



MINUTES¹
USG Senate Meeting
Thursday, March 8th, 2012

Meeting called to order at 7:14 pm. Meeting held in Humanities 1006.

Agenda item 1.0: Attendance

The roll was called:

Senator David Adams	Present
Senator Oluwasegun Adedapo	Present
Senator Emily Alcott	Present
Senator Shon Augustine	Excused Absence
Senator Lance Bertrand	Present
Senator Tiffany Bibby	Present
Senator Nicholas Ela	Present
Senator Ray Fan	Present
Senator Frank Fanizza	Excused Absence
Senator Max Gunther	Present
Senator Eric Lau	Present
Senator Anna Lubitz	Present
Senator Corey Platt	Excused Lateness
Senator Masood Rustemi	Late
Senator Najee Simmons (PPT)	Present
Senator Jason Sockin	Present
Senator Priya Sohi	Present
Senator David Szeszler	Present
Senator Andrew Tausz	Present
Senator Leslie Umalie	Present
Senator Ryann Williams	Present

President Mark Maloof	Present
Executive Vice President Deborah Machalow	Present
Treasurer Thomas Kirnbauer	Present
Vice President of Academic Affairs Adil Hussain	Present
Vice President of Clubs and Organizations Amanda Cohen	Excused Absence
Vice President of Communications Stephanie Berlin	Present; Excused
Early Departure	

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 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.

Vice President of Student Life Deron Hill	Absent
Senior Class Representative Emilisa Trotman	Absent
Junior Class Representative Dennis Nmecha	Absent
Sophomore Class Representative Christopher Priore	Absent
Freshman Class Representative Tyrik Jiang	Present

Quorum established.

Agenda item 2.0: Announcements

The Chair announced that VP Hussain's report on PASS's budget will take place next week.

The Chair requested that Senators should bring their copies of the Code with them.

The Chair further announced that, in accordance with USG Senate bylaws, all Senate standing committees must meet at least once per month, or within two weeks of getting business.

The Chair reminded Senators who have not yet submitted their reports to do so.

Agenda item 3.0: Approval of the Minutes (3/1/2012 Meeting)

- Senator Alcott moved to approve the 3/1/2012 meeting minutes.
 - Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Agenda item 4.0: Executive Council Reports – Postponed from 3/1/12

- Vice President of Academic Affairs Hussain
 - VP Hussain: I am presenting my EC report.
 - I inherited the PASS program since my appointment in November.
 - The program had eight students and we had few records on the number of tutors.
 - We revamped the program, hiring a total of twenty tutors and serving a total of 47 students. It has since moved up to 64 students.
 - We have increased advertising for the PASS tutoring program and have worked with the administration in terms of getting rooms and space.
 - Unfortunately, on Feb. 27th, we received news that during the previous administration, the program has exceeded its budget. The President and I decided that we should suspend the program at this time, in order to address the fiscal issues in the program.
 - We started with \$20,000 for the whole year, and it was spent in less than three months. We have in fact gone beyond the allotted budget. I have also let go members of my staff who were involved in supervising the program.
 - We are working with officials from the Career center.
 - Senator Adams: What was the PASS budget at the start of the year?
 - VP Hussain: \$20,000.
 - Senator Adams: When did we go past the allotted budget?
 - VP Hussain: We spent \$8,000 in November and \$8,000 in December.
 - Senator Adams: When was the last time you had contact with anyone with the administration with regards to the academic calendar?

- VP Hussain: The last time I spoke with him was at the day the Vice Provost appeared to answer questions.
 - Senator Adams: Regarding the recent EC meeting. Would you give further elaboration on your vote for Rebecca Safir?
 - VP Hussain: Everything is in the minutes. I do not feel like I need to defend why I voted a certain way.
 - Senator Adams: Are you aware that via a resolution, the Senate can compel your testimony?
 - VP Hussain: I was not aware that a resolution to that effect had passed.
 - Senator Adams: Are you aware of the straw poll vote from last Senate meeting, regarding the vote?
 - VP Hussain: I would likely vote the same way if a new vote was held on the same issue.
 - Senator Adams: Do you distrust the opinion of President Maloof or PPT Simmons in the selection of their nominees?
 - VP Hussain: I believe the President and PPT are smart people, but just as they had the duty to nominate a candidate, I had the duty to vote as I thought best.
 - Senator Tausz (to Senator Adams): Is it possible that there is another reason unstated that needed to be discussed, but was denied to the executive council with the down-vote of entering executive session?
 - Senator Adams: It is possible.
- Freshman Class Representative Jiang
 - Rep. Jiang: I would like to apologize for the appearance of the report. I believe it is clear.
 - I worked on the freshman voting issue. First year freshman with sophomore academic standing had not been able to vote for the freshman council representative.
 - I was responsible for doing all the research for the academic calendar discussion.
 - I am finishing up research on the printing quota issue.
 - I have been working closely with DoIT regarding problems of U2 students who were never U1 students at this university, to allow them to be able to vote for both the freshman and sophomore representatives.
 - I have been working on the financial records and internal expenses of the USG.
 - Senator Adams: With regards to the EC meeting, would you care to explain why you abstained on the vote confirming Ms. Safir to the Senate?
 - Rep. Jiang: I was not found of the fact that she was a personal assistant. We had little time regarding the decision.
 - Senator Adams: Do you feel this will have any negative repercussions on the functioning of the Senate?

