

WLUSP Annual General Meeting

Virtual Conference: Thursday, February 8, 2024 | 7:00 p.m.

Secretary: Maryka Van Wyngaarden

Attendance:

55 WLUSP Members in attendance including WLUSP membership, volunteers and Laurier community members. Aaron Waitson has documented all attendees for tonight's AGM.

1.0 Call Meeting to Order

- Meeting called to order at 7:14 p.m.

2.0 Approval of Agenda: February 8, 2024

- Motion: Jack Vrolyk
- Second: Bachir Miloudi
- Motion Carries: 7:15 p.m.

3.0 Approval of Last Year's AGM Meeting Minutes: February 8, 2023

- Motion: Thea Biallas
- Second: Bachir Miloudi
- Motion Carries: 7:17 p.m.

4.0 State of WLUSP Address (Serena Austin, President & Publisher)

- Some of WLUSP's highlights for the year. Time to reflect on accomplishments, challenges this year and what's to come.
- Summer months: production of WLU'er student handbook, summer training conference and preparing for school year. Two summer positions were filled through Canada Summer Jobs, looking to fill all four positions this summer so long as funding comes through.

- 100% pick-up rate on both campuses for WLU'er, but we're proposing a change of publishing responsibility from President to Executive Director to put ourselves in better position to meet our goal for advertising sales, as Ex. Dir. is full-time, permanent role.
- Publications booth on campus during O-week and throughout year to improve visibility.
- The Community Edition's night market in the summer, Blueprint's two launch parties at Revive in Waterloo, Radio Laurier's dirty bingo event and two on-campus concerts.
- Keystone's volunteer base has grown significantly after bringing on Martina as Keystone/Carnegie's EIC. Pre-order link for Pegasus hopefully available soon to get head start on grad photos.
- Quite happy with switch to Pegasus from Lifetouch for grad photos, proving to be a good decision.
- Were hoping to move WLUSP office spaces in fall of 2023, but proposed locations require some serious renovations, so process has been stalled, operating under assumption that we won't be moving this fall. Instead, using opportunity to spruce up current space with new lamps and desk chairs and organizing.
- Transformational year for publications. Radio Laurier now on streaming platform, now easier to get programming on-air. Bill C-18 significant challenge for newspapers, but led us to reconsider web and digital strategies.
- Web Manager Sam Nabi has helped us with various digital and web upgrades. Most publications either have revamped or will be revamping websites, with the Keystone's launching soon. This is one reason we're upgrading Sam's role from contracted to salaried.
- Returning to bi-weekly publishing now a realistic possibility for Sputnik and Cord thanks to strong volunteer base. Blueprint returning to full magazine style for March issue.
- Focus shifting to hiring department heads and senior staff for next year and updating strategic plan. Plus, 15 of us heading to Edmonton for student journalism conference NASH86 next weekend.

- Thank you for all hard work put into our publications this year, passion and dedication of volunteers fuels WLUSP.

4.1 Comments

- No comments

5.0 Ratify Workplace Relationships Policy

- Our board did approve this, but this is to ratify it. Briefly read through if you haven't already.

- Motion: Elisha Felician
- Second: Nia Tozer
- Motion Carries: 7:27 p.m.

5.1 Comments

- No comments

6.0 Ratify WLU'er Publishing Responsibility Transfer

- Board has already approved decision to transfer this responsibility. Motion to ratify.

- Motion: Nate Dawes
- Second: Mitchell Baldwin
- Motion Carries: 7:28 p.m.

6.1 Comments

- No comments

7.0 Financial Report / Ratification of Auditor (Randy Moore, Finance Manager)

- Every year WLUSP has an audit done, everything is as of April 30, 2023.

- Auditor called Clarke Starke & Diegel on Union Street East in Waterloo
- Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet:
 - Assets, things we own: a bank account with \$510,885. In total, assets \$640,719.
 - Capital assets went up with buying a couple cameras and computers.
 - Liabilities, what we owe: ~\$56,000, down from the year before.
 - Very financially healthy organization, operated well within our means.
- Statement of Changes in Net Assets
 - ~\$685,000, about \$35,000 more than beginning of year — positive year
- Statement of Operations/ Profit and Loss
 - Revenue: received \$506,568 from the university from student activity fees. In total \$622,893.
 - Expenses: Increased our wages considerably to make sure everyone in WLUSP was being paid appropriately, a good amount. Total expenses \$588,817.
 - \$35,026 excess of revenue over expenses (surplus) despite budgeting for a loss — tend to function conservatively, nothing to worry about financially with WLUSP.

