

MINUTES<sup>1</sup>  
USG Senate Meeting  
Thursday, March 31<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Meeting called to order at 7:17 pm. Meeting held in Union Basement.

Agenda item 1.0: Attendance

The roll was called:

Senator Allen Abraham	Present
Senator Tahir Ahmad	Present
Senator Ory Baum	Present
Senator Spenser Cushing	Present
Senator Samuel Cushner	Present
Senator Ray Fan	Present
Senator Frank Fanizza	Present by Proxy (Annamaria Viazzo)
Senator Christian Giraldo	Present by Proxy (David Adams)
Senator Gary Hagan	Excused Absence
Senator Mahyar Kashan	Present
Senator Sidrah Khan	Present
Senator Thomas Kirnbauer	Present by Proxy (Moiz Khan)
Senator Yan Leyfman	Excused Absence
Senator Kirin Mahmud	Excused Absence
Senator Kenneth Myers	Present
Senator Shivani Rampersad	Present
Senator Masood Rustemi	Excused Absence
Senator Safeer	Excused Absence
Senator Najee Simmons	Present; Left at 9:01 pm
Senator Priya Sohi	Absent
Senator Peter Stratoudakis	Present
Senator Russell Williams	Present

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President Matthew Graham	Late
Executive Vice President (EVP) Deborah Machalow (Chair)	Present
Treasurer Jackie Mark	Present
Vice President of Academic Affairs Forbes	Absent
Vice President of Clubs and Organizations Jennifer Chan	Present
Vice President of Communications David Mazza	Present
Vice President of Student Life Peter Molloy	Absent
Senior Class Representative Dexter Daniel	Present
Junior Class Representative Emilissa Trotman	Absent
Sophomore Class Representative Neville Hall Jr.	Absent

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<sup>1</sup> Typically, minutes should only contain the essentials of a meeting. This includes the meeting time and location, a list of those who attended, as well as a record of all motions made and their outcome. Debate or even a summary of debate is usually not included. I include it here at the request of the Chair. Mistakes and omissions are likely, so Senators are encouraged to e-mail the Secretary with corrections prior to the next Senate meeting, so that the record reflects what was actually said at the meeting and so corrections can be made efficiently.

Freshman Class Representative Rodriguez  
Quorum established.

Absent

### Agenda item 2.0: Announcements

The Chair announced that speakers should use the podium when speaking.

The Chair further announced that Senate reports are due today.

Senator Abraham moved to amend the agenda by inserting item 4.9 (SSC Recommendations) and item 4.9.1 (Budget Items).

The motion was approved by a vote of 16-0-0. (Roll Call #1).

### Agenda item 3.0: Approval of the Minutes from 3/24/2011

- EVP moved to amend the minutes, by replacing all instances of “Safir” with “Safeer” in the minutes.
  - The motion was approved without objection.
- Senator Abraham moved to approve the 3/24/2011 meeting minutes.
  - The motion was approved without objection.

### Agenda item 4.0: Executive Council Reports

- **President Graham**
  - Postponed until open agenda (without objection.)
- **Vice President Chan**
  - VP Chan gave an account of her recent activities, including SSC, meetings with students and clubs, etc.
- **Vice President Forbes**
  - Absent
- **Vice President Mazza**
  - The main thing I have worked on is the future of SBUTV. That has been delayed due to the court case, but the case was decided in “our” favor.
  - New assistant: Hector (starting tonight – taking part in filming the meetings.)
  - New concert.
  - Roth Regatta.
  - Legislation and Minutes to appear on USG website soon.
  - VP Mazza will not be running again for any position within USG and will be focusing his efforts entirely on this term.
  - Would like to see a Human Resources person hired before the end of the year.
- **Vice President Molloy**
  - VP Molloy has submitted a written report.
- **Representative Rodriguez**
  - Rep. Rodriguez has submitted a written report.
- **Representative Hall**
  - Fall semester: Worked closely with NYPIRG and Dean Paschkes.
  - Advocacy groups: Desire to get an NAACP chapter.
    - Working with the state office in order to get this moving.

- Meeting with clubs and reported his findings to President Graham.
- **Representative Trotman**
  - Absent
- **Representative Daniel**
  - Responsibility to cater events, especially to the senior class but also to the wider university community.
  - Senior portraits: Prices vary from \$80 - \$250. There has been a wide reception to this endeavor.
  - Senior Ball
  - Senior BBQ
  - Getting feedback from his fellow constituents.
    - Senior Committee idea mooted.

