

4 May 2020 Senate Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm

Quorum is

Approval of the Minutes

No discrepancies with the minutes.

Community Comment

President Bergman

President Bergman: I first want to say that I really miss having all of you on campus. It is truly not the same without everyone. We cannot wait to have you back as soon as possible.

Question 1: If there is limited access to campus in the fall, do you feel like you will need to expand the online recruiting process?

→ President Bergman: This new incoming class was pretty much primarily recruited online. One thing that has been really helpful is our virtual tour, which we have paired with meeting an admissions counselor. We have also been pairing up prospective students with faculty members or coaches. We have had a lot of practice with this in reaching out to international students, so I feel good about what we are doing so far. This summer, we will be allowing one family at a time to come visit in order to avoid big groups. This year's incoming class is over 600 students, including around 20 international students.

Question 2: How do you plan to unify the gustavus community as we enter into this new online experience?

→ President Bergman: I hope this is not something I have to get used to. I want everyone to be able to be on campus and learn together. We are most worried about what this would look like for our first year students if we have to start out online since they wouldn't have the chance to develop that community. We have talked about letting their class come first if we aren't able to have everyone. Thus far building community has primarily been done by your faculty. I am also open to ideas about ways we can do this better. I feel communication is key. We need as many channels of communication as possible.

Question 3: Are there plans set in place for May 30th as to how we are going to recognize the senior class?

- President Bergman: It is not entirely set yet, but we are working on getting that set. We have a team of people working on a virtual presentation to acknowledge you on that day. For you seniors, you should have a cap and gown waiting for you at your dorm when you move out, or it will be mailed to you. Hopefully, seniors will be able to get pictures with their families and we can put together a slideshow.

Question 4: If the pandemic gets worse, do you have a plan in place for students who might not be able to go home for the summer?

- President Bergman: As many of you may know, we have around 70 people currently living on campus since they were not in a position to get home. Around half of them were international students. There are some who have submitted requests to stay for the summer, and we will allow all of them to do so.

Co-President Bhakta: Awesome thank you so much. Are there any questions you have for us?

President Bergman: Yeah I would love to hear how online classes are going? What you miss the most about campus? Or what has been the hardest part about online learning?

- Co-President Bhakta: I can start. One of the hardest things for me is not being able to meet in person with my professors
- Ombudsperson Menke: I miss a lot about campus. I miss seeing everyone for in person Senate meetings, and interactions with my classmates. I was wondering if you have plans in place for how to encourage voting if we are still in this more online setting?
 - ◆ President Bergman: Yes, this has always been a priority of ours. We will still be doing outreach and engagement. Our college has been number one in student voter turnout and we do not want to lose that title.
 - ◆ Advisor Ruble: Yeah we can talk more about this later too, but I know we are focusing a lot on absentee ballots, so that students do not need to use public polling places.
- Senator Olono: Yeah, this new situation is challenging. I have Hispanic parents so they are expecting a lot from me. My question would be what do you foresee social distancing policies such as wearing masks looking like?

- ◆ President Bergman: Yeah, we have been discussing this a lot. We are listening for guidelines from the state and the CDC. We have talked about creating little families on campus to eat together in order to avoid interactions between “families.” However, this will depend on whether or not rules are relaxed, because obviously you can’t eat with a mask.
- Senator Jeremiason: My biggest struggle thus far has been with mental health. I know previously on campus we had issues with not having enough counseling support. How do you plan to address this?
 - ◆ President Bergman: This is something we have discussed a lot. We have implemented the telehealth service to try and reach a larger number of students, so we are working to get feedback from them since it may not be personal for everyone to meet with counselors in person.
- Chair Dunna: I miss a lot about campus, just little things like opening my P.O. box. My question is do you know whether or not college campuses will get to have testing kits, or will that still primarily be done by hospitals?
 - ◆ President Bergman: We are lucky to have our health service team on campus who will be able to administer tests if we can get them. I know since colleges are considered congregate living it will be emphasized to have testing available for us.
- Co-President Elect Doran: As a rising senior, I am really nervous about how I will be able to do classes such as senior seminars and 300 level courses online?
 - ◆ President Bergman: Our faculty is hard at work figuring out how to make these changes and still allow as many students to meet in person as possible. Some of the classes will be put into one longer lecture, rather than have a class on two different days, so we can use our biggest classrooms which we do not have too many on campus. But do not stress, seniors will be a priority.
- Senator Johnson: Does this affect the building projects on campus, such as nobel or lund?
 - ◆ President Bergman: Yeah we are trying to put plans in place to be able to have our Nobel Conference. It will likely be held entirely online. Lund we are still in the planning stages of preparing the documents of what the building will look like. We still need to do some more fundraising, but this could be a bigger challenge in an economic downturn.

