

Minutes of the 1312th meeting of the Hart House Board of Stewards held on Thursday, February 12th, 2021 on Zoom video conferencing.

- Present:
- Mr. Terry Gardiner (Chair)
 - Ms. Amy Intrator (Recording Secretary)
 - Ms. Beth Ali (Presidential Appointee)
 - Mr. David Kim (Governing Council Appointee)
 - Mr. David Newman (President [*ex-officio*] Designate)
 - Ms. Dhanya Dass (Steward, Theatre Committee)
 - Ms. Emily Jin (Steward, Art Committee)
 - Mr. Ian Browne (Steward, Farm Committee)
 - Mr. Josh Allen (Steward, RA&W Committee)
 - Mr. Matthew Lee (Steward, Literary and Library Committee)
 - Mr. Mussa Marashi (APUS Appointee)
 - Mr. Nicolas Sartor Campos (Steward, Finance Committee)
 - Ms. Tara Behruz (Steward, Music Committee)
 - Ms. Terese Pierre (Steward, Senior Members Committee)
- Guests:
- Ms. Sherry Kulman (Senior Director, Acting Warden & Chief Administrative Officer)
 - Ms. Danielle Dinunzio (Coordinator, Access and Community Engagement)
 - Ms. Jenifer Newcombe (Director, Strategic Initiatives)
 - Mr. Jimmy Cheung (Director, Facilities and Capital Projects)
 - Ms. Lena Yusim (Project Coordinator, Warden's Office)
 - Ms. Michelle Brownrigg (Senior Director, Chief Program Officer)
- Regrets:
- Mr. John Monahan (Warden)
 - Ms. Audrey Rochette (Presidential Appointee)
 - Ms. Danielle Karakas (GSU Appointee)
 - Mr. J. Luke Kim (Senior Member, RA&W Committee)
 - Ms. Martina Facchin (Steward, Social Justice Committee)
 - Ms. Noha Farawi (UTMSU Representative)
 - Ms. Sanaya Rau (Steward, Debates and Dialogue Committee)
 - Ms. Sarah Mohamed (SCSU Representative)
 - Mr. Tyler Riches (UTSU Appointee)

The Chair began the meeting with a Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land. The Chair noted that due to a family emergency, the Warden would not be in attendance at this meeting and the Acting Warden, Sherry Kulman, would be delivering the Warden's Report.

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Chair asked if there were any amendments to be made to the Agenda and none were presented. The following motion to approve the Agenda was made by Terese Pierre, seconded by Nicolas Sartor Campos, and carried unanimously by all present voting members of the Board of Stewards:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the February 11th, 2021, Board of Stewards Meeting Agenda be approved.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The Chair asked if there were any amendments to be made to the minutes and none were presented. The following motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board of Stewards meeting was made by Beth Ali, and seconded by Terese Pierre, and carried unanimously by all present voting members of the Board of Stewards:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the 1311th meeting be approved as presented.

3. Hart House Access and Community Engagement Presentation (Danielle Dinunzio, Coordinator, Access and Community Engagement)

Danielle Dinunzio introduced herself as Hart House's Coordinator for Access and Community Engagement. DD oversees Hart House's Youth Access work. The program reaches youth through a combination of bringing youth to Hart House (pre-pandemic when site visits were permitted) and meeting youth where they're at in their community organizations. The program aims to establish connections with youth and community organizations, develop collaborative programming with youth, and create leadership opportunities for youth and UofT students.

Between 2018 and 2020, the Access staff engaged 2509 youth participants, established 22 partnerships, hosted 143 visits to Hart House, offered 18 placements to students, and won one award. Partner organizations include The 519, Native Child and Family Service Centre, St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club, the TDSB, the City of Toronto, and more. Programming focuses on arts-based activities, physical activity and wellness, and professional skill-building. The program is largely supported by UofT students through work study and academic placements. Students have opportunities to take on a leadership roles in planning and facilitating programming. Activities at Hart House (pre-pandemic) included visits to the Hart House Farm, viewing productions at the Hart House Theatre, and special events across campus.

The pandemic has impacted the program, beginning with the abrupt closure of the Hart House building in March 2020. The timing was difficult, as a great deal of youth programming takes

place over March Break. Over the summer, many of the community organizations were still halting programming in order to provide essential services to their communities, so Hart House transitioned their approach to work with youth directly in lieu of extensive organizational partnerships. Many other departments at UofT were facing a similar challenge.