7.1 Ratify Approval of Auditor

- Motion: Dylan Baker
- Second: Lia McGinnis
- Motion Carries: 7:40 p.m.

7.2 Approval of Continuing with Clarke Starke & Diegel as our Auditor

- Motion: Cole Huszti
- Second: Hari Adnani
- Motion Carries: 7:40 p.m.

7.3 Comments

- No comments

8.0 Board of Directors Q&A

Opening statements: (Note Jacob Rice not present, has provided written statement)

- **Nate Dawes:** Third year communications major, now Music Director for Radio Laurier, next year hope to go overseas, would like to stay involved in WLUSP while overseas, explore all opportunities for making group as open and successful as it can possibly be.
- **Madalyn Mostacci:** Third year English major, religion minor, started with The Cord, involved in WLUSP board since last year, learned a lot, interesting to see behind the scenes and would like to continue on board this year.
- **Jacob Rice (read by Serena):** Over the past three years, I have had the pleasure of serving on the WLUSP Board of Directors as Vice-Chair, and it would be my honour to serve the board again for the 2024-25 school year. I believe that this would be a great opportunity for me to continue developing my professional skills as a part of the board while also assisting the organization in its goals and aspirations. After serving the board for three years while abroad, I hope you will consider me for this position on the Board of Directors as I return to Canada for my final year at Laurier.
- **Elisha Felician:** Third year law & society, deeply honoured to be considered for this opportunity. Would like to bring my experience as one of the only undergraduate student senators, would like to build more profound and storytelling community.

Question 1: Icebreaker—if you could turn any activity into Olympic sport to win a medal for it, what would it be?

- **Nate:** Starting paragraphs in pieces of writing that I potentially will finish, but unclear.

- **Madalyn:** Emptying a dishwasher, I'd take home gold.
- **Elisha:** Two-bite cupcakes, eating them as quickly as possible.

Question 2: Why do you want to run to be on the board?

- **Nate:** I'd echo what Madalyn said about it being a good opportunity to see behind the scenes, making sure minutes get published, trying to make sure general awareness about WLUSP goes up. Would like to "release the Bat signal."
- **Madalyn:** I started with WLUSP to explore journalism, being on the board has broadened my experience and helped me realize it's what I want to do as a career. I have ideas on how to make day-to-day for volunteers even more enjoyable.
- **Elisha:** I started as a writer for The Sputnik, had opportunity to speak to students on both campuses, heard them say they'd like more synergy between campuses—think we can achieve that through publications.

Question 3: How you plan to represent student publications during your term?

- **Nate:** Developing and maintaining relationships with people who are on the ground involved in each of the publications, staying in the loop with them (station directors, editors, etc).
- **Madalyn:** Important to represent all the publications, though sometimes it can be hard when you're only involved in one. Showing equal attention to all the publications, seeing which issues need to be addressed for each publication, as they can differ.

- **Elisha:** I would echo what Nate and Madalyn said, and add that I think we can also create more synergy between the publications. E.g., producing a podcast on Radio Laurier to go along with a story from a print publication.

Question 4: What do you believe is the relationship between the board and the President/
Publisher, as well as with the Executive Director?

- **Nate:** President's job to give board direction, board's job to make sure it's not "tyrannical," in dramatic terms. Executive Director a "rock" from term to term, acts as a person who has experience and knowledge and who can give advice. Specific responsibilities that ED can take on as someone who isn't as ephemeral as President.
- **Elisha:** Board has duty to guide organization to a place that's legal and comprehensive, but also influences community. Interconnected relationship between the board and Executive Director and President, connecting with people on the ground and people in community.
- **Madalyn:** Board's job to keep Executive Director and President "up to standard," as well as to communicate WLUSP volunteers' wishes to the other board members, Executive Director and President.

8.1 Comments

- Aaron: Re: voting for President, will be sending link now, you all can use it to vote after following Q&A.

9.0 President Q&A

Opening statements:

- **Umaymah Suhail:** Fourth year DMJ, minor in Criminology. Involved in WLUSP for last four years through RL and as Sputnik EIC, pieces published in Globe and Mail. As President would focus on making sure all content we publish is accurate, and fostering a community environment that is welcoming, as these qualities make WLUSP what it is.
- **Thea Biallas:** Fourth year communications, passion for WLUSP, Blueprint EIC, we've worked really hard as publication to produce creative outlet for students, open communication. A big reason I'm running is because of that creativity that I love so much, something that WLUSP has provided me. I know how to communicate effectively, think I would excel as President.