- Rep. Jiang: I believe that we will relist the position on ZebraNet for the vacant position. I believe that we will be able to find a qualified and competent candidate.
- VP Hussain: I want to condemn this again. It is ridiculous that this issue is being brought up. Do you feel that you should be obligated to speak before the Senate on this issue?
 - Rep. Jiang: I believe we have the right to make our own decisions. I do not believe we need to elaborate on our vote in this situation.
 - Senator Williams: Whose personal assistant was the candidate?
 - Rep. Jiang: She was the personal assistant of EVP Machalow.

Agenda item 5.0: Revision #2 to the Financial Bylaws Act – Presidential Veto Exercised

- President Maloof exercised his veto on this legislation.
- President Maloof: After the legislation was passed, I spoke to Treasurer Kirnbauer and EVP Machalow. Both strongly felt the need that the legislation needed to be modified. I had no strong feeling on the matter. With two EC members feeling against it, I was a team player, and felt that the legislation should be vetoed.
- Senator Adams: Are you aware of the memo I handed out earlier this afternoon?
 - President Maloof: Yes.
 - Senator Adams: How would you feel if the amendments made in the memo were adopted?
 - President Maloof: I think I should answer after the Senate discussed this issue.
- Senator Sockin: Did you feel no opinion on the issue or did you feel that the changes were not important?
 - President Maloof: My general view is that we should not change the rules for clubs and organizations during the middle of the semester and create any unfair discrepancies. My view of this – I understand why clubs want to do that, but I want to hear from the Senate how you feel on that topic, on whether or not it is a good idea to make changes within the middle of the year.
 - Senator Sockin: Quick “yes” or “no,” if Senator Adams’ changes would be enacted in the fall, what would your view be?
 - President Maloof: I would then be in favor of the legislation.
- Senator Adams moved to approve “Revision #2 for the Financial Bylaws Act.”
 - Senator Adams: I have drawn up a memo explaining the changes I made and reflecting how the legislation can be improved. (See “Memo from Senator Adams...”)
 - Senator Adams: As for changes in the rules during the middle of the year, I would prefer that any changes take effect immediately.
 - Senator Simmons: The changes outlined here seem like a great idea. The rule on charging speakers no more than 10% of their usual money is a strong failsafe.
 - Senator Adams moved to amend section #3 of the “Revision #2 to the Financial Bylaws Act”:

- Section 3: AMENDMENT
 - Section 118, Line 3, part 1, shall be stricken and replaced with:
 - Spend more than \$2,000 on any individual speaker without either:
 - Providing evidence to the Administrative Director and the USG Treasurer that they are paying no greater than 110% of what any other entity has paid that speaker in the past.
 - Receiving the approval of the budget committee.
 - Section 118, Line 3, part 2, shall be stricken and part 3 shall be renumbered to be part 2.
 - On the motion to amend: Motion passed by a vote of 18-0-0. (Roll Call #1).
- Senator Adams: We should also keep in mind that part 3 limits refreshments to \$300 for speaker events. This may not be suitable for larger events. Do fellow Senators believe it should be amended?
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: I personally do not think so. Clubs will often offer a full-blown dinner to invite students to attend a lesser known speaker. I believe the speaker's prestige should make the event, not the food offered.
- Senator Bibby: It might be a good idea to leave any limits for speaker events to the discretion of the Treasurer.
- Senator Adams: I think Senator Bibby's idea might give too much work for the Treasurer and it might be abused in the future.
- Senator Adams moved to amend the legislation, creating the new Section 118, Line 3, Part 2, which shall read:
 - Purchase no more than \$300.00 worth of refreshments for the attendees of a Speaker's event without the prior approval of the USG Treasurer.
 - Senator Rustemi: Is that not the current way it works?
 - Senator Adams: No, the way it currently reads is an almost absolute limit to \$300, but without the Treasurer being able to override it.
 - The motion was approved by the bill's sponsor as a friendly amendment.
- Senator Adams moved to make miscellaneous punctuation and grammatical corrections, all of which were deemed as friendly amendments and approved.
- On the main motion: Motion approved by a vote of 18-0-1. (Roll Call #2).

