

MINUTES

Commission on Student Affairs

April 9, 2020

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Zoom <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/272041642>

Present: Victoria Dashevsky, Adil Sageer, Alexis Hrubby, Allison Fegler, Ariana Labat, Blake Barnhill, Corinne Wells, Frank Shushok, Gina Tamburro, Ginai Seabron, Gregory Klatt, Hani Awni, Heather Wagoner, Irene Baron, Jes Davis, Jessica Nguyen, Kabyl Oxikbayev, Lauren Surface, Madelynn Todd, Maruf Hoque, Nathaniel Soss, Ryan Foley, Spencer Hamilton, Susan Anderson, Tara Frank, Terri Pecora

Absent: Ayham Nouisser, Colie Touzel, Collin Shelton, Grant Bommer, Jonathon Poff, Karen DePauw, Kayla Winbush, Lily Xie, Rachel Holloway, Sammy Bales

Victoria Dashevsky called the meeting to order at 3:33pm. A quorum was present.

1. **Introductions** (Victoria Dashevsky)
2. **Adoption of Agenda** (Victoria Dashevsky)

A motion was made, and seconded, to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

3. **University Council and Commission Updates**

- a. University Council (Commissioner)

No updates, as no one present attended the past meeting.

- b. Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (Commissioner)

No new meetings, therefore no update.

- c. Academic Support Committee (Commissioner)

No updates.

4. **Old Business**

No old business.

5. **New Business**

- a. Student Budget Board (Allison Fegler)

Allison shared updates to both (1) Funding Policies and Procedures for RSO's and USLP's, as well as for (2) UCSO's. She went over in great detail each revision, which was highlighted in green with the updated text in red. No questions, comments, or concerns were raised.

Allison then proceeded to review the (3) Proposed Appropriations Strategy for 2020-2021 and opened the floor to questions.

Kabyl (CISO) asked a question regarding the understanding of the line items. Does the carry over mean the fall of 2020 or the fiscal year 2020? Allison confirmed this is for the fiscal year and stated the carry over amount listed is what will roll over for the upcoming year.

Kabyl then asked how unused funds is being handled given the current situation with COVID-19. Allison stated they do not specifically know what this will look like, but they are working on addressing this. Once decisions are made as to what funds will be available, this information will be shared with CSA.

If you have further questions for Allison, please email: sbbchair@vt.edu.

Victoria pushed out an immediate voting poll through Zoom that enabled members to vote in real time for the two Funding Policies and Procedures document revisions, as well, as the Appropriations Strategy document. Once all of the votes were in, Victoria closed the poll sharing the results that all three were passed.

Victoria stated that SBB was actually supposed to have two readings. Therefore, the suggestion was made the votes could be taken back, thus allowing them a second reading next week; or forgo the second reading and let the votes stand. Victoria opened up the chat for members to voice their preference. Since it was unanimous, the votes still stand. Victoria will let Allison know that everything passed, and that she will not have to come back next week.

Hokie Handbook was supposed to have two readings; the first today and the second next week. Since that didn't happen, it will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

b. CSA Updates (Victoria Dashevsky)

Victoria and Heather have been working on creating a document of CSA Expectations. Therefore, when UCSO's and departments are choosing who their CSA Rep is going to be for next year they can give them a document explaining what CSA is. It can be difficult to explain, or hard to understand, if you don't understand where it stands with University Governance.

31:05 Victoria posed the question and opened a chat for when orgs thought they would have reps for next year? Would it likely be at the end of this semester or beginning of the fall?

Jes shared that most elections will take place within the next two weeks. Therefore, members would likely be chosen at the end of this semester.

Victoria stated once new members are chosen at the end of spring semester before school ends, a meeting will be held for the new CSA body. During this meeting (1) everyone can quickly meet each other, (2) gain and understanding of what CSA is, and (3) share their goals. Then the first meeting of the fall semester will be the retreat to get some training and learn what to do in CSA.

32:46 Victoria placed the CSA Expectations document onto the shared google drive for members to be able to easily access, and make any additions to of things that should be included.

