

# CMU Student Senate

Minutes of January 29, 2009

## 5:08 Roll Call

**Senators Present:** Cassandra Abernathy (CIT, .5 absence), Mana Ameri (CIT, .5 absence, .5 proxy), Miriam Cha (CIT, 1 absence), Zexi Chen (SCS, 1.5 absence), Jason Deng (SCS), Jake Flittner (CIT), Christopher Franzi (HSS, 1 absence), Aaron Gross (HSS), Michael He (CIT), Jayesh Kapoor (TSB, .75 absence), Barbara Kasbergen (CFA), Eunjin Kim (CFA, 1 absence, 1 proxy), Chansaly Ker (CIT), Diane Lee (CIT, .5 absence), Kush Mangal (MCS), Bassem Mikhael (BHA/BSA/SHS), Natalie Morris (SCS, .5 proxy), Daniel O'Toole (CIT, 1 absence), Stuti Pandey (HSS), Dina Patel (MCS, .5 absence), Robert Piston Jr. (MCS), Vivake Prasad (HSS), Sonali Shah (MCS, 1 absence), Prashanth Swamy (MCS), Benjamin Trump (BHA/BSA/SHS), Thomas Tuttle (SCS), Carolina Velez (HSS, .5 absence), Eric Wu (SCS, .5 absence, .5 proxy)

**Senators Absence:** Marcela Partida (CIT, 1 absence), Akshay Udiavar (CFA, 1 absence, 1 proxy), Brian Wade (TSB, 2 absence)

**Members-at-Large Present:** Jarett Adams, Toro Adeyemi, Marcel Christian (2 absence), Amy Kao (1.5 absence), My Le, Zack Pierce, Stephanie Schneider, Zachary Stockwell, Krishan Taylor, Will Zhang (2 absence)

**Members-at-Large Absent:** Urna Biswas (3 absence), Peter Choi (3 absence), Meghan Nahass (2 absence), Keshav Raghavan (1 absence)

## 5:08 Call to Order

## 5:09 Agenda Approved

## 5:09 Minutes Approved

## 5:09 Committee Reports

- **Academic Affairs (Brian Wade):** Unable to attend.
- **Business Affairs (Benjamin Trump):** Brought back the UC computer cluster resolution. Getting a new partner for campus readership. Meeting is at the UC back chairs 3:30.
- **Campus Life (Chansaly Ker):** No report.
- **Communications (Mana Ameri):** Postering for the vacancies. Coming out with *The Gavel* for the first time this semester. Also writing articles for *The Tartan* and may possibly begin distribution through them instead of *readme*.
- **Finance (Marcela Partida):** Comment more during discussion.
- **Internal Development (Cassandra Abernathy):** Valentine's dinner is February 12<sup>th</sup>.
- **Member-at-Large Caucus (My Lee):** Wtf series—trying to spread to other areas. Went through the cookies for comments and group them together according to concerns. Trying to follow-up with the feedback.
- **Chair:** Academic Affairs will pursue the bookstore question more in depth. Senators can go on executive board if they don't run again in the spring. Communications Committee will be doing "cookies for comments" tabling and postering...all senators need to participate.

## 5:15 Ex-officio report: Michael Director of Admissions

- Starting working for Admissions in 1974 as a tour guide.
- Became Director of Admissions in 1986.
- Today has a full-time 17 person staff and 10 part-time employees working on applications. Getting students all over the world.
- Students can apply to more than one college. Many students apply to multiple colleges.
  - 22,750 applications already this year.

