

Fulcrum Publishing Society
Annual General Meeting
MINUTES

Wednesday, April 10, 2019
DMS 3105, 6:00pm-8:45pm

Proxies: Charley Dutil for Rame Abdulkader, Jasmine McKnight for Daniel Birru, Justin Turcotte for William Hinse-MacCulloch and Hilorie Stein, Raghad Sheikh-Khalil for Sunny Walia, Graham Robertson for Anchal Sharma, Kate Murray for Dayne Moyer

1. Opening of the Meeting

R. Pepper opened the meeting at 6:12pm.

2. Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order

J. Rausseo briefly gave an introduction to Robert's Rules of Order. He explained that motions need to be moved and seconded, and then a vote can happen. J. Rausseo continued by stating that if there is no seconder, then there's no vote. He added that there can be a debate on a motion if desired. J. Rausseo noted that everyone at the meeting delegates the process of running the meeting and handling the votes to the chair, who doesn't get to vote on anything, except when a tie-breaking vote is needed.

3. Approval of the Chief Returning Officer

J. Hoytema motioned to approve Ryan Pepper as the Chief Returning Officer for the meeting. E. Davison seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

4. Approval of the Agenda

J. Rausseo motioned to approve the agenda. E. Davison seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

5. Approval of the 2018 AGM Meeting Minutes

G. Robertson motioned to approve the 2018 AGM minutes. R. Sheikh-Khalil seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

6. Auditor Presentation

The Fulcrum's auditor explained that he conducted the audit based on the financial statements that were provided to him by the General Manager. He explained that he focused on what external controls that the *Fulcrum Publishing Society* have implemented. The auditor noted that he hasn't come across any issues. He then proceeded to compare *The Fulcrum's* current assets to those from this time last year, and the rest of his report. Some highlights throughout the report include:

- Statement of Operations (pg.3): fundraising was the main impact in increasing revenue compared to the previous year;
- Statement of Cash Flow (pg. 6): cash flow is mainly due to the deficit;

J. Rausseo confirmed that this is the audit for last year, and asked if there are any red flags in terms of *The Fulcrum's* savings. The auditor replied that there isn't, explaining that when things are going up and others are going down it's not real cash flow.

7. President's Report

R. Sheikh-Khalil began her report by giving an overview of the past year at *The Fulcrum*, which included:

- Printed monthly this year with a total of eight special print editions;
- As of May 1st, *The Fulcrum* is completely online;
- Hired a professional company, Fullview, to upgrade *The Fulcrum's* website to one that's easy to navigate, mobile-friendly, and user-centric;
- Worked with Marketing Committee to boost readership;
- New content made for online models;

R. Sheikh-Khalil conceded that this year hasn't been without its challenges, some of which centered around the student union on campus. She praised *The Fulcrum's* writers who helped to continuously keep the student union into account. R. Sheikh-Khalil reported that the SFUO was replaced with the UOSU, who most recently had a successful referendum on student services, so *technically* *The Fulcrum* should receive levies next year. With that said, she indicated the biggest of the year by far has been the Ford Government's Student Choice Initiative, which deemed student journalism 'non-essential.' R. Sheikh-Khalil mentioned that the Board has done a lot of work in talking with other papers across the province and have joined a coalition with some other papers to hire a lobby firm. Given these major challenges, R. Sheikh-Khalil noted that this has therefore caused major changes to *The Fulcrum's* budget.

Despite these challenges, R. Sheikh-Khalil enthused that there have been many accomplishments for *The Fulcrum* this year, including: being nominated for three individual awards at NASH;

winning the Student Publication of the year; making a lot of social media gains; collaborating more with some other groups on campus including CHUO and La Rotonde (panel on importance of student journalism); making improvements to policies; printing the Diamond Edition and might post a copy online. She noted that it will be available in *The Fulcrum's* office soon and the university Archives will also have a copy.

Moving forward, R. Sheikh-Khalil stated that there are many areas to focus and work on, such as: pushing for essential designation and canvassing for student levies (Board); doing something to help manage stress for employees as there is a very high turnover and reaching out to other universities to see what they pay to ensure that we're paying our staff well; increasing partnerships, especially with the Digital Journalism program and potentially having internships; and increasing *The Fulcrum's* visibility on campus.