6. Announcements & Updates

a. Student Affairs (Dr. Frank Shushok)

Since March 1, 2020, VT has had 88 people donate to the Student Emergency Fund in the amount of \$28K. There are people that are worried about our students during the current pandemic to which is causing a lot of stress and tribulation for people.

Frank said he received the current Hokie Handbook revisions on Wednesday, to which he will read and pass on along, hopefully by the end of the week. He plans to send them onto the committee for review so that Hokie Handbook can get back on the agenda for the next time CSA meets.

Importance of strong student voice is in the governance of the university. Ways they think student governance could collectively create a coherent and robust student voice related to institutional policy, decision making, and advocacy.

Within the next 2 to 3 weeks Frank will be working to establish a task force on student governance which will call together 10 to 12 people (mostly students) who over a period of 6 to 8 months can study best practices in student governance across the country. They will take a hard look at the things we do really well, and things that we might do in a more effective way. They will look for ways to encourage students to be more involved in the governance process to ensure that we have a strong and robust student voice in all matters.

Frank promises to keep CSA updated as to the progress of this task force. The reason this is so important is so that your voice, the student voice, is collectively involved in just about everything that the university is engaged in.

Frank opened the floor to any questions he could answer.

Q: Hani asked...Hey- is there any chance we can get more clarity on the Student Emergency Fund's constraints and amount of use? Mainly how much is given out, what constraints apply to qualifying for it, how many grad students do?

A: Student Emergency Fund is open to any student, including Graduate Students. All students are encouraged to apply. There is no strict criteria; you meet with someone who tries to understand your unique situation. Any student who is in a place where there is a barrier in front of them that they cannot find another way to get past, he strongly encourages them to contact the Dean of Students Office. This is the case if they are a student in Northern Virginia, in Roanoke, graduate student, undergraduate student- the Student Emergency Fund is there for ALL students.

Q: Hani asked...Average amount?

A: In any typical year we have given out approximately \$150K – sometimes more, sometimes less, given what the students needs are. In the current situation, the needs are pretty significant and so is the giving. We find that when needs go up, so do the contributions.

Q: Nathaniel asked what the process is to apply for these emergency funds and how are they approved? Blake shared that students don't know about the funds or how to apply for it.

A: Information can be found on the Dean of Students website: <https://dos.vt.edu/emergencyfund.html>

Q: Hani asked... Amount that a single student gets would be very helpful?

A: It varies significantly given what a students' particular need is. Sometimes the amounts are substantial, other times the amount is \$100. The Student Emergency Fund is not designed to be a particular amount, rather

it is designed to understand what a particular student need is at that moment and how we can remove that barrier given their current circumstance. We also work with Undergraduate Scholarships and Financial Aid, as sometimes there are ways we can help in that regard.

b. Student Government Association (Adil Sageer/Blake Barnhill)

Adil has been meeting with President Sands working closely to provide as much support as possible for students during this time.

SGA's year is wrapping up. They are in the midst of transition as they just had their last Legislative meeting of 2019-2020 this past Tuesday, and this coming Tuesday will be the first meeting of the 2020-2021 year. Transition of leadership will soon follow.

c. Graduate Student Assembly (Hani Awni)

Graduate student body is really struggling. They have a lot of graduate students who were paid less than average, (50% of them), who have now lost external jobs they relied upon to be able to make rent and have food. GSA has launched a survey of the Grad student body to gather information on how people are doing, and how the COVID situation has impacted their workload, as well as, their financials. They hope to have comprehensive perspective from the survey by the first of next week.

They have found that the dominant problem Grad students have dealt with, is the great many directives, declarations, and/or administrative acknowledgements that have come out doesn't necessarily quite target the appropriate group, and so they are often being told concurrent contradictory things to do.

