



Students' Association Senate Agenda

Meeting of December 12, 2011

Speaker: Dan Cohn

Deputy Speaker: Alina Czekai

SENATORS PRESENT: Benitez, Brill, Brooks, Brookstein, Codjoe, DeMeo, Fernandes, Gaona, Macias, Patel, Rambarran, Sanchez, Sharma, Sobolewski

SENATORS ABSENT: Arastu, Donnelly, Whittier

CALL TO ORDER: 9:00 PM

SPEAKER'S BRIEFING

Speaker Cohn introduces the Open Forum.

OPEN FORUM/CONSTITUENCY REPORT

Res Life Chair Page introduces Laurel Contomanolis from Residential Life. She describes the changes to the lottery system that have been discussed. They have a task force that involves students and staff from Residential Life.

Contomanolis states that the process is currently very manual in nature. In the future, students will be able to go online and students will be able to complete the process online. The program will be tested in the fall, and hopefully it will be functioning in an electronic format next year.

Contomanolis states that they like the priority system of seniors having the highest priority. Also, they are considering the possibility of allowing sophomores to live off campus. Riverview will remain a junior and senior residential building. Additionally, they will most likely eliminate the extra ½ point that Southside currently receive.

Senator Brill states that there is a general consensus that sophomores should be allowed to move off campus especially since there is limited housing. Brill feels that financial reasons should be a main point, not just involvement on campus in determining whether sophomores should be allowed to live off campus.

Senator Brookstein asks why juniors do not need to prove that they can live off campus, whereas sophomores do. Contomanolis states that the University is concerned with sophomore retention.

Speaker Cohn inquires if they have been in contact with the Sophomore Committee. Contomanolis responds that the Dean of Sophomores is now part of the committee.

Senator Sobolewski feels that if the school is going to admit more students, it should allow sophomores to live off campus to ensure everyone has housing. President Halpern expresses agreement.

Senator Wang asks if sophomores and juniors would have the same points in the lottery. Contomanolis answers in the affirmative.

Senator DeMeo likes the current point system and the hierarchy of the seniority.

Senator Sanchez states that there is a possibility that a student could not get their preference in housing two years in a row. If an individual doesn't get their preference sophomore year, they can get it junior year.

Senator Brill states that only one junior per suite should be allowed to live with seniors in Riverview.

President Halpern states that the only way to ensure that upperclassmen are given priority based on seniority is via the current point system. It merits discussion that people not knowing who they are going to live with need extra time.

Senator Patel likes the system now. He thinks it should be made faster and more efficient. The hierarchy makes sense and it is fair. He feels that it should happen later in the year. February is too early.

Aide Bendes inquires if special housing lotteries would function separately. Contomanolis responds in the affirmative.

Rambarran moves to close the Speaker's List, seconded by Senator Sobolewski by hand vote.

The *motion passes* 15-0-0.

Transport. Student, Andy Debbins, expresses concern with the fact that the Gold Line has stopped making stops on Genesee Street on the route from campus to Riverview in the mornings. Without the Gold Line Shuttle, students have to walk an additional fifteen minutes to catch the bus. He has a petition of 400 student signatures that shows that many students have the same concern.

Debbins states that parents are concerned about safety, especially for females. There have been muggings in broad daylight there and it is also uncomfortable to walk in the cold winter temperatures.

Debbins states that the issue with the most salience is the issue of equity. Everyone pays a \$24 transportation. He does not think it is fair that students who can afford to live in Riverview are the only ones who deserve to be taken to campus from their place of residence. He urges that there is a return to the status quo. Debbins states that he made the decision to live off campus knowing that the bus makes stops there. It has been running like that for the past two years. He invites other off campus students to share reasons.

Student, Yoni Bokser, states that the only potential reasonable issue is that the only time the bus is late is when it takes many stops during the day. He feels that this can easily be fixed by adding official stops on the schedule. One or two stops would be reasonable.