8. Marketing Committee Report

G. Robertson explained that as the chair of the marketing committee, he worked with K. Bobal and C. Wang to work on bolstering *The Fulcrum's* online presence given the transition to online. He stated that in order to do this, the group looked to new ways to advertise and share online. G. Robertson added that some of the ways that the committee aimed to do this were by hosting events on campus and fundraising activities, and being present at events and translating that to editorial content. He reported that some highlights of the initiatives that the committee accomplished over the past year include:

- Launching a new website in the fall → wanted to make navigating the website easier, give it a fresh look, and keep pace with other award-winning publications;
- Conducting a user experience test;
- Tabling and class talks → had 20 people sign up for the volunteer list and they actually ended up volunteering;
- Hosting several events this year both to increase visibility and to raise money for NASH

G. Robertson then proceeded to review some social media statistics over the past year:

- Averaged 1-2 social media contests per month;
- Tactics on Facebook: posting about six times per day, one video per week, and the same on Twitter. More interactive elements on both as well;
- Milestones: passed La Rotonde on Facebook, student publication of the year

G. Robertson concluded his report by noting the next steps for the committee going into the new publishing year. He suggested increasing video content on Instagram, developing a curated aesthetic, growth on YouTube, pass *The Charletan* on Facebook, contact professors in the

summer to set up class talks, continue to host events to fundraise and boost visibility, and having social media and marketing focus groups set up in the summer to see how *The Fulcrum* is doing.

9. Inter-Board Relations Committee Report

J. Turcotte mentioned that the nature of the Inter-Board Relations Committee is to focus on improving communication between the Board and the Editorial Board. He stated that over the past year, he attended Editorial Board meetings once a month and planned one social event per month. Overall, he noted that he attended five meetings with the Editorial Board and two strategic planning sessions with both Boards.

J. Turcotte reported that the Health and Wellness questionnaire that was distributed at the first strategic planning session of the year identified several important concerns for the Board moving forward. He proceeded to go over a few key questions from the questionnaire. Moving forward, J. Turcotte noted that the format of the questionnaire can change by moving it online instead, hopefully encouraging more people to fill it out. J. Turcotte also mentioned that he'd like to change the committee to be the Inter-Board Health and Wellness Committee instead, a proposal that he said he plans to present in more depth at the Board meeting at the end of the month.

S. Awde wondered if the HR Committee is not inherently about the health of the employees. J. Turcotte answered that he thinks that there's room for it in this committee. S. Awde said that she isn't sure about limiting the scope of the committee. J. Turcotte replied that he had initial concerns as well. He explained that he wants to keep the committee as it is, but also add to the portfolio. R. Sheikh-Khalil added that the HR Committee deals more with hiring and things of that nature.

10. Editorial Board Report

M. Gergyek began his presentation by briefly going over the Editorial Board's mission. He announced that there were several accomplishments over the past year, including the transition to online and NASH! M. Gergyek mentioned that in terms of volunteer outreach, the Ed Board held workshops this year by section editors, created a Facebook group for contributors, and had a BuzzFeed workshop. He added that freelance did well this year, and that he'd like to do more class presentations during Frosh next year. M. Gergyek also noted that A. Sharma started a newsletter.

M. Gergyek admitted that there have been a few challenges this year, such as having a high turnover, although the team ended the year with a full masthead, and funding issues due to the SFUO. He enthused that there have been even more successes in all of the Ed Board sections:

- News: breaking news especially with the SFUO; expanded coverage out of campus → covered protests on Parliament and the car on campus;
- Arts and Culture: did a great job on not just focusing on typical arts events, very cultural too
- Sports: live tweeting, investigative story on sports services budget;
- Features (C. Dutil presented this part): made sure everyone was included, collaborations with other papers;
- Special Issues (8 in total this year): hopefully we can find a way to make it next year;
- Opinions: a lot of hilarious Tomato articles about the SFUO, conducted a lot of polls and memes too;
- Photography and Videos: were great this year! There were 23 in total this year and they varied in content and increased in video quality.

In terms of next year, M. Gergyek stated that he hopes to be able to train and mentor student videographers, going completely digital and some restructuring, to potentially get some volunteers through Facebook, and to make volunteer meetings more accessible.

