

MINUTES¹

USG Senate Meeting

Thursday, September 30th, 2010

Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm. Meeting held in SAC Ballroom B.

Agenda item 1.0: Attendance

The roll was called:

Senator Allen Abraham	Present	Item 9.0 Y
Senator Tahir Ahmad	Present	Y
Senator Ory Baum	Present	Y
Senator Samuel Cushner	Absent	
Senator Spenser Cushing	Present	Y
Senator Frank Fanizza	Present	Y
Senator Christian Giraldo	Present	Y
Senator Sidrah Khan	Present	Y
Senator Mahyar Kashan	Present	Y
Senator Thomas Kirnbauer	Present	Y
Senator Yan Leyfman	Late	Y
Senator Deborah Machalow	Present by Proxy (Corey Platt)	Y
Senator Kirin Mahmud (PPT)	Present	Y
Senator Shivani Rampersad	Present	Y
Senator Masood Rustemi	Present	Y
Senator Najee Simmons	Present	Y

¹ 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.

Senator Harminder Singh	Absent	
Senator Michael Spinelli	Present (by Proxy: Moiz Khan)	Y
Senator Priya Sohi	Present	Y
Senator Peter Stratoudakis	Present	Y
Senator Russell Williams	Present	Y

President Matthew Graham	Late
Executive Vice President Alexander Dimitriyadi (Chair)	Present
Vice President of Clubs and Organizations Jennifer Chan	Present
Vice President of Communications David Mazza	Present
Vice President of Student Life Peter Molloy	Present
Senior Class Representative Dexter Daniel	Present
Junior Class Representative Emilissa Trotman	Absent
Sophomore Class Representative Neville Hall Jr.	Absent

Quorum established.

Agenda item 2.0: Announcements

The Chair announced that copies of the proposed agenda were not delivered until 2:03 pm (due to copy machine problems.)

The Chair asked if there was any objection to adopting the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was approved.

Agenda item 3.0: Approval of the Minutes (from 9/23/10 meeting)

- Approved without amendments or objections.

Agenda item 4.0: USG Role in Disbursing the Undergraduate Student Activity Fee

- Dr. Peter Baigent (Vice President for Student Affairs) made a presentation.
 - Responsibilities: Admissions, Financial Aid, Transfer/Admissions part of the institution.
 - Public institution – responsibility to provide access to the citizenry of New York
 - Have a balanced class that reflects the aspirations of “you” and in some ways your parents.

- Dean Stein has the responsibility for the Dean of Students area, which encompasses those activities you are probably more familiar with. He also has that whole area of health and caring.
 - EOP (Education Opportunity Program.)
 - Amount of work that goes into ensuring that students get off on the right foot in this program.
 - Further Responsibilities:
 - Disability access to campus.
 - Large group of campus residences.
 - Some parts of the graduate school parts of campus.
 - Balancing student needs and wants, in what is a “very constrained” budget arena at the moment.
 - PHEEIA discussion.
 - Issues at Southampton.
 - Why should USG be interested?
 - 3 million dollar budget (give or take a few thousand dollars.)
 - “Quintessential” public purse – all students have to pay the Student Activity Fee
 - Some students get far more back than they pay in (due to what they are involved with.) Others get less back.
 - This is not “unfair” – some activities are more expensive than others and require more resources.
 - Per capita cost of Chess Club is far less than the per capita expense for the crew team.
 - Senators are responsible to be engaged and involved in this process.
 - Dr. Baigent would prefer the USG Senate to be much more involved.
 - Part of your responsibilities is to have an intimate understanding of how you are delivering your allocations to student groups, and to be inquisitive.
 - You are more formulaic than deliberative.
 - Role of Dr. Baigent in the process:
 - University President’s designee as to approving the USG Budget.
 - All he asks is that USG follow its own rules (Constitution and Procedural Bylaws)
 - Dr. Baigent does not interfere in what USG can fund or how it does its processes.
 - The only restrictions are USG rules, and can’t fund active political campaigning or religious service.
 - Can fund political and religious groups, however, which USG does.
 - “Viewpoint neutrality” in funding decisions.

- Can't just fund the "Crew Team" and not the "Woman's Rugby Team"
- Must be fair.
- This is a mandatory fee that generates close to 3 million dollars.
- Must be part of a deliberative process that is fundamentally fair, viewpoint neutral, and develops the campus community.
- Must think past "the debate" and think about "what are we doing as a student government to help create community?"
- Example of Labour Party (UK)²
 - David and Ed.
 - Ed's problem is to develop a community in the context of that political environment.
 - You are engaged in a process in which the best outcome is to help create or reinforce community and understanding and involvement of the student body.
 - That may sound a little high-flown, but it really isn't.
 - You are volunteers here. You are not getting academic credit for this or paid for this. You are engaging yourself. Divide the resources so that other students can be engaged (in smaller groups.)
 - That is developing communities and what we are here for.
 - You have a marvelous Dean of Students (Dean Stein).
 - I interviewed him a very long time ago.
 - (Syracuse – Dr. Baigent.)
 - You have a staff that is really trying to be very helpful.
 - Make sure though that you have conversations (not just be obedient) about where we are going, where we should be going.
 - This is an era of change for the University.
 - Ten Year Capital Planning phase for the University (2013-2023).
 - You must carry the torch for those who follow.
 - Your involvement is essential.

