Student Government Association Minutes from January 23, 2013

January 23, 2013

Present: President Bergenn, Vice President Braun, Treasurer Alaimo, Senators Anderson, Baldassario, Berriault, Choplick, Fallanca, Fellows, Fernandez, Fox, Fung, Germaine, Gomez, Hubbard, Khan, Kirk, Kitchener, Lee, Lopez, Manento, Marcelli, Mgushi, Mills, Narcisse, Ott, Pancak, Radden, Rodriguez, Sejdiraj, Sonet, Testa, Towler Truex, Zohlman

Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m. by President Bergenn.

Motion to approve minutes from January 16, 2013 (Marcelli, Ott)  

Passes Unanimously  

Student Affairs Report: None  

Public Hearing:

Ian Mangione: In Regards to the failed IRC Food Committee Resolution: Last week the IRC Food Committee resolution failed because senators thought they were just doing their job. But very few senators actually eat on campus. So to give you an idea of what the Food Committee has changed…they’ve gotten sushi nights, steak, specialized stations, better salad bars and they have gotten Sodexho to extend their Friday hours to 7:30p without charging the school. This resolution made it to the floor and it should have been treated respectfully. There is no governing body in charge of the Food Committee, they are a section of IRC but they are just a group of student volunteers. They didn’t ask for the recognition they earned it. I hope the next time something like this is brought to the floor the group gets the praise they deserve from one group to another

Baldassario: Can you explain the role of the IRC Recognition Committee

Mangione: the Recognition Committee hosts a banquet to recognize student achievement on campus mostly within the IRC. This banquet is mostly internal but the SGA resolution is geared away from the SGA
President’s Report

1- For the night life shuttle, we’re still looking into costs of extra insurance. We did get bidders back though for the actual shuttle that came in lower than expected. However, with the insurance it may still be too expensive, but this could still happen.

2- For the retreat we’re supposed to be leaving Friday at 5p which is when the snowstorm is supposed to hit. So I want to do a straw poll of what time would work best for everyone if we had to leave earlier.

3- Mike Fraiser had an idea to bring laptops to his campus that would be made available so students could sign a form letter to the Board of Regents and all related committees. Anyone who signs the letter would get food or entered in a raffle. This is something Academic Affairs looking into and may want to do.

4- I want to do another straw poll regarding scholarships for the Student Life Committee.

Bergenn: an endowment was started to help scholarships and the amount we give out has slowly risen and become sort of a heated topic. Scholarships are done annually and are in high demand, we usually give out around $20,000 a year.

Berriault: part of what we pay in tuition helps with student’s financial aid.

Bergenn: this is just a straw poll and not meant to define anything.

Philosophically, do you agree with Student Government giving out scholarships?

29Y 5N

Do you think student activity fees should directly fund scholarships?

15Y 18N

How much do you think SGA can fund scholarships? Please bold the letter of your answer.

A Not at all: 3
B the amount of the interest we earn from the endowment: 13
C endowment interest plus $1-$10,000: 10
D endowment interest plus $10,001 to $20,000: 5
E endowment interest plus anything above $20,001: 4

Alaimo: what was the endowment last year, $7,000?
Scott Hazan: I believe year between $6-7,000
Kitchener: I would say in the $6,000 range for this year maybe
Bergenn: you can go to Student Life after the senate meetings to get more information about the scholarships

**President’s Report Cont’d:**

5. I want to host an event at the beginning of March possibly with Academic Affairs, which would be a panel discussion with different department chairs, professors and Ned Lamont talking about the rising cost of education and the reasons why. I’ll let you more details and dates in the future

6. Last week “y’all looked fly as hell” and dressed professionally and I think that is something we should try to do for every meeting

**Vice President Report**

Internal Affairs will be Fridays from 3-5p. The first meeting will be at the retreat. Anyone who didn’t fill out the Doodle can still come, and if you can’t make the meeting time then you can still sit in on the meeting at the retreat.

Radden: is it every Friday?

Braun: Yes we have a number of things to work on this semester

There have been committee changes. I have the list of who is in what committee, if there are any conflicts with meeting times let me know.

