

AAS Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: 10/27/2014

Meeting begins: 8:36 p.m.

I. Attendance

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Amherst Dance

Maddie Lobrano from Amherst Dance came to senate to discuss two main issues of the the club. The first issue was regarding their budget. Typically they ask for a lot of money from senate to fund their costumes, about \$1,700 dollars a semester. They do have a costume closet and their policy is that they have to check the costume closet first before ordering anything new. In the past, they have asked for a lump sum of money. However, this year they plan to have choreographers figure out what they need before they ask for the money. This way works better for both parties. They also struggle with the problem that the Theater and Dance department refuses to work with them so its hard to get rehearsal space and show dates.

Abigail Xu asked what reasons the department gives for not giving them rehearsal and performance space.

Maddie said that sometimes there are departmental needs, but it mostly seems out of spite. They say they're scheduling events for the times Amherst Dance would like perform but at the end of the semester no events were ever scheduled.

Peter Crane asked what club dues pay for.

Maddie explained that they are for parties and club t-shirts for the semester.

Virginia Hassell asked if they could rehearse in the Powerhouse.

Maddie said they could, but she has no idea how to coordinate that.

Virginia gave her the Powerhouse email and said that she could probably get something consistent scheduled.

Blaine Werner suggested getting in touch with Leykia Brill if the Theater and Dance department continues to be uncooperative with the students.

Kyra Ellis-Moore said that dance has a lot more specific rehearsal requirements because of the need for high quality floors and mirrors. She also said that the past few semester they have had shows during reading period and they pack the house every time. the Theater and Dance department should encourage and support an organization that promotes student interest in dance performance.

Dean Vasquez said that the Theater and Dance department collaborated in the Powerhouse design to make sure it was compatible for dance.

Juan Gabriel Delgado Montes suggested organizing a workshop with the department to ease the tension between the groups.

Richard Park suggested having a mediated meeting between the two groups because if there is bad blood between the two groups they need to discuss the issues they each have and work it out. This would be better than getting shut down over and over again.

Juan Gabriel suggested figuring out a way to quantify the support of Amherst Dance within the student body in order to demonstrate the wide support the organization has to the department. This could be done through a school petition or attendance statistics.

IV. Charles Drew Health Professions Society

Christian Ramirez, Treasurer of the Charles Drew Health Professions Society, came to talk to senate. CDHPS is a support group for students interested in all of the health professions. They have three goals: connect students with upperclassmen with similar goals, connect students with faculty and alumni for networking, and bring in related speakers. They have been looking for funding for the peer mentoring program because theres no budget for it yet. They currently have 35 mentees and 26 mentors. They also hope to increase the size of the organization in the coming years. Next semester they hope to organize a TED talk event centering around the subject of pre-health with speakers from all parts of the health community. They hope to increase exposure to careers that are not just pre-med, including careers in public health and nursing. They hope to ask real professionals about health in the valley and around the world. He asked for the two \$500 dollar honorariums they have requested for this semester to be reallocated to next semester.

Abigail praised their goals and vision for the club. She also clarified that they will not be able to reallocate the money to next semester, however he should talk to Hao about having a bigger budget next semester. She suggested partnering with the Career Center.

Blaine asked how long their organization has existed and what their alumni support is.

Christian said that the organization was founded in 1992 for minority student support, but obviously now everyone is welcome. They know which alums are in health careers but not if they were in CDHPS specifically.

Jonathan Appel said that, through the experience of his friends, the resources for pre-vet students are not sufficient. He asked if Christian agrees.

Christian said that they can connect upperclassmen students to underclassmen students with the same interests without any problem. They're trying to broaden their information resources for all other health careers, not just doctors. They are working to bring in more diverse speakers to campus as well.

Juan Gabriel asked how the peer mentorship program used to be run.

Christian said that it used to be run by two seniors who graduated last year. Now it is under the purview of CDHPS. The e-board organizes it and pairs students with each other.

Rama Hagos suggested that they reach out to the Public Health Collaborative, GlobeMed and other health-related clubs on campus to organize the TED talks events in order to expand the available work force and hopefully get more members of CDHPS.

Reynaldo Pena said that they should talk to other clubs to get the word out about their own. He is in GlobeMed and had no idea about this club.

