



TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

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Thirty-Fourth Annual General Meeting

Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre
525 Bay Street
November 2, 2017

1.	CALL TO ORDER
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Chair James Papple called the meeting to order at 9:57 AM with quorum. He welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

2.	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
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Meeting materials included the agenda.

MOTION to approve the agenda as presented.
Moved by Sheila Carson
Seconded by Sharon Rajabi
CARRIED

2.	<i>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</i>
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Meeting materials included the draft minutes.

MOTION to approve the minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting as presented.
Moved by Danielle Marchese
Seconded by Marian Xhignesse
CARRIED

4.	<i>CHAIR'S REPORT</i>
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James Papple reported. His Chair's report last year ended on a note of encouragement to everyone to continue to raise awareness in classrooms and organizations, for TESL Ontario to continue to gain recognition in this profession that members love so much. This year members' active involvement in so many pursuits as well as passion and commitment to professional development is inspiring.

The Chair thanked fellow Directors Jennifer McKay, Cheryl Fretz, Sharon Deng, Bhupinder Gill, David Hazell, Geoff Lawrence, Alexander Harchenko, and Brett Basbaum.

This year the Board tackled key governance issues and handled them well as a cohesive team. Achievements included:

- establishing Ontario Certified English Language Teacher (OCELT) as a professional designation
- forming a private sector committee
- reformatting the awards procedure
- working on international certification
- developing and implementing the Strategic Plan, which is on schedule to meet targets for next year
- finding ways to increase revenue
- meeting affiliate organizations at the TESOL Conference in Seattle, to bring what TESL Ontario does to a larger group and to hear what is being done in other countries
- attending ATESL and BC TEAL conferences, which strengthens bonds in our community of practice; two provincial organizations are in turn attending TESL Ontario's conference
- communicating with government Ministries face-to-face and by letter and seeking information and clarification from Ministries regarding initiatives, to support TESL teachers' work
- at this year's conference, hosting a Ministries panel and facilitating a Program Administrators' meeting

Initiatives for the coming year include:

- strengthening Affiliate Chapter connections; by working together Affiliate Chapters share best practices and enable members to receive as equal treatment as possible
- networking with like-minded organizations, including provincial organizations and TESOL affiliate organizations, to share best practices and provide better service for members
- continuing to increase online presence through social media

The Chair stated that it has been an honour to serve this year as Chair. He thanked the membership for support, stating that he is humbled by the hard work of so many at TESL Ontario. He thanked Executive Director Renate Tilson and staff by name.

The Chair thanked the many volunteers of TESL Ontario, particularly Affiliate Chapter Presidents and Affiliate Chapter Representatives, for all their hard work and their input, which enables the

Board to make informed decisions. The Chair thanked volunteers on committees and at this year's conference for their dedication.

The Chair called for questions.

Francois Belisle stated that he expected the Chair's remarks to include the effect of the recent TESL Canada decision on TESL Ontario. The Chair responded that TESL Ontario has little information at this time, has reached out to TESL Canada to offer assistance, and is contacting other stakeholders to develop a sense of the overall picture. More information will be issued to the membership in coming weeks as it comes available.

MOTION to accept the Chair's report.
Moved by Melita Vrakela
Seconded by Barb Krukowski
CARRIED

5.	READING AND ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS
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a. PRESENTATION OF 2016/17 FINANCIAL REPORT – SB PARTNERS

Auditor Mustafa Dossajee of SB Partners reported. He thanked the Executive Director and her team for their co-operation with audit procedures, and especially thanked Operations Manager Eva Csiszar for her detailed work.

The Auditor's Report has four components:

- 1) *Report on the financial statements*, which comprises the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2017, the statements of operations and changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies plus explanatory notes.
- 2) *Management's responsibilities for the financial statements*, which is to prepare financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.
- 3) *Auditor's responsibility*, which is to audit the financial statements in accordance with accounting standards and to comment if there is sufficient evidence to give an opinion.
- 4) *Auditor's opinion*, which, having completed the audit, is a clean opinion that the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with accounting standards.

