



# Association of Amherst Students

Senate 2021 - 2022

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## [Agenda for September 6, 2021](#)

### I. Attendance

### II. Public Comment

A student asked in AAS could work with *The Amherst Student* to better publicize AAS decisions.

Basma said that we are running AAS under a hybrid model so that students can participate in meetings through Zoom, but AAS is happy to have *The Amherst Student* sit in on meetings and report on them. Basma said that the meetings are public.

Angelina said that she is speaking with *The Amherst Student's* leadership about getting writers to cover AAS.

### III. Minutes

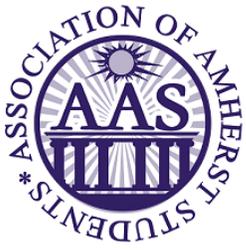
Cole asked for the minutes to be revised to better reflect the meaning of his motion to approve the Budgetary Committee recommendations with an adjustment, explaining that the motion was to approve travel and event funding irrespective of college COVID restrictions, so that the funds would be accessible to student organizations should restrictions change. The minutes previously described his motion as approving the recommendations with the caveat that funding for these events and travel would later be approved if restrictions would change.

Jae Yun responded to Cole's clarification, noting that the Budgetary Committee was not operating with that understanding and is currently holding back this funding until the trips or events are approved by Student Affairs.

Sydney added that the Budgetary Committee declined to approve certain requests because they did not believe that the requests were feasible given the college's COVID-19 restrictions on travel and large gatherings.

Jae Yun clarified that the Budgetary Committee recommended funding using the college's summer COVID-19 policies as a baseline, with the assumption that students could go anywhere in Hampshire County without overnight stays.

Minutes for 8/30/2021 passed by voice vote, revised to better reflect Cole's original motion.



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## IV. Rainy Day Fund Request: The Student

*The Amherst Student* is requesting \$6800 to hire three students for the editorial board assigned to make journalism more accessible to FLI and PoC students. The funding request pays for 75 hours of work per semester for three of these positions at \$15 per hour, plus \$50 for publicity. This is a pilot program intended to last at least three years, but AAS is only funding its first year and will reevaluate after that point whether to continue funding the project. Editors-in-Chief will work with AAS to pick the three students selected for this program, which would be funded by the rainy day fund.

Lucas asked how much is left in the rainy day fund.

Jae Yun said that approximately \$460,000 remains, but AAS should not aim to spend all of it since the Master General Fund is over budget and we want to preserve the fund for future projects.

Allie asked if this is supposed to be a long-term program.

Jae Yun said that it is intended to be a permanent program with each of the 3 students working over two-year-long terms, but we are just funding them for the first year to determine whether we should continue funding it beyond then.

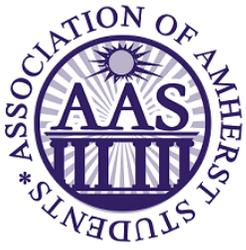
Lori asked if just the 3 students with this assignment will be paid, as opposed to every staff member of *The Student*.

Jae Yun replied in the affirmative: not everyone on *The Student* would be paid, just these three student hires.

Anna '23 asked if the funding was to create a specific position, or if it was for current staff members of *The Student* who would take on this additional role.

Jae Yun said that the funding could go to anyone working on *The Student* that is doing the work, but that the program will select applicants to fill the role (who may or may not already be part of *The Student*)

Angelina asked about the timestamps and logistics of paying the employees.



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Jae Yun said that they would be likely classified as student workers with the hours submitted to Monica Soto in Student Affairs.

Jalen asked how students would be chosen for the position and how personal background would be factored into the process.

Jae Yun said that students would apply and self-report their background (it is intended for people from underrepresented backgrounds), and would be considered by a selection committee of 2 senators and the Editor-in-Chief of *The Student*. Jae Yun emphasized that the intent of the program is to make the publication more diverse.

Cole asked if the funding proposal could be shared with AAS to review it in more detail.

Jae Yun sent [a link to the document](#) into the Zoom chat.

Sydney asked if *The Student* is telling students that it is a two year commitment, since we may not fund additional years depending on the success of the pilot program.