Truex: how did finance change if we have a set number of voting numbers

Braun: you have 10 people with Alaimo

There will be more retreat information being sent out

**Treasurer’s Report**

There is a folder in the SA/LD office where clubs have to drop off their requests and sign up for a presentation time slot

**Committee Reports**

Sonet: the Student Life meetings will be after Senate at 5p. Today we’re talking about scholarships. This semester we’ll also be talking about transportation and getting cabs to take blue chips and parking signs in garages. I also think the senators should meet with their designated “caucuses” (residents v commuters v at large) to open up dialogue about the specific sets of students
Radden to Sonet: can you send me the minutes from the meeting about scholarships

Kitchener: I’ll CC everyone on the minutes

Radden: Public Affairs will meet Monday at 3p. I’ve been in contact with the Athletics Dept and they want to work with us on boosting home crowds. Any ideas let me know

**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business**

President Bergenn passes the chair to Vice President Braun

**Motion to allocate an amount not to exceed $6500.00-half the cost of the services of Vincent Tinto, specialist in student attainment from account SG9195 (Bergenn, Manento)**

For: Bergenn: This is a man who specializes in retention and graduation rates and has helped tons of schools. CCSU was going to bring him in but the Provost couldn’t afford his final amount because of budget cuts. It could really help the school to have a specialist give advice. We aren’t paying for just an event this is paying for a critical analysis and to do the whole study. Only at the end would they have a student success day to present the findings next year. This help keeps students involved in what’s going on on campus and is a good thing for us to do.

Fernandez: where are the funds coming from?

Bergenn: SG9195

Baldassario: so we’re not paying for an event but we’re paying for one next year

Bergenn: I left how the money would be used specifically because some would be this year and some next year. There is a breakdown in the letter, but $8,000 is to do the study, $2000 is to fly him from California and $3,000 would be for the event, but the majority goes to the study

Truex: is this going to be him giving a lecture on it

Bergenn: yes, though Senators Manento and Lee know more about it than I do. I presented it today for full transparency.

Mgushi: doesn’t the University have an office to collect data like this?

Bergenn: yes and no. they are assessing data at the guidance of the President and Provost. They look at ways to get more money, not necessarily to find things wrong with the university. This is data being analyzed from an outside perspective by a man with a proven background.

Fernandez: when would this begin
Bergenn: we’d be splitting this with the provost so as soon as he can start working

Ott: is this something the university is concerned with?

Bergenn: this came to us from the outside in

Against: Mgushi: we are using student funds to fund something the university should be in charge of. We already have an office that does this and audits the departments to make sure they are staying on track we don’t need someone from the outside

For: Berriault: most of what we fund is short term, but this is long term. We need to get our numbers up. It’s not just the study, but the outcome that is important. We need to find out what we need to do to get retention rates up. $6500 is a small price to pay and if it wasn’t for budget cuts the Provost would be funding this, but they can’t so they asked the SGA to take on more of a leadership role

Against: Baldassario: grad rates aren’t necessarily as low as they seem and this is a high cost. I’m not against funding some because the merits aren’t wrong it’s just the price is too high.

For: Lee: there is a 16.7% graduation rate for those who come in as freshmen and leave as seniors in four years. This will analyze those numbers among others to be able to recommend policies to improve this. Dr. Tinto is the guru of retention, the best of the best

Against: Ott: there is a disconnect with the university and its students. We don’t need to spend money on an outsider to do a study we just need to talk to the students

For: Sonet: what we struggle with is legitimacy. We are taking a direct role in this by funding half and it could fix a major issue. This gives us a chance to help and a neutral third party wouldn’t be bad

Against: Alaimo: only concern if we vote yes is we should make it clear that this is the one time a department would get funds because if it’s a repeat thing there could be problems

For: Szabo: every university is a brand and we’re all invested in the brand while at school and as alumni. Having someone come in is maximizing an investment to improve the brand

POI Fernandez: is there already studies of students who choose to leave?

Braun: all I know about is the project Dr. Mulrooney is working on.

POI Berriault to Alaimo: the extra money found last semester, did we spend any?

