

18 May 2020 Senate Meeting Minutes

*Meeting called to order at 7:01pm.*

Quorum is met.

## **Approval of the Minutes**

No discrepancies with the minutes.

## **Community Comment**

No one from the community who wishes to comment.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Chair Yangh: I got a response back to my letter and they appreciated us sending the letter and being so ambitious and she wanted to assure us that her and the Cabinet are working hard on this topic.

### **Technology Committee**

Ombudsperson Menke: Me and some of the Senators met with GTS and it will likely need to be something that is forwarded onto next year's Senate. They recommended sending a survey now to see what the need would be for a program like this. They said they have around 8 or 10 laptops now, but feel that it could be easily expanded. I did work on writing up a survey if we want to vote to send this out during new business.

## **Old Business**

### **Finance**

Director Gupta: These are all the organizations that have requested less than \$5,000 and we will just vote all of them together as a group. The total amount is just over \$82,000.

→ Co-President Elect Doran: Were any of the organizations not satisfied with the amount we said we would be willing to fund them?

◆ Director Gupta: I did not receive any complaints. Most people seemed appreciative of the amount we felt willing to give.

→ Advisor Ruble: Are there any budgets you were sure about as a committee that you would want more input on from the Senate?

- ◆ Director Gupta: Most of them were pretty straightforward. There were a few that were unique such as the physics club wanted money for individual membership which we usually do not do, so we decided against it to keep things fair. How does the Senate feel about this decision? We also did not approve compensation for the Executive Board that one organization asked for because it would be hard to do this for all organizations
  
- Senator Hietpas: From my understanding, usually the budget is meant to help the group as a whole. To what extent would the money affect the overall group or just the individuals?
  - ◆ Senator Young: The group wanted to fund for their members to go to a National Conference which we usually do not do. Additionally, I do not think that we should compensate these Executive Boards. The way we do it in the Senate there is a lot more oversight and those positions have an important role.
  - ◆ Director Gupta: Yeah some people asked because members of the Senate do get stipends sometimes so I did not have a good answer for them.
  - ◆ Senator Young: I believe it is in the bylaws of our constitutions and that is why we do it. I would tell these organizations that if they want to see a change they could petition the next year's Senate.
  - ◆ Co-President Elect Doran: Yes it is something that is in the bylaws. The difference I also see is that as a Senate we are here to help everyone on campus be heard while individual organizations are meant for students to express themselves through the topic of their group.
  
- Advisor Ruble: I see some budgets in red. Does that mean they are not being allocated anything?
  - ◆ Director Gupta: Yeah some of the organizations were not recognized yet, so they will have to come back once they are.

Co-President Bhakta: If there are no further questions or discussion, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving the omnibus budget say aye.

*The ayes have it. Budgets Approved.*

## **New Business**

### **Title IX Letter**

Co-President Elect Conception: First I want to acknowledge that this could be triggering to some people, so feel free to take time away from the meeting if you need to. So after the conference our cabinet attended this weekend, I got added to a group chat that wants to sign this petition regarding changes to Title IX. It is due on the 21st so we want to hear your thoughts on it before we decide what to do.

Co-President Elect Doran: We met with Patty Dawson about this issue and she said we should be cautious of anything we are backing with the Senate. I sent out a google form to senators so I will read some of these out.

“Last semester I began the process of opening a Title IX case. It was terrifying telling my story over and over again trying to get a sense of security again on campus. After reading these rules, I was scared because with them I would have to withdraw my case and my assailant would go free making him look like the innocent party.”

“I disagree with the mediation aspect. However, we need to try to support everyone involved. These cases need to be taken seriously. I would advise Gustavus to do a more during orientation addressing topics of Title IX and sexual assault.”

“I absolutely believe we need to sign this letter and stand in solidarity with survivors. It is already difficult for victims to come forward and with these new rules it will make it even more challenging.”

We told Patty Dawson we want to continue being in discussion with her over the summer and into the following school year, but we also want to hear your thoughts and opinions.

- Senator Jeremiason: One person mentioned the rights of the accused. I just want to point out that it is statistically very unlikely to come forward and falsely accuse. I also do not think that by signing onto this letter will take away the rights of those who are accused. I just do not want this to turn into victim blaming.
- Senator Young: I am in favor of pretty much everything that is in the letter. Part 1 assumes that there needs to be one big moment and I really disagree with this, because for many people it is not just one big, single moment. It can be, but it can also be smaller and more pervasive. On point to, I agree with their opinion on online to a degree, but I do not necessarily agree this is the responsibility of the college. Point 5 I agree with. Point 6 I agree that a meeting between the victim and perpetrator seems like a bad idea and could

lead to a traumatic experience. The only other thing would be just some wording and grammar things. The use of “folks” and at the end saying “this and many other reasons” I feel that it should be removed or those other reasons should be added. Lastly, I do not know how I feel about signing off the letter as “with power” it just doesn’t feel fitting. In general though I am in favor if they change the part about brushing off student concerns.

