

Commission on Student Affairs Meeting

December 3, 2015

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Squires Student Center – Brush Mountain Room

Attendees

Susan Anderson, Margaret Appleby, Matthew Chan, Alicia Cohen
Mikey Erb, Caitlin Wilkinson (for Pat Finn), Jackie Fisher, Marjot Kaur (for Panisa Jiumdumneakij), Jimmy McClellan, Alexis Medina, Nicole Nguyen, Ben Calvo Rivera (for Nathalia Ossio Reque), Dr. Patty Perillo, James Orr, Anthony Carno (for Tara Reel), Mohammed Seyam, Lauren Surface, Morgan Sykes, Jake Tully

Guests

Susan Pedigo

Call to Order

At 3:32pm, 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.

New Business

A. Joint Resolution on Shared Governance

Matt Chan, Vice Chair, presented a Joint Resolution on Shared Governance that will accompany the new Faculty Senate Resolution on Shared Governance. Mr. Chan explained that Faculty Senate proposed a new resolution modifying the components of Shared Governance and after much discussion, a motion for deferral for six weeks was made. During that time period, members of SGA, GSA, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and administration met with the Provost and drafted a Joint Resolution on the Formation of a University Governance Task Force. Mr. Chan explained that the resolution mentions the problems with our current governance structure, to which the Faculty Senate created a resolution in order to work towards solving. The joint resolution mandates a task force to analyze the pilot program of the Faculty Senate and examine the governance system as a whole. Based upon the task force's recommendations after 12 months, a modified system of shared governance will be implemented afterwards for all members of the governance system. Mr. Chan

explained that this resolution is not an overhaul of the whole governance system, but rather will serve as a solution in the interim.

Susan Anderson shared that the Faculty Senate Resolution has been slightly modified since the last time it was shared with CSA.

Matt Chan made a motion to wave the second reading, with a second from Jake Tully.

During discussion, Dr. James Orr suggested that the task force be co-chaired by a student to make sure their opinions are being acknowledged.

Chair Fisher opened the floor for vote upon waiving the second reading, and the motion carried.

Matt Chan made a motion to approve the Joint Resolution on Shared Governance, and it was seconded by Jake Tully. The motion passed with unanimous vote.

Susan Anderson shared that Faculty Senate also overwhelmingly approved said resolution.

Commission, Committee, and Sub-Committee Updates

- A. Mr. Chan gave updates on the committee on CSA “operation manual” and said that they are continuing conversations, and that a very rough draft has been produced. The selection of the CSA Chair is being highly focused on, as the Chair must have served on the Commission for one term, but many students do not sit on CSA in consecutive years because they earn their seat based on elections. Due to this ambiguity, selecting a Chair is done differently each year. Mr. Chan explained that the Chair of CSA is an influential, important position and this group wants to determine a consistent way to select Chairs in the future.

Mikey Erb asked if this rule is under the Constitution.

Matt Chan replied that the rules just denote that the Vice-Chair should become the Chair the next year, which causes issues if the Vice Chair is unable to sit on CSA the next year.

Mr. Erb asked if University Council will have to approve this operations manual.

Matt said that it may, but approval should be granted because it will not change the function of the organization.

Matt added two more clarifying points explaining the language in the University Council Bylaws that claim that the Vice Chair will become Chair, except in the case of CSA.

Greg asked what would happen if a dedicated, involved student wants to serve as chair, but will no longer have their seat on CSA due to the nature of their position. Jake Tully explained that they are considering allowing any student to run for chair and their position will be filled in by a proxy. The Chair will be non-voting so there will be no extra representation from any group.

Matt explained the explicit guidelines for selecting the Chair will make future elections easier and fairer.

Chair Fisher asked the group if there are any additional topics they would like approved in the operation manual.

Greg mentioned better guidelines for the minutes taker would be beneficial.

B. Chair Fisher gave updates on the committee on religious holidays and she said they will look at the interfaith calendar and recognize which holidays are nationally recognized and observed. They are meeting directly after the conclusion of this CSA meeting.

Matt shared a suggestion to reach out to USCOS after the religious holiday calendar is finalized.

Susan Anderson also requested that Faculty Senate see the draft before it is finalized to add input as well.

