

ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson - CESAR

Thursday, March 11, 2021, 5:00-7:00pm | Zoom Room

Annual General Meeting

Attendance:

- Abdul Ahmed
- Aisa Manjira
- Avinandan Kundu
- Britney Viechweg
- Carol Sutherland
- Christine Stolarz
- Elaine Ng
- Farah Aziz
- Hemanshu Bhargav
- Janet Rodriguez
- Jasdeep Sekhon
- Jennifer Dietz
- Kanneeisha Thevadasaa
- Khalid Ahmed
- Maddy Fast
- Michael Yoon
- Mirza Ahmad
- Mohib Malik
- Nayema Chowdhury
- Noha Farawi
- Olivia McIntosh
- Parthiban R.
- Pegah Pourtheidari
- Ronald Kakooza
- Samer Mansour
- Sharan Lall
- Stefani Murray
- Tanzeem Saleha
- Tarmanjit Mann
- Tasfia Afroz
- Virna Deganis
- Wajiha Ahmed
- Nicole Brayiannis, Chair (Non-Voting)
- Amanda Lin, Staff (Non-Voting)
- Ayat Rizvi, Staff (Non-Voting)
- Corey Scott, Staff (Non-Voting)
- Ilhan Farah, Staff (Non-Voting)
- Lyndall Musselman, Staff (Non-Voting)
- Shahla Navai, Staff (Non-Voting)
- Zayd Ghunaim, Staff (Non-Voting)

1. Call to Order 5:03

Rodriguez thanked everyone for attending, and introduced the Chair of the meeting, Nicole Brayiannis, former President of CESAR, and current Deputy Chair Person of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). She said that Brayiannis was an avid advocate for equity, and that during her time with the CFS, had worked to expand the eligibility of the CERB and CESB to include international, part-time, and continuing education students.

Rodriguez announced that the Annual General Membership meeting (AGM) was being livestreamed on Facebook including the candidates' statements. Once agenda items were addressed however, the livestreaming would end to allow voting members to discuss motions and cast their votes.

2. Remarks from the Chair

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a. Welcome and meeting procedure overview

Brayiannis said she was excited to be back at CESAR to help with the virtual AGM meeting procedure. She noted that the meeting was focused on the annual election of the CESAR Board and the members' decision on motions presented on the agenda. She explained that while most motions required a simple majority vote, by-law amendments required a two-third majority vote in order to pass.

As the highest decision-making authority of the organization, Brayianis encouraged members to participate in the process. She explained that for each motion presented a mover and a seconder were required to open the motion for discussion prior to going to a vote. Voting poles would show up on the zoom screen for 30 seconds for members to cast their votes. A speakers' list could be created in the Zoom chat for her to follow if participants wanted to speak to a motion.

b. Recognition of and Respect for Unceded Traditional Territories of First Nations People

c. Equity Statement

Both statements were read by **Fast**, Vice President Equity and Campaigns

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion: AGM-21/03/11-01

Be it resolved that the AGM agenda be approved as presented.

MOVED: RODRIGUEZ SECONDER: DIETZ RESULT: CARRIED

4. Elections Candidates Forum

Farah, Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for CESAR elections, announced that nine candidates were running for board positions in 2021. She noted that advance polls had been set up every day for three days prior to the AGM meeting on Zoom, since in-person voting during COVID-19 had not been possible. She explained each voter was put in Zoom break-out rooms with a poll clerk and a privacy officer to cast their votes. She said that the same process would be continued during the AGM meeting, and members could vote until 7 p.m. by putting their names in the chat box once the candidates' statements concluded. She gave each candidate two minutes to present their agenda.

Fast, introduced herself as a Politics and Sociology student at the Chang School, running for the position of President. She said she was working alongside the CESAR executive team as Vice President of Equity and Campaigns, allocating emergency student funding for Chang School students, advocating for more funding for

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post-secondary education and the reduction and eventual elimination of tuition fees for domestic and international students. Sitting on various University Committees, she had made sure the voices of CESAR members were heard. She successfully advocated for the removal of 'The Use and Possession of Prohibited Substances' from the students' code of non-academic conduct. She said that with the help of the staff and community members, CESAR had been able to host online events, workshops, and socials to build community and battle the stresses of isolation. CESAR had also offered educational opportunities around important equity and social justice issues such as houselessness, transit fares, colonialism, and support of survivors of sexual violence. If elected, she said that with the experience she had gained in her role of Vice President of Equity and Campaigns, she would continue to fight for social justice and equity, expand digital services, and increase part-time undergraduate, continuing education, and certificate students' access to the Ryerson's mental health and wellness initiatives.

Parthiban R noted that he had served as the CESAR Certificate Director since the summer of 2020, and was running for the same position with the Solidarity Team. As a newcomer to Canada in the Spanning the Gaps program to obtain the equivalency of his foreign education in Canada, he had advocated for certificate students, and had been a member of the Finance Committee to add his voice to ensure that the funding CESAR received was equitably allocated. As a member of the Bursary Selection Committee, he said that at times it had been distressing for him to read the additional information applicants provided on their application.

