

Information for New Members of the Board of Directors

The Tantramarsh Club Inc.

(Last Updated: September 2009)

The essential role of the Board of Directors is to oversee the Tantramarsh Club as an ongoing business entity. Traditionally, this does not mean that the Board wants to become too involved in the running of the Club. Therefore, there has been a split in responsibilities. The Board members will debate and shape broad organizational policies and long-term goals. In addition, the Board appoints a Manager to oversee day-to-day *operational* aspects of Club activities. At times, the Manager will request the Board input on operational matters, especially when they will affect operations at the Club in a significant manner. Also, the Manager sometimes seeks the assistance (support) of the Board when difficult decisions must be made.

The information on this page is designed to provide new (or returning) Board members with the kind of information that helps them to make effective decisions affecting the Club. It will probably take you a couple hours to go through the information on this page, and to read through the suggested links at the bottom of this page, so make sure you've got a little bit of spare time before you sit down and attempt to absorb everything here. However, once you have read everything here, I think you'll feel a lot more comfortable with your new role at the Tantramarsh Club.

Responsibilities

Maintaining an Appropriate Image

The absolute number one responsibility for board members is to maintain a suitable public image with respect to their involvement at the Pub. Board members are generally not as visible on campus as Staff members at the Pub, however, the onus is on both groups to be equally diligent in attempting to maintain a positive public image. This is especially applicable to the student Board members, who interact with our customer base far more frequently than the non-student Board

members. This certainly doesn't mean that we discourage you from going out and drinking, and expect you to spend all your time studying and so on. What it does mean is that we hope that when you ARE out drinking, you try to behave in a responsible manner, without carrying on and annoying other customers within the establishment, and most certainly in not breaking any of the Pub's rules and regulations. As the Pub's disciplinary guidelines state, "staff members who break the rules will not be given any special preferences, and in fact, can expect even more severe sanctions, since they should know better." The same would apply to Board members.

Answering Questions from Members and Other Customers

You will frequently get questions from the members and other customers about "how things work" at the Pub. Much more often than not, these questions relate directly to operational aspects of the Pub, which therefore fall within an area of the Manager's responsibilities. However, Board members can certainly be of some assistance to the Manager in explaining to customers why we do some of the things that we do. Hopefully, by the time you have gone through all of the information within this section of our website, and gone through the suggested related readings, you will be able to accurately answer at least three quarters of the questions posed to you.

At other times, you will be unable to answer questions, either because you don't know the exact answer, or because it is a question about a "delicate situation," or because you're not certain if you can give the most satisfactory answer to the customer. By all means, I (Scooter) will be more than pleased to try to answer any questions that you receive, to the best of my ability. If you would like to refer a question to me, just send me an email, and I will write back to both the party who had the original question, and also copy it to yourself (or the entire board, if appropriate). I am sometimes difficult to reach by telephone when I'm busy (which is quite often), but I do have a personal goal of responding to ALL emails sent to me, and I usually try to do so within 48 to 72 hours when time permits.

Attending Board Meetings

The Board usually meets once per month during the academic year. Every September, the Annual General Members' Meeting is held, to discuss financial

results from the previous fiscal year, answer general inquiries from members, and to elect a new Board (traditionally, any Board members who have served in the past seem to be re-elected automatically). Following the AGM, the “first” Board meeting of the year is held, as a quick sort of orientation meeting. At that meeting, a time is set for future meetings. For 2009-2010, it appears that we will be holding our meetings on approximately the 2nd Monday evening of every month, at 8pm, at the Pub. It is suggested that Board members should make every effort to try to attend the majority of these meetings.

