

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
COUNCIL

Tuesday November 22, 2005
417 Kerckhoff Hall
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Biniek, Kaisey, Kaminsky, Malik, McLaren, Neesby, Nelson, Pham, Sassounian, Tuttle, Vardner, Villasin, Wood, Zai

ABSENT: Doan, Hawkins, Sargent, Smeets, Williams

GUESTS: Julia Erlandson, Shawn Dona, David Lazar, Elaine Long, Janina Montero

Because Council did not have quorum, Wood suggested that they begin with Officer and Member Reports

I. Officer and Member Reports

Student Welfare Commissioner – Tracy Pham

- Pham said that the SWC had cold medicine on hand if anyone needed it. Pham also passed around fliers for World AIDS day. She said that there would be a number of events on the day, including a speaker, a live band, and other events focusing on Africa. Pham said that the SWC had collected a total of 134 units of blood, with Friday being the biggest day ever. She told Council that UCLA Run/Walk had only drawn 6 different teams, which disappointed them, but they had been able to make a nice contribution anyway.

Academic Affairs Commissioner – Michelle Sassounian

- Sassounian said that she had gone to the faculty executive council meeting, and the issue of changing the late-drop policy had come up again. She said that the AAC had decided to create a task force to oppose the changing of the late drop policy. She gave Council a brief description of the current policy, and said that it would be changed to requiring a petition to drop anytime after fourth week. She continued by saying that the policy change would not come to a vote before January or February at the earliest, though this was a mounting threat that needed to be dealt with.

- Tuttle asked if this had any application to ECP, to which Sassounian said that it did. Tuttle said that as he saw it, ECP penalties could be the punishment to discourage too many drops, so there might be a compromise that could be struck between the students and the faculty with regard to late drops and ECP.

- Sassounian told Council that the drop policy had been changed to the current status in 1993, before which it was in-line with other universities.

- Neesby asked if there would be no difference between impacted classes, those that cannot be dropped after fourth week, and regular classes, if this policy change were to pass, to which Sassounian said that there would still be small differences.

- Nelson asked how UCLA's drop policy compared to other universities, to which Sassounian said that she was unsure.

- Sassounian lastly said that her office would be tackling academic counseling. She said that her office wanted to create counseling for pre-medical and pre-law students. She added that UCLA had no counseling for such students, and they wanted to create such a program. She said that her office would be eliciting advice from the Law and Medical Schools.

General Representative #1, PC Zai, arrived at 7:20p.m., establishing quorum

II. A. Call to Order

- Wood called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m.

B. Signing of the Attendance Sheet

Villasin passed around the Attendance Sheet

III. Approval of the Agenda

- Biniek added an update on the UC Regents Meeting.
- Wood removed New Business Item A, the Student Involvement Update, from the Agenda.
- Pham removed the Financial Aid Policy Committee Appointments from the Agenda.
- Neesby moved and Kaminsky seconded to approve the Agenda as amended.
- Sassounian called for Acclamation. Wood asked if there were any objections to approval by Acclamation. There being none, the Agenda was approved, as amended, by Acclamation.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

October 11, 2005

- Neesby moved and Sassounian seconded to table the Minutes of October 11 until the next meeting.
- Pham called for Acclamation. Wood asked if there were any objections to tabling by Acclamation. There being none, the Minutes of October 11, 2005 were tabled until the next meeting by acclamation.

V. Special Presentations

There were no Special Presentations this week.

VI. Appointments

UCLA Recreation Advisory Board (RAB)

- Wood said that she was forwarding Elaine Long for Appointment to the Recreation Advisory Board (RAB). Wood said that Long had done a lot of work on issues such as sustainability, as house manager for her sorority, and **on campus**. Biniek said that the two members of the ARC who were present had both voted to approve Elaine Long to the RAB.
- Biniek moved and Pham seconded to approve the Appointment of Elaine Long to the UCLA Recreation Advisory Board.
- Council voted to approve the Appointment of Elaine Long to the UCLA Recreation Advisory Board with a vote of 8 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

VII. Fund Allocations

- Villasin said that \$7,108.73 had been requested from Contingency, and that the Finance Committee was recommending that a total of \$2,544.94 be allocated. She said that, after deducting the amount recommended for allocation, the running total in the Contingency Fund would be reduced from \$24,823.13 to \$22,278.19.
- Malik moved and Pham seconded to approve the Contingency Fund Allocation Recommendations.
- Council voted to approve the Contingency Fund Allocation Recommendations with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

The Contingency Fund Allocation Recommendations are attached to the minutes.

