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Senate Meeting

Friday, February 9th, 2023

Presiding Officer: Vice President Brooks

Minute Taker: Laura Zabaleta

1. **Call to Order:** Call to Order at 1:06 PM
2. **Roll Call:** Roll Call Complete at 1:07 PM
3. **Approval of Minutes from February 2nd:** Motion to Approve the Minutes from February 2nd by Senator Rodriguez, Seconded by Senator Agarwal
4. **Adoption of the Agenda:** Motion to Amend the Agenda to include “A Bill to Temporarily Ban Finance and Funding Budget Requests Over $2500 for the Remainder of Spring Semester by Senator Agarwal, Seconded by Senator Rodriguez
5. Vote of Affirmation: 19-0-0

Motion to Amend the Agenda to include the Swearing in of New Members by Representative Mauro, Seconded by Senator Burns

1. Vote of Affirmation: 19-0-0

Motion to Adopt the Agenda by Senator Burns, Seconded by Senator Anson

1. **Public Comments:**
2. **New Business:**
3. A Bill to Amend the Finance and Funding Bylaws to Automatically Deny Budget Requests After 7 Days of Pending Resubmission and Past Event Dates
4. **Presented by Senator Augustyn**
5. Motion to Add Representative Valdez to the Roll Call by Director Sharma, Seconded by Representative Mauro
6. Sharma: Is there a specific reason for waiting 7 days before deleting the requests?
7. Senator Augustyn: Failure to resubmit within seven days may result in the request being delayed by two weeks, reaching a point where the items can no longer be procured. Timely attention to emails and staying on top of the application process is crucial for efficient procurement from the ex officios.
8. Senator Burns: Will there be a notification sent to student organizations?
9. Senator Augustyn: Harshit and Juju will work on the message for student orgs. As per internal policy, when requesting resubmission, a comment is added on MyLynx, alongside an email notification. Senators will send an additional email every Friday at 5 pm, reminding them about the seven-day deadline.
10. Sharma: Will you keep deleted requests for record-keeping purposes?
11. Motion to Call to Question by Senator Agarwal, Seconded by Senator Augustyn
12. Roll Call Vote: 20-0-0
13. The Bill Passed
14. A Bill to Cancel Senate on February 25th for Community Service Event
15. **Presented by Senator Rodriguez**
16. Daphne: This bill is great for the science fair and sign-up. Glad that Civics came up with this idea.
17. Senator Augustyn moves to make a friendly amendment to correct grammar in the Whereas clause
18. Friendly amendment accepted by Senator Rodriguez
19. Representative Valdez: Looking forward to this great community service project.
20. Senator Rodriguez: Thanks to everyone working to make this event happen.
21. Motion to Call to Question by Representative Torres, Seconded by Senator Agarwal
22. Roll Call Vote: 20-0-0
23. The Bill Passed
24. A Bill to Temporarily Ban Finance and Funding Budget Requests Over $2500 for the Remainder of Spring Semester
25. **Presented by Senator Augustyn**
26. Representative Mauro: I want to commend F&F as this makes the most fiscal sense for SGA to adequately use the remining of our budget.
27. Representative Gebremariam: Do you plan to communicate to student organizations about this being the case for the remainder of the semester?
28. Senator Augustyn: It will be included in the message with Juju from the previous legislation. Currently, there are no pending requests affected by this legislation. Dyllan is working with Lance to identify organizations with significant past spending events. This approach allows for multiple smaller events instead of one large event, extending the impact.
29. Senator Burns: This semester, we granted a substantial allocation to CAM. If a student org demonstrates a significant impact with a strong application, will the Senate play a role in the decision-making process? The spending cap seems to be reducing the number of requests brought to the floor.
30. Senator Augustyn: When we approved the $5000 request, we were halfway through the budget. Since then, we approved 20 requests, using 25% of the budget, which were pending from December. My concern about $2500 requests, regardless of their impact, is the remaining budget. Student orgs had time to submit requests early, and responsible organizations seized that opportunity.
31. Senator Burns: Even if there isn't a specific mechanism for rejecting requests, does F&F still have discretion in determining the allocation amount?
32. Senator Augustyn: We can face challenges with Judicial during an appeal since there is no mechanism to explain rejection reasons or reduce event funding. Having legislation in place will provide support for our decisions.
33. Ex Officio Dew: Let's aim to submit bills on time to allow thoughtful consideration of these mechanisms. In the review process, let's prioritize Equity. If budget caps were a concern, they should have been established earlier. Is it fair to organizations to implement this now? Consider the impact on organizations struggling with membership and seeking meaningful spaces on campus.