Virtual youth programming has been responsive to evolving youth needs. Staff transitioned their approach based on consultations with youth participants from previous years of programming. Around one-quarter of youth participants access the programming from their phones, so Hart House staff had to get creative about which programs they transitioned online and how those programs were delivered. Several programs could not be translated to a virtual format.

Staff have learned a lot from the past nine months that will inform programming going forward. From reimagining the training for student staff, to creating virtual programming, the program has evolved to the current landscape. Examples of virtual programming include a special workshop to help participants design their own Zoom background, beat-making workshops, and an arts-based program in collaboration with Toronto Community Housing. Staff are now considering how to create sustainable programs moving forward. Building on previous successes will include expanding the BEE Youth Program and expanding partnerships such as the Youth Community Recreation Project. The program continues to develop new initiatives such as the Hart House Youth Council and Outdoor Education programming.

For the full presentation, see Appendix A.

DD then welcomed comments and feedback.

The Chair asked about the statistic shared that 75% of youth access programs had not transitioned to a virtual platform in the Fall term. He asked if this number would be as high for summer programming.

DD explained that initially, so much of the programming was based on bringing youth into Hart House for activities (e.g. Theatre activities, fitness workshops). Now, several of these programs have been adapted but community organizations have also had trouble re-adapting to the online environment so many have not yet resumed programming and partnerships.

David Kim added that at Chestnut they have also had difficulty delivering some programs due to the nature of the programs (e.g. cooking workshops). He asked if we have seen decreased engagement from community partners due to their own difficulty translating their offerings to a virtual environment.

DD responded that some community partners have evolved programming to a virtual environment, but it has been more difficult for other partners. Hart House is trying a virtual cooking workshop next week as part of the BEE Youth Program where participants will cook virtually with students in Ghana. The program has added a layer of logistics in ensuring participants have all the resources necessary to participate.

Michelle Brownrigg thanked the Committee members who have helped deliver this programming in collaboration with the Access Team. MB added that another level of difficulty was engaging

teachers in this programming. At the beginning of the pandemic, teachers were struggling to adapt their curriculum to a virtual environment, and only recently have they been able to consider creative programming such as those offered by Hart House.

DD added that the Centre for Community Partnerships at UofT has started hosting virtual workshops for staff partners and community organizations. Jenifer Newcombe, who recently attended a workshop, added that it was useful to hear how community partners are experiencing the pandemic. The workshop was a chance to share experiences and brainstorm how to adapt moving forward.

Mussa Marashi added that for APUS many of their in-person events were cancelled, which amounted to a surplus in the budget, which was then turned into student grants and bursaries. MM asked if there's a similar opportunity for Hart House to offer similar financial support for students and youth.

DD thanked Mussa for the great idea. She explained that most of the funding for youth programming is through grants, so it's not always simple to convert funding for a new purpose.

Sherry Kulman added that due to the pandemic, Hart House has no budgetary surplus, rather we are facing a nearly \$10 million hit to revenue since the revenue-generating streams largely dried up between fitness memberships and Hospitality. However, it is a great suggestion for the future if ever Hart House is in a position to allocate surplus funds.

4. Hart House Strategic Plan Update (Jenifer Newcombe, Director, Strategic Initiatives)

Jenifer Newcombe introduced herself as Hart House's Director of Strategic Initiatives. One of JN's principle responsibilities has been drafting Hart House's next 5-year Strategic Plan, and tonight she is sharing an update with the Board of Stewards on the progress of the consultation and drafting process. Currently, Hart House is in the final months of the previous Strategic Plan, which will officially end by May 1, 2021. The new plan will be informed by the extensive consultations with students, staff, and other stakeholders, which began in Spring 2020. In Fall 2020, Hart House staff conducted over 40 consultations with departments, offices, and faculties across campus (e.g. Student Life, Equity Offices, Deans of Students, Centre for International Experience). Hart House also sent out a survey in Spring 2020 to hear feedback from highly engaged students, and Hart House also created an online platform so people could provide feedback, guidance, and advice for the upcoming plan.

Hart House staff heard a variety of feedback that can be summarized as "more and deeper." Many individuals expressed Hart House work on access, inclusivity, mental health, and global learning are all steps in the right direction, and could be strengthened by continued focus and resources going forward. Many expressed the impact of the pandemic for students and other members of the university community. There was also a lot of feedback about Hart House's infrastructure, and both the limits of the building and potential for using spaces creatively.

The current plan focuses on Operational, Experiential and Reputational Excellence, and the new plan will building on these foundational pillars and ensure that the three areas are clearly

connected. The new plan will champion accessibility, innovation and inclusion. There will also be a focus on collaborative action for the planning processes, and a commitment to strategic partnerships with students, campus and community in *all* initiatives, which will include a renewed focus on Hart House's tri-campus mandate.