Jae Yun said that the pilot nature of the program should be made clear to applicants.

Anna '24 asked if funding for future years would come out of the rainy day fund again.

Jae Yun confirmed this, saying that the rainy day fund is meant for long-term projects like this.

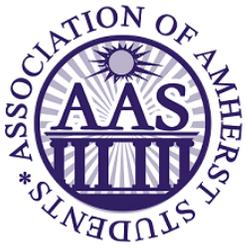
Cole motioned to approve *The Student's* request. The motion passed.

## V. BC Recs

Brooke asked about the Men's soccer coach being on-campus.

Jae Yun said that we approved it since he is in the testing protocol and therefore is allowed to be brought on campus.

Allie asked about the microphone funding line item, noting that AAS has funded many shared items and equipment in the past, so where do we store them and how do we publicize their availability to students?



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Jae Yun said that we have tried to make a database of this, but it has been hard. Generally, items like speakers and board games have been kept in Keefe under an honor system where clubs know that their equipment should be public. Our goal is to encourage universal access while ensuring that people are not stealing from clubs, as long as the items are easily accessible to the whole community.

Angelina asked where specifically these items are kept.

Jae Yun specified that much of it was in the Keefe basement, and there are closets for things like board games. The microphone in BC Recs for this week would be kept in the Campus Center booth. However, he noted that storage is very hard to find on campus, which is why these items are all stored in slightly different places.

Angelina asked how people would know where these items are or how they could get them; Cole added the question as to how students would even know that they exist.

Jae Yun said he did not have an answer, but that it would be a good senate project.

Allie motioned to approve BC recs. The motion passed.

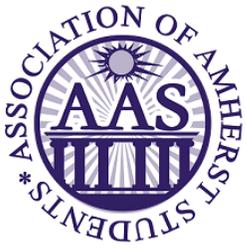
## **VI. Community Conversation Request from Dean Agosto**

Basma introduced Dean Agosto's concerns about the cleanliness of dorms after parties, and asked if students would be interested in working with her on a conversation.

Sydney said that there's no one person in charge of an event because parties are technically not allowed, so no one feels responsible to clean up. Furthermore, in her first year, student security existed to make sure that parties cleaned up after they ended, which would have help avoid situations like these.

Cole said that Sydney was spot-on, since previously parties were registered and people would be held responsible to clean up by a deadline. Dean Agosto talked about 'returning to normal', but in reality, we haven't done so because people can't register parties. Thus, cleanliness cannot be enforced.

Sirus suggested that Dean Agosto likely knows which team left a mess in the dorm, and that the coaches know these parties are being held and should thus bear some responsibility for allowing this outcome.



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Maira said that Cole's point about not being allowed to hold parties is a major reason why they result in such a mess, and, if we were to have this conversation with Dean Agosto, her question asking if this is the 'return to normal' students want contributes to an unproductive tone.

Yvette said that she's concerned about the safety of students at parties, having heard that people aren't calling ACEMS because they're worried about getting in trouble. To avoid health risks, the school shouldn't be as harsh in their approach to parties.

Sydney said that this conversation would not yield much serious student interest.

Brooke said that dorm damage is a major problem, and it stems from the suite-style housing. As a senior who has seen a lot of pre-COVID social life, the administration has seemed very hostile even to safe party culture. While messes are unacceptable, people want to gather, and it seems that the administration is on a very different page on what campus social life should look like. This message from Dean Agosto was unsettling, and we should consider how to make this discourse more productive, rather than attempting to eliminate all health risks or all messes in residence halls.

Cole added that we know from other schools that off-campus parties are very dangerous, and that what we have at Amherst is much safer than the alternative. To address this issue, we should engage with Dean Agosto and explain this reality.

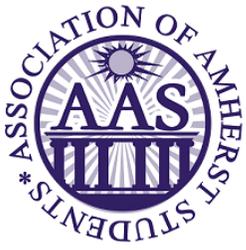
Basma asked if any senators are willing to engage in that conversation; Cole, Brooke, Sofia, Mattea, Anna '24, and Dania replied in the affirmative.