34. Senator Augustyn: I agree that we shouldn't introduce legislation at the last minute. I thought this was emergency legislation and couldn't wait given my budget concerns next week. There's a lot to consider here, and I encourage everyone to think it through in the next two hours we have.
35. Ex Officio Spray: I'm struggling with both sides—considering the resources we've provided to student organizations; we anticipated more groups to submit requests. On the budget front, the decision lies within your capacity to make in that space.
36. President Combs: If this were to pass and the communication is sent out, can we ensure that we also inform them about potential alternative funding avenues within the university?
37. Ex Officio Spray: Many resources are available: Student life is streamlining bulk purchases to reduce requests. We are compiling a resource list for student organizations, and additional grants are open for clubs.
38. Motion to move into Committee Caucus by Representative Torres, Seconded by Senator Burns
39. Repealed
40. Senator Augustyn: I introduced this legislation urgently in response to Kelsi's message and ex officio concerns about F&F spending. I don't have a preference; either way works for me. I brought it to the floor to address the urgency. I recommend approval as I aim for smaller requests to have a more lasting impact. It's up to your approach, whether you prefer to use up the budget now or later.
41. Senator Anson: As a campus, fostering cultural and educational thriving within our community is crucial. Implementing a spending cap facilitates financial flow throughout the semester. Hosting multiple smaller events encourages community engagement across campus.
42. Chief Justice Zabaleta: The legislation promotes collaboration among student organizations to create great events.
43. Senator Rodriguez: Do you anticipate all funds being allocated by the end of April with this spending cap?
44. Senator Augustyn: I can't guarantee the end of April; a more realistic estimate would be mid-April. Without caps, it could potentially be halfway through March. I want to emphasize the importance of genuine votes and seek approval from all of you on how to proceed throughout the semester.
45. Ex Officio Spray: The F&F application closes on April 3rd, so we won't be accepting requests through April. We will have an answer regarding the remaining funds by April 5th.
46. Representative Torres moves to go into Committee Caucus for 10 minutes, Seconded by Senator Burns
47. At 1:54 PM
48. Back at 2:04 PM
49. Chief of Staff Bachman: This discussion comes down to two points: equity of impact and equity of access. I prioritize equity of access, as the current system falls short of impacting every student adequately. The F&F committee lacks agency to prevent requests from going through, leaving student groups with the ability to appeal denials based on facts and documents. The key is to ensure that funds have the widest impact, not just the tallest. While acknowledging that this conversation should have happened earlier, it is not too late to start now. By developing a system now, we can gather data for a better future system. Many organizations have taken the time to submit large requests, now we can affect 15 organizations with a more significant impact. We must acknowledge our own complacency in this issue, as this body has had multiple opportunities to play a fiscal role and has consistently deferred to the F&F committee, and while that decision is fine it has led to the consequences we are facing today.
50. Senator Anson: Each student pays student fees that we allocate to organizations. If we distribute the funds across the campus, there is a better chance that students can benefit from these fees through various events. With limited funds remaining, it is crucial for students to have access to the money they pay to the school.
51. Representative Torres: Since we promote early submissions from student organizations, it is their responsibility to submit requests promptly. For instance, in the case of regional conferences with set dates, it makes sense to request funds in a timely manner rather than approaching F&F at the last minute. This proactive approach benefits the entire student body for the rest of the semester.
52. Senator Burns proposes an amendment to include: “Student Organizations are to be allowed to resubmit their application to align with the budget cap,” Seconded by Senator Anson
53. Roll call vote: 16-4-0
54. Amendment accepted
55. Representative Gebremariam: Certain national societies formed within the colleges are either more recent or had a late start. We can contemplate semester-specific caps to ensure that organizations are not deterred from initiating activities late in the spring semester due to limited funding. Analyzing statistics can guide us in determining when we typically have more events and allocate more funds to those semesters.
56. Ex Officio Spray: Policy 7029 allows organizations from national chapters to receive funding from F&F, potentially contributing to the faster depletion of funds.
