

Present:

L&L: Alex, Karin, Rachael G., Gen, Alannah, Reilly, Ashley, Aiish and Shvata

Student Caucus: Gabby, Marcel, Chloe and Andrew

Disability Collective of Osgoode: Allie, Dave, Jeff, Devon and Michael.

Student Body: Mihaela, Daimie, Rachel P. and Sarah.

Osgoode Administration: Associate Dean (Students) Dufraimont.

Gen: I appreciate everyone that has come to this working group. We are going to start with a land acknowledgment. We are here today to discuss a proposed policy for every L&L event to be physically accessible. We have come to the conclusion that L&L has always operated in a certain way, but that does not mean that we have to continue to operate like that. We want to agree to a policy that we have the means to implement, so we're happy that everyone is here to help us come up with creative solutions, so that the policy is not only adopted but also properly implemented.

Karin: I want everyone to feel free to be honest about how you feel. This is a safe space. We want to talk about how the policy will be implemented not "if" it will be.

GOAL FOR TODAY

Rachael: This is a working group for a goal to build an inclusive environment at Osgoode. We can have a policy around accessibility and ask for changes from the social convener.

L&L SOCIAL EVENTS OVERVIEW

Karin: I'd like to start by providing an overview of L&L's social events. We have our weekly pub nights, formals at the end of the year, ski trip, and L&L affiliated club events. Pub nights are a big part of this role. The bigger issue here is surrounding our budget. We look for venues who will allow us to use the space for free since we don't have a budget. This eliminates some accessible venues. The reservation (50-150 people) can also limit our venues. We have also received mixed feedback on places that don't have a dance floor and serve more of a pub atmosphere. We try to aim for different areas of the city. We currently have an informal policy that our most attended pub nights (the first and the last one) are to be accessible as well as one pub night every month. We also aim to have our formals at accessible venues. In terms of alternative social events, we mostly rely on clubs to run those since they do have the required funding. However, this is a conversation we are open to. We have some data on venues regarding which ones are accessible and the recorded attendance at those events.

Gen: the minimum spend sometimes can be achievable. The Bier Markt charges us \$100 per person as a minimum spend which is unrealistic.

Michael: what is the venue's response to us wanting more accessible spaces?

Karin: I have sent them many emails.

Jeff: we can push towards the direction that they are going to lose money by not supporting our cause.

Karin: there are certain accessible limitations at these venues. For an example, sometimes there is a ramp to enter but the washrooms are not accessible. The Pint is an excellent venue since there is a dancefloor and it is completely accessible. Grace O' Malleys is always busy which makes it lose the Osgoode Community feel to the pub night. Imperial Pub is new and accessible but there is no dance floor. Mick E Fynns is also new and they have a dance floor and they are accessible. The Ballroom, Crocodile Rock, and Early Mercy are accessible but don't have accessible washrooms. There are venues that are restaurants and because of our reservation, they tend to take issue with it and require a minimum spend.

Jeff: where is the data from?

Karin: I am using an application to collect this data.

Chloe: what is the school doing to help, if anything? What pressures can we place on administration to help with this?

Rachael: we're going to discuss this soon.

WHAT SHOULD SOCIAL EVENTS LOOK LIKE AT OSGOODE?

Karin: there are some potential solutions. We can reduce the number of pub nights, allow clubs to plan accessible social events, allocate a budget to the social convener, pub nights at the JCR and pub nights without dance floor are some options.

Gen: L&L has had conversations about limiting drinking activities, because we know that it doesn't cater to all of the Osgoode Community.

Allie: I worry that people might put the blame on us for changing the ways pub night operates. I want us to be careful about how we frame this.

Gen: It is a reality that things are going change. We want accessible venues to open these activities to all of our students. Our community building should look different. We're not doing this to be more accessible, we are doing this to build a stronger Osgoode Community.

Rachael: it is a policy that L&L is going to implement and it is on us to take on the good or bad feedback. It is on us, because that is what we have been elected to do.

Michael: there should be no funding towards an inaccessible event. That means there should be more funding for accessibility. You should put your money where you want it to be.

Gen: right now, we don't have any funding for these events.

Michael: what about clubs and administration?

Gen: Administration does not want to be involved with our drinking events and promote them.

Michael: they still promote the culture of that.

Gen: for Administration it is not a priority to fund these drinking events. We can maybe access grants for certain events sometimes, but I have been met with no response from them.

Chloe: how does this work for student fees?