Hani asked Adil if he could request from President Sands, that he too, be included in those discussions? He has attempted to be looped in on such discussions and the lack of addressing the grad student perspective in any of the announcements that have come out has been pretty noticeable. Hani went onto say that for future instances when Dr. Sands and the Provost are checking in on students, ensuring they are doing okay and being treated well, – to make sure they are including the graduate students in their considerations. Should they need clarification on that, considering the average after fee pay rate for Grad students is \$15,500, that is a specific demographic or group that is extremely brittle right now. To not be included in these discussions is a huge problem.

Hani stated he would like to be sure that the student emergency fund is genuinely accessible to grad students and of large enough magnitudes to match the need at hand. Here's the GSA's survey, to share with your grad students: <https://bit.ly/VTGradCovid19>

d. Board of Visitors Representatives (Madelynn Todd & Ryan King)

Madelynn wanted to reiterate what Dr. Shushok had shared regarding the Student Emergency Fund. She asks that all CSA members push this information out to as many constituents that you can. She shared that she, Adil, Hani, and Ryan, spoke in great length with VP Phlegar and Dr. Dooley about waiving the 4% administrative fee, and now funds are going directly to students.

Virtual Board Meeting on YouTube Live took place a few weeks ago was extremely productive. BOV is still running, doing amazing things, and donations have been great.

If CSA members have anything to reach out about Madelynn encourages you to do so, please let her know - mtodd13@vt.edu. She has gotten a lot of good feedback from undergrad students to which their main source of income was lost. Madelynn shared this was something she brought up with Presidents Sands and the Provost; and they are both aware of the issue and ensure they are making great steps to help those students out.

Jes had an update to share regarding Student Affairs. HokieWellness is doing a student needs assessment. They are checking in with students to see how they are doing and they want to know how student affairs can better support you. Assessment can be found here: <https://baseline.campuslabs.com/vpiasu/hwneeds20>. The last Jes heard, as a couple of days ago only 70 students had taken the survey thus far. Please push out to your constituents.

Jes recommended that Hani reach out to David Andrews, (davida12@vt.edu) who is chairing the survey, to mesh together what is currently being done for graduate students and what he is doing through HokieWellness.

Q: How is the assessment is currently being shared?

A: Jess received it in an email from David to share with students. He is doing direct outreach to different departments who have direct contact with students. In addition, it should be shared to all students in the Daily Student News email.

Blake wanted to loop back conversation Dr. Shushok had pertaining to the Student Emergency Fund. He realizes that the Student Budget Board funding was approved, but suggested it might be worthwhile to consider taking the money that will be unspent from the spring semester and support the Student Emergency Fund with that money. Maruf agreed he would fully support that idea, should that be possible.

Victoria posed a question to Alison about how that would affect orgs wanting to reschedule their events. Allison stated that yes, orgs do have the opportunity to reschedule or to roll over funds, and therefore SBB does not currently know the exact amount of what will be coming back.

Blake said that if the Student Emergency Fund has enough money to support students, then it is probably unnecessary. However, if the Student Emergency Funds gets hit really hard, that he feels it is worthwhile investigating to see if we can help out at all.

Heather asked that CSA give her a little time to investigate this with the Budget Office as there is specific language about the Student Activity Fee should be used for. In addition, allowing time for Gina and Allison to review the SBB numbers. Heather said to give her until the end of business Monday, (two business days), to find out more and will share the update with Victoria so that she can send something out to everyone.

e. Other, etc. (Commissioners)

Gregory Klatt – A couple of weeks ago it was announced that commencement was canceled and they are moving to virtual platform with a couple events taking place in the fall where they are inviting seniors back. They are looking at ways to make virtual Commencement the best it can be. What are ideas of things you would like to see incorporated into Commencement? What does virtual Commencement look like to you? Please send your ideas and suggestions along: klattge@vt.edu

Victoria shared she did not know at this time when Hokie Handbook would be rescheduled, but that it will be on an upcoming Thursday, at this same time. She will update everyone as soon as it is confirmed with her. She will also be gathering info and links to share with CSA members Monday or Tuesday of next week.

7. Adjournment (Victoria Dashevsky)

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:30pm.

Reminder: Next CSA meeting is Thursday, April 16 – 3:30pm to 5:00pm