V. Green Amherst Project

The Green Amherst Project presented a resolution to make Amherst College a plastic water-bottle free campus by Fall 2016. They chose this date because this is when the new dorms will be ready. They have talked to dining services and they have been incredibly supportive. Last year they stopped using plastic water bottles at commencement. They are also working with the athletics department and had all sports teams agree to suspend the use of disposable water bottles.

RJ Kermes suggested sending a poll to the entire student body to garner support.

Sam Keaser said that this was something he's been wanting to work on and he is excited about the project.

Karen Blake said that she always likes when senate supports student initiatives like this one. She also asked what they were going to do about grab and go.

A representative said that they want to have a fill station at grab and go and hopes to do a trial run soon. There's a cost issue with serving boxed water at grab and go.

Sheron Terho asked how this policy would be enforced.

A representative said that this is a good question. She says that if they aren't selling them on campus that is definitely a deterrent. They are also planning a big campaign for publicity and social encouragement.

Fawzi Itani suggested in the future expanding into town and encouraging businesses to have fill stations.

RJ Kermes asked if they would like them to pass this survey tonight.

Blaine said that they have to vote on a set date to send it to abide by the constitution.

The representatives asked for november 17, 2014.

A motion was made to send the GAP survey on November 17, 2014

Vote to send GAP survey on November 17, 2014.

Result: Passed.

VI. Amherst College Republicans

Robert Lucido stated that they are back with more information after attending the BC meeting last week. He explained that they are planning to bring Mosab Hassan Yousef. The Amherst Police Department stated that the speaker poses no greater threat to the campus than any other controversial speaker.

Alex Southmayd presented the threat analysis of the speaker from the Amherst Police Department. The police department contacted the FBI during their research and determined that the speaker poses no greater threat to the campus than any other controversial speaker.

Robert, Tierney, and RJ collaborated on a letter submitted to the senate arguing against the decision made in the previous meeting. This five page letter was read to the senate by Juan Gabriel.

Peter asked if the student from Gaza was asked permission to be quoted in the letter.

Robert explained that she made the statement in an open forum.

KC Fussell wanted to make a clarification between content-based judgement and value-based judgement. In order for the senate to operate, they have to make value-based judgement. The senate doesn't have funds to fund every single desire of the student body.

Robert said that value-based judgements are economically necessary, that was not the content of the debate

Tierney Werner said that while value-based judgements are necessary they have not been codified. The motion on the table was to reallocate the money in the budget that was already given to the College Republicans. This is not a debate on the fiscal ability to fund the event.

Blaine agreed with Tierney. There is a difference between ski trips and TD Garden events, rather than speakers being brought to campus for the entire student body to enjoy.

Jonathan said that they have to see how many people the event will serve and how many people it will benefit. Jonathan also said that he felt uncomfortable with the comment directed against the Amherst Safespace for Kinksters.

Robert thanked Jonathan for that point. That was the feeling he intended to draw through the juxtaposition.

Sam moved to reallocate \$7,500 dollars to the Amherst College Republicans.

Siraj Sindhu stated that he was misquoted a couple times in the letter. He argued that they need to pay attention to the scope and scale of funding in regard to the student body's interest.

Claire Jia clarified that they voted to zero last week because for this specific speaker she felt uncomfortable with the fact that people felt unsafe. There is no reason she should have to clarify to explain why she feels unsafe. She can't vote to fund the event for this reason.

Scott Nelson asked what the cost to bring Yousef would be. Robert said it would be \$15,000 dollars. He has gotten \$4,000 from Smith and \$4,500 from YAF.

Richard said that we are arguing about this because we don't know if we should bring the speaker to our campus. He was uncomfortable and thought that we should send this to referendum.

Robert clarified that he did his best to represent what was said in the quotes he included, he didn't want to embarrass anyone. He argued that this would set an unsustainable precedent because it would allow for anyone to block funding to an event simply by saying that they feel unsafe and there would be no question about it. He stated that if this precedent were set he would literally come to every meeting and block funding requests for any honorarium.

Tierney said that if we decide not to fund this under the idea that we would be denying the feelings of those who object without asking them to substantiate their claims, that's really wrong.

If someone says not to bring a speaker to campus, they are infringing on everyone else's right to free speech and the people who would agree with that speaker.

Reynaldo said that he doesn't think our classmates want this event on our campus.

