

MINUTES OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 09/15/09

Prepared by Stephan Edel, Secretary

- (12:15) President Elette Fortune convened the Session.
- Elette motioned to APPROVE MINUTES of previous Session it was seconded and approved by a majority of members.
- (12:20) Elette recognized Assistant Director for Student Activities and Events Charles Johnson to address the concern about the Student-Events listserv (Interim Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Angela Burton & Webmaster Joe Lynch attended this portion of the Session as well).
 - Charles explained that there were several concerns about improving the system for using the Student-Events listserv, stating that numerous students had been complaining about the volume of email being sent through that listserv. The Office of Student Affairs thus decided to create the new online calendar in large part to reduce this volume.
 - Charles stated that this decision was made in conversation with Walter Polkosnik (IT), Deans Greg Koster (Associate Dean for Administration and Finance) and Burton, Webmaster Joe Lynch, and Bright Limm, then SG President.
 - [Note: Bright Limm wishes to enter into the record the following. Bright confirms that he had spoken with Dean Burton and Charles Johnson about the online calendar last spring; however, he denies that either Dean Burton or Charles Johnson mentioned that they were planning to reduce, or eliminate, student access to the Student-Events listserv. He also wishes to introduce into the record that it was he who approached Dean Burton last spring to notify her of SG's plans to create a Google Calendar on the SG website in development and to inquire as to whether any of the technology fee funds could be allocated to the SG for the purpose of funding basic maintenance of the SG website. He states that after approaching Dean Burton with these points that Dean Burton merely notified him that Student Affairs was working on an online graphical calendar which would potentially be ready within several weeks (i.e., before the end of the Spring 09. He further states that upon seeing the empty online calendar about two weeks ago, he emailed Dean Burton to inquire whether this online calendar was the same as the calendar she had mentioned during their conversation in spring '09, and if so, what the procedures would be for students to post events on this calendar. Dean Burton replied by stating that Bright should ask Charles Johnson, who would be providing this information at the upcoming Student Organizations Orientation. Again, according to Bright, neither Dean Burton nor Charles Johnson notified Bright of any plans to modify students' access to the Student-Events listserv.]
 - Charles continued, stating that an email was sent informing people that Student Affairs intended to move away from the student events list-serve, that was interpreted as ending it. Dean Burton supported this statement, adding that this email provided students with the type of notice that students alleged they did not receive.
 - Charles stated further that the goal of limiting/ending students' access to the Student-Events listserv was to move towards more efficient communication and to avoid the overwhelming number of emails sent through it.
 - Paula Segal (2L Member) and Becca Olson (2L Member) reiterated concerns raised by students at the Student Organizations Orientation, including whether information that is not well-suited to posting on a calendar could still go out via email because **otherwise the information would not be available or would be very difficult to disseminate.**

- Dean Burton replied that events which aren't suited for a graphic calendar can still go on the Calendar Board along with Forum. The real concern, she stated, is that people don't check these portals.
- [ATtribution?] We need to develop the access. We can add an un-subscribe from the Student-Events listserv; we can change these web portals.
- Charles stated that neither Forum nor Calendar were really being used, and so they had Joe Lynch prepare the graphical calendar.
- Becca Olson stated that the problem is that it may take a long time, perhaps a year or longer, for people to get used to it. She asked Joe Lynch and Dean Burton if students could receive an email telling us about this site and with an easy link every week. She also asked about what protocols, if any, would be in place with regard to day-of or other short-notice events.
- Charles replied to Becca's concerns by stating that it doesn't take more energy to check Forum and/or Calendar than it does to check one's email.
- Alissa Hull (3L Member) stated that she does not use a computer at school, so if she logs into anything while at school, it's email, and only very briefly at that.
- Dean Burton stated that this is part of an "evolving process" to find the best way. "We aren't just telling everyone here what it will be like," she said. The goals of the administration are to "begin the conversation" and have us [student leaders] raise concerns so that it can be modified as a result of student input over time.
- Elette then intervened, stating that we must conclude the conversation on this topic in order to move onto other agenda items. She suggested that we take a moment to focus on options and suggestions.
- Joe Lynch wanted to make one more comment. He stated that when Dean Burton came to him with the request for the online calendar, prior to that moment there was a Forum with essentially a thread for calendar that didn't keep things in chronological order; naturally, then, a graphical calendar would be easier to use. Walter Polkosnik (from IT) spent a lot of time and effort doing this and he did a great job. What exists now isn't a complete solution, Joe recognized, and he emphasized that they are working on improving it. He recognizes that there is a desire to not have to go to many different sites, and that they are working on making creating RSS feed capability; this would allow easier access to the calendar and for it to cross post to the Central CUNY website. The links can include just check out this link, and it will be self updating. You won't have to log into the forums to access it. Of course, it is also a work in progress.
- Paula Segal asked a technological question of whether RSS feeds can be emailed.
- Joe replied that RSS feed can be emailed using essentially any system (including Gmail, Outlook, or Mac Mail) except CUNY Webmail.
- Michael Leonard (3L Member) asked whether the calendar could be included in a separate frame within CUNY Webmail.
- Joe replied that he knew what Michael meant and that they are looking into changing the webmail software. He explained that IT is still using it for reasons having to do with security, but they are actively looking at other webmail programs which are more flexible and have greater capabilities, such as including the calendar in a frame. He asked whether people would like it to work like that; there was general approval.
- Joe continued by stating that once the calendar is set up for RSS and other capabilities, he will notify the student body.
- Patrick Foster (2L Member) asked whether Forum postings could also be disseminated via RSS feed?
- Joe replied that they are working on that as well, and that once they work out the

