

CMU Student Senate

Minutes of January 24, 2008

5:06 pm Call to Order

5:06 pm Roll Call

Senators Present: Sudeep Paul (TSB), Rohit Kabra (TSB), Jared Itkowitz (TSB), Evan Osherooff (TSB), Rotimi Abimbola (HSS), Alan Eaton (HSS), Dorian Adeyemi (HSS), Amanda Reapsummer (HSS), Helen Lam (HSS), Brian Wade (HSS), Vivake Prasad (HSS), Daniel O'Toole (CIT), Lauren Walch (CIT), Robert Bethea (CIT), Matthew Maurice (CIT), Marcela Partida (CIT), Chansaly Ker (CIT), Hemant Bothra (CIT, 1 absence), Edward Oh (MCS, Proxy), Prashanth Swamy (MCS), Steven Reilly (MCS), Guangzu Gao (MCS), Joonho Hwang (MCS), Jenny Han (SCS), Hao Su (SCS), Benjamin Johnston (SCS), Kwasi Mensah (SCS), Nara Kasbergen (CFA), Steven Burton (CFA), Jerry Wang (CFA), Joey Cordes (CFA), Cyrus Larijani (BHA), Conor Flanagan (BHA)

Senators Absent: Luis Balceda (CIT, 2 absence), Mauricio Garduno (CIT, 1 absence), Ioannis Goutakis (CIT), Ranjit Korah (CFA)

5:08 pm Approval of Minutes from 12/6/2007

- The minutes are not yet printed

5:09 pm Audience Participation

5:09 pm Ex Officio Reports

5:09 pm Chair of Faculty Senate (Vivian Loftness)

- Faculty member in Architecture
- Key agenda items
- Plus minus grading has been brought up twice. Twice voted yes. Student senate voted against. As a result, was not implemented
- Why this decision: Tough grading program in Architecture. Foreign faculty often shy away from A's because international standard is that this is a "treasured moment" No A-'s means straight to be. CMU has on of lowest of peer institutions. The average GPA would go up by changing to plus/minus grading
- Used during midterms. Faculty will often go half a grade down to pressure students to excel

- Passed resolution to shadow grade. See what would happen if we had pluses and minus. Kept as secret excel file. Seeks to see if the grades would move up or down compared to actual grades
- Indira Nair would not be a robust task. Would only give a glimpse moment
- Some faculty think that it should not be up to students. Some say it should be 100 point scale. Some say 10 point scale.
- Currently at an impasse. Have to make decision soon.

5:14 Questions

- Would an A+ be a 4?
- Different institutions have different ways. We have to pick one
- What the heck is going on with the plus and minus. What does it mean if I get straight A's? What systems?
- Some institutions only have plus, result: more B+s than A's
- You mentioned that in CFA is holy with the A. what does it mean for the other colleges? What about the headache of managing it?
- Depends on the course. Some courses calculate to different decimal points make a direct grade conversion difficult. Hard to compare college by college. Have to look at the implications for each college.
- Where will the plus cut off?
- It will depend on the teacher
- If there is a difference, what does it mean on the 100 grading system
- I doubt it will get to the 100 point scale
- In my opinion, when you compare to peers after, there is ultimately deflation/inflation. What is the goal of this?
- The aim is to raise the average QPA. We currently are lower than peer institution
- Point of information: we have a lower QPA because we are a more competitive institution.
- I think that using plus/minus will ultimately average itself out. This is faculty driven, and the students should be told this. Lets look at other institutions that have switches and provide that info back to the students.
- A lot of student think that 90 is a really good mark, and getting higher is really hard and valued. People will worry that with plus minus, this 90 will

become even harder. There are some institutions that have no minus at the A level

- Didn't know that
- Question about shadow grade? Won't teachers without the knowledge just split that rare rare A into a plus/minus rather than making the high B's into A's
- Some teachers have to ask themselves to make the cut off at the beginning or do I just bump up B's to A's
- Some schools have plus minus and no A plus. What about past grades?
- We beat up our students! We work make you guys work hard and give you lower grades. The goal is to raise the QPA!
- What are the other ramifications of this? Will this increase competition?
- Good point. Don't know the answer

5:25 pm Committee Reports

5:26 pm Academic Affairs (Evan Osheroff)

- On Monday we met with Indira. We covered a sophomore writing program held during break before classes. Was considered a success. They will do it again next year. Next year Indira will be introducing a 4 for 1 history course. Each will be four units. On Brazil, Russia, China, and India. They will be held during the weekend. 14 intensive hours. Write one paper which will be the grade. You can take as many as you want and turn it into one class. Pass fail grades brought to UEC. Positive feedback.

5:29 Questions

5:29 pm Business Affairs (Timi Abimbola)

- Meeting went well. Scott Street is coming to talk to us next week about USA Today. Will talk about readership numbers. Talk about marketing strategies. "Film your issue" marketing campaign
- Working with awareness on campus. What each committee does. Going to write a mission statement. Looking to target the right areas. Going to student organizations.

5:31 pm Questions

5:31 pm Campus Life (Sudeep Paul)

- Great committee meeting!

- Campus Gear Sale. Two days. One for winter and one for spring. Appropriate items at each. First one will be next month towards the end.
- Campaign for Great Ideas. Inside the UC for three days. Anyone can come up and write on a piece of paper an idea. What to fix, etc . . . Great way to meet with your constituents. Look at 4,5,6 of February. Flier next week.