Volunteer Shift at the Pub

Traditionally, all Board members have performed one volunteer shift at the Pub, not so much for the purpose of the Pub getting free labour without any associated wage expense, but for the purpose of letting the Board members become more fully immersed in Club operations during our peak operating times. These shifts have been quite eye-opening and useful in letting the Board members see, from the staff point of view, how to best deal with the customer public in an efficient and proactive manner, and to experience the good and bad points of being employed by the Club. Don't start worrying at this point – we try to make this a positive experience. Board members are typically given one main staff position to become familiar with – the buseperson. This position lets the Board member interact with a large number of customers, but does not expose the Club to potentially negative financial ramifications (such as having an untrained person serving drinks). However, you will get an introduction to the process of serving customers, and also to the whole process of verification of ID's at the door. On the night that you do your volunteer shift, you can expect to show up early, at 9pm (opening time), and at that point you will spend about half an hour to an hour being trained in the basic responsibilities for the position. Following that, you will probably spend a couple hours getting introduced to the other aspects of the Pub (serving, door, and possibly DJ'ing), and then a couple hours as a buseperson. At the end of the night, once the customers leave (service of alcohol stops at 2am), we all participate in the cleanup of the bar, and are usually done by around 3:30 to 4:30am, depending on the number of staff working and the size of the crowd. By that point, you'll probably want to go home and shower and collapse into bed for a long sleep. Since you don't get wages or a cut of the tips for your volunteer shift, the least we can do is give you a few drink tickets so you can enjoy some cold beverages on your next visit to the Pub!

Benefits to Being a Board Member

Intrinsic

Obviously, the biggest benefit to being on the Board is the feeling of being able to help the organization and thus make one more meaningful contribution to the student body and thus to the University Community as a whole. Some Board members have commented on the fact that they learned quite a bit about running a business (on a general, theoretical level) during their tenure. Others have commented quite simply that they learned a lot about teamwork or working on an advisory body. Naturally, most student Board members have appreciated the ability to add something meaningful to their resumes.

Financial Compensation

There is no financial compensation for members of the board, whether it be in the form of wages, grants, or honorariums. However, there is one slight advantage in that Board members may get discounts on drinks at the bar. Traditionally, this is up to the server of the hour to allow discounts, which are the same as those given to staff members. The two products that staff members receive discounts on are draught (\$2.25 per glass) and all hard liquors & liqueurs except Scotch (\$2.25 per ounce). In practice, any Board member who remains in good standing, who does not cause disciplinary problems, and who tips a reasonable amount, will likely receive the staff discount on an ongoing basis. Tipping is of course not mandatory, and you should not feel obligated to tip if you do not receive good service from the staff. However, in practice, it is the staff members and board members who tip most generously, and that gratuity is certainly greatly appreciated by the staff members. Incidentally, if you do not know the person who is serving you, PLEASE introduce yourself. The servers are very suspicious of random customers who come up and say that they get the staff/board discount, and will want to know exactly who you are.

You may be interested to know, by the way, that the tips are not kept exclusively by the serving staff. Instead, all employees who work on any given night pool all the tips from all servers and from the coat check, and every person gets an equal share. This is a situation which is almost unheard of in “the real world,” but works very well at the Pub to encourage teamwork and a cooperative work

spirit. Every employee who works at the bar is responsible for helping to add to the customer's enjoyment of their evening, whether it being the doorman greeting you with a smile and a hello on your way in and out of the bar, the DJ who plays a nice selection of music, or the bartender who is knowledgeable about your orders and can get them to you quickly. For this reason, we have always been big fans of a general tip pool which benefits all employees. If you want a rough guide as to tip amounts, I am reluctant to suggest anything, but I will state that most of our employees will tip a quarter to seventy-five cents per drink. Take consolation in the fact that you are getting your drinks significantly cheaper than the general public!

As I just mentioned, until you get to know the staff members well, they may not recognize you, and thus may not realize that you are eligible for the staff discount. If this is the case (and sometimes they completely forget when it is busy), the best approach is to just stop for a moment and introduce yourself to them, and let them know that you are on the board of directors, and that you're glad to meet them. I do send all the servers a link to the Board of Directors page with your photos, BUT even I forget to ring in the discount at times when I'm busy and the bar is lined up badly, so please have some patience.