architecture on that for the calendar they will apply it to Forum too. He hopes that they may replace the (non-graphical) calendar thread so that it is connected to the visual calendar and avoid redundancy and confusion.

- Paula asked whether it will continue to be the case that can only one person (namely, Charles Johnson, as Assistant Director of Student Activities and Events) will be able to post information on the calendar.
- Joe replied that at the moment, the calendar is still very much in “Beta mode,” so Charles does it when he does the room request....[?????]
- Paula stated that if posting ability will remain centralized, then Student Affairs needs to add the opportunity for student organizations to provide descriptions of the events, which opportunity the process currently does not provide. She asked whether Student Affairs would be willing to move to email format for room requests, noting that, especially where event descriptions are longer, it makes little sense to have student fills out descriptions on paper, which would then need to be transcribed into electronic format anyway. She also noted that many event announcements would benefit from being able to include graphics, flyers, and other attachments.
- Charles responded to Paul by explaining that he is required by CUNY central to receive requests in paper format to document the resources used by students. There is a movement to switch to electronic, but for now Student Affairs offices are still required to keep paper files.
- Joe stated that IT has been working on an on-line submission form; it isn't operational yet. Actually, the code for online version was somehow erased, so it will take time to recreate. It would improve Charles' work flow, and he could develop a different document system. It could include attachments of photos or word documents.
- Elette then intervened to end discussion on this topic, concluding with the suggestion that Members should email Joe any specific suggestions they have, and that a working group should be formed.
- Suha Dabbouseh (2L Member) thanked Joe for his work and his time today, and asked whether students could be provided a mini-training for the student body to solicit ideas from the student body.
- Joe replied that he could probably do a SIT time once the group is solidified.
- Dean Burton stated that she had anticipated that SG would take the responsibility for devising an input mechanism.
- Elette replied that SG can take charge and set up a working group.
- Suha asked whether Student Affairs would be willing to email the student body clarifying, and informing the student body of, the status and planned developments of the online calendar, the plans for the working group, and the estimated timeline for the completion of various components of the online calendar.
- Charles and Dean Burton stated that “in the mean time” all Student Group officers can access the Student-Events listserv again. The shut down was about the registration process.
- Dean Burton added the claim that all student submissions have been put out on the Student-Events listserv. Paul Segal contradicted Dean Burton's statement, stating that at least one of her submissions had not yet been posted.
- Suha stated that she is confused about what is going on with the Student Affairs' procedures and that she assumes others are confused as well.
- Dean Burton stated Student Affairs can send a clarifying email.
- Elette thanked Joe, Charles, and Dean Burton for coming.
- Paula asked whether Student Affairs would email everyone information on how they

could get Student-Events email in digest form rather than receiving every email individually.

- Charles replied that he did not know how to do that, but that he could check with IT and figure that out.
 - Dean Burton concluded her remarks at the Session by stating that Student Affairs is not really supposed to be dealing with these matters, that these matters are really IT issues, and that Dean Koster is really the administrator to approach with issues on these matters..
 - Elette explained that Dean Koster, whom she also invited to attend the Session, wrote beforehand notifying her that he would be off-campus today and therefore unable to attend.
 - Joe very quickly showed everyone the new webmail, calendar, and forum links on the Student affairs website, and a tech support self-service system, which he described as a “wiki-type” database. He stated that he will be in communication on these and other issues.
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- (1pm)) Tabled matter(s) from previous Session – NEWSLETTER.
 - Katie Bruggeman (Vice President, ex officio chair of the Communications Committee, 2L Member) stated that the Communications Committee is meeting at 5pm on Thursday. Currently, the committee consists of Katie (ex officio chair), Stephan, and Amy Hager (2L Member). She stated that other SG Members should feel free to join as well.
 - Katie also sent an email to the student body soliciting free web design help.
 - Finally, Katie noted that her plans for the contents and format of the Newsletter will probably change because they are impacted by with the developments of the online calendar and forum.