Students express frustration that there was no announcement that this change was going to take place. The busses drove by students on the street and refused to pick them up. Students have been missing class and other commitments on campus.

Chair Page states that bus drivers were stopping when they were not supposed to. From the administration's point, they were not expected to make those stops in the first place.

Chair Page feels that a great solution would be to make official stops. She urges students to voice where they would like these stops to be.

President Halpern apologizes for the lack of communication.

Chair Page states that in order to make official stops, they have to change

the schedule. The changes would happen for next semester. It is possible that they can continue to be picked up for the rest of the semester.

President Halpern states that he and Page will look into this issue and they will make a post on the Hive.

Senator Sobolewski expresses frustration that the change was not communicated to the student body and that this has put many students in dangerous situations.

Senator Brooks asks Debbins to read petition. Debbins reads the petition.

Senator DeMeo inquires what specific incidence led to the drivers re-adhering to the policy. Halpern explains that a driver had a personal emergency and the replacement driver was not aware of how the route was run.

Sustainability Coordinator Finnie states that although it is policy, because it was not enforced and the status quo seemed to work well, it should go back to the way it has been run until recently.

Yoni Bokser feels that a compromise would work fine such as stopping at every other street.

Senator DeMeo states that he lives in Riverview and he has been late many times because the schedule is not properly adhered to.

Senator Sanchez feels that it is important that they consider official stops to prevent this from happening again. There should be a set policy.

Tuition Student, Alykhan Alani, expresses concerns with the increase in tuition.

Senator Sharma suggests Senators and members of the gallery look at the website studentdebt.org to learn more about the issue.

Senator Sobolewski states that tuition costs are rising all over the country. She states that a great portion of the University's campaign will be going to student scholarships.

President Halpern expresses agreement and states that two large donors have made donations available for student aid and student support. It will not keep tuition costs from rising, but it will make more financial aid

available

Alani states that the overarching issue is the fact that the tuition costs are still rising.

President Halpern states that in January, there will be a breakdown of where tuition dollars and the student activities fee go on the Hive. Halpern is in the process of getting final dean approval.

Alani states that transparency will be a wonderful step in the right direction

Rambarran states that donations to the capital campaign will provide additional financial support. He states that the current endowment is \$1.7 and they are planning on adding more.

Alani feels that the campaign is about building and expanding the campus, not student aid. President Halpern states that student support is the number one priority, whereas facilities are the third priority.

Senator Rambarran states that from an economic standpoint, the rise in tuition is following the principles of supply and demand because students are willing to pay these prices. Senator Gaona expresses agreement. He states that consumers determine the prices because they are willing to continue to pay them as the prices increase.

Alani feels that SA Government and the student body have the power to enact change and they should do so.

Chair Holden states that it is difficult to stop tuition from increasing, but it would help to increase financial aid. She states that her financial aid was lowered from one year to the next, and the aid should be consistent.

Aide Bendes feels that with the issue at hand is in regards to increasing scholarship, and not lowering tuition since it is inevitable that tuition will rise.

Senator Benitez states that he feels that not much can be done to keep the tuition prices from rising.

DeMeo *moves to close the Speaker's List*, seconded by Senator Brooks.

The motion passes 10-0-3.

Senator Brookstein urges Senator Halpern to publicize the tuition breakdown on the Hive as soon as possible. Brookstein feels that the rise in tuition is justifiable.

Senator Macias states he feels that the Senate does not have enough information about the matter and he encourages President Halpern to gather more information from Dean Feldman and to take further action from there. He appreciates Alani bringing this issue to the Senate.

Senator Brill states that the school should guarantee consistent financial aid for students from one year to the next.

President Halpern states that he will voice this concern with administration.

Alani expresses frustration and states that the Senate should help to change this injustice.

Speaker Cohn states that, three years ago, there was a letter written by the SA Senate that asked that they freeze tuition and there was a freeze. There was a letter drafted by Eric Weissman in 2008 when the market tanked.

Alani thanks the Senate for listening to his concerns. He encourages them to look into the issue and to advocate for the interests of the student body.

