

Minutes of the 1313<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Hart House Board of Stewards held on Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 on Zoom video conferencing.

- Present:
- Mr. John Monahan (Warden)
  - Mr. Terry Gardiner (Chair)
  - Ms. Amy Intrator (Recording Secretary)
  - Ms. Audrey Rochette (Presidential Appointee)
  - 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. Sanaya Rau (Steward, Debates and Dialogue Committee)
  - Ms. Tara Behruz (Steward, Music Committee)
  - Ms. Terese Pierre (Steward, Senior Members Committee)
  - Mr. Tyler Riches (UTSU Appointee)
- Guests:
- Ms. Davina Chan (Senior Director, Marketing, Communications and Information Services)
  - Ms. Jenifer Newcombe (Director, Strategic Initiatives)
  - Ms. Kiran Sukdeo (Deputy Returning Officer, Hart House Election Commission)
  - Ms. Michelle Brownrigg (Senior Director, Chief Program Officer)
  - Ms. Sherry Kulman (Senior Director, Chief Administrative Officer)
- Regrets:
- 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. Sarah Mohamed (SCSU Representative)

The Chair began the meeting by asking if any members of the Board of Stewards would like to read the Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land. Matthew Lee volunteered and read the Statement, adding the importance of being mindful, as many of us work remotely, of the specific history of the land each of us lives and works on.

### **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 Audrey Rochette, seconded by Nicolas Sartor Campos, and carried unanimously by all present voting members of the Board of Stewards:

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the March 11<sup>th</sup>, 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 Dhanya Dass, and carried unanimously by all present voting members of the Board of Stewards:

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the 1312<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved as presented.**

### **3. Committees Elections Results** (Terry Gardiner, Elections Commission Chief Returning Officer, and Amy Intrator, Elections Commission Administrative Assistant)

The Chair, Terry Gardiner, introduced his secondary role on the Hart House Board of Stewards as the Deputy Returning Officer of the Hart House Election Commission. Amy Intrator, the Recording Secretary on the Board of Stewards introduced her secondary role as an Administrative Support for the Election Commission. The presentation will focus on the results of the elections for the Student Chairs of Hart House's nine (9) student-led Standing Committees for 2021-22.

The process began in December, when the Board of Stewards voted to approve the creation of the Election Commission to oversee the elections for the 2021-22 Student Chairs of the student-led Hart House Standing Committees. The Election Commission is struck each year to oversee elections, and ensures all protocols are followed throughout the election process. The Election Commission consists of the Chief Returning Officer (Terry Gardiner), and two Deputy Returning Officers, who must be students who are not returning to U of T next year. This year Nicolas Sartor Campos (Finance Committee) and Kiran Sukdeo (Recreational Athletics and Wellness Committee) volunteered to serve this role. Both Nicholas and Kiran were present and willing to take questions after the presentation.

The Elections ran online through the University's election platform "UElect" from 12:01am on

February 24<sup>th</sup> to 11:59pm on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Voting was open to students on all three U of T campuses, both part-time and full-time, graduate and undergraduate students. Students ran for Chair for all nine (9) student-led Standing Committees, and had three (3) weeks before voting to campaign for the election. Overall, 102 students voted in the election, and nine Chairs (and Co-Chairs) were elected for the nine (9) student-led committees.

**Observations from the Election Commission, based on the election results, include the following:**

- There was a decrease in voter turnout: 102 students voted this year compared to 256 last year. The pandemic likely impacted voter turnout.
- There was a decrease in spoiled ballots: 15% of ballots were spoiled this year compared to 25% last year. This suggests that while fewer students are voting, those who are voting are casting ballots across multiple committees.
- There was an increase in co-chair ballots: 50% of ballots were Co-Chairs this year, compared to 25% last year. This suggests more interest and awareness in the Co-Chair option.

**Recommendations from the Election Commission, based on the election results, include the following:**

- Hold information workshops for potential nominees: This could help build interest before nominations open and help provide students with skill-building opportunities.
- Create a resource kit for campaigning: By creating easy-to-adapt templates designed for social media, we can encourage more campaigning from candidates.
- Begin social media outreach earlier: By promoting the elections and voting early, we can build awareness and interest across potential student voters.

See Appendix A for full presentation.

All Election Commission members noted that they were glad to have been part of the process this year. Kiran Sukdeo emphasized the importance of the recommendation about encouraging more campaigning from student nominees. She noted that though students may feel less motivated to campaign when there is no opposing candidate, it is still an important part of the elections process, and we should find ways to make this election experience comparable to other democratic processes students will be involved with when they leave the University.