Peter said we are not the federal government so we don't have to support free speech in all cases. For instance, we wouldn't invite a pro-slavery speaker or a pro-colonialist speaker to our campus. We shouldn't support speech that attacks our students.

RJ said that we should present a sense of faux-populism and punt every decision we're uncomfortable with to the students. We are elected by the students to make tough decisions.

Johnathan said that he has talked to his constituents and there is no interest in this event and there is a lot of interest in keeping it off campus.

Ali said that there is no reason not to send this to referendum.

Robert said that the referendum is not on the table at all. If you vote for the referendum, you might as well vote no because as of tomorrow they lose the date.

Blaine argued that the economic reason against funding this is unsound. He stressed the point that we keep saying that this is the students money, but its not. Its the College Republicans money because it has already been apportioned to them.

Sam pointed to the student handbook stating that every students has a right to inclusion and participation in college activities. In this situation, this comes into conflict with free speech.

Will Jackson stated that minority views would be crushed by a referendum.

Abigail said to put past funding precedents in context with the amount being spent here.

Siraj proposed a straw poll to see if people want to fund this or no.

Scott warned that the act of sending this to referendum implies controversy which skews the results of the referendum and harms student faith in the senate.

Kyra argued that sending this to referendum could set a precedent of sending a lot of things to referendum.

Dean Vasquez reiterated that the body is elected to represent students. Its okay if students don't agree with you. You were elected because people trusted you to make these tough choices.

Robert stated that the argument that we are not the federal government and don't need to care about free speech is flawed and not legally sound.

Roll call vote to reallocate \$7,500 dollars to the Amherst College Republicans.

Result: Failed.

Dean Brown, Assistant Dean of Residential Student Life, said that students really need to value free speech. If you polled liberal arts colleges throughout the country they would be predominately liberal. However, liberal arts colleges should not bar other voices from campus. He stated that they need to keep integrity up to a high level. He also said that he saw student groups in the room before treated very differently than the students in the room now.

Obinna Ukogu stated that when we are elected, people believe we have ability to make difficult decisions. He argued that we have the opportunity to bring this guy to campus and that is a very unique opportunity that we shouldn't just throw away arbitrarily.

Juan Gabriel clarified to Dean Brown that having the College Republicans at this meeting was under a different premise than the earlier clubs. The College Republicans came in response to a very specific funding request.

Tomi Williams said that we should keep in mind the way we speak to each other and be more respectful.

Richard agreed with Dean Brown and Dean Vasquez that they represent the students but stated that he thought there are unique cases where they have to reach out to the student body directly.

Reynaldo stated that he agrees with Dean Vasquez and that we need to respect minorities.

Sam stated that voting no was hard and he wished he had more time to think about this.

Claire stated that she absolutely supports free speech. She definitely wouldn't equate this speaker to Patrick Moore. This is a safety issue, its a completely different issue.

Olivia said that if they don't fund this, to make it up to them we could at least fund the movie.

Siraj called to follow the agenda.

VII. Budgetary Committee Recommendations

Hao Liu presented the Budgetary Committee's recommendations for the upcoming week.

Olivia Pinney, representing Amherst Debate Society, requested \$120 dollars for registration fees and \$300 dollars for a hotel room for two nights.

Vote to add the Amherst Debate Society request to the BC recommendations.

Result: Passed.

Phillip Yan requested an additional \$450 dollars for the Dalai Lama tickets.

Sam moved to fund the \$450 dollars in full.

Hao explained that we discussed this already and decided that 15 tickets would be purchased. He was confused about how this keeps coming up because he thought that they had agreed on this.

Nancy Nzeyimana said that comparing the ski trip and hearing the Dalai Lama is valid. A group of students have been running around trying to find funding from other resources. She argued that the \$450 dollars is much less than the \$3,350 dollars they first requested additionally.

Karen clarified that this already does not fit in our funding guidelines. She expressed with how dangerous the precedent it sets is. They need to stick to the decision they feel comfortable with.

Johnathan reiterated that they trust BC decisions.

Tierney explained precedent behind not funding the event at all. Plus, they are already over their spending cap for the week.

Philip said that the BC is funding 15 tickets for \$1,500 dollars. By adding \$450 dollars, they can fund 40 tickets for fifty dollars a piece. The details of the situation have changed.