The discounts to staff/board members are entirely at the discretion of the server, so I have instructed them to charge full price if the staff/board member is misbehaving. Staff/board members are allowed to buy drinks for other patrons at the discount pricing IF it is coming out of your own pocket. However, you are not allowed to bring friends to the Pub, take their money, and buy their drinks for them at the discount. If you get caught doing this, you will lose your eligibility for discounts, permanently. Remember, we do have to run a profitable organization here, and these discounts are pretty significant. We are only going to keep this system in place if we can make sure it benefits the staff and board members, not all of their friends too. And yes, we DO notice this sort of behaviour very, very quickly. If you're curious about pitchers, we consider a pitcher of draught to be equal to three glasses, and a pitcher of hard liquor to be equal to five drinks.

Rules and Regulations

Eligibility for Joining the Board

Obviously, there are some straightforward regulations about who can become a board member. For example, to have been nominated and elected to the alumni

position, you must be a Mount Allison alumnus. The Random House dictionary defines an alumnus as, "a graduate or former student of a specific school, college, or university." So technically, the alumni positions do not have to go to MTA grads, and can be filled by anyone who was formerly enrolled in classes but who is no longer a current student. The student positions must be filled by persons who are enrolled as full-time or part-time students at MTA at the time of the AGM. There is no age restriction for Board members, although it is suggested that Board members should be 19+ because they can't frequent the Pub until they are 19. An underage student would be limited in the amount of valuable input they could provide to the Board, not having experienced the venue during operational hours.

Disciplinary Guidelines on the Pub Website

As mentioned above, the Pub's disciplinary guidelines state, "staff members who break the rules will not be given any special preferences, and in fact, can expect even more severe sanctions, since they should know better." The same would apply to Board members.

This would be a good time to go into the whole disciplinary framework that applies at the Pub. Traditionally, when customers are involved in various types of security incidents, we have three methods of recourse, or of dealing with the situations. The first is to use the provincial RCMP force, which could mean something as innocuous as a night in the drunk tank (which is located in Shediac at the time of writing this), or something as serious as pressing criminal charges, such as for cases of assault or theft of property. The second option is to use the university's judicial system. The university's student governance committee has a very specific and lengthy document which outlines rules and regulations for students at Mount Allison, and for those students who break the rules, there is a judicial committee which holds hearings, renders judgements, and applies sanctions. This committee is not a replacement for the courts of the land; rather, the trials are intended to be a parallel system of justice, and one that is permissible and legislated by law in the provincial Universities Act. The judicial committee may find defendants guilty of incidents that took place at the Pub, and may impose sanctions related to the Pub and/or related to general university life. These sanctions might include fines, bans from the Pub, bans from other campus events, forced counselling, and so on. As a tenant on university property, the Pub is subject to any sanctions imposed by the judicial committee, for instance, if a particular student was banned from our premises by the judicial committee, we could not overrule that ban. The final option

available to us is through internal sanctions, namely by banning patrons from our premises for certain periods of time. We rarely impose fines, except in the various rare circumstances where somebody breaks something and we do not allow them back into the Pub until they have compensated the owner of the damaged items, whether that be the Pub itself or another customer. It would seem that the internal sanctions would be the least severe of the three methods of dealing with problem patrons, but ironically, some students would far rather pay a fine in front of judicial than be banned from the Pub for an extended period of time.

Until about 1995, the Manager (myself, Scooter) was the sole judge and jury with respect to determining what happened to individuals involved in security incidents. This was not the best approach, because I was not comfortable with having to arbitrarily impose sanctions against customers, for the simple reason that I wanted the establishment to appear to be consistent and fair (not to be confused with lenient), especially from case to case when various cases might appear similar on the surface, but involve different persons and different extenuating circumstances. The end result was that I asked the Board to come up with a standard set of disciplinary guidelines, which I could hopefully apply to all security incidents “by the book,” and without having to resort to arbitrary personal decisions. The Board came up with such a set of guidelines, and we have used it successfully ever since, with occasional enhancement to the guidelines when new situations have arisen that were not covered by the original framework. The Manager is still completely involved in assigning internal sanctions and acting as a plaintiff for cases that go before the judicial committee, but the good thing is that there is now a “cut and dried” set of guidelines to follow, which makes the process easier, and seem more equitable.