The Election Commission welcomed any additional feedback from the Board of Stewards.

Tyler Riches noted that in future year, Hart House may be able to increase voter turnout by lengthening the voting period beyond two days, as many students may be slower to respond to the calls to vote.

#### **4. Hart House Tri-Campus Engagement Presentation** (Jenifer Newcombe, Director, Strategic Initiatives)

Jenifer Newcombe introduced herself as Hart House's Director of Strategic Initiatives. The presentation focused on how Hart House is engaging the tri-campus community, based on assessment metrics over the past years. The number of partnered tri-campus programs has grown from 8 events in 2017-18 to 32 events in 2019-20.

For context, the U of T student population consists of approximately 93,081 students. Of this total population, 68% of students are based at St. George Campus, 17% at UTM, and 15% at UTSC. Hart House seeks to engage students from all three campuses, as Hart House has a tri-campus mandate and receives fees from students on all campuses. Recently, Hart House has changed registration tracking, which allows staff to more easily assess which campus students are based from, but previously this data was not available. Staff do not have a complete set of data to assess past tri-campus engagement, but Hart House will be able to consistently track this moving forward.

The virtual environment has also shifted tri-campus engagement. Assessing current data against last year's numbers is a bit of a challenge, as we are assessing in-person engagement against virtual engagement. For a benchmark, JN shared that in 2019-20, for the Hart House Fitness Centre alone, 1.2% of participants were UTM students, and 0.9% of students were UTSC students. By comparison, since the pandemic began, 10.5% of students accessing the Virtual Fitness Studio are from UTM and 3.9% are from UTSC. (NB: The Virtual Fitness Studio is a partnership involving Hart House, UTM and KPE, and provides students with easy-to-access virtual fitness and wellness classes as part of their incidental fees.)

Hart House's virtual Black Futures programming has also seen higher levels of tri-campus engagement this year. Across 5 Black Futures programs, 6.7% of attendees were UTM students, and 7.3% of attendees were UTSC students.

Another Hart House program that continues to engage the tri-campus community is the Hart House Global Commons. This program includes partners from St. George, UTM, and UTSC, and students from all three campuses take part in the annual student-led planning committee. Since the program transitioned to an all-virtual format this year, we have seen participation by UTM students rise to 13% and participation by UTSC students rise to 19%.

Next steps for tri-campus engagement include continuing to track the levels of UTM and UTSC engagement and continue to strengthen Hart House's partnerships and collaborations with student groups, staff and faculty at all U of T campuses.

See Appendix B for full presentation.

JN then welcomed any comments or suggestions from the Board of Stewards.

Matthew Lee asked if there is a way for Committees to learn more about how to program on the other two U of T campuses (e.g. space considerations, programming needs).

Michelle Brownrigg encouraged students to reach out directly to students from other campuses. Peer-

to-peer programming is important, and students can learn the best ways to engage students on other campuses by engaging those students directly. Spaces like the Board of Stewards provide great opportunities for students to engage directly with tri-campus student representatives.

Audrey Rochette asked if Hart House considered a tri-campus committee, similar in structure to our existing Standing Committees, in order to ensure tri-campus student needs are met through Hart House programming.

MB responded that this idea has come up before, but Hart House wants to avoid adding too much bureaucracy to the process of creating tri-campus programming. For example, if a committee existed that approved all tri-campus programs, it might stifle more organic program creation within specific areas of Committee expertise. However, MB agreed that creating a more informal working group on tri-campus programming, involving students from all three campuses, might be a way to ensure tri-campus needs are met without restricting program creation with a strict structure.

Nicolas Sartor Campus asked if there is any way to measure current Global Commons tri-campus engagement compared to previous years. JN offered to analyze some of the existing post-program assessment to get an initial idea how tri-campus engagement in this program has grown.

## 5. Committee Presentations

### a. **Hart House Farm Committee** (Ian Browne, Steward, Farm Committee)

Ian Browne began by introducing himself as the Co-Chair and Steward of the Hart House Student Farm Committee. The Hart House Farm is a 150-acre property located in Caledon, Ontario, approximately one-hour from downtown Toronto. In a typical year, the Farm Committee organizes several social activities and trips to the Farm. In the past, visitors to the beautiful property could hike on the trails, swim in the ponds, explore the land, enjoy the Finnish-style sauna, and even sleepover in the Ignatieff House property. IB referred to the images highlighting the different assets of the property (see Appendix C, slide 2).

