-wrap table and giveaway through TDSA CARES to help ease student stress. As part of our Wellness campaign, we also held a make-your-own trail-mix station for students to make healthy and energy-boosting snacks. For our April exam season, we hired an exotic animal mobile petting zoo to come to campus for the final day of winter semester classes. This event was received very well and we would like to continue doing this in future years.

Yoga

In 2016 the TDSA hosted a free yoga week, with classes held Monday-Thursday before evening classes. We felt that this event was well advertised on our social media as well as on campus, and we attracted great student interest. We also held a raffle for a Lululemon yoga mat, water bottle and mat strap for the yogis on campus. Despite the great sense of excitement surrounding this event, the actual attendance was extremely inconsistent across the four-day span.

Movember

We continued to participate in the Movember campaigns this year, and even expanded our participation to host a network on the website for students to participate in. As has been consistent over the past few years, this campaign did not attract a lot of interest or attention from students. This likely is a result of our campus demographic being overwhelmingly female with a disproportionate number of male students. This event has never been extremely successful and might need to be overhauled completely or no longer ran as a campaign in future years.

First and Second Pub Nights

For the first time ever, the TDSA hosted pub night events on campus. The first and second pub nights were both extremely well attended by students and the programming was exciting and enjoyable. The first pub night took the shape of a trivia/karaoke night and the second was solely trivia-based. Both nights were successful and run easily through the Student Association, once a Special Events Permit had been obtained. We would highly recommend continuing this tradition as students continuously asked us for more pub nights and when the next one would be. This year, both of the events took place in first semester.

Bubble Soccer

Also for the first time, the TDSA hosted bubble soccer on an intramural night at the Oshawa Civic Recreation Centre. This event was booked through an external company from Toronto. We filled our sign-up sheet for this event many days in advance and even had to create a waiting list for students who wanted to participate if a spot became empty. We also had a large audience of spectators on the day of the event. Overall, it was a wonderful event and all of our students had a safe and fun experience; however, due to the city of Oshawa's facilities refusing to allow the event in their building, although the TDSA has sufficient insurance of our own for the Civic Centre, we were told that we are not permitted to run this event again.

Basketball Intramurals and Soccer Intramurals—Relocating Wednesdays

Typically, the TDSA's athletic intramurals were run as soccer on Monday nights and dodgeball on Wednesday nights, both being held at the Civic Centre across the street. To save money and open up more possibilities for our programming this year, our Wednesday nights were moved from our 5-6pm timeslot at the Civic Centre to being held at 8:30-9:30pm at Waverly Public School (located just behind our campus). This change allowed us to save thousands of dollars over the course of the year and actually increased participation rates at on the Wednesday night. The programming was typically basketball, with a few occasional nights of volleyball or badminton.

Lip Sync Battle 3.0

TDSA lip-sync battles began in the 2015-16 year as a low-cost stress busting event that stands as a running campus tradition for students now. After purchasing the materials in the previous year, this event can now be run at no cost to the TDSA. This event also continues to have some of our largest student turn out and involves many students that we do not typically see attending our events. In the 2016-17 year only one lip-sync battle was held, but students do seem to enjoy seeing one per semester, as in 2016-16 attendance at each event was great.

Valentine's Day Carnations

Selling carnation flowers on the week of Valentine's Day has been a community building piece that the TDSA has put on for the past two years. We do not make any proceeds from selling the carnations - the cost only covers the price of the flowers on our end - but it spreads love among students and professors alike. This year we distributed the flowers from a table set up in our library hallway and we sold out once again this year.

Semi-Formal Dinner and Dance with Awards

Our Garden Party themed semi-formal event this year was a great team effort by the TDSA and we came very close to selling out our tickets. Like our other events, this dinner in no way financially profits the Student Association, but rather, is put on as a celebration for our wonderful students. It also gives us an opportunity to distribute awards to our Board of Directors, our most engaged students, and our club executives. Presenting these awards allows for the event to be received more as an end-of-the-year banquet and also helps to draw a larger crowd. Additionally, we hired a new DJ this year and he really 'livened' the party, so we would definitely recommend using him in the future.

Volleyball and Badminton Tournaments

As per our change in programming when we switched to Waverly P.S on Wednesday nights, we gained access to the gym's sporting equipment and, for the first time, were able to host volleyball and badminton tournaments for intramurals. These events were executed by the VPCL as well as the intramural assistant. The tournaments were held in back-to-back weeks near the end of second semester, and both had full sign-up sheets. We eventually had to close our sign-up to ensure that we had enough time to run our tournaments with enough games. We would recommend considering similar events in the future.