General Representative #3, Marwa Kaisey, arrived

VIII. Officer and Member Reports (cont'd)

External Vice President – Jeannie Biniek

- Biniek said that the House of Representatives had voted in favor of the bill on Budget Reconciliation, which had been another defeat for UCSA. She said that this had occurred after one of the largest organizing efforts they had carried out in years. Biniek said that the bill before the Appropriations Committee had failed on Thursday, which would otherwise have leveled higher education funding issues. She also said that the Thurgood Marshall Program had almost been cut, but the passage of the resolution this year in support of the program had kept it from being cut.

President – Jenny Wood

President Jenny Wood's Officer Report is attached to the Minutes.

Questions and Comments followed Wood's Report.

- Nelson brought up the issue of textbook prices being so outrageous, forcing students to sometimes spend upwards of \$1,000 each year. Biniek replied that this was something that UCSA had worked on, and that CalPirg had also spearheaded the issue.

IX. Old Business

A. Senate Proposal Discussion

- Neesby said that he had spoken with Council about the proposed Senate system, and wanted to address several concerns. Neesby said that his answer to the question, "why the Senate System", was that the amazing programming apparatus currently in place would be protected, but it would be depoliticized. He said that, as it is now, when one slate wins a majority of the seats, there's the potential for 49% of the student body to go unrepresented. He said that such a situation would not occur under the Senate system. Neesby then commented on a second concern that had been raised about the Senate system was that it would abolish the commissions. He said that, while he does like the division of labor, he prefers the potential to work together, which would happen under the Senate system.
- Zai said that she had concerns about inefficiency, and said that the Senate system at other campuses seemed to work either very well or not at all. Neesby replied to Zai's concerns by saying that there would be mechanisms put in place to protect the efficiency of the Senate, and he gave the examples of deadlines for making appointments, and funding, and other obligations.
- Williams asked how, exactly, an appointment would be handled under a Senate system. Neesby said, for starters, that the IVP would preside over the process, with a parliamentarian present, and acknowledged that the process would otherwise have to be tightened up a little bit.
- Kaisey asked if the IVP was delineated as the official liaison to student groups, to which Neesby said that it might be implied, though not verbalized. He said that the IVP was the liaison from the Executive Branch to the Senate.
- Biniek said that she felt the purpose of student government was to advocate for students, typically done through the process of publishing resolutions or doing programming for the students. She said that the Senate would still be able to present resolutions, but was concerned that there would no longer be anyone specifically responsible for programming. Neesby replied that there would be more of a division of labor, but there was no reason why individual Senators could not spearhead programming.
- Biniek asked that, since the Executive Branch and Senate Branch were separate, and both could program, but only the Senate could vote, what was the point and power of the Executive Branch. Neesby explained that the original reason for dividing the tasks and labor was because, under the present system, Council members have to both legislate and program. He said that by separating these two responsibilities into two separate bodies, members of the government could focus on their main roles. Neesby said that the checks and balances in place could ensure that everything gets taken care of. Biniek pointed out that they could go back and forth on the issue forever, but said that she saw legislating and programming as inextricably intertwined. Neesby ended the discussion by stating that separating the tasks and dividing the labor has worked well at campuses which have the Senate system.

- Wood said that, in terms of representation, she felt that the system in place allowed for the leaders to be representative of the majority of students on campus. She said she was very concerned that, by allowing for a single transferable vote, it would then be possible to have special interest Senators who had been voted in by just one large student group. Wood also said she thought that it didn't make any sense to change USAC's structure to match other campuses because, right now, the USAC system is the model for many other universities' systems. She said that the Action Agenda items that are developed under the current system at UCLA are often incorporated into the UCSA Action Agenda Items. Wood said that it was not an issue of what worked well for other campuses, but an issue of sticking with what continues to work well for UCLA.
- Tuttle said that one of the things that happened on USAC was people working toward what they saw as the majority of the vote. He said that probably worked to greater efficiency. Tuttle said that this resulted in tradeoffs with the actions of the government, but resounded with the president's remarks about what worked best for UCLA and what was best overall. Neesby responded to Tuttle by saying that, presently, for example, the commissions could vote to veto funding with a 2/3 vote. He said that the other change was that right now, referendum money that went to commissions was under the full discretion of council.
- Tuttle said that the commissions presently could veto, which was a negative effect. He said that by putting this all together, they were armed with that vote. Neesby recognized that the commissions could exhaust resources, but that it would be illegal to do that, and any such situation would have to go to the Judicial Board. He said that, under a Senate system, there would be mechanisms in place to prevent the exhausting of funds.
- Vardner moved and Zai seconded to extend the time limit on the Senate Proposal Discussion by four minutes.
- Pham called for Acclamation. Wood asked if there were any objections to calling for Acclamation. There being none, the time limit on the Senate Proposal Discussion was extended by four minutes.
- Vardner said that he agreed that the question before Council was about what type of student government they wanted. He said that UCLA was an extremely diverse campus, with more than 800 clubs, and there was no possible way that 13 officers and commissioners could possibly represent them all. Vardner said that, in fact, a single viewpoint had been represented for the last ten years. He said that there was no possible way for the members of this Council to represent the views of Engineering students, for example, who were never represented on council, even 'though they make up nearly a quarter of the undergraduate student population.
- Sassounian asked how frequently commissioners ever voted against Base Budget allocations, to which Neesby replied that very few budgets were ever voted down.