Hart House's new Strategic Plan will have a series of core commitments, accompanied by key initiatives. JN then shared some of the *draft* commitments and milestones that have flowed from consultations, which are not yet finalized. These commitments include the following:

- Commitment 1: Develop ongoing, trust-based relationships with underserved communities rooted in accountability and humility, and that facilitate access and engagement;
- Commitment 2: Advance initiatives that address racism and exclusion. Embrace Indigenous communities, histories, and practices (e.g. reconsidering staffing practices to ensure representativeness, evaluating and modifying spaces to serve diverse communities);
- Commitment 3: Deliver innovative opportunities with and for students to engage in community and develop leadership capacity (e.g. building connections across arts-based work, considering new virtual programming opportunities, creating student employment opportunities);
- Commitment 4: Advance a culture of caring, support and holistic wellbeing at Hart House and U of T (e.g. actioning recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force, continue focus on underserved communities);
- Commitment 5: Adapt and recover from the pandemic. Pursue opportunities to enhance revenue and operational efficiency models (e.g. developing a plan for post-pandemic revenue generation);
- Commitment 6: Enhance and build marketing strategies that facilitate engagement, revenue generation, and grow organizational brand presence (e.g. developing a multi-media, multi-channel communications strategy);
- Commitment 7: Advance infrastructure renewal that is grounded in enhancing accessibility and inclusion (e.g. over the new five year obtain funding for the first phase of work on the Infrastructure Renewal project); and
- Commitment 8: Committed leadership in environmental justice, sustainability, climate and planetary health (e.g. developing sustainability plan for the House focused on student engagement).

For the full presentation, see Appendix B.

JN then welcomed any questions or feedback, with an invitation to also provide feedback after the meeting by contacting her directly at jenifer.newcombe@utoronto.ca

DK congratulated the Hart House team for continuing to make progress on the Strategic Plan, even in light of the challenges of the pandemic. He noted that with the current uncertain situation, staff in leadership positions have had to think creatively about which initiatives will take focus in the future.

JN noted that the current situation has been a learning situation and allowed Hart House to consider the foundational priorities that will remain consistent over time.

5. Committee Presentations

a. **Literary and Library Student Committee** (Matthew Lee, Steward, Literary and Library Student Committee)

Matthew Lee introduced himself as the Co-Chair and Steward of the Hart House Literary and Library Committee (HHLLC). The Committee hosts a diverse series of programs with the goal of helping students discover their literary passions and develop their skill. Programming includes the Writer's Co-Op and skills workshops, panel discussions, the *Hart House Review* and writing contest, and the Committee's podcast *Endnote*.

The Committee's mandate is to reach a diverse group of people on and off-campus to enrich their lives through literature, creative writing, workshops and other programs. The Committee helps students expand and develop their minds, and take on leadership positions that prepare them for the future. The Committee is committed to operating in an egalitarian manner that allows for student-led learning. Literature is meant to deconstruct barriers, and all the Committee requires of members is a love of the literary arts. The Committee is committed to creating an inclusive environment and discussing literary topics with a focus on sharing the work of voices typically underrepresented.

The Committee's goals for 2020-21 include the following:

- Exploration: Creating a space where students and community members can explore the literary arts;
- Engagement: Engaging the community, especially during these difficult times through a variety of programming (e.g. creating virtual opportunities and programming) and also engaging with different communities on campus;
- Equity: Working to make the community an inclusive and representative space (e.g. creating an Equity Officer role and developing an Equity Mandate); and
- Enhancement: Helping with students' skill development and offering opportunities for student work to be published.

The Committee has hosted a great number of events and programs in 2020-21. Here is a summary of the Committee's event portfolio:

- Fall Events
 - *Student Journalism 101; Intentional Worldbuilding Workshop Series; Genre Panel: Comedy Deep Dive; Lingua Fantastica: How to Construct a Fictional Language; How to Get Published; “Finding Light in the Dark” Poetry Workshop*
- Winter Events
 - *Hart House Literary Contest; Worldbuilding of Wakanda in collaboration with Black Futures; Black Voices in Can Lit Roundtable in collaboration with Black Futures; How to Find a Literary Agent*
- Recurring Events
 - *Deconstruct the Library Booklists and Playlists in collaboration with the Social Justice Committee; Descent Exposure Workshops; First-Year Journaling Community; Write Outside Your House in collaboration with the Farm Committee; Art Magazine Event in collaboration with the Art Committee*

For the full presentation, see Appendix C.