11. Year-to-date

D. Ghosn began his presentation by going over *The Fulcrum's* revenue year-to-date line by line. He explained that the column displayed on the left-hand side of the screen is what *The Fulcrum* budgeted for the year and the column displayed on the right-hand side of the screen is where *The Fulcrum* is currently at. Some important notes from the YTD that D. Ghosn outlined include:

- Online advertising was a lot higher than expected;
- *The Fulcrum* is on par with where *The Fulcrum* budgeted for national advertising;
- *The Fulcrum* received a much higher student levy than expected → approximately \$56,000 more than was budgeted for. D. Ghosn noted that he's not sure why, but it could perhaps be to a student attendance increase;

D. Ghosn noted that the Miscellaneous line refers to a payment that the SFUO owed to *The Fulcrum* last year, but that was given to *The Fulcrum* this year with regards to *The Fulcrum's* advertising contract with them. He added that it was close to \$1500 that *The Fulcrum* received.

D. Ghosn mentioned that the Wages and Salaries section, which doesn't include this week's pay, refers to what *The Fulcrum* pays its employees. He continued by stating that EI is pretty standard, as is CPP. D. Ghosn reported that *The Fulcrum* budgeted over WSIB this year.

D. Ghosn stated that *The Fulcrum* had to pay for an auditor this year, which is reflected in the Accounting and Legal line. He also explained the with regards to ads, there were a lot of events that *The Fulcrum* wanted to hold in conjunction with Sports Services.

As a point of note, D. Ghosn informed those present that a lot of lines that *The Fulcrum* budgeted for, *The Fulcrum* didn't spend that much because the Board put a hold on spending until *The Fulcrum* received its levies from the SFUO.

D. Ghosn continued going through the lines, explaining that *The Fulcrum* rolled over some money from last year for Capital Assets, which is why the line is so high. He indicated that he plans on purchasing a hard drive for *The Fulcrum* and has already purchased some new computers for *The Fulcrum*.

With regards to the Fundraising line, D. Ghosn advised that *The Fulcrum* plan to budget a certain amount of money for NASH and then plan to match that amount in fundraising.

D. Ghosn proceeded to give some more general updates on various lines, including:

- Diamond Edition will be filled in at year's end;
- Received a free month with distribution because they messed up a couple of times in their placement of the papers;
- CUP → a standard amount every year;
- HST/GST: noted that it might be a good idea to budget as a miscellaneous expense next year;
- Insurance went up because *The Fulcrum* was sued/given a notice of action;
- Bank fees were higher because *The Fulcrum*'s account went low for a while when *The Fulcrum* didn't have the levies;
- *The Fulcrum* is going to finish just under budget for printing;

With regards to the Recruitment and Training line, D. Ghosn noted that *The Fulcrum* didn't spend nearly as much as it budgeted for. He added that next year, he will encourage people to take more advantage of it.

Finally, D. Ghosn announced that *The Fulcrum* will finish the year with a surplus of approximately \$70,000 because of the higher than expected levies from the SFUO and general austerity measures. E. Davison wondered if there is any policy on what to do with the surplus. D. Ghosn replied that it will go into *The Fulcrum*'s bank account. He added that *The Fulcrum* also has an investment account that it could go into. S. Awde wondered why there will be no bound editions. R. Sheikh-Khalil replied that the Board cut the bound editions two years ago as a cost-cutting measure.

12. Budget

J. Rausseo explained that preparing a budget involves estimating the income and expenditure of the year ahead. He noted that part of the process is asking the questions how and what do I want to spend my money on. J. Rausseo continued, saying that in order to create a budget, you look at what happened last year, and evaluate your core values and risks. He noted that *The Fulcrum* budgeted for approximately a \$13,000 deficit last year, and we actually ended up having a \$76,000 surplus this year. J. Rausseo added that trimming the budget saved *The Fulcrum* approximately \$8,000.

J. Rausseo mentioned that the core spending elements in the budget are for the core staff, payroll, and the website expenses, and business expenses (insurance, etc). He noted that some future risks to keep in mind are that there is no more SFUO, a change in the number of students on campus, in which case *The Fulcrum* would expect to see a decrease in number of students coming in, and the Student Choice Initiative.

J. Rausseo stated that the most likely scenario is that *The Fulcrum* will see a 50% decrease in its budget. Once again, he stressed that it's important to review *The Fulcrum's* core values, which are that information needs to go to students, dedication to being online, etc. With that in mind, J. Rausseo said that a possible direction moving forward is to work on a new editor model with one less business staff (including a shared position between the Ed Board and the Board, a staff contingency line, and lean budgets).