Agenda item 6.0: Graded/Pass/No Credit Option Proposal

- EVP Machalow left the Chair. PPT Simmons in the Chair.
- EVP Machalow: This is the graded/pass/no credit option.
 - I have included an e-mail from the Chair of the Undergraduate Council as well as the current grading policy and the proposed policy.
 - Basically, as of right now, if you are a student enrolled in a class that you are not enjoying, you may have exercise the "Pass/No Credit" option by the 9th week of the semester.

- What the proposal in the undergraduate council is to mimic Dartmouth's policy.
- You would be able to go to the registrar and set a specific grade. If you make that grade or higher, then the grade is recorded by the registrar. If the grade is not reached but is a passing one, you would get a pass. If you fail, you would get no credit.
- The University Senate and the Undergraduate Council have endorsed this proposal.
- Senator Rustemi: Is there a limit on doing this action three times?
 - EVP Machalow: That is the policy in Dartmouth, but our proposal would allow students to exercise this option once per semester, every semester.
- Senator Adedapo: Would giving the option to do a G/P/NC every semester make it too easy for students to get a high GPA?
 - EVP Machalow: Proceeding with the proposal would give students the option to expand their horizons and enroll in classes that they might not otherwise feel motivated to take. In addition, it would replace the ability to P/NC under the current system, which allows students to P/NC two classes per semester.
- Senator Bibby: I think the current proposal is a great idea for students.
- Senator Sockin: If a student exercises the G/P/NC and gets the threshold grade, would the student's G/P/NC be recorded?
 - EVP Machalow: No, that would be something recorded internally. It would not show up on your transcript.
 - Senator Sockin: Would there be a limit on the amount of G/P/NC you can have for your major?
 - EVP Machalow: Some departments do not allow students to P/NC classes within their major; this change would not affect that.
- VP Hussain: I want to thank all those who worked on this proposal, which will benefit students.
- Senator Tausz: Instead of increasing student motivation for classes, I think this will decrease it. I think it will decrease motivation for the class that is G/P/NC.
 - EVP Machalow: I think the proposal is a better system. Under the current system, I would be forced to P/NC courses that I am not sure I am ready to take. Under the proposed system, I would be motivated to do well in the class, as I might do well enough to get a threshold grade.
- President Maloof: I yield to Senator Lubitz.
- Senator Lubitz: I move to suspend the rules in order to allow Katie Watt to speak.
 - Motion approved by unanimous consent.
- Ms. Watt: I think we discussed and brought up many of the issues and concerns that Senators have already brought up.
- Senator Umalie: When you P/NC a class, are you allowed to take it again?

- EVP Machalow: Yes, unless the class is not repeatable.
- Senator Adedapo: Are similar systems used in nearby universities?
 - EVP Machalow: There is a somewhat similar system in NYU and Brown Universities, although we are adopting more of a middle ground.
- Senator Sockin: This proposal might completely get rid of risk for students.
 - Ms. Watt: But the risk still remains. A student might still fail the course.
- Senator Bertrand: I do not think that students are using the P/NC options on classes that they are doing well in.
- Senator Gunther: There is still a risk for students in not abusing the new system, as there is still a great risk in getting a P or NC.
- Senator Sockin: I believe that the current system is a safety net, but the G/P/NC is a super safety net.
- Senator Platt: This option helps students like me. I am taking a course for fun, which I am currently P/NCing. If I had the G/P/NC option, I might also benefit from a good grade on that course, if I happen to do really well in it.
- Senator Szeszler: Could anyone explain how the current P/NC option is reflected in the GPA?
 - EVP Machalow answered the question by referring the Senator to the included material, which shows how this is done.
- Ms. Watt: I P/NCed a class that I believe I could have done really well in, and I earned that grade just as much as anyone else, but it now appears as a “P” in my transcript.
- Senator Williams: I understand Senator Sockin’s contention, but the new system still forces students to work for their grade. What is wrong with that?
 - Senator Sockin: There is an option for students to audit classes.
- VP Hussain: Our job is to provide for students and provide a safety net for them. We should never advocate “not helping” students.
- President Maloof: I definitely understand what Senator Sockin is saying. I think often times, the reality of the situation is that students P/NC a class and then stop paying attention or feeling fully motivated, since the best they can do in that class is get a P. Students who are struggling can exercise a G/P/NC option to help themselves, as well as retaining the motivation that they might do better.
- Senator Rustemi: Many students do not want to see a P or NC on their transcript. Our job is to help students. Why not help them?
- Senator Adedapo: I agree with my fellow Senators. This is a great opportunity for students, but my problem is giving students this option once per semester. I feel that if we had a limit of three courses over the entire academic year, it would be much better.
- EVP Machalow: Dartmouth is different from Stony Brook. Dartmouth has four separate quarters. They do not take the same number of courses that we take. For Dartmouth, they are getting three non-recording options.