- Hard to gauge the “Randy Pausch Effect”. Many students focus on his ideas in their application essays.
- Admit about 38% of applicants.
  - About 29% of these admitted applicants enroll.
- High average SAT mathematics score. SAT writing scores are also on the rise. No one is excluded in the figures.
  - CFA is included even though such scores are not as important in their.
- 17% international.
- 9% minorities.
- 5,100. 54% admitted women.
- About 10% international.
- Qatar campus—objective: do things in parallel. Focus on standardized testing, secondary application performance, extracurricular, etc...
  - Communications via video to ensure things are being done in parallel.
  - Application number increasing.
  - 20-30% admits. Enrollment is at about 30%.
  - Yield challenged because more Universities have arrived in University City like Northwestern and Georgetown.
  - Women outnumber the men.
    - Perhaps because Information Systems was added as an additional degree program.
  - Goal is to help native population become educated.
  - There primarily to serve Qatar natives—it’s the mission.

### 5:33 Questions

- (Zexi Chen) Was happens to waitlisted Students?
  - Learn who really wants to be at Carnegie Mellon, but wasn’t really able to reach out to those students this year because of the large applicant pool.
- (Vivake Prasad) What is our yield compared to our peer institutions?
  - A bit lower than other tier one universities. Biggest reason is because they meet full financial need of undergraduate students.
    - They have larger endowments.
- (Daniel O’Toole) How do you balance between quantitative data (SAT scores, etc.) verses experiences?
  - Look for academic capabilities but also look beyond to leadership, community service, read essays, recommendations, etc. The latter can be significant in the decision.
  - It’s a selection process, not an admission process. It’s not just academic talent, but these other variables.
  - It’s less formulaic and more holistic.
- (Natalie Morris) What is Carnegie Mellon’s position on early admissions?
  - We do early decision, not action. Intended for students where CMU is their first choice.
  - Early admission is essentially for high school juniors who are finishing early and skipping their senior year. There are some early admission students that do come.
  - Early action is where students find out early but they don’t have to make that commitment.
  - It’s still a small process for us, ~23% early decision admits.
- (Benjamin Wade) What oversight does the Pittsburgh have in the Qatar campus?
  - Have strong oversight from the Qatar foundation. They are still autonomous but we are there to help. In general, 80-100 per class is a reasonable size for three programs.
- (Stuti Pandey) Has our selection criteria changed over the past years and will they change in the

future?

- Some of the weights have changed but not really. There are not really a set of measurements that can be used for every school, especially with international versus domestic students.
  - There is more focus on leadership and ability to read well. International students have to have strong English scores in reading, writing, and even speaking.
  - President Cohen wants Admissions to pay the most attention to leadership.
- (Jay Kapoor) There are twice as many students that graduate from Tepper compared to the initial freshman class. Why is that the case?
  - Many CMU students want the opportunity to move programs, the most popular being business. Admissions has even decreased admission into Tepper to allow for students to change. Allow for 50 to 60 internal transfers.
- (Vivake Prasad) How do you compare international students to domestic?
  - We don't really try to compare schools in different systems. Important to look at how the student is doing in the context of their education.
  - Unfair to students to make that comparison.
    - This is why ranking is important.
- (Zach Stockwell) To what extent does CMU use Affirmative Action?
  - We can use race as a factor but not an exclusive factor as stated by the Michigan case. Do we use race and gender as factors?...absolutely. It's based on individual review.
- (Kush Mangal) What percentage of applicants interview? How many people use the online application versus the paper application?
  - They are not required but are recommended. Offer interviews from about May to before Thanksgiving.
  - Used to offer interviews via webcam but no longer use that.
  - Have hometown interview days.
  - 93% of students applied online. This year is 96%.
- (Chansaly Ker) Some schools have stopped accepting applications because of the economy. Has Carnegie Mellon been affected in this way?
  - Admission is something important to the university. Gifts and grants not as aggressive in the past. It's a tuition dependent university so it's important to continue to be strong. Recognize the importance of a strong and robust admissions program.
- (Skye Kim) How much time do you spend on each applicant?
  - First reader: ~15 minutes. Second reader: ~10 minutes (check and affirm/ disagree).
- Would you research schools?
  - Yes. We know many schools and we also have access to school profiles.
- (Sonali Shah) Are you changing how you're weighing the SATs?
  - The value in the SAT is not what it was; more factors are looked into. Scores are not a defining factor.
- (Daniel O'Toole) Can you touch upon graduate admissions?
  - Most graduate students are funded by research. Thus engineering and sciences—where students are funded by the research—are hurting.
- Is there a skew in nationality of international students?
  - Yes, there is a large international population but it's not very diverse, mainly because we offer no aid to international students. Doing so is more popular in Asia.
- (Benjamin Trump) Can you describe admission to SHS?