Clubs' Policy Overhaul

To close our 2016-17 year, the TDSA and its Board of Directors have looked into a complete overhaul of our current Clubs' Policy. Primarily, we have looked towards changing the ways in which clubs are funded so that we can more adequately support the growing number of clubs on our campus without having to limit the number of clubs we can permit. We have explored options of switching our funding

towards a pool based system where clubs will apply for funding and it will be approved by the VPCL, rather than our previous model of giving clubs standard budgets every year and hoping that they spend them. This change is more in line with systems that larger universities have in place, as we hope to continue to grow in that direction. Additionally, we implemented changes that clarified removal of club members, created a club election process, and simplified the definition of being a club executive.

23 Ratified Clubs

Over the span of the 2016-17 year, our on-campus club presence has grown the most dramatically of all TDSA years, as we ratified 7 new clubs and currently have 2 applications on hold for the incoming executive. These clubs address a wider variety of interest than was previously offered on our campus and we are ecstatic about how they have been received by students. Many of our older long-standing clubs have also begun to run more independently, with their own annual traditions and large student followings.

Club Training and Sanctions

This year, our club training process continued as one-on-one meetings to begin the year and in many cases continued as the year progressed, with numerous clubs completing more specified training in areas where they needed assistance. This process has been beneficial in a year where we had more new clubs than ever, to ensure that new clubs were getting the support they needed and the guidance of the VPCL. Additionally, as club training became more serious and demanding, the responsibilities of clubs were monitored appropriately and sanctioned by the Clubs' Policy only when absolutely necessary.

Financial Awareness

On a different note, we worked to build increased financial awareness of our members. We developed TDSA's Operating Budget to accurately reflect "actual" expenditures and revenue streams and identified previously unclaimed reserved funds. We also successfully navigated an unexpected financial hit to our budget from online student fees. In addition, we recently designed the budget to be more readable to non-Executive TDSA members.

Board Member Experience

We also looked into improving our board member experience this year, through implanting signed contracts and providing more volunteer opportunities. We looked into the possibility of allowing our Board Members to get course credit for their dedication and involvement as well. Furthermore, we successfully redesigned and implemented the TDSA CARES program for the increased advocacy and representation of our members, and this is something we hope to see continued.

Health and Dental Plan

Our new health benefits plan implementation went very well this year. The new plan that we negotiated provides significantly upgraded coverage at a minimal cost to our students. The plan offers direct-deposit to replace opt-out and claim cheques, Direct2U Prescription Delivery, and will also provide increased psychotherapy coverage and e-transfer options starting in September 2017. Through our health care provider, we organized the mental health de-stigmatization campaign #MyDefinition as well as a Mental Health Awareness Week which promoted direction to available resources.

Rebranding of Our Store

Finally, we rebranded our store to be “uniquely Durham,” and we will see this further carried out through our store presence at convocation in June 2017. *The Rack & Shelf* store was developed as TDSA’s first ever hands-on shopping experience for students. This change also involved the improved quality and diversity of TDSA’s merchandise and the first multi-year extension of the TDSA’s “Trent University Durham” branding rights, provided by Trent University.

External Relations

Despite our VPUA’s more internal-focused advocacy this year, her role with OUSA was still extremely effective and successful. She authored an article in *Educated Solutions* focused on university expansion, a website article focused on experiential learning, and the policy paper titled “A Comprehensive Access Strategy.” She also brought observers to both spring and fall conferences, which was extremely valuable in exposing the value of our OUSA membership and increasing our delegate presence. We hope that the knowledge that was gained and value that was presented will be carried forward.

New: Employment and Job Descriptions Policy

We have completely redesigned our Employment and Job Descriptions Policy to better communicate expectations of employees. This new policy can be found on our website. It involves a performance review format that was successfully implemented this year, and it also includes three completely new job descriptions that we believe will bring value to the organization as well as provide further opportunities for involvement of our members.

Overall, it has been a great year, and we look forward to seeing what the future holds for the TDSA.

We hope you have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Kayla Smith

Acting President

Vice President of University Affairs

Jaclyn Hruby

Vice President of Campus Life

Joseph Cassidy-Skof

Previous President