- Ms. Watt: I wanted to mention that this makes us better students. As President Maloof said, most students who P/NC a course lose all incentive to work hard. This new option gives students a reason to work hard and be engaged in their classes.
- Senator Sockin: I have three comments. To President Maloof, I am saying that this option helps students too much. To Ms. Watt, you are talking about a group of people who do not show up anymore. Even if we give them this option, I do not think that group of people would change. Finally, if we make this a more convenient option, why don't we make it more convenient?
- VP Hussain: I wanted to ask if this option will only be given once per course.
 - EVP Machalow: Yes, it will only be allowed once per given course.
 - VP Hussain: I feel that this is a good option then.
- EVP Machalow: We are not trying to cheapen the value of a Stony Brook degree at this point. This is not to inflate GPAs but rather to help students and motivate them to keep trying.
- Senator Fan: I agree with Senator Sockin and his reasoning. I think that this option gives too much power to students who take this option. You have to compare those students with those who are actually taking the class without a G/P/NC option. What about the students who are taking a difficult course who cannot P/NC? That is the bad thing about this. It gives immunity to the students taking this option.
- Senator Alcott: As a student who has never taken advantage of P/NC, I would say that I would use this new option.
- Senator Adams: Can we move on?
- EVP Machalow: It has been requested that the student government weigh in on this.
- Senator Tausz: I move that we take a straw poll on the option as it currently stands.
 - Straw Poll: In favor of the G/P/NC option as currently proposed:
 - Yes: 14
 - No: 4
 - Abstain: 0
 - Straw Poll: On the deadline for withdrawing or G/P/NC on the 9th or 10th week of the semester:
 - 9 weeks: 3
 - 10 weeks: 13
 - Abstain: 2

Agenda item 7.0: Annual Budget Process Timeline Revision

- Treasurer Kirnbauer presented the budget process timeline revision.

- Treasurer Kirnbauer: The applications were due last Wednesday at 5 pm. What I did was extending the deadline to 6 pm. Even under my extension, out of the 125 clubs, only about 90 sent me an e-mail before the 6 pm deadline.
- There are about 30 clubs who did not apply for a budget. There could be many reasons. E-board miscommunications within themselves or in communicating with us.
- If we exclude those clubs, it will be difficult to accommodate those clubs in the Fall Revisions process.
- What this amended timeline would do is allow my office to accept late submissions until 3/12 at 5 pm.
- What we will do as a Budget Committee for those clubs, is instead of enacting the 66% rule in the fall, is we might as well accept as many club budget applications as possible now.
- The reason we did it for 3/12 is because we will be assembling a draft budget shortly thereafter, so we cannot given more than 3/12 to accept new budgets.
- Senator Adams moved to approve the new timeline.
 - Senator Adams: We are running out of time. This is a great idea. Please vote yes.
 - On the motion: Motion passed by a vote of 18-0-0. (Roll Call #3).
- Senator Tausz moved to suspend the rules to allow all club representatives to speak.
 - Motion approved without objection.

Agenda item 8.0: Stony Brook Pre-Law Society National Tournament Grant

- EVP Machalow left the Chair. PPT Simmons in the Chair.
- Treasurer Kirnbauer: This is the first time that the Mock Trial team made it to the national tournament.
 - This club did not have a great deal of time to ask for funding.
 - This grant is to allow the club to compete in Washington, D.C.
 - The club made a great effort to minimize their expenses.
 - The club members would not be able to afford to compete without this grant.
- Senator Tausz: How many people will be going?
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: 13
- Senator Adedapo: How much is left in the budget?
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: At this time, there is only \$7,000. There is a possibility that we might be able to get some more money by shuffling some of our accounts.
- Senator Williams moved to approve the Stony Brook Pre-Law Society National Tournament Grant for \$2,010.
 - Motion approved by a vote of 16-0-1. (Roll Call #4).
 - EVP Machalow returned to the Chair.