#### Agenda item 4.9: SSC Recommendations

- Eta Kappa Nu Association
  - Honor society for computer and electrical engineers on campus.
  - Some conflicts with the club:
    - It currently includes graduate students.
    - They would finance people to have scholarships (a requirement of the national chapter.) This has been changed after discussions with USG personnel.
    - USG has never recognized an honor society due to the fact that their membership is restrictive (GPA and major requirements.)
    - The organization is currently getting funding from non-USG sources to hold events and activities.
  - Senator Ahmad: Have they been recognized by Student Activities?
    - Senator Abraham: Yes.
  - Senator Ahmad: How are other organizations of this kind established on campus?
    - Senator Abraham: Other honor societies function due to outside funding sources or fundraise by themselves. No other such clubs get USG funding.
  - Proxy Khan: GPA requirements are not “restrictive” in my opinion, since students can control their own GPA.
  - Senator Ahmad: How do we fund the Economics Honor Society?
    - Proxy Khan: They are a line budget funded organization.
  - Senator Ahmad: I thought we never granted USG funds to honor societies before?
    - Senator Abraham: I appear to have misunderstood.
  - Senator Abraham: There is a per-capita “tax” levied on organizations to fund a convention that Stony Brook students may not go to.
  - Senator Cushing: Is the updated constitution included here, or is this an older version?
    - Senator Abraham: If we look at Article VII, Section 2, Subsection A, “graduate” was removed in the updated constitution.
  - Proxy Khan: The dues element is also something that we can fund. WUSB-TV has to pay dues to outside organizations in order to exist. One problematic section, however, is

Article VIII, Section 3, is restrictive, because it opens the organization solely to juniors and seniors.

- Proxy Adams: How many prospective members does this group have?
- Senator Ahmad: I think and I hope that we cannot in good conscience approve this organization until they have made the required changes.
- Senator Abraham: I move to table this item.
  - Motion fails by a vote of 3-13-0. (Roll Call #2).
- Senator Ahmad moves to approve the organization.
  - Motion fails by a vote of 0-16-0. (Roll Call #3).

#### Agneda Item 4.9.1: Budget Requests

##### **FOCUS: On Women & On Diversity**

- Senator Abraham presented the budget request.
  - We recommend an allocation of \$1000 to this club.
- Proxy Khan moved to approve the allocation of \$1000 to “FOCUS: On Women & On Diversity.”
  - Motion approved by a vote of 15-0-1. (Roll Call #4).

##### **Stony Brook Ringers**

- Senator Abraham presented the budget request.
  - Senator Ahmad: Where will the equipment be stored?
  - Senator Abraham indicated temporary arrangements that will be made to store the equipment.
- Senator Khan moved to approve the allocation of \$1195 to “Stony Brook Ringers.”
  - Motion approved by a vote of 16-0-0. (Roll Call #5).

##### **Undergraduate Anthropology Society**

- Senator Abraham presented the budget request.
  - Senator Ahmad: Was there not a similar club or society in existence to this on line budget last year. If so, are they similar or different clubs?
  - Treasurer Mark: This is not the same group as the one that exists. The Anthropology club that existed last year has a budget of \$0.
  - VP Chan: The club existing previously was apparently not told that they had funding in the past. They were told to apply for SSC funding moving forward.
  - Senator Khan: Are the members of both of these clubs the same?
    - VP Chan: It is unclear.
  - Senator Ahmad: Motion to table further consideration of the “Undergraduate Anthropology Society” until these issues are favorably resolved.
    - VP Chan: A comment to the Budget Committee. Please notify club leaders regarding their funding status.
    - Treasurer Mark: Clubs are notified when they receive a budget. Budget applications and the budget process are under way. It is difficult to fathom that clubs do not know what funding they have.

- Senator Abraham: Due to the new criteria on club recognition and funding, there will likely be further instances of clubs with duplicate services coming forward for recognition and funding.
- Senator Cushing moved to end the debate.
  - Motion to end debate approved by a vote of 16-0-0. (Roll Call #6).
  - On the main question (motion to table): The motion was approved by a vote of 16-0-0. (Roll Call #7).

