

**Smith Commerce General Assembly**

**Thursday, November 23rd, 2023**

**Land Acknowledgement**

**Josh Cristofoli**

**Agenda –**

* **Approval of the Agenda**
* **Approval of Minutes**
* **Statements by Members**
  + Mahir Hamid
  + Ethan Williams
  + Tyler Tam Tram
  + Spiro Saites
  + Brian Yau
* **Motions**
  + Transition Document – Prem Mehta-Spooner
* **Discussion Items**
  + Elections – Tyler Tam Tran
  + Elections Pt. 2 – Prem Mehta-Spooner
  + Academic Issue Committee – Charvi Guduru & Adam Dhanji
* **Close of Assembly**

**Statements by Members**

# President – Mahir H

* Update on peer mentorship
* Ryan and Erin are working on new project to reward student leaders, thinking about ways to engage ComSoc alumni to give back to the community financially
  + Starting first-ever Commerce endowment fund
  + Money from fund is given to student leaders awarded at March Gala
* Smith Transparency Project
  + Many engagements with admin, including EDII director and David and Christing in the Commerce Office
  + Discussions on ways we can collaborate with them

# VP SA – Ethan W

* YGK Boxing match weigh-in tonight at 8pm at Brass, please come!
* Holiday Hope is December 1st in partnership with QCEI
  + Sign ups are on ComSoc socials
* Boxing match is Saturday afternoon/night
  + Sold out yayyy!!!!
* Thank you everyone for coming out to first social, thank you Annabelle for hosting!

# COMM 25 President – Tyler Tam Tran

* Planning after party with virtue or Jack Astor’s
* Finalizing microwave with facilities
* Speaking with Jacob about making ComSoc positions more digestible for people outside ComSoc

# COMM 27 President – Spiro Saites

* Social next Wednesday with gingerbread making and holiday movies
  + Feel free to pop by Goodes 108 from 7:45-9:45
* Midterm feedback survey in the works
  + Will be sent out to committee soon
* Lots of social media activity with week in preview posts
  + If you’re part of clubs and want timelines communicated, reach out to
* Jim Hamiltion is doing a workshop in collaboration with COMM 27
* COMM 26 and 27 social is in the works

# Student Affairs Intern – Brian Yau

* Been working on the Gingerbread Social in collaboration with HSL
* Candy Grams!!
  + All proceeds are donated to Holiday Hope

# Lower AMS Rep - Amin Nazari

* AMS assembly occurs once a month
  + Includes all kinds of student governments (e.g. EngSoc, ASUS, ComSoc)
* Amin advocates on behalf of ComSoc
* We are being well represented at AMS assembly (very believable)
* Special event yesterday because Board of Directors were present (only happens twice a year)
* AMS is a non-profit association.
* Enrollment in AMS went up by 200
* 25% of students opt-out of non-mandatory AMS fees (Don’t opt out of the Commerce ones though!)
* AMS has five offices: HR, Communications, Operations, Secretary of Internal Affairs, Student Life Commission
* Currently running on a deficit of $413k (this is expected)
* AMS $5 million in operating expenses this year
  + CoGro accounted for $1 million of this
* Next year, AMS is forecasted a $**104k (or 140???)** surplus
* Queen’s is getting a full review to correct hiring policy and student fee policy.
* Copy centre is merging with Studio Q which will reduce expenses
* Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence policy is being updated
* Palestinian Students Organization and Halal spoke during AMS assembly to share their perspectives and stories
  + Very educational experience, left AMS and student governments with much to think about for next steps

# **Motions**

# TRANSITION – Prem Mehta-Spooner

WHEREAS

The Smith Commerce Society (ComSoc) needs to address the organization and placement of duties of the executive from the Operations Policy to a resource document for the Executive and Talent Strategy Team

AND

In an effort to emphasize Executive’s freedom of assembly composition catered to the needs of that year, as well as ease of facilitating transitions

BIRT

ComSoc remove sections 2.01.01-2.01.21 (Duties of the Assembly) from Operations Policy and ‘move’ the policies to an “Assembly Composition Resource” for the Executive and TS Team, contingent **on the passing of a future safeguard for the Society’s stability on December 12th, SGM**

Notes:

Smith ComSoc Operations Policy: Enhancing policy knowledge through policy overhaul Maintaining continuity and accessibility in governance