Agenda item 9.0: African Students Union Event Grant

- Senator Adams moved to amend the agenda to bring up “Math Club” in item 10.0 before 9.0.

- Motion fails by a vote of 2-11-5. (Roll Call #5).
- Treasurer Kirnbauer: The ASU Aftershow Galla is the club's biggest event and is part of a huge weekend for them. President Maloof and I have been working closely with the club to help pull this off.
 - There has been extensive budgeting and financing.
 - The club has already increased ticket prices – without this event grant, I do not believe the club would be able to pull off this event.
 - Senator Adams: I see that the club was approved for \$3,521, but according to the budget we have online, they would be over by \$21.
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: Yes.
 - Senator Tausz: Is there a representative from ASU?
 - Chair: Senator Bibby is a member, but should not speak, in my opinion, under the rules.
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: President Maloof and I have extensive knowledge of the event and will likely be able to answer any of your questions.
 - Senator Williams: Can you explain the breakdown?
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: These are all the estimated prices for the show. The club cannot adjust the amounts that the University Police, CSS, or Events Management charge for the event.
 - President Maloof: If you see UPD or CSS on the Budget, they are required to give their pricing for the entire evening.
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: If you are looking for financial need for the event, ASU has a little more than \$2000 left in their budget for the fashion show and after-party. It has been made very clear to me and the President that the club is in financial need.
 - Senator Umalie: What is the after-show for?
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: It is a party after the fashion show. It is a party that goes late into the night.
 - Senator Umalie: Do you think that the after-show will get more people to come? Is it essential?
 - Treasurer Kirnbauer: It is my understanding that these are two separate events, each with one ticket, but the club is doing combined pricing. I would make the argument that this is a largely successful event that is a tradition for the club.
 - Senator Adams moved to approve the override for this event, to allow the club to get more than \$3000.
 - Approved without objection.
 - Senator Adams moved to amend the amount to \$3500.
 - Approved as friendly.
 - On the motion to approve the event grant for \$3500:
 - Motion approved by a vote of 15-0-3. (Roll Call #6).

Agenda item 10.0: Special Services Council Funding Recommendations

- Math Club
 - Senator Gunther presented the budget request.
 - We have a very limited budget remaining in SSC.
 - We allocated the club enough money for their conference fees and transportation by car only.
 - Senator Adams: Is the club comfortable with \$400?
 - Mr. Kevin Sackel (President of Math Club): I have been working hard to see if people can drive to the event. As of now, I have found two drivers, and we need three. I am confident that we will be able to find enough transportation.
 - Senator Williams moved to accept the budget application to the Math Club for \$400.
 - Motion approved by a vote of 17-0-1. (Roll Call #7).
- Stony Brook University Speech and Debate Society
 - The club requested to go to two events, in MIT and Cornell.
 - As a committee, we discussed what would be most essential to the club, and they indicated the Cornell trip.
 - We allocated a total of \$550 for the transportation and hotel fees for the Cornell trip.
 - Senator Adams moved to approve the SSC club budget for \$550.
 - Motion approved by a vote of 18-0-0. (Roll Call #8).
- Stony Brook Women's Soccer Club
 - It would be difficult to provide funds for team jerseys, but we did approve funding for soccer balls, ball bag, and driving to the Albany competition.
 - Senator Williams: Can you compete without the uniforms?
 - Kathryn Michaud (Club representative): Without the uniforms, club members who do not currently have uniforms will not be able to compete unless they buy a jersey out-of-pocket.
 - Senator Umalie: Did you try to fundraise for the event?
 - Club rep: It is difficult as we are short on time.
 - Senator Adams moved to approve the club's budget for \$570.97.
 - Motion approved by a vote of 18-0-0. (Roll Call #9).
- Undergraduate Anthropology Society
 - The club helpfully gave us the minimum amounts they needed for their event.
 - Senator Adams: Could you explain the \$50 allocation for "goat meat"?
 - Senator Gunther: I believe this is an educational event.
 - Senator Szeszler: The club representative stated that they donate money to the farm in exchange for the amount donated.
 - Senator Adams: I know we are not allowed to donate, but this is almost a "gift-in-kind" situation. Is this legal?