The Auditor pointed out highlights of the financial statements, with reference to pages 17-18 of the *TESL Ontario Annual Report for the year 2016-2017*, which was distributed at the meeting:

The *Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2017* is a snapshot as of that date. Total assets for the year are \$457,683, and for the prior year were \$270,305. This approximately \$187,000 increase is due to a surplus generated from operations as shown under “Cash and Cash Equivalents” and “Short-term Investments,” which increased from \$188,446 to \$380,745.

“Liabilities” increased by \$40,815, from \$421,958 to \$462,773, mostly due to Ministry funding for a project to be incurred in 2018, and due to deferred contributions. The latter are funds received in advance, mainly for membership fees and accreditation fees, that have not yet passed through the income statement as they apply to the next fiscal year.

“Unrestricted Net Assets” were a deficit of \$151,653 the prior year and as of this year are a deficit of only \$5,090. This is a significant reduction from the prior to the current audited fiscal year.

The *Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets* shows that the reduced deficit is mainly due to reduced operational expenses. Reduced conference expenses alone produced savings of approximately \$90,000.

The Auditor pointed out that TESL Ontario is no longer collecting and remitting fees to TESL Canada.

The membership had no questions.

b. TREASURER’S REPORT – JENNIFER MCKAY

Meeting materials included draft financial statements for the first six months of the current fiscal year, April 1 to September 30, 2017.

Treasurer Jennifer McKay reported. TESL Ontario recovered most of its deficit through the hard work of staff and volunteers. As of September 30, 2017 TESL Ontario has a surplus of revenue over expenditures of \$29,439. Financial operations are carefully monitored and measures taken to reduce expenses. In accordance with a motion at last year’s AGM, a plan to put TESL Ontario back in a positive financial position was posted on TESL Ontario’s website in February 2017, and financial statements continue to be posted. TESL Ontario has two main sources of revenue, membership fees and accreditation fees, and is currently receiving government funding for initiatives including the Directory of Best Practices Project, Webinar Project, and TESL Ontario conference assistance.

The Treasurer responded to questions.

Dianne Tyers: The financial statements show that TESL Ontario is still in a negative position. How will you address that?

We had a deficit of \$5,000 as of March 31, but we are out of that now and perceive that we will have much improvement going forward. The trend is upward.

Dianne Tyers: One measure of an organization being in sound financial condition is cash reserves, which should be six months of operating costs. Financial reserve are about \$385,000 and operating

costs are \$1,100,000, so TESL Ontario is not close to being in a sound financial position until there are operating reserves of at least 50%, and 60-70% to be sound. Can you comment on that?

The Board and the organization have been monitoring the financial situation and things are looking good right now. This is just the Head Office budget. The Executive Director will tell you more in her report, it will be a higher number. The organization is doing well.

Dianne Tyers: Twenty percent of income is from government funding. If you lose that you will be in a difficult position.

A member commented: What are you proposing, that TESL Ontario raise membership fees to reach that position? Be more specific.

Francois Belisle added, from where I sit I find that the achievements at TESL Ontario are nothing short of extraordinary last year. [Members applauded.] You managed to take a deficit last year that was extremely worrisome, of \$150,000+, down to \$5,000. You turned it around in one year. Kudos to your staff and volunteers. You've done a great job. [Members applauded.] This is not to say the previous speaker is not correct to say, as a Board do you have a plan going forward to keep the organization afloat, and if you do, share it with members. If you don't we should work on it and share it. These two things are not contradictory. Some members want to see the roadmap ahead, to continue to make sure that the organization flourishes. In that context, how might the situation at TESL Canada impact on Toronto? It is an important piece of the puzzle. There will be time to discuss that, but you did a great job. Inform your members what steps you will take. [Members applauded.]

Dianne Tyers recommended that the Strategic Plan include more cost cutting measures, and gave some examples.

The Treasurer responded, Operations Manager Eva Csiszar asks that it be noted that TESL Ontario is posting financial statements quarterly and has been since the last AGM. One cost cutting measure already undertaken is to sublet some of TESL Ontario's leased premises.