### **Stony Brook Quidditch**

- Senator Abraham presented the allocation request.
- The Senate went into recess briefly due to noise issues.
  - \$1200 was recommended to be approved.
  - Senator Cushing: What is the \$900 “transportation” fee going towards?
    - Senator Abraham: LIRR tickets in order to attend tournaments in the city.
  - Representative Daniel: What does the equipment entail?
    - Senator Abraham: To purchase Quidditch equipment (e.g. brooms.)
- Senator Baum moved to allocate \$1200 to the “Stony Brook Quidditch” club.
  - Senator Cushing: Are clubs forced to spend funds only on items they budgeted for in their request, or can the money allocated go to anything?
  - Proxy Khan: I believe this club is one of the most dedicated and will spend their funds as budgeted.
  - The motion was approved by a vote of 16-0-0. (Roll Call #8).

### **Stony Brook Young Americans for Freedom**

- Senator Abraham presented the allocation request.
  - Requests for funding T-shirts were not approved, as part of a USG policy not to give funding for shirts for any club. The same is true for club “banners.”
  - Proxy Adams: Does this group receive funding from the national organization?
    - Senator Abraham: Not that I know of.
  - Senator Adams moved to approve the appropriation of \$1540 for Stony Brook Young Americans for Freedom.
    - Motion was approved by a vote of 10-0-6. (Roll Call #9).

### **The Mix Magazine**

- Senator Abraham presented the allocation request.
  - Proxy Adams: What is the content of the magazine?
    - Senator Abraham: It is a music magazine.
  - Senator Ahmad: Motion to approve the allocation request for \$432.
    - Proxy Khan: I move to amend the amount to \$442.
      - Amendment approved without objection.
    - On the motion to allocate \$442: The motion was approved by a vote of 16-0-0. (Roll Call #10).

## Agenda item 5.0: Colleges for Change Proposal

- Randi Zito, Tania Panicucci-Roma, and Miranda Guerriero presented the proposal.
  - Colleges for Change program is funded by the NYS Department of Health
  - Goal is to make Stony Brook University a “tobacco-free campus.”
  - We would like to get USG’s recognition in our program’s goal of making Stony Brook University a smoke-free campus.
  - We have obtained a petition of 1358 students in favor of our campaign to stop smoking on campus.
  - The highest prevalence of initiating smoking is during college years.
  - There is a three-year implementation phase if our plan succeeds. Smoking cessation services would also be offered during this time.
  - Dr. Stanley and Dean Stein are supporters of this program.
  - Dean Stein suggested the petition, and we are attempting to gain USG’s support on this endeavor.
  - Senator Baum: A movement like this is an unnecessary infringement on students’ civil liberties. I believe there should be an enforcement of the rules that are already in place. A ban on something is a complete infringement on our rights as adults. I do not personally endorse smoking, but students have the right to smoke cigarettes. Saying “you cannot” encroaches on our personal rights as people.
  - Presenter: This is a very common argument. The whole idea of the ban is not against smokers but rather against the act of smoking. Currently, 20-25% or so of people smoke. There is a higher medically sensitive population out there that has the right to breathe fresh air. If you breathe in a wisp of smoke, that is 500-1000X higher than the allowed FDA toxin amount. For me, as a pregnant individual, and for others who have asthma, cardio and pulmonary problems, etc., have rights that are not being respected by smokers. Smokers are not a constitutionally protected class. This is becoming more of a cultural-societal phenomenon, to prepare students for a world in which smoking is increasingly being restricted.
  - Senator Ahmad: Personally, I am for this, for several reasons. I can sit here and tell you why smoking is unbelievably bad for you, but I do not think I need to lecture. Let me give you an anecdote about my day today. I was walking by the library, and I saw that sanitation workers were using leaf blowers to sweep away cigarette butts from the vicinity of the library. It is also absolutely disgusting to face second-hand smoke as you are walking on the campus. The best we can do in terms of USG’s support as a Senate is to pass a resolution in favor and to lobby the University to implement this program. HSC is also already a smoke-free zone.
  - SUNY is prioritizing health issues on Stony Brook campuses. Tobacco use on campus is a Tier 1 issue. Stony Brook is one of the schools being targeted to implement this program. There is definitely a tobacco issue on campus. Finally, many of the students who signed the petition are smokers themselves, who would like a smoke-free environment to help them quit.