J. Rausseo proceeded to review the 50% budget, which is essentially half of all of the lines. He noted that a lot of the lines are bare bones, and the budget doesn't leave much wiggle room. With this budget, J. Rausseo indicated that it projects approximately a \$900 surplus. He added that it only includes the levies (and not the surplus) from this year.

J. Rausseo posed the question how best does *The Fulcrum* create a nest egg to shelter *The Fulcrum* from the uncertainties to come. R. Sheikh-Khalil explained that normally, if *The Fulcrum* had a surplus as big as it does this year, it would look into where to invest it (new building, etc), but because of the new provincial government, this surplus will likely go to savings this year.

S. Awde wondered if management staff are included in the staff contingency fund. J. Rausseo replied that not if in the job description, but situational. For example, if the Editor-in-Chief takes over two section editors positions. R. Sheikh-Khalil added that in that situation, the Editor-in-Chief can come to the president.

13. Policy Committee Report

K. Murray began her presentation by introducing herself and noting that she took over as the chair of the policy committee in November. She explained that the policy committee is responsible for reviewing *The Fulcrum's* policy manual and bylaws to ensure that they are relevant and up-to-date, proposing changes to the Board for approval and again at the AGM in the case of proposed bylaw amendments, and ensuring that those changes are made to the policy manual and bylaws.

K. Murray mentioned that the committee had several goals for the 2018-2019 year, including: update the policy manual and bylaws with policies and bylaws that have been approved since it was last updated in December 2015, conduct a thorough review of the bylaws, review and update the job descriptions in the appendices of the policy manual, revisit and define the term “staff” in the bylaws and policy manual, amend policy for emergency budget needs re: audit, review section 6.18 of the policy manual, review whether job descriptions should be in the policy manual, and review potentially changing the signing authority from the Vice President to the Treasurer.

K. Murray excitedly announced that the committee is on track to fulfilling the goals that it outlined for this year. She noted that so far, the committee has updated the job descriptions in the appendices of the policy manual, reviewed the bylaws and proposed amendments, revisited and defined the term “staff” in the bylaws and policy manual, and updated the policy manual with the policies that have been approved since it was last updated. K. Murray mentioned that the biggest project this term has been updating the policy manual and bylaws, which involved going through archived meeting and committee minutes dating back to four years ago. This process was pretty straight-forward, but there were a couple of instances in the archives where bylaws had been proposed to the Board, but either weren't voted on or were voted on by the Board, but not at that year's AGM.

K. Murray stated that looking forward, there are projects that the committee could focus on, such as:

- Conduct a thorough review of the policy manual, make any changes to reflect the transition to online and review any outdated policies, change the language in the policy manual from feminine to gender inclusive, fix formatting issues and ensure consistency throughout, fix any spelling mistakes, add an in-camera policy;
- Create a sub-committee to conduct a review of the bylaws to ensure that they comply with the ONCA's (Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act) Ontario Bylaws Act Compliance;

- Develop a policy guide to make policies more accessible to employees and directors.

K. Murray proceeded to review the proposed Bylaw amendments. R. Sheikh-Khalil motioned to approve having an omnibus vote at the end of the presentation. J. Turcotte seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

R. Sheikh-Khalil motioned to omnibus approve the bylaw amendments proposed in addition to the following amendments:

- Replacing all mentions of the “SFUO” with “the student union of the University of Ottawa”;
- 11.07 “must be presented”; and
- 13.02 “The Website of the Corporation shall explain”

S. Awde seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

14. Election of the 2019-20 Board of Directors

R. Sheikh-Khalil briefly went over the responsibilities for Board members and the seats that are available on the Board.

J. Rausseo motioned to elect K. Murray as a staff representative. S. Awde seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

J. Rausseo motioned to elect J. Turcotte as the continuity representative. S. Awde seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

J. Rausseo motioned to elect R. Sheikh-Khalil as the community representative. E. Davison seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

J. Rausseo motioned to elect S. Awde as the Fulcrum alumnus representative. G. Robertson seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

J. Rausseo motioned to elect A. Sharma as a staff representative. G. Robertson seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

R. Sheikh-Khalil motioned to elect J. Rausseo as the university representative. J. Turcotte seconded the motion. All voted in favour and the motion passed.

15. Adjournment

R. Sheikh-Khalil motioned to adjourn at 8:45pm. All voted in favour and the motion passed.