Motion that the Board provide us with another annual strategic plan in terms of addressing the financial position of the organization so that it can continue to grow in financial strength and can in the next two years be in a strong financial position.

Moved by Dianne Tyers

Seconded by Marian Xhignesse

Friendly Amendment by Jennifer Fieldhouse to add a report deadline of February 28, 2018

FINAL MOTION that the Board provide us a report by February 28, 2018 on another annual strategic plan in terms of addressing the financial position of the organization so that it can continue to grow in financial strength and can in the next two years be in a strong financial position.

CARRIED

C. MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF 2016/17 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Treasurer called for the following motion:

MOTION to approve the 2016/2017 audited financial statements and the Auditor's report.

Moved by Shaun Tass

Seconded by Monica Zacharias

CARRIED

d. MOTION FOR APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR FOR 2017/18 YEAR

The Treasurer called for the following motion:

MOTION to appoint SB Partners as Auditor for the 2017/18 fiscal year.

Moved by Marian Xhignesse

Seconded by Agnes Papanastasiou

CARRIED

6.	<i>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT</i>
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Executive Director Renate Tilson reported. She welcomed everyone to TESL Ontario's 45th Annual Conference. Forty-five years is an eternity in the life of a not-for-profit organization. TESL Ontario was established in 1992 and incorporated in 1993. Ottawa is TESL Ontario's oldest Affiliate Chapter, founded in 1974. [Ottawa members applauded.]

The original objectives of an Ontario TESL organization were to set up acceptable professional standards through exchange of ideas, and to get those standards recognized by different authorities. This was therefore a professional organization to foster professionalism. Looking back at the history of this organization it is clear that TESL Ontario's success and continued viability depends in large part on a high degree of trust, teamwork, and integrity on behalf of all our members, Board, staff, and volunteers, in both Affiliate Chapters and Operations.

This has been an exciting year with many new initiatives to report.

In one short year last year's \$151,000 deficit was reduced to \$5,000. Now, as of October 31, 2017, the deficit is entirely eradicated, and the organization's net assets are \$57,700. Head Office is grateful to Affiliate Chapters with whom we are intrinsically linked in all ways including finances, for their hard work in reducing their conference expenses and thereby making their conferences more financially successful. Thanks also go to Eva Csiszar at Head Office for the many sleepless nights she spent finding cost savings and raising revenue.

We are happy to host at our Conference this year, for the second time, the Joint Program Administrators meeting, sponsored by both MCIIT and IRCC.

As a new initiative, TESL Ontario now has a professional designation: Ontario Certified English Language Teacher (OCELT). OCELT recognizes the professionalism and integrity of TESL Ontario-accredited teachers. OCELT teachers are qualified to teach in both federally funded and privately funded programs in Canada and internationally. OCELT identifies highly educated, responsible, and dedicated professionals who seek to provide the very best possible learning experience for their learners.

At the same time TESL Ontario has made efforts to introduce its program accreditation standards and requirements to international TESL organizations, with the specific purpose of expanding TESL Ontario accreditation services beyond the borders of Canada and to enhance quality of service abroad. One result is the development of an International Certificate for Teaching English as a Second Language (ICTEAL), granted to all TESL Ontario members as of August 2017. TESL Ontario-accredited members who are teaching or considering teaching abroad are able to submit their certificate to international employers as proof of extensive training.

TESL Ontario accreditation based on prior education and experience is an important area of professional practice in Ontario. Ontario is a very substantial share of Canada's new immigrant and refugee settlement each year. Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR), which started in 2012, gives eligible applicants a snapshot of exactly what gaps exist between previous training and experience and the training required by TESL Ontario to achieve accreditation. Teachers from abroad are required only to complete additional course work and the practicum needed to obtain the OCELT certificate.