Committee Updates

Finance Committee

Director Gupta: We will be trying to approve 6 block budgets today. We are recommending an amount of \$120,000 for these 6 budgets. We allocated 40% from our total budget of 300,000. These organizations asked for more than in previous years, and we want to do as much as we can. We want to save some money to rollover, or for the emergency fund. Additionally, most of our funds come from student enrollment and we are not sure what that will look like with covid.

→ Co-President Bhakta: We will approve those right now.

Director Gupta: On this budget sheet, we have what was requested and granted last year, what they requested this year, and what we recommend. We will start with the PA's. This year they requested \$30,650. We recommend giving them an amount of \$24,000. This is still a higher amount than they received last year.

Co-President Bhakta: We can start by opening the floor for the PA representatives.

→ Alyssa: We do a lot to help students on campus in regards to health and well being. We also have a conference that we go to to help with leadership.

→ Maya: We have different committees within the PA programs and each of those committees put on different events throughout the year that need funding.

→ Hiwot: We do a lot of events on campus that bring people together such as the 100 hour challenge, walktober, our focus on health and wellness during j term. We offer prizes as incentives and a lot of students get involved.

Director Gupta: The next student organization is CBSL.

→ Amy Pearson: I am the representative for CEC: Community Engagement Center. The name of the office was changed about a year ago. This organization primarily works on transportation for different events. We have done a lot for Gustie Buddies and Big Partner Little Partner to go on their big events throughout the year. Another big one is transportation for Habitat for Humanity trips. For Pound Pals, we also try to do advocacy a few times a year. We would be very appreciative for your support.

Director Gupta: DLC had requested an amount of \$49,207. This is because they have a large number of organizations and committees that run under them. We are recommending \$39,525 to go to DLC.

- Senator Lim: We grew a lot this year. We have gotten quite a few more organizations on board. It is a combination of older and newer organizations. These older budgets know what to expect, but the newer ones will still need to figure out how everything works.
- Hiwot: We now boast 26 organizations under our umbrella. Some of these organizations do have their own resources, but we want to be able to help these organizations do big things on campus. We want to empower our groups to make impactful changes on campus. This amount would really strengthen our movement and vision for this coming year.
- Jorge: One reason our budget might seem higher is that one of our groups PASO takes an entire fourth of that budget. This limits the rest of our groups in what they can do. We do want to thank you for all you have done for us and continue to do.

Director Gupta: IGS requested an amount of \$14,500. We recommend that we fund the entire amount.

- Reed: We were in a unique position this year of not needing our extra \$10,000 since we were unable to go to our IMPACT leadership retreat, and we are able to rollover our deposit to the new conference this fall.

Director Gupta: The next organization is SAVE. They requested \$9,975. We recommended \$8,975 This organization is in charge of planning events for students such as SNL.

- Peter Lundquist: Our budget is mostly the same as last year. The only change is that we are only doing one sports psychology workshop, and we are adding a workshop focusing on sports equality. We also help fund various SNLs. Other than that we promote healthy lifestyles for students on campus.

Director Gupta: The next group is Senior Week. They requested \$28,538. We would not be able to plan this, so we are recommending giving them \$23,000 . They are trying to expand their amount so that they do not need as much money from seniors.

Co-President Bhatka: We will now move into a chance for Senators to ask questions and discuss these budgets. We will start with the PAs. If there is no discussion, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the recommended PA budget for next year say aye.

The ayes have it. Budget approved.

Co-President Bhatka: We will now move into discussion for CEC. If there is no discussion we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the recommended budget for the CEC organization say aye.

The ayes have it. Budget approved.

Co-President Bhakta: We will now move into a discussion for the DLC budget.

→ Chair CarlsonSather: What orgs under DLC would end up having budget cuts if they are not allotted their full amount?

◆ Senator Young: We have no discretion as to how they choose to spend their money since it is a block budget. They are also able to come back and request more money.