 - (1:02) Nomination (and possible election) of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIR
 - Elette requested nominations for the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.
 - Patrick Foster (2L Member) asked for a clarification of what the committee does.
 - Bright Limm asked Elette for permission to speak and was recognized. He (Whip, 3L Member) identified himself as one of the drafters of the Constitutional provisions on the SG Standing Committees. He stated that the Academic Affairs Committee is the SG Standing Committee which has primary responsibility for receiving and obtaining information about academic issues, and proposing SG’s course of action to address particular academic problems, including problems students may have with a specific faculty member or course, the academic standing policy. The principle guiding the drafting of the committee was the creation of an institutional structure within SG that would give a small group of students primary responsibility for prioritizing, and working out the details of, SG’s actions regarding various academic issues and give a specific individual (the chair) the responsibility to report back regularly on these matters to the Executive Board and/or General Body.
 - Elette clarified that the Academic Affairs Committee is an “internal” committee – i.e., internal to SG.
 - Katie suggested that we ensure that a 1L Member be on the committee.
 - Alissa asked whether any Members currently are not on any committee; Michael Leonard and Casey Bryant raised their hands.
 - Elette called for nominations.
 - **[ATtribution?]** nominated Casey; a number of Members, including Becca Olson and Bright Limm, seconded the nomination. Casey accepted the nomination. As no one else was nominated, Casey was then elected Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee

for 2009-2010.

- Bright asked Elette for permission to speak and was recognized. He stated that when he, and former Member Dave Eisenstein drafted the constitutional provisions creating the committee, they hoped that this Committee would help SG to move from being reactive on academic issues to being proactive. Now that a Chair of the Committee has been determined, he expects and hopes this to be the year in which SG makes that move.

- (1:06) Introduce issue of DEAN'S FORUM – discuss alternatives.
 - Elette stated that the Deans' Forums are not highly attended. We should change structure of the Forum, she said, adding that she spoke with Dean Anderson about this and that the Dean is open to changes. There are several possibilities.
 - One idea, Elette stated, is to have more Dean's Coffees, with perhaps one or two deans at a time rather than one big forum with all the deans at the same time.
 - Another idea, Elette continued, is to have only one Deans' Forum per semester. Currently there are two per semester.
 - Elette stated that this may be an issue that we have to discuss for a little while before coming to a decision about any proposed changes. She encouraged everyone to think about ideas.
 - Patrick requested Elette to send the Membership an email articulating what she thinks the problem are with the current set-up and an explanation of the advantages of other options. Elette agreed to do so.

- Tabled Vote on OFFICE POLICY.
 - Stephan, ex officio chair of the Office and Records Management Committee, explained that the proposed office policy with the office would lock the office except for specified uses.
 - Given the lack of time, he didn't want to go into the details now, but simply wants people to read through the proposed office policy and begin discussion on it, most likely via email, so that we can vote on it first thing next Session.
 - Suha wanted to know what was the reason for wanting to lock the office. Is it mainly because of new computer and security issues involved?
 - Elette explained that it was not just a matter of security regarding the technology, but also misuse of the space, including: people's leaving a lot of mess in the office all the time, people interrupting SG meetings to hang out, theft of materials, and unaccountable use of the office as storage space and/or garbage dump.
 - Stephan stated that one of the issues to be accounted for is the fact that other groups [minus Law Review] don't have their own office.
 - The goal is to come up with policies so that the office could become a workspace and not just a hangout space.
 - Paula stated that she thinks we need to table and have further discussion.
 - Elette decided to table it.

- Tabled: Solicit interest in and appoint membership on INTERNAL COMMITTEES.

- Tabled: Solicit attendance at PLANNING MEETING FOR SG GOALS FOR THE YEAR.

- Tabled: Vote on Co-sponsorship of STAFF-STUDENT LUNCHEON

- Tabled: FACULTY COMMITTEE representatives' report-back.

- Motion to add the SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL seats to General Election ballot.
 - Elette introduced topic of motion to put the Sustainability Council' student seats on the General Election ballot.
 - Patrick explained some of the history of the committee's formation. He noted that the putting these seats on the General Election ballot has the benefit not only of making the selection process for these seats more democratic but also of increasing awareness of the SC's existence throughout the student body.
 - Charles clarifies- you can only be on three things.
 - Elette moved to add the SC student seats to the general election ballot.
 - The motion was seconded by nearly all the Members present.
 - The Motion was passed unanimously.

- SG meeting time
 - Suha raised the issue of whether SG can adequately conduct its Session business solely during the one hour Tuesday period every other week. A number of other Members nodded their heads.
 - Elette said that she would begin a discussion thread on the TWEN site on this issue.
- Session was adjourned at 1:15 pm.