This year, the pandemic has presented several challenges for the Committee, mainly the inability to visit the Farm and organize events and activities on the property. The Committee has found ways to pivot, despite these challenges, and continues to focus on the following areas/priorities:

- Land, Agriculture, and Food Justice;
- Commitment to Social Justice; and
- Partnering with Community Groups.

Even with the challenges and restrictions on in-person activities, the Committee has maintained focus on these priorities by hosting a series of virtual events. Farm Committee events/activities in 2020-21 have included a partnership with University of Toronto Environment Action (UTEA), a Young Farmer Social Series, and support for Hart House-organized programming. Upcoming programming includes a collaboration with the Literary and Library Committee on the “Write Outside Your House” series, which encourages students to get outside, explore nature, and reflect on their experiences in writing.

The Committee has also continued to work on several longer-term projects. The ongoing “Mapping Project” seeks to create a map of the Hart House Farm that can be used by visitors of the Farm to explore, understand and engage with the property. The Committee is working to create a map that does not adhere to colonial boundary-based mapping, and instead focuses on the experiences of those who have engaged with the Farm and the Indigenous history of the land. Another project is an increased presence on social media to help promote the work of the Committee. IB also mentioned the ongoing accessibility work at the Farm. This work is led by Hart House staff who have made several important accessibility upgrades to the property, mainly at the Ignatieff House. These improvements will make the property much more accessible to future visitors of the Farm.

IB concluded by stating that he believes the Farm property is under-utilized in its current form. For several years, Committee members have been arguing the importance of using the land for farming purposes. Possibilities include making the land available for community-based farming for Indigenous and BIPOC groups. IB believes there are low-maintenance ways to utilize the land and make the land more widely available as a resource for those who want to explore farming and other land-based activities.

See Appendix C for full presentation.

IB then welcomed questions or feedback from the Board of Stewards.

John Monahan began by thanking IB for his presentation and for the work that the Farm Committee continues to accomplish even during this challenging year. JM noted that there have been significant advances made in the past years to make the Farm for accessible for land-based work. In recent years, Hart House has consulted with the University’s Elders’ Circle about the ways in which the farm could be better used to support the needs and interests of Indigenous students and community members. Hart House has also formed a collaborative relationship with the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health (WBIH) at the University’s Dalla Lana School of Public Health. This partnership has allowed for land-based education, based on Indigenous teachings, to take place directly on the Farm property (prior to COVID-19 health and safety restrictions). This dynamic partnership creates opportunities for both the University of Toronto community and members of the Indigenous community.

The partnership with Dalla Lana was also essential to the recent accessibility upgrades at the Hart House Farm. The Hart House Farm was awarded funding through the Student Space Enhancement Fund (SSEF) through the Hart House and WBIH partnership. The funds allowed for several accessibility improvements on the property including the creation of an AODA compliant accessible washroom in the Ignatieff House and the construction of an AODA compliant ramp into the Ignatieff House. These changes are the beginning of improvements to the Farm property that will make the space inviting and accessible for future generations of U of T students.

Finally, JM thanked IB for bringing some of his innovative ideas to the attention of Hart House staff, including recent proposals for water diversion on the Farm that were discussed with Hart House’s Director of Facilities, Jimmy Cheung and which would be explored in more detail.

MB added that the Farm Committee has been supported by their Staff Advisor, who has provided support for the Committee work and connected Committee members to Hart House at large. The

Staff Advisor has helped communicate Committee members concerns and ensured that their ideas are not left unheard.

IB responded that he has not always found Hart House's governance structures to be effective for implementing farming projects that have been suggested by previous generations of Farm Committee members. IB stressed the importance of working with Indigenous and BIPOC farmers to help realize the full potential of the farm land.

JM indicated that he would be happy to discuss any specific proposals from the Farm Committee. He also noted that there had been some student-initiated farming projects at the Farm during his tenure as Warden – such as the planting of fields of garlic and the taming of the apple orchards – but that the recurrent challenge was how to sustain such projects when student leaders graduate or leave the university. MB added that the capital expenses and maintenance costs related to any farming projects should be assessed in the context of the House's larger capital priorities, including the pending Infrastructure Renewal Project at 7 Hart House.

Audrey Rochette commented that she appreciated IB's presentation and his commitment to the land. She encouraged his passion for working on such land-based projects and proposed that the conversation continue outside of this meeting with herself, IB, and Michelle Brownrigg.

## 6. Warden's Report

The Warden began his presentation by thanking the members of the Board of Stewards for their support after a recent family emergency that left the Warden unable to attend the last meeting.