→ Senator Braun: Jorge, I was just wondering if we could hear where you think DLC would be hurt the most in not receiving the full amount of funding?

◆ Jorge: I feel like we want to see more opportunities for all the orgs we have and since Africa Night takes up the largest portion of our budget, that is likely where those budget cuts would come from. In addition, the other larger events such as Hmong New Year, Latinx Night, and Chinese New Year. This would be to give some of our smaller organizations a chance to show us what they can do on campus.

→ Co-President Villarreal: Can you explain more about the breakdown of the budget?

◆ Jorge: Yeah we use some of the money for Diversity Ball and the DLC carnival. We also use some for a workshop to create collaboration between different organizations.

◆ Hiwot: Going off of that, as Jorge said Discovering Our Elders was a huge success and that was put on by two different organizations.

- ◆ Senator Lim: As Jorge mentioned, some of those funds go to Diversity Ball which recognizes leadership on campus and the people putting in work to help cultivate diversity and inclusion on campus.
- Director Gupta: I am aware it is disappointing to not receive the full requested amount, but it was hard for us to make estimates for next year since everything is so up in the air right now. As I mentioned though, there will be opportunities for DLC and other organizations to come back next Fall or Spring and request more money if what they initially received ends up not being enough.
- Senator Young: I also wanted to note that with the budgeting process what we are giving is our recommendation. Senators can propose that we raise or lower this amount, and the Senate can take a vote on this.
- Senator Lim: I wanted to clarify that a lot of what DLC does is Spring heavy, so we would likely not have used all our funds by mid year allocation.
- Co-President Bhakta: If there is no further discussion, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the recommended budget for the DLC say aye.

*The ayes have it. Budget approved.
One abstention.*

Co-President Bhakta: If there is no discussion for IGS, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the recommended budget for IGS say aye.

The ayes have it. Budget Approved.

Co-President Bhakta: If there is no discussion for SAVE, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the recommended budget for SAVE say aye.

The ayes have it. Budget Approved.

Co-President Bhakta: We will now move to move to a discussion about the Senior Week Committees budget.

- Chair Dunna: I was Co-Chair of Senior week last year. Since Senior week may be an abridged version what will that look like with funding?

◆ Director Gupta: They will keep this funding until they are able to plan a Senior week event for the 2020 senior week, but any extra funds will come back to the Senate and not necessarily rollover to the next year's senior fund.

→ Co-President Bhakta: If there is no discussion for Senior Week, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the recommended budget for Senior Week say aye.

The ayes have it. Budget approved.

Old Business

Senate Fund

Co-President Bhakta: I would like to open the floor for a discussion of what should happen with the extra money we have talked about.

→ Director Gupta: As mentioned earlier, the Senate has an amount of \$160,000 extra. We usually carry over \$100,000 for a cushion. This leaves us with about \$50,000 or \$60,000 leftover to use.

→ Co-President Elect Doran: I love the idea of using the money to fund organizations that did not get the full amount they asked for. I do support travel funding for graduation if that happens. As I said last week, I think we should come up with a few key items that are a priority for us and then to charge the finance committee with figuring this out further.

Senator Young: I charge the finance committee with estimating potential costs for allowing international and out of state seniors to return back to campus for graduation.

Seconded

Co-President Bhakta: We will now move to a discussion.

→ Senator Young: I think this would be a good idea since the amount of money we have is still a little unknown and this way we could figure out this cost and see if we could do more besides this.

Co-President Bhatka: All those in favor of the finance committee coming up with an estimate of travel expenses for seniors coming from international destinations or out of state to come back for graduation say aye.

The ayes have it. Motion Passes.

- Senator Schaaf: Yeah I was wondering if there's any possibility the funding could go to people struggling with food insecurity or other struggles.
 - ◆ Co-President Bhakta: Yeah that is actually why the emergency fund exists which is funded by the alumni. It has not been utilized fully by students as of yet though.
 - ◆ Senator Schaaf: I feel like maybe as a senate spreading the word about this is something we should do.
 - ◆ Co-President Bhakta: Yeah that could be a great charge possible for the Public Relations chair.
- Senator Olono: One thought I had would be to donate to a group in St. Peter who helps with domestic abuse, which has increased during this time in quarantine, and it is a good way to give back to the St. Peter community.
 - ◆ Advisor Ruble: Just as a point of clarification. We are not allowed to use Senate funds to donate to a charity due to tax laws. One idea I really liked was to put the extra money into a fund to give out grants to do things the Senate has never done in the past such as adding something to a res hall if res life can't afford it.
- Senator Johnson: One idea would be to use the money for a rental program for computers to help students with struggles during this time of online school.