57. Senator Augustyn: Budget caps were unfamiliar to us until December of last year. F&F never discussed them in previous years, and this F&F year is notably unusual with a substantial number of requests and money. Even though we should have addressed this earlier, none of us anticipated this situation. The post-COVID increase in campus activity has provided an excellent opportunity to consider legislation for the next year. The Film Club received a larger allocation to address inequity within their department. I want us all on the same page, emphasizing responsibility for our budget. I am shifting the agency from F&F to all of you.
58. Ex Officio Glunz: SGA has shifted from having leftover F&F money annually to depleting the budget early, due to lifted club restrictions and changes in APS #7029 and your 2023-24-08 bill. SGA sponsors larger club programs, but fewer groups receive support, and many do not explore other resources. Senators, as you weigh "impact," consider whether SGA prioritizes large marquee programs by fewer clubs or small, cost-effective programs by many groups. What steps are the Senate or F&F taking to reinforce these priorities for all student leaders?
59. Representative Valdez: I am not questioning our past decisions; there has been a learning curve in how money is requested, and we need to adapt. Our immediate focus is the budget; we can consider future mechanisms that will not impact necessary initiatives now. Prioritizing what is most impactful for students, considering all major events are planned, the amendment helps balance interests. It allows organizations to collaborate with F&F and plan events, even if not as grand as initially thought.
60. President Combs: F&F did not experience something like this last year; there have been numerous changes. Policy 7029 looks different this year. In the current circumstances, a bill like this makes sense to me because now every organization can seek funding from us. This provides an opportunity to test and observe the impact. If there is a desire to implement something similar in the future, this trial period allows us to measure its effects.
61. Representative Gebremariam: It is the responsibility of some of us in SGA to collaborate with departments in securing funds for student organizations within colleges. College Council can support F&F to prevent future spending caps.
62. Chief of Staff Bachman: Some key questions in the F&F discussion include: How much decision-making autonomy does F&F possess? Considering their documentary power, what rights, agency, and responsibilities does F&F have in rejecting student organizations? While acknowledging F&F's limited authority to decline significant proposals in the interest of the student body, the debate arises: Should F&F even have this autonomy? If you agree, this legislation becomes crucial for safeguarding student needs. Alternatively, if you do not see the risk in letting a small board dictate spending without sufficient accountability, we can discuss that aspect later after your no vote.
63. Motion to Call to Question by Representative Torres, Seconded by Senator Saoji
64. Roll Call Vote: 20-0-0
65. The Bill Passed
66. Swearing in of New Members
67. Representatives Favorite and Craig have been sworn in.
68. Updates:
    1. President
    2. Vice President
    3. Chief of Staff
    4. Civics
    5. College Council
    6. Public Relations
    7. Finance & Funding
    8. Judicial
    9. SACAB
    10. SSRC
    11. Ex Officio
69. **General Business from the Floor:**
70. Senator Rodriguez: Civics is shifting focus from the reflection space initiative. Victoria, overseeing the food pantry at the wellness center, has asked for collaboration with SGA to support the pantry. To gather diverse perspectives, we have created an Excel sheet for input and opinions on the food pantry. Feel free to contribute any additional information. Civics aims to gather a broad range of perspectives before collaborating with the staff.
71. President Combs: In our recent meetings with the executives and ex officios, a few concerns have popped up, and we want to take a moment to revisit our expectations. The current theme for this administration is "effective excellence." While we have been flexible during the fall to allow everyone to get acquainted with our way of working, it is important to emphasize that excellence is the standard for all our efforts on behalf of the student body. Unfortunately, recent performance has not met this standard. If excellence cannot be consistently delivered, a discussion about resignation may be necessary. Our tri-institutional campus presents challenges, but it also offers numerous opportunities to best serve the students on our campus.
72. Chief Justice Zabaleta: We want to set clear attendance expectations. If you are unable to attend committee meetings, complete the absence form and ensure communication with your chair. This expectation extends to your desk shift as well.
73. **Adjournment:** Motion to Adjourn by Senator Saoji, Seconded by Director Galloway
74. Senate adjourned at 2:49 PM