Board members can review the entire set of university Student Governance rules and regulations online - this is a copy of the handbook that the judicial committee refers to during their hearings. You can also review the Pub’s internal disciplinary guidelines online - a much shorter document. I would suggest that unless you have a great deal of time, you can probably skip the student governance document, and just quickly skim the internal disciplinary web page, which is still quite complicated in areas. If you do read that, you may initially think that some of the guidelines are excessively harsh, whereas others are excessively lenient. Remember that this document was studied and debated thoroughly during the period of its creation, and there are very simple reasons why some types of conduct are treated more harshly than others – please don’t hesitate to email the Manager if you have questions about the rationale of various sanctions. In general, I would suggest that some sanctions are especially harsh for problems that are more

rampant in the general university population and which cause more severe problems for the Tantrammarsh Club, for the purpose of hopefully providing a stronger deterrence effect. As an example, we treat smuggling of alcohol into the Club quite strictly, because it is a serious problem that is estimated to cost us a minimum of \$10,000 per year in lost revenue, and puts our liquor license at risk.

Occasionally, students who have been subjected to bans will appeal these bans, and the cases will come before the Board of Directors. In these cases, you must try to ignore the identity of the specific person who is involved, and treat the case in a generic sense. Almost everyone who gets into trouble at the Pub has friends or acquaintances on the Board, and it is important not to let these relationships cloud judgements. Focus on the offence, rather than the person. Do you think your roommate should be treated any differently for smuggling a quart of vodka into the bar and mixing drinks for people than for another student whom you don't know?

Excessive Drinking and Being Cut Off from Further Service

Any server within the Club has the right to cut off any customer whom they feel is behaving inappropriately, or whom they feel has consumed too much alcohol for their own good or for the good of other customers. There are no exceptions to this rule. Staff or Board members (who would only be drinking while off-duty, of course) are just as likely as any other customer to be cut off if they consume too much. Servers can even cut off myself, the Manager (and it has happened, occasionally). Of course, there are no hard and fast rules about how many drinks it takes for a person to be cut off, so there is a bit of a judgement call on the part of the server, such as when the customer starts to exhibit slurred speech, difficulty in walking properly, drinks a large number of shots in a short period of time, etc. Some people display more tolerance to alcohol than others, and appear less intoxicated than others, so it can be a difficult call at times. However, if the sober server has cut someone off, then there is generally a very good reason for it.

Cutting people off is a moderately frequent event. On a typical busy night, two or three people in the bar might be cut off (but if this is the case, they are offered free non-alcoholic drinks for the remainder of the night, *unless* they continue to try to drink alcohol or argue, in which case they are asked to leave for the remainder of the evening). There have been incidents in the past when staff members or board members have refused to accept the fact that a server cut them

off, and either continued to sneak drinks on the side, or caused other problems. In such cases, the offenders were *without exception* suspended from their positions for an intermediate period of time. The bar is subject to losing its liquor license if a compliance inspector were to believe that a server had been “serving a customer past the point of intoxication,” which is against provincial law. For this reason, we turn away customers at the door who are already “too drunk to be in the bar,” although if they are in the bar and get too drunk, we take the dubious approach of trying to feed them non-alcoholic drinks and watch over their safety, within reason. This is tough because it balances our liability for having an overly intoxicated person on the premises against our moral responsibility for taking care of customers whom we have accidentally gotten too drunk (or who have appeared sober when they arrived, but a short time later started exhibiting signs of excessive intoxication, which happens quite often). Anyway, the long and short of the matter is that we treat “over-serving” and “cutting people off” in a very serious manner.

General Good Behaviour

In general, normal socially acceptable standards of conduct are expected of Board members within the Pub, just as for off-duty staff members. It wouldn't look good if our Board members were running around within the Club, yelling, dropping drinks on the floor, bumping into other people and spilling their drinks, and pouring water pitchers on other people. Enough said.