Question 1: Icebreaker—if you could turn any activity into an Olympic sport that would give you good chance at winning a medal, what would it be?

- **Umaymah:** Washing dishes, like Madalyn said.
- **Thea:** Playing Catan, I tend to do really well in that.

Question 2: Please describe what WLUSP is, and what the President's responsibility is.

- **Umaymah:** WLUSP a place for students, by students, that they can safely come to and say what's on their mind. Independent student space, without Student Union or Laurier getting involved. President has many responsibilities, main ones to be there as strong support system for students, ensuring highest standards of accuracy, credibility, being present as manager but giving people space to be themselves and do what they need to do.

- **Thea:** WLUSP multiple publications that provide students with method of creativity. President someone who's open minded, knows their way around inner workings of WLUSP, is an impactful leader, when necessary putting their foot down and guiding organization in right path.

Question 3: Can you describe relationship between WLUSP and the Students Union, and how do you plan to maintain a positive relationship?

- **Umaymah:** That's a relationship we want to work on, as it can sometimes come off like we're trying to throw them under the bus. Of course it's our responsibility if something's happening to make sure students know about it, but we have to have positive relationship with SU—could do so by helping them with small things like sending over photographers for their events.
- **Thea:** I agree with Umaymah that we want to work alongside SU, making sure there's two-way communication. I went to grade school with new SU president, so we have existing relationship that would be beneficial.

Question 4: What do you think is the biggest issue facing WLUSP, and how would you address it?

- **Umaymah:** Brantford students feeling excluded. Especially with Milton campus coming into play, we'd have to ensure the Brantford campus as well as Milton campus are given equal opportunity and attention.

- **Thea:** Bill C-18 meddled with WLUSP's methods of sharing news content online. It will help to update publication websites, but it's a bigger issue than websites, I would like to better utilize newsletter. Also addressing everything that's happening on Brantford and Milton campuses.

Question 5: How does this role fit into your future career goals?

- **Thea:** I see myself doing something in a creative and leadership role. I hope this role will help me create connections in communications.
- **Umaymah:** What I'm focusing on is how can I be valuable to WLUSP. With past experience in editing, writing, I believe I can be beneficial to it. Of course it will be beneficial to me too, given my future plans to be involved in the publishing side of media.

Individual questions:

Thea, how do you plan to guide newspapers despite not working with them in the past?

- By fostering connections with current and future department heads, and with you Serena, to learn the ropes of the role. I do also have experience with written pieces.

Umaymah, how do you plan to learn about and integrate yourself with the Waterloo campus?

- I live in Waterloo and have since I was five. Have also taken a summer class in Waterloo, so that familiarity a plus for me. I think I have good awareness of what goes on on both campuses.

9.1 Comments (Questions from members)

Randy: What is your favourite book?

- **Thea:** *Influence* by Robert Cialdini. Read it for leadership class, about how people move in groups and are influenced by each other's actions.
- **Umaymah:** *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy, about characters that come from different minority groups in India.

Bachir: What in your opinion, is the best piece you've published/written/recorded?

- **Umaymah:** Longer piece not published yet on Alberta education system, very passionate about it. Also recent story about Starbucks boycotts, felt honoured to do interviews and write that story.
- **Thea:** The Metamorphosis issue at Blueprint. I had pieces included in that issue too, loved that issue.

Q: What is your perspective on activism?

- **Thea:** It's important, if we have a community of people who are passionate about something, it's something to consider within WLUSP.
- **Umaymah:** Activism is supposed to be separate from journalism, but can be incorporated by reporting on and publishing pieces topics of activism, without inserting my/author's opinion, still reporting in a balanced way.

10.0 Voting for WLUSP President

- With a total of 77 valid ballots, Umaymah Suhail has been elected.

11.0 Ratify Umaymah Suhail as New President & Publisher for 2024-2025

- Motion: Nia Tozer
- Second: Bachir Miloudi
- Motion Carries: 8:32 p.m.

12.0 Ratify Acclaimed Directors

To approve Nate, Madalyn, Jacob and Elisha as Directors:

- Motion: Dylan Baker
- Second: Martina Boakye-Gyan
- Motion Carries: 8:34 p.m.

To ratify Board of Directors:

- Motion: Nia Tozer
- Second: Darren Eung
- Motion Carries: 8:35 p.m.

(Nate Dawes abstains)

13.0 Adjournment

- Motion: Martina Boakye-Gyan
- Second: Cole Huszti
- Motion Carries: 8:35 p.m.

WLUSP Board Meeting for Thursday, February 8, 2024 is adjourned at 8:35 p.m.