X. New Business

B. USIE Update

- Sassounian said that all of the applications were in, and a lot of well-established Faculty members had signed on to be mentors. She said that she was astounded by some of the amazing topics that were proposed for classes. Sassounian said that, on November 28th, she would go through the applications and decide which 20 would be made into classes. She said that the instructors would then enroll in the mandatory class for facilitators during Winter Quarter, and they would then teach the courses during Spring Quarter.

C. UC Regents Meeting Update

- Biniek said that the Regents had voted on a 33% Return to Aid, which was something that she had been working on for years. She said that it had previously been 20%, but since then they had worked so hard it was now being brought back up to 33%. She said that there had also been a compromise offered to the Regents, which would have lowered the amount back down to 26% in four years, but they managed to bring the Return to Aid back up to 33%, resulting in such things as six million more dollars, and more students eligible for grant funding. Biniek also said that five UC Regents had personally thanked UCSA, which had been very meaningful to her and everyone else. She said that, unfortunately, they had approved an increase in student fees.

Biniek said this meant that student fees would go up 8%. She said that this happened because the governor had decided not to put the needed \$75 million dollars back into higher education. Biniek said, though, that if this money was allocated to higher education at a later time, then the increase would be either lowered or rescinded. She said that graduate student fees had also been increased, but it was done by a narrow vote of 10 to 9, which had been sad since some Regents that were friendly with UCSA approved it. Biniek also said that there would be a 5% increase for professional schools, with some going up even more than that. She said that they would be looking into that, however, to see if the fee increases did, in fact, go back to the schools themselves.

- Tuttle asked if Dynes was keeping the compact, to which Biniek said that he and the Governor both had. Tuttle said that there might be senior officials who would continue to fight on behalf of this deal. He recommended that, since President Dynes had honored the deal, UCSA ought to respect him for doing that. Biniek said that was why they had focused so much on financial aid; she said that they were always against fee hikes. She added that they still felt that the compact was a deal that was struck which had sold the students out.
- Biniek said that funding had also been put back into labor centers, which was good because the governor might make a line-item veto on labor center funding. She said that there had also been a graduate student initiative that would direct another \$10,000 annually toward graduate students' fellowships. Biniek said that, at the next UC Regents meeting, they would be voting on a proposal for divestment from Sudan and also on a resolution about sustainable practices.
- Wood added that there were a lot of students who made the trip to the Regents meeting. She also gave great credit to Biniek for all of the work she had done on these critical issues and for all the things that she had accomplished.

XI. Announcements

- Vardner said that the administration was preparing for post-game celebrations following the UCLA versus USC game. He said that the full UCPD would be called in along with 100 LAPD officers roaming the streets.
- Kaminsky passed around flyers for the CEC movie and concert next week, and said that his commission would be marching in the Blue and Gold parade.
- Kaisey said that the Jewish Student Union would be having a movie night next Tuesday, and asked council to invite people to come to it..
- Zai said that the Bruin Bear Security Force would be operating all week, beginning on Sunday night.
- Pham said that a multicultural event would be held at Rieber on Sunday.
- Wood said that she had signed up USAC for the Blue and Gold Parade, and that she was thinking about a theme about the fee increases. She said that they would be writing a song, making a lot of costumes and preparing a dance. Wood said that they would also be making statements to Alumni and other spectators.

XII. Signing of the Attendance Sheet

Villasin passed around the attendance sheet.

XIII. Adjournment

- Biniek moved and Kaminsky seconded to adjourn.
- Pham called for Acclamation. Wood asked if there were any objections to approval by Acclamation. There being none, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m. by Acclamation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Keesler
USAC Minutes Taker