Section we are hoping to move today:

* Part 2: Duties of the Assembly – Role Descriptions
* To be removed from the Operations Policy, and placed into a Resource Document for use by the Executive and the Talent Strategy Team

1. Equipping ComSoc leaders with the tools they need to effectively do their job

* Training and Resources
  + Learning how to use the tools like ComSoc Shop and developing skills
  + Navigating policy as a fundamental learning skill
* Maintaining Relationships
  + Understanding the key points of contact in ComSoc
  + Being aware of the larger scope of Comsoc’s operations
* Insights: Challenges and Opportunities
  + What has failed, what has worked?
* Timeline: Predicting Events
  + Anticipate the high-volume of work
  + ComSoc-wide events

Immediate Implications

1. The Executive and Talent Strategy responsibilities are clarified in transitioning new assembly members
2. Creates an internalized and centralized platform for transition-related information to be stored
3. Fosters agency for the executive team and has TS as an oversight body to keep structure intact

Future Implications

1. Creating an updated transition document for each assembly member: 58 members, 41 positions
2. Presenting this information to Executive Team Candidates afters official nomination process
3. Developing a tracking system for transitions for if and when they occur with incoming vs. Outgoing parties

*The motion must add value to internal operations*

* give some time to read through the policy
* What implications would a move have torwards assembly functions?
  + How does this permit freedom of assembly composition for the executive?
  + How do we ensyre roles necessary for club function are not omitted?
  + How would a resource best work on behalf of the executive?
  + How does this impact the facilitation of role transitions?
* Policy Committee has been consulted, TS, 2 discussion items on this topic, and a motion presentation

*Elections and transition timelines fit, highlighting the importance*

Jan.19 - Information Session

- Will present this document to the approved Executive Team candidates

Feb. 1 – Executive Onboarded

**….**

Mar 24 – Assembly Onboarded

The new assembly is on boarded onto the team and transitions should be planned at the earliest

…

*The motion is only possible with additions to the Constitution*

* Under formalization of the Executives in the Constitution:
* State it is the collective responsibility of the executive to facilitate transitions
* State it is the collective responsibility of the Executive to retain **critical** roles mentioned in the Assembly Composition Resource
* Do this under: Duties of the Executive
* Provide three levels of safeguards:
  + Written in the Constitution
  + Meeting with TS when determining composition
  + Removal process of the Executive outlined in the Constitution

**Questions directed at Prem – 5 min**

**Name:** Mahir Hamid

**Question:** Why does this have to be a two-part motion?

**Answer:** Because it’s a general assembly meeting, so nothing can be moved until Dec 12th until the Special Assembly Meeting. Timelines are the primary issue.

* Also needed to consider what the implications would be if this was removed. Felt like it may put society under threat due to two week hiatus where something might go wrong.
* First part is just the assembly resource part
* Second part is alteration to the constitution

**Name**: Tyler Tam Tran

**Question**: What happens if the second part of the motion doesn’t go through?

**Answer:** The first part is not “moving” anything. We’re just asking permission to duplicate what’s in the Operations policy into a resource document that it is in a resource file in the transitions folder. The second part will help to move it

**Name**: Sagaana Sivathason

**Question**: Will that section still be in operations policy or moved to the transitions document?

**Answer**: Trying to address this with the Constitutional amendment that will force the executive to consult the assembly composition resource which will have an excerpt of the previous operations policy. The removal is contingent on this motion being passed first so we have permission to “move” the policy. To clarify, nothing is being moved today.

**Name**: Ally Hamil

**Question**: How did you define what was a critical role and not a critical role? Will there be something in the policy to amend the definition of a critical and non-critical role?

**Answer**: Every role that is listed on the operations policy is critical to the functioning of the society. There would need to be a rationale behind wanting to change a non-critical role to a critical one. In terms of what we’re talking about, these restrictions are particularly pertinent to roles such as CFO, Talent Strategy Officer, etc.