Bar Bus

Senator Brookstein states that the Bar Bus & Off Campus Events Committee will meet this week with security.

Senator Brill states that the committee has posed three fundamental questions. Firstly, do you feel we should have these events and why? Secondly, what are the benefits/detriments to campus community for having these events? Thirdly, what changes should happen for them to be brought back?

Senator Brill feels that formals and senior nights should be excluded from the ban on bar events. Most recent issues have not been a result of these events. She states that she has voiced this suggestion to the committee. Senator Brookstein expresses frustration with the fact that the administration does not always listen to the suggestions of students.

Admin. Senator Sobolewski states that the Administrative Committee will meet on December 15, 2011.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Halpern discusses his meeting regarding the college town. He met with the developer. Chair Holden will reach out to students to see what they would like to see in the college town.

President Halpern states that there will be upcoming appointments the first meeting back from break.

President Halpern states that in regards to the issue of having cumulative exams before reading period, the policy of not having these exams during this time period will be more strongly enforced this year.

Senator Rambarran asks if there is a policy about having exams on the last day of class. Rambarran states that there is currently no policy regarding this matter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Appropriat.

Treasurer Eckert states that there is now \$12,082.55 remaining in q the Programming Supplemental Budget and \$8,675.41 in the Equipment Supplemental Budget.

Communicat.

Chair Holden states that Rocky's Report will go out tomorrow morning.

Chair Holden states that she will be publicizing information about the college town and she will be seeking student feedback. There will also be a Hive post tomorrow morning regarding the Winter Bike Storage.

Chair Holden states that the Initiatives page has been updated.

Policy

Chair Topudurti states that the Policy & Review Committee denied Trebellius preliminary status.

Chair Topudurti states that UR Libertarians was granted preliminary status.

Chair Topudurti states that the first meeting of the year will be with Athletes in Action.

Chair Topudurti states that the Midyear Report will go through the online testing next week. It was given to Chair Holden to be publicized in the Rocky's Report.

Projects

Chair Page states that there will be a Winter Bike Storage on Friday.

Chair Page states that the committee is in the final stages of finalizing the logo for the Safe Rides Home program.

Sustainability Coordinator Finnie states that SSC met last Friday to discuss Earth Week and the new recycling policies.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion A. Motion to approve constitution changes to UR Debate Union by Macias, seconded by Senator Fernandes.

Chair Topudurti introduces UR Debate Union. They would like to update the procedure for firing the coach.

Brookstein *moves to the previous question*, seconded by Senator Patel by hand vote.

The motion passes 12-0-2.

Motion B. Motion to approve Humma Sheikh to serve as co-chair of the Projects & Services Committee by Sanchez, seconded by Senator Fernandes.

President Halpern introduces Sheikh. She is a current Policy & Review and Projects & Services aide.

Senator Fernandes states that there will be a transition period.

Humma Sheikh introduces herself. She states that being a part of SA Government has been a positive experience and she looks forward to getting more involved.

Senator Sanchez asks Sheikh what projects she was responsible for on the committee this semester. Sheikh responds that she worked with residential life and dining. She enjoys working with students and gathering feedback.

Senator Brill asks Sheikh if she is prepared for the time commitment. Sheikh responds in the affirmative.

Chair Topudurti asks Sheikh how comfortable she feels about potentially having to confront members of the committee who are not fulfilling their responsibilities. Sheikh states that she will also seek to understand their perspective, but she will be sure to uphold the ideals of the committee and will feel comfortable addressing issues that arise.

Rambarran *moves to the previous question*, seconded by Senator Brill by secret ballot.

The *motion passes*.

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S REPORT

None

SPEAKER'S REPORT

Senator DeMeo resigns.

Speaker Cohn accepts Senator DeMeo's resignation.

ADJOURNMENT

DeMeo *moves to adjourn* seconded by Senator Patel at 11:51 PM.

Thank You,

Alina Czekai