² The reader might not be familiar with Dr. Baigent's remarks here. They are regarding leadership of the Labour Party in the UK, after the resignation of its leader and former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. Two of the leading candidates for the position are brothers, David (the elder) and Ed (the younger) Miliband. Although David had a higher profile position in the previous Labour Cabinet and received more support from the Parliamentary Labour Party and from party members, Ed won by a small margin largely due to support from affiliated groups (primarily labor unions.) Dr. Baigent was discussing the challenge that Ed now faced in uniting the Labour Party, after having defeated his older brother to secure the party's leadership.

- Questions/Thoughts/Suggestions:
 - None.

Agenda item 5.0: Resolution Supporting Online Course Evaluations

- Vice President Mazza presented the resolution.
- Building on last meeting's discussion of course evaluations:
 - Current process not working.
 - Students need full access.
 - Useful for whatever committee is implementing this to see the view from the student point of view.
 - Suggested a mobile application for ease of use of the process.
 - USG will collaborate with TLT (Teaching, Learning, and Technology) to make this process optimal.
 - This will create a clear, simple, and transparent system.
 - Questions?
- Senator Kashan moved to adopt the "Resolution Supporting Online Course Evaluations."
 - No debate: Vote: 18-0-0 (Approved unanimously.)

Agenda item 6.0: USG Code

- Since Chair will be speaking on this matter, he has relinquished the Chair to President Pro-Tempore (PPT) Mahmud.
- Executive Vice President Dimitriyadi opened the discussion.
 - The Code consists of three components.
 - Compilation of all the laws that USG has.
 - Way of tracking all the laws made by USG.
 - Modeled after the way US laws are codified.
 - The current Senate is not asked to endorse or repeal particular laws, but merely to agree that these are the laws already on the books.
 - Questions:
 - Who is on the law revision council?
 - Executive Vice President and his staff, as defined by appropriate legislation.
 - Why is the "Appropriate Office Behavior Enforcement Act" not included?
 - Ruling by former Chief Justice Jordan Cushner that "any alternate or additional means" other than those in the Constitution regarding impeachments are unconstitutional.
 - Moiz Khan moved to approve the USG Code.
 - Debate: (Senator Cushing): USG Marketing Act.

- Includes contradictions and problems.
 - The act is bizarrely specific.
 - Not well-written and hinders the ability of the VP of Communications to provide services for clubs of students.
- On the motion to approve the “USG Code”, the motion passed by a vote of 17-1-0.
 - PPT relinquished the Chair.
 - The EVP returned to the Chair.

Agenda item 7.0: Student Activity Fee Referendum

- Senator Ahmad introduced the referendum.
- Debate:
 - It is a very good idea to raise the Student Activity Fee.
 - Good way to ensure that clubs get the appropriate amount of funding.
 - With the new SBA, money is needed to promote weekend and campus wide activities.
 - The vote is merely on putting the matter to a referendum, allowing our constituents the option to raise the fee, should they so wish.
- Senator Cushing moved to approve the “2010-2011 Referendum on the Undergraduate Student Activity Fee.”
 - Approved by a vote of 18-0-0.

Agenda item 8.0: Events Management Bylaws

- Proxy Khan introduced the bill.
 - No codes for the Events Management Agency, as to its structure and how it would operate. These bylaws establish that structure.
 - A Senator moved to approve the “Events Management Bylaws.”
 - Questions:
 - Sometimes people were being paid at the “Supervisor” rate, even though they did the work of “workers.” This will no longer take place, as people will be paid based on the position they are working.
 - In previous years, certain employees would work more than 20 hours, incurring time-and-a-half. This would be less likely.
 - The current head of the agency would continue in his role.
 - If the director is removed, the Executive Vice President takes over the agency. How long would it take to hire a new director?
 - Until such time as the EVP believes it is necessary.
 - Senator Ahmad moves to amend Article I, 1.1, to read: “The Executive Vice-President, by and with the consent of the President, may designate a Director of the Events Management Agency, as needed.”
 - This is to keep the language consistent with other designations.

- Senator Ahmad moved to amend the language of the previous amendment, to now read: “by and with the advice and consent of the President”.
 - The amendment amending the language of the first amendment was approved without objection.
 - The amendment as finally stated (amending Article I, 1.1, to read, after the words “... Events Management Agency”):
 - “The Executive Vice-President, by and with the consent of the President, may designate a Director of the Events Management Agency, as needed.”:
 - The motion to amend was approved by a vote of 20-0-0.
 - On the main motion, approving the “Undergraduate Student Government Events Management Bylaws”, the Bylaws were approved by a vote of 20-0-0.

