

Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs

January 18th, 2024

3:30pm

CID, Multipurpose Room (Room 104)

Present: Shahed Sanuri (presiding), Delia Alcorn, Kat Nelson (representing James Bridgeforth), James Bridgeforth (representing Frances Keene), Sophie Thomson, AJ Bass, Katelyn Steide, April Myers, Emon Green, Lindsay Barron (representing Lauren Surface), Sara Greger, Mantu Hudait, Rachel Maizel, Ayesha Ansari, Kim O'Rourke, Alix Guynn (representing Sarah Armstrong)

Absent with Notice: Crasha Townsend

Absent: Kimberly Smith, Tamara Cherry-Clarke, Dee Hopkins, Yohan Sequiera, Aarav Parikh

Guests: None

Shahed Sanuri called the meeting to order at 3:36pm. A quorum was present.

1. Team Builder: New Year's Resolutions

2. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda at 3:46 PM. The motion carried with 9 votes in favor.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes

A motion was made to adopt the previous minutes. The motion carried with 11 votes in favor.

4. Unfinished Business

- None

5. New Business

- Discussion: CUSA goals for presentation to Tim Sands tomorrow
 - Dr. Bridgeforth noted the importance of regular attendance of Committee members, even if through a proxy
 - Dr. Bridgeforth noted that the importance of engagement by Committee members
 - Shahed Sanuri noted that CUSA should encourage members to use proxies when needed by making the procedure for proxies more accessible
 - The group discussed CUSA SharePoint workplan
 - Mantu Hudait expressed the need to determine specific initiatives that pertain to each of the four goals of the work plan, ideas were as follows:

- Emon Green suggested the creation of a hate speech/Title IX report database – method of data collection TBD
- Emon Green expressed the need to hold town halls so that sentiments of students can be collected/better understood
- AJ Bass expressed that the modules taken by freshmen at the start of their time at Tech cover sexual assault and harassment, but could be improved by having students revisit them or by increasing the topics covered, since some victimization may take place due to ignorance
- Dr. Bridgeforth expressed that the function of CUSA is to identify problems to be fixed with legislation
- Mantu Hudait requested that in the wording of Goal II of the 2023-2024 CUSA Workplan, “promote” be replaced with “review and revise policy pertaining to”
- Rachel Maizel expressed that university polls or studies do not capture nuances of harassment or toxic culture, this is why the GPSS hosted their own climate and culture survey to capture microaggressions and other forms of victimization
- Emon Green expressed that many Black students at Tech feel like the administration does not care about their problems, and have become used to this
- Emon Green noted that smaller minority organizations receive less money than larger white organizations and are unable to put on large events and thus to bring in money from such events
- Rachel Maizel shared some information on how SAFAB has updated how they review and evaluate funding requests as well as other changes for this year. She also discussed how the organization’s mission and function as well as the UCISO policy impacts how final allocation amounts are determined.
- Emon Green expressed that disengagement among students is common, especially among Black students, making it more difficult to conduct polls and surveys and activism in general, stressing the importance of increasing engagement
- Dr. Bridgeforth expressed that CUSA and the USS VP for Finance can help with student organizations’ finance concerns
- Rachel Maizel noted that harassment and Title IX policies must be enforced, this is a problem in the graduate and professional student community
- Sara Greger noted that victims need to know their rights and feel cared for by the university in order to feel comfortable reporting harassment incidents
- Shahed Sanuri noted the importance of identifying specific problems that CUSA can help with

6. CUSA Announcements

- None

7. CUSA Conversation

- Delia Alcorn shared a progress update on the Schiffert Post-Sexual Assault Care Initiative

- Delia Alcorn informed the Commission on House Bill 1342 regarding Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners on staff at Virginia public universities

8. University Council and Commission Updates

- University Council Meeting Minutes from Monday, October 30, 2023:
<https://governance.vt.edu/BodyDetails/UC>

9. Adjournment-

There being no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Bridgforth to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 PM. The motion was seconded by Kat Nelson.

Next meeting: February 15, 2024 at 3:30 PM in CID Multipurpose Library