5:34 pm Questions

- So we have campaign for great ideas and each committee having its own campaign! They can all work together
- Cool. It's a good campaign. I'm excited about it. Smile about it

5:34 pm **Communications** (Nara Kasbergen)

- Hopefully you saw the ad in the Tartan. Talked about the spotlight
- We were at the activities fair. We gave out handouts.
- We are going to be posterizing after next weeks meeting. For CFGI and the spotlight series.
- Different color posters corresponding to different committees. Pictures of chairs along with information about the committee and advice for the student body.

5:36 pm Questions

- During winter break I went to Korea and saw universities there. Their student senate would have a changing icon (every two years or so). Captured some philosophy.
- Can each committee see the flyer before it goes out
- Yes
- Every committee will be using the communications committee to make the fliers.

5:38 pm **Finance** (Lauren Walch)

- We started off with our new budget with \$38,000 and change.
- DOCS isn't coming. If everything passes \$37,150.
- We have some really big ones coming up. Putting them in binders and stuff. Really exciting. Going to review the bylaws

5:39 pm Questions

5:39 pm **Internal Development** (Vivake Prasad)

- Handbook for every senator. Will have big points about big things.
Contact information, red flags. If you want something in there, talk to me
- Survey of student organizations that have anything to do with senate.
- We are all harping on visibility.

5:41 pm Questions

- Are we going to have parliamentary procedure
- Yes

5:42 pm **Chair** (Jared Itkowitz)

- From ex-comm I can tell everyone is doing a good job.

5:42 pm **Points of Discussion**

5:46 pm **Visibility Campaign**

- Chaired by Adi
- We are getting pens. They are going to say “click to the website”. AB is going to advertise before the films. Video eventually. A short commercial. Work with film club. Have them script it, etc. Fast facts, trivia, insanity.
- T-shirts. Designs are in question. They are going to be fun. Can be given to funding groups or students who just come to the meetings. Couple of ideas. Forming.
- Joel and his condoms.
- Could rub people the wrong way.
- Straw poll
- Entire plan: None
- Reservation: A LOT
- Kill it: two

6:04 pm Spotlight Series

- Ideas?
- Facebook event for it

6:07 pm **New Business from Committee**

6:07 pm **0708-042 Special Allocation of \$350 to Chak De**

- See Appendix for summary of event

6:09 pm Questions

- Is there enough time to come back to senate incase other things fall through

- I don't know. Going to SDC this week. Might be able to, but leaves us in a tight position.
- Guaranteed in this?
- Yes
- Good luck

5:35 pm Discussion

- Great event. Lots of dedication. I am very for this

6:10 Call the Question

6:10 Objection

- I'm worried that they may not have the other sources of funding. May have to come back to us.

6:11 Discussion

- Rent cars or use cars
- Borrowing from friends. All car costs are for gas and tolls

6:11 Call the Question

6:12 Passes, 24-0-2

6:12 0708-043 Special Allocation of \$1032 to DOCS

- Not present

6:12 0708-044 Special Allocation of \$1000 to Lunar Gala

- See appendix for summary of event

6:13 Questions

- Do all the numbers add up?
- Yes
- What do you do if you have extra money from ticket sales
- It rolls over
- Do you guys ever have extra money
- Last year was the first we didn't end in debt

6:17 Discussion

- This is the definition of what we are supposed to be doing with out money

6:17 Call the question

6:17 Passes, voice vote

6:18 0708-045 JFC Slate

6:19 Call the Question

6:20 Passes, 24-0-1

6:20 07080-046 Pass/Fail Grading Proposal

- Rather extensive with a good amount of information. Potential risks on the last page.

6:20 Questions

- Shouldn't we wait until we have the spotlight series before approving
- Should not include MIT's findings. Just your findings.
- Its really good, including the background information. Actually having the other cases is good. I commend you.
- I agree with the last comment
- Should a D be a pass or a D be a fail? It will alter how it is viewed by the faculty senate
- In the CS department, if you get a D in a 100 course you have to retake. Will it be department specific
- We want to go for uniformity.
- There are a lot freshman who start out with one major and then move. Those will people may get Ds which will set them back, but when they change it doesn't matter.
- Making D a pass gives students too much leeway. They come in with AP credit, but you are still taking introductory courses. They may get D's in those introductory courses, and it is too much leeway for it not to be a fail.
- What would a GPA look like for a pass fail
- It would be non-factorable units
- We have to be careful when we implement this. It would not be a way to escape doing work.
- That is why one semester is best. Doesn't allow them to beat the system. Allowing it in the second semester, as noted by MIT, is a big mistake
- If this is implement, freshman now will be doing be seniors who did not have the privilege.
- The system will hopefully balance itself out because the people who beat the system will do poorly second system.
- Nothing in here about the implementation for CMU
- It is in there as fall semester. The only other question is ABC, or ABCD.
- Faculty senate talked about plus/minus grading to improve grades. This is a viable alternative.

- You won't be competing against people in other grades. Just against your grade.
- Is it possible to give them two or three pass fail options?
- Nope. Advisors will select the courses for you.
- Well could we change which ones are pass fail within those picked courses
- Probably not. Would complicate the system
- We should take into consideration that each school is different. Some have major GPA and overall QPAs
- Won't effect anything because the grades are secret!
- Academic affairs meets Tuesday at 5. Go to explore this further.

6:33 pm New Business from the Floor

6:34 I need two new members to join CoSO.

- Nominate: Mana (accept) Dorian (accept)

6:35 Discussion

6:37 Call the Question

6:38 Mana, Dorian approved

6:39 pm Announcements

- Meet with college senators!
- Tepper meet with Jared after meeting
- I brought it up because Tepper really sucks right now.
- This should be informal. People should be meeting at the very least
- New people at senate: Antonia (MCS) Ben (SHS) Andre (TSB)

6:41 pm Motion to Adjourn

6:41 pm Adjourn