\* Prem and Mahir placed in the hall \*

**Debate – 10 min**

N/A

**Voting – 75% yay, 25% nay**

**Motion Passed**

**Discussion Items**

# Elections – Tyler Tam Tran

At the last ASUS discussed changing the election method

*Overview of Structures*

* Team-based Election v. Role-based Election
  + ASUS, EngSoc, Compsa do a role-based election where candidates run for roles individually
* Currently ComSoc and AMS do elections as a team-based election
  + Eg. MEC ran as a team

*Consultation*

* Aidan (EngSoc) – Operation wasn’t an issue. Biggest change was election debate format
  + Makes debate format longer and a bit more complicated
* Prem (CPRO) – March Hiring timeline, Nomination Timeline, Engagement, Quantity vs Quality of Candidates
  + Like to have exec and hiring policy done by march
  + If it is role based, after this exec need to come together to mech their vision, which could add time to the process
  + May need to have a longer nomination timeline because people will be nominated individually, so need more nominations
  + Not sure which format would increase/decrease engagement
  + Individual = more people running, but not sure if all candidates are well-qualified
* Mahir (MEC) – Vision Unification, Leadership vs. Role Motivation, Nature of Societies
  + Would need to unify visions at the end of the campaign cycle, which could become issue
  + Some people may not run because they don’t know who they would be working with. On the flipside, some people may become more motivated to run
  + Different societies have different needs and compositions, so what works well for some societies may not work well for ComSoc

Pros

* Increase Engagement/Reach
* Lower Barriers to Entry
* More Competition
* Focused Portfolio Vision
* Democratization

Cons

* Operations Challenges
* May Discourage Team
* More “Unqualified” Candidates

**Discussion – 20 minutes**

**Name**: Jacob

**Comment**: In high school we had individual-based elections and there was always an issue with this, lots of conflict. People going into leadership roles with aligned vision were most effective in the role. MEC stands as a unified group, and this is integral to ComSoc.

**Name**: Etienne

**Question**: Why ASUS made the switch?

**Answer**: I was not aware they were going to make a switch until a few hours before the assembly in which they voted. Specifically with ASUS, the president is very much in charge, so it makes more sense to have individual roles. Whereas in ComSoc leadership is more team-based

**Name**: Amin

**Comment**: In terms of risks, if you compare both strategies, individual has a lot more risks. You would be hiring the strongest candidate, but the question is if the team elected mesh? If you select your team beforehand, the team will mesh, but not necessarily the best.

**Name**: Sagaana

**Comment**: This is brought up frequently year-to-year as a discussion item. In terms of whether we convert to this new model, we need to look at ComSoc independently rather than making changes on the basis of what other faculties are doing. We are a unique society in the way we operate and have a smaller faculty than most whereas or purvue is arguably larger. Would not be fair to compare to other faculties because all are different. No talent strategy implication, but from an HR perspective: teams spend a lot of time unifying their vision prior to running, whereas if you have individuals they may have conflicting platforms which means they mey need to start from scratch once elected – there's not necessarily time for this to happen. So conversations would be better to happen ahead of time. One big issue in ComSoc is siloing amongst portfolios, so having a team-based leadership can help prevent this. Team-based promotes more collaboration. Last year, there was a lot of collaboration between different portfolios to set up Career Discover Day, which was a new initiative. Would not have been as feasible if there was not team-based leadership. When you have a joint vision, because in ComSoc we aren’t mutually exclusive to our portfolios, its important that a leadership team shares a joint vision which eases collaboration and improves operational efficiency.

**Answer**: There is value of having different visions going in. Unified but considers all perspectives

**Mentioned by Name**: Mahir

**Comment**: Discussion of the benefits of team elections. ComSoc historically has had uncontested elections – there has only been one team running. Historically, contested elections in Queen’s brings more engagement. People put more effort into their campaign. Hypothesizes that individual elections will bring more candidates and engagement. The way that ComSoc runs is very reliant on having a strong executive team. A lot of the roles have crossover. Collaboration is difficult if you are individually elected.

**Name**: Arvin

**Question**: The issue with lack of collaboration, people who run for executive positions. Individual provides more opportunity for competition, whereas its difficult to collaborate against a team of strong individuals. Don’t believe that collaboration is impossible if individually elected. Although ComSoc requires collaboration, its not mutually exclusive to individual elections

**Answer**:

**Name**: Etienne

**Question**: Doesn’t see the need for ComSoc to make the switch. EngSoc represents so many more people with different views as there are many sectors in their program (chemical, civil, etc). In Commerce, we are a smaller faculty and have less differences in our studies.