JM 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, the Warden provided an update on several broader initiatives and achievements that were not in the written report. These updates included the following:

- i. **National Day of Observance for COVID-19:** March 11th marks the National Day of Observance for COVID-19. The day has been designated as a commemoration for those who have lost their lives and the serious impacts felt since the beginning of the pandemic. The Board of Stewards observed a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives since the onset of the pandemic.
- ii. **International Women's Day:** On March 8, 2021, Hart House honoured International Women's Day with a special Global Commons program, *The Arctic Spirit: Healing Our Relationships*. The program featured Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who explored how the histories and wisdom on Inuit traditions can inform strengthening and healing our relationships with the environment, our communities, and ourselves.
- iii. **Constitutional Amendments:** On January 7, 2021, the Board of Stewards approved the proposed amendments to the Hart House Constitution, which would change the name of the "Senior Members Committee" to the "Community Members Committee," and add the

word “student” to the title of all student-led Hart House Standing Committees. These changes will be proposed at the University Affairs Board on April 22, 2021, and pending approval, will move to the Governing Council for final approval.

- iv. **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. As of February 28, 380 students have checked in to these spaces. 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.

Students continue to provide positive feedback about these spaces, including a recent comment that Hart House has provided a “sense of stability and comfort” for those students who remain living and studying on-campus.

- v. **Budget Approval Process:** As of March 4, Hart House’s 2021-22 operating budget has officially been approved after receiving approval from the University Affairs Board (UAB). Prior to receiving UAB approval, the budget was approved by the Finance Committee, Board of Stewards, Service Ancillary Review Group (SARG), and the Council on Student Services (COSS).
- vi. **Landmark Project:** The University continues to progress with their construction project that will transform the campus, including exteriors around Hart House, to increase accessibility and become pedestrian-friendly. Upcoming construction around Hart House includes construction on Tower Road (begins May 2021) and construction around Hart House Circle (begins June 2021). Construction around Hart House is estimated to be completed by Fall 2021.
- vii. **Hart House Student Awards:** Hart House recently announced the winners of the 2021 student awards, including the Audrey Hozack Student Leadership Award and the Judi Schwartz Memorial Scholarship. Each award recognizes exceptional student leadership at Hart House. The awards are each valued at approximately \$1000. The 2021 Hart House Student Award Winners include the following:

- Audrey Hozack Student Leadership Award Winner:
  - ***Kiran Sukdeo*** (Hart House Student Recreational Athletics and Wellness Committee)
- Judi Schwartz Memorial Scholarship Award Winners:
  - ***Chantelle Soropia*** (Hart House Student Ambassador);
  - ***Muskaan Kaushal*** (University of Toronto Drama Coalition);
  - ***Rebekah Robinson*** (Hart House Student Podcasting Team & Hart House Global Commons);
  - ***Rudra Patel*** (Hart House Debating Club)
  - ***Sabrina Brathewaite*** (Hart House Student Podcasting Team);
  - ***Tara Costello*** (Hart House Student Theatre Committee).

The Warden extended his congratulations to all award winners for their hard work and commitment to student leadership at Hart House and the University at large.

- viii. **Hart House Podcasts**: The Warden concluded by encouraging members of the Board of Stewards to explore some of the great podcasting work produced by Hart House staff and students. Podcasts include [\*The West Meeting Room\*](#) (produced by the Hart House Student Podcasting Team), [\*Endnote Podcast\*](#) (produced by the Hart House Student Literary and Library Committee), and [\*Living Well\*](#) (produced by the Well Being Collective @ Hart House).

For the full presentation, see Appendix E.

KS commented that she was extremely grateful for receiving the Audrey Hozack Student Leadership Award. KS thanked Hart House for the opportunity to grow as a student leader over the past several years. She noted that Hart House afforded her several opportunities to engage outside the classroom and connect with the broader student community.

## **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, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, on Zoom Video Conferencing.

## **9. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made by Nicolas Sartor Campos, seconded by David Kim, and carried unanimously by all voting members of the Board of Stewards.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

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Chair  
March 24, 2021

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Recording Secretary

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: Committees Election Results Presentation (Terry Gardiner and Amy Intrator).

Appendix B: Hart House Tri-Campus Engagement Presentation (Jenifer Newcombe).

Appendix C: Hart House Farm Student Committee Presentation (Ian Browne).

Appendix D: Hart House Departmental Report.

Appendix E: Warden's Report (John Monahan).