Agenda item 9.0: Adjust Operation Budget

- Senator Cushing (Chair - Budget Committee) presented the act.
 - Simple update of the 2010-11 USG Operational budget.
 - Senator Simmons: Please clarify the term “operational”
 - Operational refers to the USG’s budget (not the budget of clubs or organizations.)
 - Treasury’s budget \$1000 currently – being changed to zero. Why?
 - Since other budgets are being utilized to take care of the Treasurer’s expenses, the account is no longer needed.
 - Why is the Student Activities Board budget raised?
 - To reflect the increased involvement of the USG Student Activities Board.
 - More funds are being requested for other activities, such as ideas being brought forward by the Senior Class Representative, especially with regards to “Senior Week.”
 - Ideas such as “Senior Breakfast.”
 - Bringing more attention to seniors in the fall (not just those graduating in the spring.)
 - “Senior Ball” for the fall.
 - Spring activities:
 - Annual Senior BBQ.
 - Trip (subject to approval.)
 - New Senior Ball at new location.
 - What happens to the \$50,000 in “unallocated funds”

- Will likely go to the Senate’s Discretionary Fund.
 - The SAB budget would be \$404k.
- Senator Kashan moved to approve the “2010-2011 USG Operational Budget Adjustment Act.”
 - A motion to amend (Computer Equipment from “\$1425” to “\$3425”) was moved and seconded.
 - In order to put some money into the computer equipment fund to have computers in the office.
 - Where would money come from? Rollover funds.
 - On the amendment: The amendment was approved by a vote of 19-0-0.
 - On the main question moved by Senator Kashan, the vote was made by roll call:

• Senator Allen Abraham		Y
• Senator Tahir Ahmad		Y
• Senator Ory Baum		Y
• Senator Spenser Cushing		Y
• Senator Frank Fanizza		Y
• Senator Christian Giraldo		Y
• Senator Sidrah Khan		Y
• Senator Mahyar Kashan		Y
• Senator Thomas Kirnbauer		Y
• Senator Yan Leyfman		Y
• Senator Deborah Machalow	Vote by Proxy (Corey Platt)	Y
• Senator Kirin Mahmud (PPT)		Y
• Senator Shivani Rampersad		Y
• Senator Masood Rustemi		Y
• Senator Najee Simmons		Y
• Senator Michael Spinelli	Vote by Proxy (Moiz Khan)	Y
• Senator Priya Sohi		Y
• Senator Peter Stratoudakis		Y
• Senator Russell Williams		Y

- The “2010-2011 USG Operational Budget Adjustment Act” was approved by a vote of 19-0-0.

Agenda item 10.0: Nominations for the Elections Board

- Michal Fricke was nominated:
 - The candidate spoke of his qualifications.
 - The candidate desires to increase the involvement and participation of USG members in the elections.

- Questions:
 - How would you raise awareness?
 - I would work closely with VP of Communications Mazza.
 - I would use the Elections Board Budget to purchase fliers and other means of advertising, and ensure that the news is spread to everyone on campus.
 - Are you familiar with the guidelines recently passed by the Senate regarding the Elections Board? Would you enforce the Senate's provisions?
 - Candidate has a "mild" understanding.
- Proxy Khan moved to approve the nomination of Michal Fricke as a member of the Elections Board (secret ballot):
 - By a vote of 13-6-0, the nominee was approved.
- Jeffrey Horne was nominated:
 - Made a speech regarding his qualifications to assume a seat on the Elections Board.
 - Proxy Khan moved to approve the candidate as a member of the Elections Board (secret ballot):
 - By a vote of 18-1-0, the nominee was approved.

Agenda item 11.0: USG: Going Forward

- President Graham introduced the legislation (see statement from "Office of the President"):
 - Important to show the students what we have done for the student body.
 - Focus the tremendous energies of USG officers to improve the campus community.
 - Executive Council Members got together and brainstormed, and over three full days came up with this document.
- VP Mazza also spoke on the legislation.
- Senator Ahmad moved to adopt the "USG: Going Forward Plan"
 - Is this a resolution?
 - It would be seen as the "Will of the Senate"
 - On the question: 19-0-0. Approved unanimously.

Agenda item 11.0: Open Agenda

- No business from the Senate.
- Gallery:
 - NYPIRG (Aarthi Sheth) spoke regarding the role and activities of NYPIRG:
 - Three credit internship program (8 interns this year)
 - General Interest Meeting.
 - Working with USG Sophomore Rep: "Dare to Vote Campaign"
 - Registered over 500 students on campus to register to vote for this November's elections.
 - Please remind students that the deadline to register is this Friday.

- Vice President Chan discussed the red USG shirts that had been passed out to Senators.
- No further business, meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.