Alaimo: we have $277,389.49 in reserves

Against: Truex: we have a department to do this so why do you need the outside opinion? The school should pay, we’ve told clubs no for speakers who cost this much
For: Rodriguez: the department you’re talking about is the one suggesting we get this man, but they don’t have enough money. Retention affects everyone. The amount of money, the quality education and quality of life on campus…it’s all a cycle and we’ll never break it if we don’t do anything about it

Against: Mgushi: it isn’t logical to bring Dr. Tinto in when all the things he will do can be done in an office that CCSU has. We have the data someone coming in won’t change that, we’re not fixing a problem

For: Manento: University Administration didn’t come to us about this, it was brought up at the SST. The provost can’t pay for it all but they said if SGA funded half they’ll still do it

Against: Fernandez: using student funds to do this is still an issue. This is a university issue and if people aren’t doing their job then generally they get fired

For: Towler: we need a fresh pair of eyes if you expect different results

Call to previous question (Germaine, Mills)

Vote: 27 Y 7 N 0A

Original Motion

Vote: 23 Y (Baldassario, Berriault, Choplick, Fallanca, Fellows, Fox, Germaine, Hubbard, Kirk, Kitchener, Lee, Lopez, Manento, Marcelli, Mills, Narcisse, Pancak, Radden, Rodriguez, Sonet, Towler, Zohlman) 8 N (Alaimo, Fernandez, Gomez, Khan, Mgushi, Ott, Sejdiraj, Truex) 3 A (Bergenn, Anderson, Fung)

Motion Passes

Move to approve the letter to Department Chairs RE: Academic Maps (Bergenn, Marcelli)

For: Bergenn: Nick and Liz haven’t signed off on this yet, but basically the SST suggested each department have academic maps which lines out the list of necessary classes you need to take by semester to graduate in four year. They have a list of necessary classes but not different semesters or prerequisites. The Provost has signed off on this but not all the departments have so the SST asked if we would do this letter as a friendly nudge to remind them because maybe they’ll listen to the students.

POI Baldassario: is this mandating department courses?

Bergenn: no this isn’t mandating what’s offered, just an order

POI Truex: so like a degree evaluation but more department oriented?
Bergenn: yes this would be a department breakdown by semester

POI Narcisse: what about summer/winter/community college courses

Bergenn: if necessary, but it’s up to the department

POI Berriault: is this also for transfers?

Bergenn: I can’t answer that.

POI Bergenn to Lee: can you answer?

Lee: the maps are for people who begin freshmen year. The issue with transfers is they come in with a whole range of credits

Vote: 23Y 1N 0A

Motion Passes

Open Floor:

Hazan: the academic map allows the transfers to align their credits to get a good estimate of where they would be

Baldassario: I was initially against Dr. Tinto because of the amount but think about it, we spend $12,000 on our own stipends which is why I changed my mind

Berriault: In regards to the beginning of the meeting with Ian and the IRC resolution. Senate likes to throw out money but not follow through on leadership. I try to talk to people on campus but I feel we lose perspective. I was disappointed the resolution was voted down and Ian spoke as a frustrated student who wants the SGA to pay more authority

Bergenn: what im good at is politicking. We often push to make decisions and at times that’s appropriate but it can also be appropriate to sit on a decision without giving a yes or no decision right away. We need to think of the repercussions

Hazan: in regards to Dr. Tinto: consultants are used all the time. SGA is funded based on enrollment. The more we retain because of the study the more funding the SGA will ultimately get.

Motion to excuse Sen. Germaine from the SGA Winter retreat. (Germaine, Truex)

For: Germaine: I have prior obligations-my parents are sending me to Vermont for my birthday. It’s not a great excuse and I feel bad for missing this but I will make it a point to get the notes.

POI Braun: is this the big news you were tweeting about?
Germaine: amendment rights!!

Vote: 17Y 4N 2A

Motion Passes

Mills: Feb 1 is the CAN Snowball and the VIP tickets are almost sold out

Motion to be excused from the SGA Winter Retreat (Pancak, Mills)

Pancak: I have to go to the CAN retreat and I’m facilitating part of the conference

Vote: 19Y 2N 2A

Motion Passes

Choplick: we need to start thinking of the excusals we allow…Club Sports board meets Monday Kaiser 128 at 6:30p

Marcelli: I suggest we not bring something up without talking to the other senators before hand

Braun: remember you also find out the spring artist at the Snowball

Fernandez: how much are we putting in for the artist?

Bergenn: it’s more this year but with what we’re projected to make back we won’t be losing any more. But it’s at least $60,000

Hazan: it may even be in the $70,000, but it won’t cost the SGA even more

Braun: we need Senator Volunteers and you have a higher chance of meeting the artist

Motion to adjourn (Choplick, Ott)

Meeting adjourned at 4:57p

Respectfully submitted by SGA University Assistant Brittany Burke.