Senator Schaaf: I would charge the Public Relations Committee to raise more awareness to spread more awareness about the Student Emergency Fund.

Seconded by Senator Olono.

Co-President Bhakta: All those in favor of the Public Relations Committee working to raise awareness about the Student Emergency Relief Fund say aye.

The ayes have it. Motion passes.

Ombudsperson Menke: I also love the idea of creating a computer rental system since we know there will be hybrid courses, and we cannot guarantee lab space for all students. I know if the former tech chair were here he would be in support since it was something he wanted to see

happen. I could check with GTS too about this seeing as there is not a chair for the tech committee.

- Senator Johnson: I charge the tech committee/Ombudsperson Menke work with GTS to come up with a possible plan for a system of creating greater accessibility of technology for students.

Seconded by Senator Patterson.

- Senator Young: I would move to amend that to include the finance committee as well.
- Senator Johnson: I will friendly that.
- Co-President Bhakta: All those in favor of the Technology Committee, the Finance Committee, and Ombudsperson Menke working with GTS to come up with a plan for easier access to technology for students say aye.

The ayes have it. Motion passed

New Business

Senator Braun: There are many students at Gustavus with disabilities and chronic illnesses and this impeded on their way of life at Gustavus. One example is with FIT and ACT credits. However, they have been told they need to take these credits, even if it is not possible for them to do so. I charge the Student Academic Affairs committee to speak with the college and act as a bridge for students.

Seconded by Speaker Ellingson.

Senator Braun: I have numerous chronic conditions including joint dislocations and another condition where if my heart rate gets up too fast I could have a stroke. I was told I could do a walking class and do as much as I can. I talked to the academic affairs and disabilities office about this and they were worried that it would not be fair to able bodied students if they still had to do them. Anyway, I would love to hear your thoughts and hopefully support.

- Senator Young: Advisor Ruble, do you know if this is changing at all with the new curriculum?
- ◆ Advisor Ruble: As far as I know, these credits have not changed.

- Senator Young: I definitely support this idea. I think there should be exceptions for students who have varying conditions. I do not agree with these credits at all. I think one alternative could be having students who are unable take some sort of nutrition class rather than a physical fitness class.
- Speaker Ellingson: I have had a number of constituents come to me with this same issue. From what I understand, it is up to the professor for the amount you have to do in the class and how you are graded. Additionally, you have to divulge your entire medical history to a stranger
- Chair CarlsonSather: As someone else who has EDS and knows how daunting it can be, these students have enough to deal with as is, so they should not need the pressure of taking a fit or an act credit, so I am in support of looking into this.
- Chair Yangh: I believe with the new curriculum this credit has changed to health and wellbeing credits, so I am hoping it will include more classes such as nutrition or mental health. I know the committee is working on these changes soon, so we should work to get this done quickly.
- Parliamentarian Boyden: I know there is one course on health and well-being that might be a good option, but I am not sure the exact details of it.
- Senator Jeremiason: I would also like to voice my support for abolishing fit and act credits for those with chronic illness, or all together.
- Co-President Elect Doran: From what I know of the physical well being course, it still had a strong physical activity component that would still not meet the needs of students.
- Co-President Bhakta: All those in favor of the Students and Academic affairs committee looking into accommodations for act and fit credits say aye.

The ayes have it. Motion Passes.

Announcements

Advisor Ruble: The parking feedback survey will go out to the student body at the end of the week. It will have potential policy changes and potential spots for parking lots. It will also cover pedestrian safety which we talked about earlier.

Co-President Bhatka: There were a lot of charges tonight so committee members make sure to check in with your chairs to see if there is anything you can do to help.

Chair CarlsonSather: I just wanted to remind everyone that Anthony is coming in next week to talk about the situation with off campus housing.

→ Co-President Elect Doran: Can we also ask questions about the room draw process in general, or would that be off the table?

◆ Chair CarlsonSather: Out of respect to his time since I asked him specifically to talk about off campus housing I would try to limit room draw questions, but if he's willing he would probably answer some.

Meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.