

MINUTES

Commission on Student Affairs Meeting

February 11, 2016

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Squires Student Center – Brush Mountain Room

Attendees

Nathalia Ossio Reque, Susan Anderson, Zach Greenwald, Evan Robohm, Morgan Sykes, Tuna Shankar, Jack Crockett, Lauren Surface, Mohammed Seyam, Greg Purdy, Tara Reel, Jackie Fisher, Matt Chan, Alexis Medina, Patty Perillo, Susan Pedigo, Bradi Rhodes, Reid Thomas, Byron Hughes

Guests

Angela Simmons, Joe Edens, and Ryan Beck

Call to Order

At 3:34pm, Chair Jackie Fisher called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda

Morgan Sykes made a motion to approve the agenda; Matt Chan seconded, the agenda was approved.

Registration Procedures

Heather Wagoner and Gina Tamburro, from Student Engagement and Campus Life, presented on the updated student organization registration procedures in order to bring clarity to how organizations are being formed so SECL can better serve them. By examining registration, SECL found ways to better help the organizations on a practical level such as room registration and officer transition. They plan to make systems and policies more congruent and easily understood by members, and explained that typically organization registration opened after Summer Session two concludes. Previously, the re-registration was not interactive at all. Now, the registration will happen much earlier in the spring, and organizations will be required to attend a registration of approximately 60 minutes to become better acquainted with GobblerConnect, and to better inform organizations. New organizations can still be created on a rolling basis, but they will have to attend a similar session.

Margaret Appleby asked if there will be alternative options for students who cannot attend the listed meetings.

Heather replied by sharing that there will be sessions offered at least weekly, but under extreme circumstances they would allow a makeup.

Tara Reel explained the importance of the educational component of these sessions to foster the growth of leaders within organizations.

Matt Chan asked what would happen if an existing organization missed the registration deadlines.

Ms. Tamburro explained that the organization would be unable to apply for the rest of the year, and they would lose access to budget requests, space rental, and all other advantages of a student organization. New organizations that apply after this deadline are also not eligible for funds until the next academic year.

Lauren Surface asked about “student organizations” that are not necessarily organizations, but are registered as one in order to reserve rooms.

Dr. Angela Simmons started looking at RSO, UCSO, and UCLP policies that each have differences and DSA is looking at how to better define them to make those types of organizations better serve the students and their needs.

Matt Chan recommended that any of these changes should come to CSA.

CSA Mission and Goal Setting

Jackie Fisher, Chair of CSA, presented on CSA mission and goal setting. She explained that she and Dr. Simmons have found that it is difficult to name a specific purpose of CSA. Chair Fisher asked the group to share what they feel the purpose of the organization is and why we are here. Tuna Shankar shared that we are a commission based solely around the student experience at Virginia Tech through work with Student Affairs. Tara Reel added that you have a cross section of representatives that come from many backgrounds. Susan Anderson shared that CSA is the only commission that is comprised predominantly of students.

After group discussion, the Commission explained the following:

1. CSA is a good resource for UCSO’s, but students do not know that it can be an asset. CSA needs to be better publicized to the students through explanations of CSA at required registration sessions for student organizations, and DSA “hot topic” presentations.

2. Transition and training between members of CSA will help future members, as many members are first year representatives that do not understand the initiatives of the year before.
3. The Commission needs to be more accessible for students and better the communication between this group and the student body. We will revisit these issues in the upcoming weeks and make sure we are enacting these ideas to make CSA even better.

New Business

A. Sponsorship of Take Back the Night

Susan Anderson, from the Faculty Senate and Town Council, presented on the potential sponsorship of Take Back the Night. Susan explained that Take Back the Night's goal is to educate the public about gender based violence in our community, energize people to want to do something about it (ie. The March), give people simple, everyday tools to lessen violence within our community, and teaching people to be social justice activists. Educate, empower, activate. If CSA were to sponsor this event, we would be put on the back of the program as an endorsement. There would be no money or volunteering commitment. The event will be held Wednesday, March 30th starting at 6:30 and it will be at the outdoor stage at Henderson Lawn (Rain location is inside at GLC).

Reid Thomas moved to vote and Zach Greenwald seconded CSA's sponsorship of this event and it was unanimously passed. CSA will sponsor Take Back the Night for 2016.

Commission, Committee, and Sub-Committee Updates

Chair Fisher and Vice-Chair Chan updated the group on the progress of the newly created CSA "Operation Manual". Matt Chan shared that they have a draft in the works and this manual should hopefully help speed up the learning curve of CSA and provide members with a better understanding of the expectations of this group and how their membership can be mutually beneficial to the members and organizations they represent. The google drive of the draft will be shared and Matt and Jackie encouraged members to check it out and offer feedback.

Chair Fisher and Mohammed Seyam, the graduate student representative to the BOV, provided updates about the Committee on Religious Holidays. The old JSU representative brought an issue to CSA last semester about class attendance excuses in regards to religious holidays. Dean Brown shared with us how and why the policies were created and

CSA created a committee to further address this issue. Our hope was to formalize a list of “major holidays” that could be debated and eventually create a resolution to alleviate the confusion and ambiguity of these absences.

Chair Fisher updated the group on CSA’s representation on the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Last semester, we were unable to send a representative from CSA to CEOD because everyone had class or commitments. This semester the meetings will be held once a month from 10am-12pm and discuss policies related to principles of community and inclusivity. If you are interested, let Chair Fisher know.

Announcements

Tuna Shankar announced the DSA leadership scholarships and family of the year applications were sent out today by Jackie.

Tuna Shankar also updated the group on the creation of the Keystone Fellows program that would recognize students who lived out the aspirations of student learning during their time at Virginia Tech. Applications for this honor will be out Monday.

Adjournment

Matt Chan made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Tuna Shankar, and passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:55PM.