**Answer**: Consideration that it is up to the student body to vote for who they feel is qualified.

**Name**: Jillian

**Question**: Want to touch on the portion of promoting more people to run in elections. However, on the flipside, this could highlight as a deterrent to elections. In classes, people greatly dislike randomized groups. From personal experience, there are few randomized groups that work well together. So individual elections increase the risk of collaboration not going well. So there may be people who are nervous to putting themselves in a situation where they may be forced to collaborate with others who do not share the same values or morals. Appreciate that it is possible for people to collaborate after the fact, but there is elevated risk of team breakdown. Whereas, if a team was established prior to the election, people could work through issues ahead of time.

Answer: Definitely a consideration. Thinks that the people who would run would

**Name**: Prem

**Question**: There would be a necessity to change the number of nominations required. Currently 50 nominations for a team. There would need to be discussion to see if that needs to be changed. Individually it is 15 nominations. Supports the stability of group elections. If a President has to step done, VP will have to assume the role and it would be better if they had similar views.

**Name: Josh**

**Point of clarification**: In the executive of the year society, if an executive position becomes vacant, an election will be held within 15 class days unless vacancy occurs after November 1st. So VP OPS or VPSA could call for an election if they do not want to take on the position of president

**Name**: Amin

**Comment**: Even if we are tight knit, ComSoc does represent a large amount of people. One of ComSoc’s biggest issues is connecting with everyone and advocate/represent with their best interest in mind. What we need more of is giving back and being team oriented. competition is healthy to an extent, but sometimes it does more harm than good.

**Answer**: Balancing competition is important, but right now we have zero competition.

**Name**: Charlotte

**Comment**: Want to raise the point of voter turnout. One of the issues is extremely low voter turnout. Generally, across the Society there is a lack of interest in the elections. Fear that even those who do vote don’t fully understand what executive roles are. Fear that if people run on their own merit, which has its benefits (e.g. sense of competition), there may be even more of a popularity contest rather than a meritocracy.

# Elections pt2 – Prem Mehta-Spooner

ComSoc Elections Policy

Centralizing Elections Information & Clarifying the Election Format in a Post-Pandemic Era

*The proposed fit moves election policy amidst hiring policy*

* Elections have changed over time from to an online accommodating format: addresses exchange issue, reduces budget costs, and the nature of COVID-19

There are 5 different policy locations for elections:

1. Constitution **(maintain status quo)**
2. **Operations --> Change to Bylaws**
3. Society Elections (**refer to specific Bylaws**)
4. Year President Elections/Elected Members (**refer to specific Bylaws**)
5. Archived Elections Policy (**remain as a resource**)

Problem #1: Fit needs to be accessible to all applicants but need to be respected/agency of the policy?

Problem #2: What policies are enforced during each type of election format?

*Comparison of Elections Rules reveal similarities/redundancy*

*The benchmarks of the project highlight what will be accomplished*

1. Finding a better and more intentional fit
   1. Move from Operations to the Bylaws, other governments (e.g. EngSoc, AMS) either have separate or Elections is under the Bylaws
2. Protecting the agency of the policy
   1. Edit the existing Election information documents to refer the Bylaws
3. Providing Guidelines for the election format
   1. Maintain the policies and clarify which “format” is occurring
4. Clarity and Enforceability of Election Policy
   1. Use the election information documents with the power to enforce from the Bylaws

**Discussion – 10 minutes**

**Name**: Mahir

**Question**: What were the election policies written in the operations policy?

**Answer**: The number of nominations required, what is/not allowed in campaigning, not mass emailing, no instant messaging. It is a small.

**Name**: Ally

**Question**: What is the purpose of moving it from one to another? How does this benefit the Society and why is this impactful/meaningful?

**Answer**: The first reason why we would move it is the consistency. Archived policy is not enforceable. The positioning of the operations doesn’t make sense because it is internal/external. It is more so to make sure the credibility is effective.

**Name**: Tyler

Comment: Appreciated the simplicity of the current campaigning information document because it made it accessible. Complaint that certain parts are outdated and want to flag that for upcoming elections.

**Motion to table assembly!**

**Assembly called to a close**

# Academic Issue Committee – Charvi Guduru & Adam Dhanji