- Ombudsperson Menke: Personally, I approve of the message. This is one spot that says meditation where it should say mediation, but aside from that. There is no rationale that supports the changes. However, we do need to consider that we haven’t asked the entire student body. We all have our opinions, but we want everyone to be heard.
  
- ◆ Co-President Elect Doran: To address a concern from the previous speaker, I think it would be signed by the two of us as being supported by the Student Senate and not the whole student body. Also, we were voted in by our peers so in that respect we have their support.

Senator Haney: I motion that the Co-Presidents sign onto the letter.

*Seconded by Speaker Ellingson.*

- Senator Young: In the previous letter, those who signed it put their title and the school they were with, so it is not entirely possible to remove the name of the college from that. Also, given my time on campus, given my experiences I have had with other students on other Title IX issues I feel there are few people that would not be in support of this.
  
- Advisor Ruble: Is a vote on this a simple majority vote or would it require a higher vote from the student body.
  
- ◆ Senator Young: To my knowledge, there is nothing in the bylaws that says we can’t send a letter out. If anything, they wouldn’t need our approval at all since they were asked in their capacity as Co-Presidents.

Co-President Elect Bhakta: If there is no further discussion, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of Co-Presidents Elect Doran and Conception signing onto the letter say aye.

*The ayes have it. Motions approved.*

### **Laptop sharing program**

Senator Johnson: I move that the tech chair sends out the laptop survey to the student body.

*Seconded by Senator Hieptas*

- Co-President Elect Doran: Point of inquiry: Since the Senate technically switches over after this meeting, do we want the new tech chair to do it, or still just have Ombudsperson Menke do it?
- Ombudsperson Menke: I am fine either way, but I think it would be easier if I just sent it out on my computer right after the meeting.
- Senator Young: I think it might be helpful to add a question about how much a student would be willing to put in for their deposit, or how much per semester they would be willing to pay to utilize this survey. I motion that we add this since the point of this service would be to help funds who cannot afford a personal laptop.

*Seconded by Speaker Ellingson.*

- Ombudsperson Menke: I did consider adding a question on this, but I am not sure how helpful it would actually be because the range would be so large or a lot of people might just put zero. Ideally, as time goes on the Senate will be in charge of keeping up with these laptops so there would not be a fee involved at all. Therefore, I do not support this change.
  - ◆ Senator Young: I do understand your point. Initially, I was thinking not doing it open ended for numbers, but after hearing your response I withdrew my amendment.
- Chair Yangh: I really like the questions you thought of Ombudsperson Menke. However, I would recommend adding one question at the end for just general comments or concern if someone would like to further elaborate on why this is important.
- Senator Johnson: I motion to add a free response question to the survey.

*Seconded by Senator Young.*

Co-President Bhakta: If there is no further discussion, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of Ombudsperson Menke sending out the laptop survey say aye.

*The ayes have it. Motion passes.*

- Advisor Ruble: One more thing I might recommend is a question about how a laptop would be used such as could a person use it while their laptop is being fixed or would it be a permanent need for the year.

### **Technology Committee Appointment**

Senator Young: We need to approve the Academic Technology Committee Appointment.

- Ombudsperson Doran: I encouraged our new Technology Chair to apply for the position. They thought I was returning, but I am not due to other commitments so Abbie Doran is being offered the position.
- Senator Young: I move that we appoint Abbie Doran as the new Academic Technology Committee Chair.

*Seconded by Speaker Ellingson.*

Young: She already seemed like she would be a good fit as tech chair for the Cabinet, so I also think she would do well in this role.

Bhakta: If there is no further discussion, we will move to a vote. All those in favor of approving Abbie Doran as the new Academic Technology Committee Chair say aye.

*The ayes have it. Appointment approved.*

### **Announcements**

Senator Young: This is my last Senate meeting. I want to thank everyone for everything. I will really miss it. I am happy about everything I accomplished. And with that, for the last time, I yield.

Co-President Villarreal: I want to bounce off of Senator Young and say that I am so thankful for everyone. I am going to miss you all. I cannot believe it has been a year already. I also want to give a round of applause to Megan Ruble. She has been so helpful and so amazing. I am so excited for next year's Senate.

Co-President Bhakta: I am so happy I had the chance to get to know all of you. You are all amazing and wonderful and I will miss everyone so much.

Ombudsperson Menke: Yeah to the seniors, I know this isn't how you planned on your last semester going but you guys are awesome and we are going to miss you all so much! Thank you for everything and I hope to see you soon.