- Proxy Adams: What is a “wisp” of smoke? Also, how will we enforce a total ban when current rules are not being enforced?
  - A wisp is the immediate discharge from a smoke, regardless of whether or not it is inhaled. As for the ban, it appears that it is easier to enforce an “all or nothing” approach. Gray areas (25 feet from building) are more difficult to enforce.
- Representative Daniel: I support this initiative but I also have some questions. Have you approached smokers who are opposed to the ban?
  - Yes, we have seen many smokers who are against the idea, with personal rights being the biggest reason cited. Others have also discussed that we should legalize pot, lower the drinking age, etc. The whole idea is to respect smokers but go against smoking.
- President Graham: I am in strong support of this issue. I believe this is a quintessential student issue. More than passing a resolution, we should put this as a question on the ballot, which would increase exposure of the issue and the elections.
- VP Chan: There are many overseas students who smoke and are from countries which do not consider smoking to be necessarily unhealthy or taboo. How would you address these students?
  - There are great smoking cessation programs within the NYS Department of Health which can be utilized. Some campuses also have designated smoking areas, which could cater to those students who insist on smoking. There are ways of dealing and negotiating with these issues, but ultimately, we would like a 100% smoke-free campus.
- Senator Cushing: I am not necessarily for or against a resolution. There are many of our constituents who have signed this petition. Senators should vote for their constituents.
- Senator Stratoudakis: What would the penalty be for a person who flouts the smoking ban?
  - There would be a three step process. The first would be warning the student, the second being naming the student, and the final one would be a penalty. An appropriate penalty might be requiring community service cleaning up cigarette refuse. Other colleges also have a system where violating the policy results in a fine. It is up to the discretion of the school on how to enforce.
- Proxy Khan: The whole point of living in a free society is to “deal with it.” There are lots of things we do not necessarily enjoy about the rest of society, but we have to deal with them.
- Senator Baum: I just want to return to the point of the societal/cultural change that smoking is already on the decline? Why would legislation be needed to end a phenomenon that is apparently already coming to an end? I do agree that smoking on campus is a nuisance for non-smokers, and I am also not a fan of seeing cigarette butts on the campus. My main point is, rather than having a campus like it is now, with no regulation or enforcement of the rules already in place, or the other extreme, a complete ban to smoking, I propose that it would be more appropriate to meet at the

middle, with designated smoking areas, and there has to be enforcement and regulation of rules regarding smoking. If cigarette butts are being disposed of outside these areas, then there should be fines. I do not think that it is appropriate to completely ban smoking completely.

- Presenter: The two main ways of ending smoking are legislation and increasing the price. New York State has implemented these with the Indoor Clean Air laws and by heavily taxing cigarettes. Many have given up the habit as a consequence. Furthermore, many people want to quit, but will not do so unless there is a smoke-free environment. A good percentage of smokers are also in the “pre-contemplation” stage. This is a very debatable issue. Innately, you would love for people to take it on themselves, but realistically this does not happen. 1200 people a day die because of cigarette smoking. Legislation is necessary. As for the 25 foot ban, that has been tried previously, but it simply does not work. You can focus all you want on enforcement of the existing ban, but you have to change the whole culture.
- Senator Baum: It is still too extreme to tell someone that they cannot smoke, period. If a non-smoker really cared that much, they would take it upon themselves to take personal action. I believe that there should be true enforcement of existing or updated restrictions. Banning anything never works.
- Presenter: There is a huge education and implementation component to this.
- VP Mazza: I do not know how many schools you have been to, in terms of student governments, but in USG you will never see in our history any sweeping generalizations and political judgments. Our business is the dispersal of our 3.1 million dollar budget and funding our clubs and organizations. We have to do a scientific survey and poll students, faculty, and others who work on campus, to see the viability of such a plan. I can say that I have personally smoked on the campus, including the HSC.
  - Presenter: This has been enforced and implemented over hundreds of campuses. Any ban or law can be broken. There are drunk drivers, for instance. But when you come down to it, laws are needed. I will return that this is done in respect of smokers, helping them to quit, and partial bans do not work.
- Senator Myers: I like President Graham’s idea of making this a ballot issue. I believe we should bring this up to students directly to see how they feel.
  - Presenter: I appreciate your comment about polling your constituents and seeing how they feel.
- Senator Abraham: I move that we suspend the rules and move on to the next item on the agenda.
  - The motion failed by a vote of 8-7-1. (2/3 majority not achieved – Roll Call #11).
- Senator Stratoudakis: I understand that smoking is bad. We should not tell people to ban things just because it is bad for them. This would set a precedent on banning fatty foods and other unhealthy items.