ML then invited any questions.

Terese Pierre congratulated the Committee on all their work and thanked Matthew for his presentation. TP noted that the upcoming *Black Voices in Can Lit Roundtable* will include author Ian Williams, winner of the 2019 Giller Prize in Literature. TP noted that his inclusion in the program is an extraordinary feat for the Committee, for which it deserves congratulations.

6. Warden’s Report

Sherry Kulman began by introducing herself as Hart House’s Chief Administrative Officer and the Acting Warden. She will be delivering the Warden’s Report in John Monahan’s absence.

SK then directed the Board’s attention to the written summary of departmental highlights that was circulated at the meeting. This document underlined several of the ongoing issues, opportunities, and activities of the House (see Appendix D). Following this, SK provided an update on several broader initiatives and achievements that were not in the written report. These updates included the following:

- i. **Essential Resource Spaces:** On January 25, 2021, Hart House opened three spaces in the building for students to access essential resources to complete their studies including study space and Wi-Fi. Since opening, 263 student have registered for these spaces and 160 students have checked in. Each space is limited to 5 students per time block in accordance with health and safety protocols, other measures include pre-registration for the spaces, self-assessment required for student visitors, and a rigorous sanitization schedule for each space.
- ii. **Budget Approval Process:** Hart House continued to advance forward in the approval process for the 2021-22 operating budget. So far, the budget has been approved by the

Finance Committee, Board of Stewards, and Service Ancillary Review Group (SARG). The budget will be voted on at the Council on Student Services (COSS) on Feb. 16, followed by the vote at the University Affairs Board (UAB) on Mar. 4.

- iii. **Year in Review 2019-20:** Hart House's annual report has been published as an accessible PDF on the Hart House website. The report includes highlights from a busy year, which included a variety of programming marking Hart House's 100th anniversary.
- iv. **Hart House Black Futures:** Hart House offered a variety of Black Futures virtual programming throughout the month of February. The series uses the lens of Afrofuturism to blend the knowledge of the past with a re-imagining of the future. Programming ranged from dance workshops to artist and author panels, to podcasts.
- v. **Hart House Elections:** Hart House Student Chair Elections for 2021-22 continue to progress. Nominations closed in early February, and nominations were submitted for all nine of Hart House's student-led Standing Committees. The election will run online on Feb. 24 and 25, and the Election Commission will meet on Feb. 26 to confirm the results.
- vi. **Student Award Winners:** Each year, the Department of University Advancement recognizes student leaders with an award known as the University of Toronto Student Leadership Awards (formerly called the Gordon Cressey Student Leadership Award). Each year, Hart House has the opportunity to nominate highly engaged students as finalists for this award, and this year, all five of Hart House's nominated finalists have been recognized as award winners. The students include Board of Stewards member and Student Chair of the Finance Committee, Nicolas Sartor Campos. Other recipients include Ally Yuqing Lu (Social Justice Committee), Hui Wen Zheng (Debating Club and Debates and Dialogue Committee), Kiran Sukdeo (Recreational Athletics and Wellness Committee), and Syed Zain Ahmad (*DEMO Magazine* and Social Justice Committee).

Hart House has also launched the nomination process for the Hart House Student Awards, which include the Audrey Hozack Student Leadership Award and the Judi Schwartz Memorial Scholarship. An awards jury made up of the Warden and two former award recipients will be meeting this month to confirm finalists for the awards.

For the full presentation, see Appendix E.

SK then welcomed any questions or comments.

DK extended his congratulations to Nicolas for receiving the University of Toronto Student Leadership Award. He noted Nicolas' work on the Finance Committee and the budget process is commendable, especially during this year.

7. Other Business & Announcements

The Chair then asked members of the Board of Stewards if they had any other business or announcements to present. There were no announcements presented.

8. Next Meeting

The next Board of Stewards meeting will be held on Thursday, March 11th, 2021, on Zoom Video Conferencing.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Terese Pierre, seconded by Mussa Marashi, and carried unanimously by all voting members of the Board of Stewards.

The meeting adjourned at 6:39pm.

Chair
March 3, 2021

Recording Secretary

Appendices:

Appendix A: Hart House Access and Community Engagement Presentation (Danielle Dinunzio).

Appendix B: Hart House Strategic Plan Update (Jenifer Newcombe).

Appendix C: Literary and Library Committee Presentation (Matthew Lee).

Appendix D: Hart House Departmental Report.

Appendix E: Warden's Report (Sherry Kulman, Acting Warden).