Semester Conclusion Notes and Reflection

Chair Jackie Fisher gave her best wishes to those on CSA who will not be returning next semester, then shared notes from the retreat that was held in September. She discussed upcoming events with Student Engagement and Campus Life, Universal Liability Insurance, and Keystone Experience. She then explained that next semester, the Hokie Handbook Revisions Committee will be presenting revisions to get approval from CSA. Additionally, we will be working on Budget Board policy changes, operations manual, and religious holiday revision.

Chair Fisher explained that she is optimistic for the progress next semester and was pleased with the outcome of this semester.

Jackie asked if we should designate people to cover issues we did not address this semester. She opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Erb brought up child care and asked about the current progress of childcare at Virginia Tech.

Mr. Purdy shared that the problem is not fixed, and BOV members mistakenly thought that Little Hokie Hangouts was an adequate solution.

Lauren Surface shared that Little Hokie Hangouts is volunteer-based and only serves 3 hour shifts. The time is not long enough and the volunteers do not meet the needs of the program.

Mohammed Seyam shared that volunteers are not trained and do not serve children between 0-2 years old, and that working with another group may be necessary to operate a program that offers more fluidity and reliability.

Morgan Sykes asked if this program or others similar have reached out to the school of education for volunteers and workers.

Nicole Ngyuen shared that she is a part of the Human Development program and explained the need for placement of students in field studies that could align with these goals.

Mohammed Seyam said at this time nothing has been confirmed, and that he and Morgan Sykes agree to bring up these suggestions to the Provost.

Mr. Purdy shared that the Provost is already looking into new facilities and seems to be making more progress than in previous years.

Mr. Purdy asked what the progress of Dental Insurance through Virginia Tech is currently.

Mr. Chan replied that at this time, VT offers dental insurance program that graduate students can purchase, but there are few long-term options, as there are few insurance providers who want to cover students for such low costs. He explained that rates are always rising but Dean DePaw was hoping to form more of a solidified relationship with insurance providers for affordable insurance for graduate students. Matt shared that, with the exception of needing dental, the current program is good and affordable, but each year, insurance providers raise prices resulting in VT having to choose whether to keep the premium plan offered for graduates while charging more or cutting benefits to keep costs the same.

Mr. Purdy offered that the out of pocket cost for graduate students would rise because the percentage funding from assistantships will be lowered slightly while maintaining the same plan.

Mr. Purdy shared potential problems regarding cost raises from ObamaCare causing the Premium increase above \$2000, affecting international students because limits on credit cards are often \$2000.

Mr. Seyam mentioned that this is a subject matter that he informed the Board of Visitors about in his previous reports.

Dr. Perillo explained that undergraduates are not mandated to purchase insurance plans.

Mr. Purdy shared that his roommate is no longer a student but is involved in martial arts and was concerned about the increase in prices of renting spaces at War Memorial Gym.

Dr. Perillo said that this is not solidified and the changes are still being discussed, as this has been a long discussion with much consideration from numerous facets of the university.

Chair Fisher asked if this is something CSA would like to pursue further.

Mikey asked if Budget Board would have the funds to accommodate this plan.

Chair Fisher suggestion we reach out to Budget Board and bring them in for a discussion with this group.

Chair Fisher shared the date of the Spring Retreat is Thursday, January 21st from 3:30pm-8pm, but will likely end early. It is scheduled to be in 116 Burruss, but this location may change. She asked if members are not returning to please give her the information of the new Commission member by the week of the retreat.

Dr. Perillo wishes the members good luck with finals and take care of themselves.

Announcements

Susan Anderson shared that the holiday parade will take place tomorrow night at 7pm. There will be other activities taking place between 5-7pm. She shared that there will be a holiday market and many local businesses participate. She encouraged members to experience Blacksburg in this environment.

Mohammed shared that Santa Claus will be at the Lyric at 4 and the tree lighting will happen at 5:30pm.

JSU is having a movie event of 8 crazy nights at 7pm on December 8th in Brush Mountain B.

Matt Chan advertised the musical version of A Christmas Carol that a local community group that Matt is a part of (he's the conductor) will be the weekend of December 17th beginning on Thursday-Sunday. There will be 5 showings on campus in Haymarket Theatre in Squires.

Susan Anderson shared that Town Council is approving legal food trucks for the public sector and the university is also looking into food trucks.

Adjournment

Jake Tully made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Matt Chan, and passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:33 PM.