Gen: L&L's complete budget goes towards clubs. We pay approximately \$3000 for formals and this is the only money that L&L takes from the levy.

Rachael: we also have to pay to get audited each year.

Gen: allocating funding to the social convener would just mean less funding for clubs.

Michael: we want to ensure that the money is spent in an accessible way.

Gen: clubs can place accessibility of their events into their budget request.

Rachael: we've talked about L&L events being accessible. We could have a policy that clubs must hold their events at venues that are accessible.

Allie: on our end, we want all events at Osgoode to be accessible. We are expecting push back on this which is why we went to L&L first.

Rachael: it is easier for clubs to implement this. I believe it should be aimed at L&L and clubs.

Karin: clubs do have the means to do it. The L&L expectation might be more difficult.

Mihaela: if it's between more than one location or just going to the same location, this is a matter of promoting accessibility and we should be prioritizing that.

Rachael: it is a privilege for us to be at some venues. We don't want some places to revoke our access to them because less people start to show up because of repetition. We can maybe start charging for pub night to meet the minimum spend.

Gabby: does L&L keep track of how many students come in? I assume the numbers fluctuate. If L&L were to cut back on the frequency of pub nights, would that make it easier to make sure that when they do host pub nights that they are accessible and that might bolster attendance because it is not frequent?

Karin: that is definitely something we can consider.

Allie: what is the cost that we're looking at?

Karin: it is possible to do pub nights at 3 locations for free. It is if we want a variety of venues, that is when the budget begins to come into play.

Ashley: what if we add to the social convener's mandate that they need to find sponsorship? We can get firms to sponsor pub nights potentially. We can also host one pub night per month at Osgoode. We have the JCR which is completely accessible. The Mock Trial and Wendy Babcock pub nights go well.

Marcel: if we cut down on pub nights or take away events like ski trip, we could end up with students organizing events without any consideration for accessibility and those student run events won't be open to everyone at Osgoode.

Alex: we don't need to frame the conversation on what we're taking away. We have a chance to renew L&L's mandate and make sure our services are available to everyone. We shouldn't tie this to cutting club funding.

Gen: if we do reduce pub nights it doesn't have to be a negative.

Dave: Ashley raised an interesting point about hosting more pub nights at the JCR. There is willingness to purchase tickets for pub night. We should ask the pub night going community what they would be open to. We should talk to clubs about what they need to make their events accessible.

Karin: I'm always open to feedback. People wanting different places is the most feedback I've received.

Chloe: should the role of social convener be expanded to ensure that this is handled diligently? In talking about costs, we have the option to take away from clubs, but can they choose what is most convenient for them?

Daimie: there are going to be positive long-term effects with this policy. As a school we should stand behind the message that we want accessible venues and get other schools involved by leading by example. In terms of funding, we (clubs) don't use everything in our budget but we aren't able to carry that over to other events we are hosting. If there is more of a flexible structure then we might see more change.

Allie: we have to make a conscious commitment that this is more important than people's personal choices.

Ashley: we should rebrand ski trip as a winter retreat.

Rachael: the only pubs available on ski trip are inaccessible.

Ashley: I also think it will be better to have club funding be contingent on them hosting accessible events because that would have a positive impact.

Gabby: the question of taking away funding from equity seeking groups might cause some challenges amongst equity seeking groups themselves. Making the budget contingent on accessibility might be the better route.

Michael: we're not asking for accessibility to punish people. With equity seeking groups, it would be inequitable to not host an accessible event. Marcel, I respectfully disagree with you. These events might happen but it will not have Osgoode or L&L's support with it which will send a strong message. Why don't we create more incentives such as rewarding clubs for having accessible events? We should keep the funding for what works. We should take things case by case. I ask for things because I felt that I was able to. I am getting impatient because it is my last year and I have missed out on a lot of events at Osgoode. Other students will miss out on events that Mock Trial is making jokes about. Those main events that create the picture of Osgoode should be made accessible.

Sarah: are we able to create 1L reps or some form of recruit to monitor accessibility? That way it is not just the social convener looking for accessible places. For pub night, are there accessible pubs in Collingwood that we could offer transportation for?

Reilly: in terms of funding, a possible option could be attaching money to events with clubs and L&L will play a larger role in co-hosting these events.

Gen: everyone seems to be on the same page. It sounds like people are happy to mobilize club resources to help implement this policy. We can have one pub night at Osgoode and dedicate a Thursday to a club event and then a pub night somewhere else, so there would be 3 pub nights in total. This could be something that we start with to not just put the pressure on the social convener.