Nancy felt frustrated that the senate wasn't even trying to consider their request.

Karen said that they are making an argument based on how much they've reached out and lowered the asking amount, all of which they appreciate. However, they are still concerned about precedent.

Richard said it delegitimizes the BC when they keep coming back. They understand that this is a once in a lifetime event, but they need the AAS to value their decision. It hurts the senate when they keep going back and forth.

Tierney said that they have \$50,000 dollars left in discretionary and they have exceeded their weekly allotment. They can't fund this because they don't have the money.

Abigail stated that she was proud that the senate was so committed to fiscal conservatism. She also said that the senate is a check on the BC and ignoring this fact is dangerous. The BC has made many mistakes in the past when she was on it.

Chico Kosber said that if we have very high demand for an event and they've done the leg work, we should consider funding them.

Vote to fund the \$450 dollars in full.

Result: Failed.

Tierney moved to zero the \$450 dollar request.

Vote to zero the \$450 dollar request.

Result: Passed.

Roll call vote to fund Budgetary Committee recommendations.

Result: Passed.

VIII. First Year Life and Orientation Committee (2 FY Senators)

Peter said that this committee has two components: planning orientation and ensuring the quality of first year life.

Zoe Kayton, Scott Nelson, Tasha Kim, and Joe Hussen were nominated.

Zoe and Scott were elected.

IX. College Council (1 FY Senator)

Kyra explained that College Council is comprised of one senator from each class and the student body president. It is the only committee where faculty, administrators and students meet for the purpose of discussing student life. They are voting on Friday on the college calendar for the next three years. In order to be on the committee, you need to be available to meet at 1 pm on Fridays.

Tasha Kim, Will Jackson, Obinna Ukogu, and Phillip Yan were nominated.

Tasha was elected.

X. Reports

a. Committee Reports

Sam, representing the Committee on Education Policy, reported that they discussed adding a second pre-registration period.

Kyra, representing the Sexual Respect Task Force, reported that they are working on a sexual respect archive. They are working with the WGC to catalogue student advocacy work from the past few years.

RJ, representing the Committee on Priorities and Resources, reported that they met and tentatively discussed changes in financial aid policy.

Tierney, representing the Committee on Discipline, reported that the committee is really well run. She also commended the fact that Dean Gendron was still at the meeting.

Peter, representing the Traditions Committee, reported that they had a productive meeting with Dean Epstein.

Kyra clarified that bystander training is mandatory for all college orientation programs in the country. While they want it to be as effective as possible, eliminating it is not a choice.

Olivia, representing the Traditions Committee, reported that they have meeting with athletics tomorrow and invited anyone interested to wants attend.

b. General Announcements

c. Officer Reports

Abigail reported that the JC has a new complaint and that we will be hearing about it shortly.

Hao reported that he meet with members of the administration to talk about changing coach insurance over to athletics.

Juan Gabriel reported that he liked how the beginning of the meeting went with the various clubs. He stated that they are trying to move the body away from discussing funding nuances. He is working on getting AAS suggestion boxes.

Tomi thanked Dean Vasquez for sticking around for the meeting and also thanked Dean Brown and Dean Gendron for sticking around. He reported that he has been working on Amherst Reflects.

XI. Approve the minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2014 meeting.

Vote to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2014 meeting.

Result: Passed.

XII. New Business

Johnathan stated that he has heard a lot of students say that there aren't enough ping pong tables and the ones we have are warped.

Richard explained that they want to reconsider the BC recommendations. He pointed out that they didn't even think twice when the Debate Club requested \$400 dollars for four people to debate for a weekend but they didn't get those who scoured the campus for fund to send 30 people to see the Dalai Lama the time of day. Also, Dean Vasquez gave \$300 dollars of his own money to the fund. Now all that is left is to give \$150 dollars for them to go. While the integrity of the BC is important, this effort must also be considered.

Richard moved to emergency fund \$150 dollars for funding tickets to the Dalai Lama.

Vote to emergency fund \$150 dollars for funding tickets to the Dalai Lama.

Result: Passed.

Will moved to reallocate \$6,500 dollars to the Amherst College Republicans for their speaker.

Roll call vote to reallocation \$6,500 dollars to the Amherst College Republicans for their speaker.

Result: Passed.

XIII. Adjournment 12:06 PM