Ng said that she was taking a Mental Health Certificate course at the Chang School and was running for the position of Vice President Services and Finance. She stated that the past year had been challenging, juggling her work and school to improve her academic standing. She said she understood the financial pressures students were under, and would increase grant amounts and numbers, and with the help of the CESAR team, would present financial workshops to help students maneuver their finances.

Farah announced that not all board members had been able to attend the AGM meeting, but that their statements were available online. She said she would now open two Zoom polling stations for members to vote for the candidates throughout the night.

Brayiannis asked voting members who were watching the proceedings being livestreamed on Facebook to rejoin the formal meeting to cast their votes on motions presented.

5. Bylaw Amendment A: Force Majeure

Motion: AGM-21/03/11-02

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Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has indicated a necessity for provisions within the bylaws of CESAR to address situations outside the control of the organization; and

Whereas force majeure is understood as unforeseeable circumstances that prevent a party from fulfilling a contract; and

Whereas current bylaws regulate the basic governance of general meetings and elections; and

Whereas the Canadian Federation of Students and other students' unions have put similar motions on their general meeting agendas to incorporate force majeure clauses to cover certain sections of their bylaws; therefore

Be it resolved that Bylaw Section 12 be amended to include:

12.3 Force Majeure

In the event of force majeure, sections of the Bylaws and Operations Policy related to the structure and logistics of general meetings and elections covered in Bylaw IV: General Meetings and Bylaw IX: Elections may be temporarily suspended by the Board of Directors.

MOVED: SUTHERLAND SECONDER: VIECHWEG RESULT: CARRIED

Sutherland explained that this procedure had been followed by CESAR throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and that this by-law would formalize the process when facing unforeseen circumstances.

6. Bylaw Amendment B: Contingency Fund

Motion: AGM-21/03/11-03

Whereas CESAR is currently required to maintain an operational reserve of six months; and

Whereas recent issues regarding the Student 'Choice' Initiative, Ryerson vs. Ryerson Students' Union dispute and concerns about ongoing enrollment have posed concerns over the need for a long-term safety fund to maintain CESAR operations; therefore

Be it resolved that Bylaw Section 8.6 be amended to read:

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8.6 Reserve Fund

CESAR must maintain a reserve fund equal to the basic minimum operating expenses of the organization for ~~6~~**18** months to ensure the continuation of CESAR in the event that it is prevented from obtaining or utilizing member fees for any reason.

MOVED: SUTHERLAND SECONDER: AHMED RESULT: CARRIED

Sutherland informed members that during Covid-19 enrolments had increased, although it was not a given that this trend would continue. Having received additional funding this year, it had been decided to increase the reserve fund from six (6) months to 18 months, which would allow staff to continue working, and in turn would allow CESAR to serve students for a longer period of time, should funding be reduced or ceased in the future.

7. Bylaw Amendment C: Executive Committee

Motion: AGM-21/03/11-04

Whereas the CESAR Executive Committee is currently made up of three executives: President, Vice-President Services & Finance and Vice-President Equity & Campaigns; and

Whereas prior to the Student 'Choice' Initiative, the CESAR Executive Committee was made up of five executives: President, Vice-President Services & Finance, Vice-President Internal, Vice-President Equity & Campaigns and Vice-President Events & Outreach; and

Whereas the reduction of the Executive positions has put an unrealistic expectation on three executives that is better suited for five executives; and

Whereas the following proposal also includes a reduction in maximum hours; and

Whereas the following proposal is a restoration of the bylaws from 2019; therefore

Be it resolved that the CESAR Executive Committee be made up of five Executive Committee members; and

Be it resolved that these changes be reflected in subsequently reflected in Bylaws (to see tracked changes please refer to [Appendix A](#)):

- The Entirety of Bylaw VII: Executive Committee

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- 5.1 Membership of the Board
- 5.10 Conflict of Interest
- 8.3 Signing Officer

MOVED: RODRIGUEZ SECONDER: PARTHIBAN RESULT: CARRIED

Rodriguez said that CESAR was in a position to revert to the 2019 executive numbers, which at the time were reduced from five (5) executives to three (3) executive members for cost saving measures under threat of the Student Choice Initiative (SCI) and the uncertainty of receiving adequate funding. She said that even though the SCI was struck down by the courts, it had been appealed by the Ford government, and was currently in the courts again pending a decision.

She said that the workload of the three remaining executives on the CESAR Board had necessitated that they work full-time hours instead of the prescribed 30 hours per week.

K. Ahmed asked whether some of these full-time hours were related to other employment.

Rodriguez explained that the full-time hours were spent to serve the CESAR membership. She said adding two executives to the team would allow each of the executives to keep their hours of work to the prescribed number of hours in the By-Laws.

Dietz added that she had recently joined a CESAR committee and had witnessed the amount of work the executives put in to achieve their goal. She said the increased number of executives would put more ideas on the table to provide more quality services that would benefit the membership.