Allie: would clubs be willing to do that?

Gen: if they can charge for the event then yes.

Marcel: we would need to make the pub night at the JCR different than just a JCR bar night like they have on Wednesdays.

Rachael: we could have a DJ.

Karin: we can also have themes.

Marcel: I also just wanted to address the issue of people creating informal events that we won't be able to regulate. I don't know what the answer to it is. If there are other institutions that have implemented some form of an accessibility policy then we can talk to them about this.

Karin: U of T just did a blanket implementation that did not go well with their student body. This is why we want creative solutions.

Rachael: this is why we want a workable policy.

Mihaela: is L&L committing to a 100% accessible policy for L&L and club events?

Gen: L&L won't be prescribing something because we won't be able to monitor that, but we will have our funding contingent on the accessibility of their events.

Dave: if clubs are asking for the Thursday time, then that will take pressure off of the social convener. If there is a charge but it will be accessible, then that might be a good balance.

Michael: The school should be making sure that events are accessible. Once an accessible event has been done successfully then people will be encouraged to do the same. This would ensure consistency going forward.

Allie: framing it as 100% physically accessible policy emphasizes the burden and takes away from the requirement. The reality is that people have different needs that we should be aware of. Venues for formals meet the requirement of being accessible but they aren't actually completely accessible. I would rather we not brand it that way.

Rachael: we are happy to brand it differently. If a club is doing something the right way, we want to encourage others to do the same. Once L&L becomes informed on accessibility issues, we do our best to respond to them.

Michael: everyone with a disability appreciates that you are trying to make events accessible. If a venue can't be wheelchair accessible, we can still find ways for them to be a part of the event.

Karin: I have a database for our accessible venues and I will put it out to the clubs to add any venues they have used that are accessible. Ski trip is a bigger issue for us currently. The hotel is accessible, but the winter sports part is inaccessible and the pub night venues are inaccessible. We would have to research other venues in Collingwood and budget for the transportation. What if there was an alternative social event that was accessible on sky trip?

Allie: That doesn't seem like the answer, because people will still be excluded.

Michael: you should talk to Jeff Adams because he has been involved in active sports before.

Allie: I'm not too worried about the winter activities, I just don't think the pub nights will work for accessibility. People will be inclined to go to the blue mountain clubs.

Devon: I've been to Blue Mountain and there are other things to do than going to the pubs.

Rachael: do we go somewhere else for winter retreat? Maybe we can look at places with more options.

Marcel: we noticed that the main issue is the regular Thursday pub nights. Are there places that would be easy to adjust for accessibility? Can we bring our own solutions to places that are inaccessible?

Allie: sometimes there are places that you can bring solutions like a ramp. However, this won't work for every place.

Marcel: this might be a potential solution for the issue of repetition of pubs.

Alex: for ski trip, there are other opportunities that are accessible. Blue Mountain has a list on their website of accessible things to do. There is a place on their website that is accessible.

Karin: we can try to change the pub for the future.

Alex: we do have new bars opening up in Toronto that are accessible, so it would be interesting to consider those places. They are new and would be open to the business.

Dufraimont: I'm happy to see the constructive discussion for these issues. I have spent a lot of time in Collingwood. Blue Mountain Resort is pricey and I am sure that Collingwood has more places that the Osgoode Student Body could explore. There are also other ski resorts around us that have accessible options that are better than Blue Mountain. I do also like the idea of having a committee rather than placing the responsibility on one person.

Michael: We would like to involve Administration in these efforts. We know that they are not interested in promoting drinking events, but their involvement will be appreciated.

Dufraimont: I am happy to bring that back to the Management team and see what the school can do to help with this policy.

DRAFT POLICY IDEAS

Rachael: we want to work closer with clubs to allow for them to find accessible venues and making funding contingent on having accessible venues. We want to frame this in a way that isn't meant to reduce anything but rather to be more inclusive. We want to deprioritize cost accessibility while prioritizing physical accessibility. We can try to make Thursday nights at the JCR more appealing.

Allie: what would making funding contingent look like practically for L&L? Some clubs might not know what venue they are using when they request funding.

Gen: ideally, clubs make the venues accessible. This might have some glitches that we work through gradually. For an example, they can list in their budget request that they are looking for an accessible venue. There are some accessible places that aren't completely accessible and we won't want to cut funding for places like that.

Rachael: we can make this a part of the meeting the VP External holds with clubs to encourage their search for accessible venues.