- Top five percent of HSS and MCS students to arrive at 60 students. It's purely formulaic.
- (Thomas Tuttle) How do you balance well-rounded, really focused, and leadership?
  - Want a well-rounded community but not necessarily well-rounded individually.
  - Involvement is important.
- (Robert Piston) Does the admission office have goals in tenure?
  - Internalization, listen to the academics, we listen hard and read between the lines. Listen to representatives from the faculty.
- (Chris Franzi) What is the future and goals of Admissions?
  - Keeping with the whole green processes. Want to not print applications. Help secondary schools only send electronic materials. Make it a paperless process.
- (Nara Kashbergen) How much control does CFA have over its admissions? Less Koreans is Design.
  - The Language test changed. It changed the complexity of getting in CMU. Each CFA department admits.
- (Amy Kao) Can you speak on the early admission process?
  - In Drama there is no early decision process.
  - Don't make choices until they see the entire pool. Commitment is to enroll the best possible class.
  - Central mission is to bring best group of students.
- (Krishan Taylor) Breakdown of admissions by school?
  - It's available on the institutional research website (and the fat book).
- (Daniel O'Toole) Does CMU's push toward a healthy campus affect international population applicants?
  - No, most students just assume they cannot smoke as liberally.
  - "I'll admit it, when we were in lecture we all smoked. There would be a blue cloud over everything."
- (Jay Kapoor) Best things you've seen in Admissions?
  - Coconut sent in the mail.
  - Message in a bottle.

#### **6:20 New Business from Committee**

- (Daniel O'Toole) Way better than last time.
- (Carolina Velez) Love it!
- Make correction to third "whereas". Say "in part by Business Affairs Committee."
- (Tuttle) Statistics?
  - Can't be released before the report.
- (Daniel O'Toole) Specify why it is a convenient addition. Good to distinguish why it is better than the clusters.
- Motion to add a second whereas clause to express their convenience. It deserves its own clause.
- (Jake Flittner) This resolution helps make these computers precedence for other convenient computer locations.
- **6:29 Call to Question to adding clause. Passed.**
- Addition: to second whereas—"the webstation project has proven to be a convenient and accessible computing resource to the student body."
- **6:33 Call to Question. Simple majority. Passed.**

#### **6:34 The Deliberative Loop**

- (Chansaly Ker) When people were more informed they were more likely to approve of it.
- Allowed them to make a better informed decision.
- (Vivake Prasad) Most students were ill-informed. Naturally, they voted against it. Those who are well-informed do want the increase to happen.
- (Nara Kasbergan) Wanted more fiscal responsibility to better allocate money. Discussion of expanding better financial oversight.
- Groups had too narrow of a focus.
- About 60+ students came.

#### **6:40 SAC Update**

- Computing update. Redhat Linux pilot, media technology.
- Default setting on printers.
- Clicker issues: cost, learning how to use them, coming to class mandatory, clicker doesn't go through.
- Treated like books at the bookstore. Looking at update from RI to RF. Battery issues. Future ones required to have on/ off switch.
- (Vivake Prasad) Do professors really think they are beneficial?
  - There is shown to be some improvement in students' performance.
- Get information on what classes use it.
- (Nara Kasbergan) UEC. Chaired by Indira Nadir.
- (Prashanth Swamy) New cluster design seems like an inefficient use of space.
- (Krishan Taylor) It reduces the number of computers.
- (Daniel O'Toole) Allows for more face-to-face interaction.

#### **6:53 Minutes**

- Elections moved to next week. Have 3 vacancies.
- Fill out Princeton Review Survey.

#### **6:55 Adjourn**