Social media continues to grow, with more members joining online to gather and share on Twitter, Facebook, Tutela, and TESL Ontario's blog. A volunteer team has begun to develop a more robust YouTube channel, which will include more tech tools and a more informative playlist. TESL Ontario's Webinar Program continues to grow and offer members a wide array of professional development on popular topics.

Our Directory of Best Practices Project, funded by MCIIT, is nearing completion. The Directory, which will be online, identifies and directs language training stakeholders to methodology tools and resources for the most effective programming and delivery of English language training. The Directory facilitates access to all language stakeholders for delivery of MCIIT-funded training.

Sincere thanks to volunteers who serve and support this organization at all levels, whether on working committees or as members of the Executive at one of TESL Ontario's twelve Affiliate Chapters around the province.

I personally wish to thank the TESL Ontario Board of Directors, who work tirelessly to lead and support our organization. I very much appreciate the collaborative and productive working relationship that exists between Board and Executive Director, ultimately allowing all staff members to do their best work possible and feel joy in doing so.

TESL Ontario's dedicated and hardworking staff team is comprised of:

Eva Csiszar
Allison Keown
Reza Maloom-Farzaghy
Kevin Gamble

Operations Manager
Member Services Manager
Accreditation Services Manager
Office Coordinator

Conference registration is currently in excess of 850, and totals approximately 920 including attendees of the joint meeting this afternoon. To our members we thank all of you for allowing us to serve you for so many years. Thank you, and enjoy the conference.

Marian Xhignesse asked the Board, now that TESL Ontario has achieved a professional designation, OCELT, to appeal to funders and other organizations to pay TESL teachers at a level comparable to other teachers in Canada.

The Chair acknowledged the request. He encouraged all members with concerns and suggestions to contact their Affiliate Chapter or the provincial Head Office, to make their voices heard. That information does get forwarded to the Board.

Agnes Papanastasiou thanked the Board for all the work it has done, especially those doing it as volunteers. OCELT is a huge step in narrowing the gap between TESL teachers and designated teachers. That achievement is phenomenal. The Board has in mind that the work they do helps members as instructors and teachers. They are doing the work for the membership, and the membership is proud to have the Board do so.

The Chair responded. Apart from staff, all contributors, including the members of the Board, are volunteers. So in effect, “you are us.” The Chair noted that in the next agenda item, new Board members will be welcomed to the Board of Directors.

7.	<i>NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – DAVID HAZELL</i>
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David Hazell, Nominating Committee Chair, reported. He thanked his colleagues on the Nominating Committee: James Papple, Cheryl Fretz, Sharon Deng, and Geoff Lawrence. The committee worked hard to conduct a sustained recruitment campaign, especially online through social media and through Affiliate Chapters spreading the word for a call for candidates. Three positions were open. Seven candidates applied and were shortlisted by the committee to four. An election was held. The results included useful, positive member feedback on the election process.

8.	<i>PRESENTATION OF NEW BOARD</i>
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David Hazell, Nominating Committee Chair, reported election results. Laura McInnis, Art Rekhtin, and Ami Yani are elected to the Board of Directors to join continuing Directors Brett Basbaum, Sharon Deng, Cheryl Fretz, Alexander Harchenko, David Hazell, and Geoff Lawrence.

MOTION to accept the 2017/2018 TESL Ontario Board of Directors.

Moved by Sheila Carson

Seconded by Marian Xhignesse

CARRIED

9.	MEETING ADJOURNED
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The Chair thanked everyone for making this the most attended AGM in several years. He thanked everyone for their votes and their comments, which help to make the organization improve. He called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by Susan Stitt

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 PM.

10.	MEMBERSHIP DRAW
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The Treasurer conducted the prize draw:

Membership Draw and Gift Basket (two): Sharon Rajabi and Anne-Marie Kaskens

Conference Pass Draw and Gift Basket (two): Delia Belda and Margarida Alemeida

Gift Certificate for One Night Stay at Marriot with Breakfast for Two: Anthony D'Amato

Membership Draw (without gift basket) donated by a TESL Ontario member: Luba (Lyubov) Conty

Certified to be a true copy this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

Chair

Secretary