Allie: I do attend O Week training and I would be happy to attend the meeting with the clubs. If we build in an out, I worry that everyone will take that. The framing should be that people should do this and not we want you to do this and if you can't then that's ok.

Gen: whoever is transitioning into their new roles, this will be a discussion for them as well.

Rachael: we want to make sure that we know what a contingency looks like.

Allie: for implementation, clubs have to submit their receipts and we can add in that they have to confirm with a receipt that their venue is accessible.

Rachael: I can add a page to the L&L website to add a section on accessibility that lists places that are accessible so clubs will have access to them.

Marcel: I agree that it is better to have a hard stance and not offer people the 'out'. In terms of ski trip, I wonder how things that involve physical health initiatives within our school would be hindered by this policy? If there is an event like a spin class, would these events be blocked?

Allie: for physical activities there are usually accessible alternatives. People won't hold those expectations if they understand that they do have personal limitations but they can participate physically in a different way.

Michael: offering people different options would be better.

Rachael: it would take the burden off of people who have disabilities and place that burden on us. Do we want to create a committee to work with the social convener on this?

Chloe: would L&L expand the role of social convener?

Karin: it would just be building on it. It would also be external so everyone can be a part of it.

Rachael: if we want an amendment to the Constitution to add that to their role that would need to be ratified by the entire class.

Allie: we could make this as part of the equity officer's role. We could have them work with a committee together.

Daimie: what if we advocate for a paid position in administration to work with members of L&L? Otherwise, it will always be students.

Rachael: this is an ongoing question. There isn't a lot of wiggle room to have a new person hired. We do have someone advocating for Indigenous groups which is new and took a lot of time. We believe that having an equity officer on L&L is to fulfill a purpose like this.

Dufraimont: the resource allocation isn't in my purview. The issue might be that the events and L&L initiatives have always been run by L&L themselves. The place to start is to come up with a concrete proposal to be discussed.

Rachael: we want an equity officer who could be available to speak to students and not just ensure L&L events are meeting equitable measures.

Dufraimont: it may sound simpler than it is. It doesn't always come down to one person. Osgoode students might have a misconception about this.

Michael: we are looking for an advocate for people with disabilities and to monitor the progress.

Rachael: this conversation is a broad one and this can be brought up to Student Caucus to advocate for this next year.

Daimie: this is part of a larger project. I think when advocating for a new position we need to be clear about their role, which this policy would affect.

Allie: there are 2 parts – what is the black letter policy and what is its implementation? We have contingent club funding and having L&L events be accessible. In terms of the policy is there anything else we should talk about?

Karin: we will review the letters you provided to ensure that events don't just seem accessible they actually should be. This is an issue that I foresee.

Gen: for activities during O Week – is the board game option and the volleyball tournament considered an accessible event?

Michael: yes.

Gen: then we need to distinguish between cop out events and actual accessible events.

Devon: if it is in the same venue with the same people then that event is a good accessible alternative. We want events that allow everyone to come and participate together. It doesn't have to be the same activity. There can be an event with the same amount of effort put into it with a similar concept.

Allie: a pick and choose option does allow for a parallel structure to work better. If there is a single event that isn't accessible, we would rather have a different context with different but equally as fun events.

Dave: you should look at the character of the event. There can be parallel introverted and extroverted activities that involves accessibility, but it is not apparent.

Karin: people have brought it up as a solution.

Gen: we want to make sure we use comprehensive language.

Marcel: people can take advantage of their interpretation. Working with equity seeking groups and working together on the wording of that grey area is what we should be doing. We need to make sure the wording is correct.

Rachael: we want to write this like a statute that is going to be implemented.

Daimie: if you have an alternative event it shouldn't be put on a lesser tier. Hierarchical framing is the problem. If in the case that a club has a proposal, then that means they are planning 2 events. Would that involve more funding?

Rachael: the VP External looks at what you are asking for and determines your budget based on that.

Daimie: from a club perspective, I wonder how would I implement the different events into the budget request to ensure this won't impact my funding.

Rachael: the VP External can go to the committee and allocate the budget accordingly.

Duframont: you can try to come down to language that addresses the grey area, but I don't think it needs to be like that in this case. There can be an interpretive aspect to it. You can provide people with examples if they are unclear.

Allie: if an event involves concurrent events, it is still accessible if there is an activity involved that is accessible. The activities should be linked.

Karin: thank you to everyone for coming. We will be drafting this soon so that it will be ready to go next year!

Gen: it will be attached to the Constitution, but it won't be in the Constitution itself.

Adjourned: 3:27 pm.