8. Bylaw Amendment D: Board of Director Honoraria

Motion: AGM-21/03/11-05

Whereas the CESAR Board of Directors currently receive no honorarium in fulfilling their duties;

Whereas there has been much discussion about accessibility, inequities and representation trends of relying on unpaid work; and

Whereas by providing a small honorarium, Board members are able to access CESAR Board opportunities without being expected to miss meals, take time off work and receive some type of honorarium in line with the expectations of the role;

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Whereas the CESAR Board of Directors are not able to access financial aid resources such as the Emergency Grant and CESAR Bursary; and

Whereas the honorarium is not meant to be pay in lieu of work but as an accessibility feature and/or for low-income and marginalized people to access the CESAR Board of Directors; therefore

Be it resolved that Bylaw 5.1 be amended as follows to be implemented May 1, 2021; and

Be it further resolved that the Bylaws & Policies Committee be tasked with revising the Board of Director Honorarium Operational Policy with a one-year review period.

5.1 Membership of the Board

The Board is comprised of nine (9) members duly elected from the membership at the Annual General Meeting or at a Membership Meeting should a by-election be required. Board position terms shall be held from May 1 to April 30. **If Board members satisfy the duties and responsibilities listed below, they will be eligible for an honorarium of \$50 per month which shall be paid out three times during the fiscal year (see Policy Manual on Board of Directors' Honouraria).**

MOVED: RODRIGUEZ SECONDER: STOLARZ RESULT: CARRIED

Rodriguez explained that CESAR wanted to recognize the work the Board members were doing on behalf of the membership, and, therefore, show the Union's appreciation through the allocation of a small honourarium,

Brayiannis advised that this last motion concluded the voting portion of the meeting, and thanked members again for attending and participating in the process.

Rodriguez also thanked members, and reminded them to make sure they received their gift cards by providing the information requested. She explained that the gift cards were in lieu of the hot meal that CESAR usually provided during in-person general membership meetings.

9. AGM Report

Rodriguez thanked the board for their worked and said that at times they had to work with a limited capacity until the by-election in the fall, when the current board had been elected. She said that in response to Covid-19 all services had been moved online. She said she was proud that unlike its sister union, the Ryerson Students' Union, CESAR

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had not laid off any of their staff members, and instead had found more opportunities for them to serve members.

She said the Union had advocated for CESAR representation on the Ryerson Joint Health and Safety Committee and had contributed \$10,000 to the Chang School Emergency Student Funding initiative. This had been especially important for CESAR since the general Ryerson emergency grant was mostly available to full-time students.

Rodriguez encouraged students to subscribe to CESAR social media channels, come to meetings, and to contact the Board and staff to bring their ideas and input to the table.

Fast talked about campaigns having moved online with the Equity and Campaigns committee taking place monthly, attendance at the virtual Lobby Week organized by the CFS to lobby federal and provincial members of parliament to fully fund education, freeze interest on student loans, end differential fees for international students and to include them in the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), as well as to increase funding for mental health support.

On the University level, CESAR and the All Union Campus Coalition released a call to action for better mental health support, better working conditions for staff, the hiring of more racialized instructors, and accessibility support.

Fast said that CESAR was continuing to collect signatures to remove the Egerton Ryerson statue, was opposing the Ryerson University's alliance with the Navitas Corporation to recruit and exploit international students, and had run campaigns including, I Stand with Carol, Harm Reduction, and No Cops on Campus campaigns, and the Orange Shirt campaign against campus racism.

She also drew the attention of the attendees to the many events that had been organized with the help of full and part-time staff focusing on trivia and game nights, leadership, mentorship, and social justice issues, alongside advocacy and grade standing appeal workshop, which could be watched on the CESAR website, on Facebook, and the CESAR's YouTube channel.

Sutherland announced that the amount of bursaries had been increased and a total of \$200,000 given out to students, and that the Emergency grant disbursements had reached \$25,000, over 3.5 times the amount given out in previous years.

Sutherland explained students would be consulted through a survey, to expand the students' health and dental plan, and that CESAR would conduct negotiations and

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evaluate adding psychologist, psychotherapist, counselling and social worker sessions to the existing coverage to start in September of 2021.

Sutherland enumerated donations to community members, which could be found in the AGM Package, which included Social Justice Week, Justice for Regis, and the Bond Place Emergency Shelter, among others.

10. Announcements.

Ghunaim enumerated the many events that had been planned, and encouraged students to check out CESAR social media platforms and YouTube channel. He invited students to attend the By-Laws, Equity and Campaigns, Finance, and the newly created Student Advocacy committees, which served to bring new ideas to the table and raise issues to bring to the attention of the Chang School and the Ryerson University.

He also spoke about the volunteer and the class representative programs, which provided learning opportunities for participant, and tracked hours to award them.

11. Adjournment 6:22 pm

Motion: AGM-21/03/11-06

MOVED: NOHA

SECONDER: FAST

RESULT: CARRIED