## **VII. On-Campus Check-ins**

Jae Yun asked if anyone on the COVID-19 task force could share updates.

Sydney, who is on the task force, said that there aren't any updates, but there is an online question form being released that they will use to produce an FAQ webpage.

Dania asked about the testing protocol, noting that the administration has made the process of assigning testing days really difficult for people who haven't been assigned to days yet. She added that this failure is hypocritical, given their opposition to parties for public health reasons even though they are not being systematic about testing students.



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Allie raised the issue that many people had their stuff in storage lost (full boxes were thrown away) and housing has not gotten back to them.

Mattea said that Liz Brozski reimbursed a lost couch in the past, and that perhaps there should be a communication to students about how to get reimbursed. Allie noted that Liz Brozski has not replied to an email on this issue in over a week.

Maira noted that there is still no concrete answer as to what post-9/13 COVID-19 restrictions on campus will be, but the task force is meeting on Friday.

Brooke asked if there is a dining committee. Basma replied that elections will be after freshmen senators are elected.

Brooke noted that Val container pick-up in dorms is not happening and is becoming a major issue.

Angelina suggested that dining could get rid of the dorm drop-off locations for the boxes to prevent them from piling up in the halls.

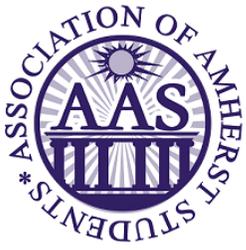
Jae Yun said that he and others eat in dorms and those drop-off locations are useful. The administration should understand that not everyone wants to eat outside, and that they should increase the frequency of pick-ups in dorms to address the issue.

Anna asked about moving container drop locations to outdoor central spots between residence halls (such as the area between the Greenways or the parking lot between the dorms in the Triangle).

Brooke asked if indoor dining at Val will ever open; Sydney replied that they do not know.

Maira said that the Val staff wants students to be able to eat indoors, but that allowing this would mean closing the Russ and Lewis serveries, leading to longer lines; the dining staff have to weigh this issue as well.

Jae Yun noted that in winter, if they don't open Val for indoor dining, the box drop-off problem inside dorms will be a lot worse since many more students will elect to eat indoors and drop off their containers there.



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Lori asked about Amherst SafeRide and if it is running; Kya said that it is currently running from 7p.m. to 3a.m.

Brooke asked about the porter potties around the main quad and who they're for, since there are no apparent construction projects ongoing in that area.

Jae Yun replied that he believes that they're for students attending outdoor classes. However, the doors on one were not working and using the restroom in Frost was a more effective alternative.

Allie asked if we could get more student workers to staff at Val and advocate for higher pay for them, suggesting that we could talk to President Martin or Dining Services Director Joe Flueckiger.

Kya said that there have been efforts to hire student workers at Val and that the wage was increased with a \$500 signing bonus.

Anna '24 noted that it is hard for students to fit working at Val in with class schedules.

Cole said that they also expect students to work 10 hours a week in Val with bad shift hours; such an arrangement can be overwhelming for students who are also taking classes full-time.

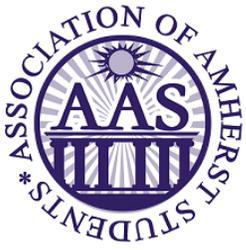
Jalen heard a rumor that Val reduced regular workers' pay to pre-COVID levels. Referencing Dean Agosto's email, Jae Yun asked if "this is what a return to normal looks like."

Sirus stated that the water bottle refill stations are not installed in every dorm, including Charles Drew, which comes across as anti-black. He also asked about funding his free hygiene products project for this year, asking if anyone on Senate would like to help.

Jae Yun said we can set up a meeting to fund it through the Master General Fund.

Sirus said he was talking with facilities to make it a permanent program but they need us to write a proposal for that funding, an idea with which Jae Yun agreed.

Courtney said Marriage Pact will run again on October 18. The Senate erupted in positive exclamations, expressions of appreciation, and laughter.



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Sydney asked where theme houses get funding. Jae Yun stated that the Office of Residential Life provides it.

Allie suggested that we set up a system to tip the Val and custodial workers and asked if anyone had ideas on how this could be implemented effectively.