- Senator Kashan: I would like to agree with President Graham and Senator Myers regarding raising awareness of this issue and bringing it to the ballot. I believe we should get a survey going and get the question out to see if students really care.
  - We have a facebook page and a survey.
- Proxy Adams: I do not believe it is fair to conflate the issue of littering (cigarette butts) with the larger issue of banning smoking. We could find litter for any item, e.g. pop tarts, and speak out against them. I do not see this ban as being the right thing to do.
- Senator Ahmad: First of all, thank you very much for coming. We really appreciate that you are coming by. We care about this issue. As the USG Senate, we have limitations in terms of how long we can speak on an issue. I would request that you would come back and work with us whenever you are free. Most of the people in this room would like to work with you and have a plan of action. One thing we can do is put this as a poll issue. Furthermore, our constituents include smokers who we must speak on behalf of as well.
- Senator Ahmad moved that the rules be suspended to extend the allowed Senate meeting time past two hours.
  - Motion approved by a vote of 12-3-0. (Roll Call #12).
- Senator Abraham moved to table further consideration of item 5.0 and insert item 5.9 “Tennis Grant.”
  - Motion approved by a vote of 14-0-0. (Roll Call #13).

#### Agenda Item 5.9: Tennis Grant

- Treasurer Mark presented the grant proposal, which was brought to the floor directly by petition (1% of USG members signed a petition bringing the proposal to the floor.)
  - The Tennis Team made it to the “Nationals” but do not have the funds to attend the tournament in North Carolina.
- Senator Cushing moved to approve the grant for \$2512 to the Tennis Club.
  - Motion approved by a vote of 15-0-0. (Roll Call #14).

#### Agenda item 6.0: Senate Bylaw Reform Act

- Senator Ahmad presented the act.
  - I would ask Senators to review the legislation over the weekend and to e-mail the Rules Committee with any proposed changes.
  - Senator Ahmad moved to refer the “Senate Bylaws Reform Act” to the Rules Committee.
    - Motion approved by a vote of 15-0-0. (Roll Call #15).

#### Agenda item 7.0: Open Agenda

- President Graham’s report:
  - The YAF issue has consumed a great deal of my time recently, including consultations with counsel, the interim administrative director, and others.
  - We have audits due this year. I have assembled the personnel to get this done.
  - We are working on figuring out the exact future of ALLOCATE, regarding the technical side of things.

- University Governance: Working on the Student Conduct Code and numerous other committees and bodies, like the University Senate.
- We are implementing a trial phase of “Procurement Cards” for certain clubs. Instead of having to pick up checks from accounting, clubs would be able to spend their money more directly. This is a trial phase as there is some risk of abuse, but we are implementing slowly and looking at the results.
- Helping out and making sure that previous events have run smoothly and working on future events.
- The survey took a great deal of time to put together and market. Compiling the data and giving the presentation.
- SBU-TV.
- Advocating for specific things on behalf of the students and USG:
  - Tuition
  - Fees
  - Transparency
- Budget transparency: Releasing the operational budget of the University (White Book) online.
- Advocating on longer library hours, particularly close to finals. I believe we are coming to an agreement soon on extending library hours.
- FSA Memorandum of Understanding and other FSA duties.
- HR Act – will be brought to the Senate floor next week.
- Aarti (NYPIRG):
  - NYPIRG is working with regards to the US Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce is lobbying against climate change legislation.
  - We are trying to get local businesses and local chambers of commerce to disassociate from the US Chamber of Commerce, due to their stance on climate change legislation.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

	Attendance	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15
Senator Abraham	Present	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Ahmad	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Baum	Present	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Cushing	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Senator Cushman	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Fan	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Proxy Viazzo	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Proxy Adams	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Hagan	Excused Ab.															
Senator Kashan	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Khan	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Proxy M. Khan	Present	Y	N	N	Abstain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Leyfman	Excused Ab.															
Senator Mahmud	Absent															
Senator Myers	Present	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Rampersad	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Senator Rustemi	Excused Ab.															
Senator Safer	Excused Ab.															
Senator Simmons	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Abstain	Y	Y	Y
Senator Sohi	Absent															
Senator Stratoudakis	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abstain	Y	Abstain	Y	Y
Senator Williams	Present	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Total:		16-0-0	3-13-0	0-16-0	15-0-1	16-0-0	16-0-0	16-0-0	16-0-0	10-0-6	16-0-0	8-7-1	12-3-0	14-0-0	15-0-0	15-0-0
Decision:		Approved	Fails	Fails	Passes	Passes	Passes	Passes	Passes	Passes	Fails	Passes	Passes	Passes	Passes	Passes
Y = Yes; N = No; A = Abstain; Ab = Absent																
Total is in Y-N-A format.																
Roll Call votes for 31-Mar-2011 USG Senate Meeting																