Basma noted that there are laws about how tips can be deducted from wages, which may not have the intended effect for the staff.

Cole said that he is uncomfortable asking students to pay workers when they may not have money to do so, especially since the college is supposed to be paying the workers. He stressed that only some students have the financial resources to tip workers.

Dania said that she does not want to create a system of shame where students who don't have enough money to tip workers feel pressured to do so. She also expressed concern about creating a culture of students picking up the slack for the failings of the college's policies.

Lori asked if the college could give a bonus to staff as a thank-you from students.

Jae Yun said that we could try a program where AAS gives an amount to the workers and the college matches it, but that it is not AAS's job to pay the workers a fair wage, as the college should be doing that.

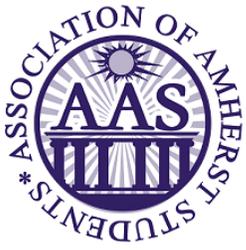
Kya asked about the Alumni Parents program, where the college supposedly asks alumni for donations and the college matches it, and if the college could replicate this model for their workers' pay.

## **VIII. Senate Project/Committee Updates**

### **A. Elections Committee**

Lucas outlined the elections schedule for the two open senate seats for the class of 2024, one open senate seat for the class of 2023, and seats for the first-years and transfer students. He raised the issue of whether or not the COVID-19-era protocols on banning campaigning and not requiring a petition to run for senate should continue.

Brooke said that everyone is on campus, so campaigns should be allowed since there is no longer an equity issue.



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Regarding the petition, Jae Yun said that, when he ran for senate, he just asked random people to sign, asking, “so what’s the value of that?”

Sydney asked why speech night will be on Zoom instead of outdoors, in-person.

Lucas stated that none of the tents have sufficient capacity for a large audience, and that it would be difficult to hear candidates speak in such a setting. An online format would make more sense.

Jae Yun further noted that setting up sound systems in the main quad can be expensive.

Jasper asked about whether there would be any at-large Judiciary Council seats up for election, noting that it would be better to have a full council to hear the pending case.

Lucas stated that since that election was held in the spring and only two candidates ran, the remaining two seats must remain unfilled until the next general election. He added that the same logic would hold for the eighth senate seat for the class of 2024

Basma mentioned that, in the past, there was a special election in December and that the September elections are generally considered ‘the next general election’. Jasper agreed, understanding this to be the case as well.

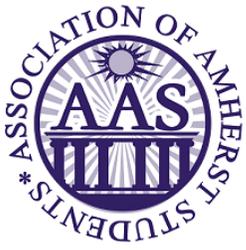
Without objection from the Senate, Lucas amended the number of seats open in the September election to 3 senate seats open for the Class of 2024 and two additional seats on the Judiciary Council.

Dania asked if JC includes senators or just at-large members. Basma stated that senators would be elected to JC after the first-years are elected into the senate.

Jasper explained that there will be 2 current senators, 2 freshmen senators, 2 already-seated at-large members, 2 new at-large members, and himself on the Judiciary Council.

Lucas asked if the petition requirement should continue; Brooke and Cole stated that, since it is already in the constitution, we should apply the requirement to the upcoming election.

Basma asked if Lucas needed the senate’s approval to send the announcement email for elections.



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Cole said “I did learn this, reading through the constitution today,” discovering that committees have full email privileges and do not need the approval of the senate to send them.

Lucas asked which constitution AAS is following, since there is a version on the website, as well as a marked-up Google Doc with some amendments made by JC last semester (some of which were approved by the Senate and some of which are still drafts).

Jae Yun and Cole advised Lucas to follow the version currently on the website.

## **IX. Officer Reports**

Angelina said that the Class of 2022 needs senior gift committee representatives, urging senior senators to let her know if they are available to participate. She also asked senators to be more conscious about the language they use in meetings (specifically, using the term ‘first-year’ instead of ‘freshman’).

## **X. Adjournment**

The senate adjourned.

*Minute Taker: Lucas Romualdo '24, AAS Secretary*

*Length of Meeting: One Hour and Fifteen Minutes*