

# CMU Student Senate

Minutes of April 9, 2009

## 5:07 Roll Call

**Senators Present:** Cassandra Abernathy (CIT, 1.5 absence, .5 proxy), Mana Ameri (CIT, 3 absence, .5 proxy), Eduardo Benatuil (HSS, 2 proxy), Jake Flittner (CIT), Aaron Gross (HSS, 1.5 absence), Jayesh Kapoor (TSB, 3 absence, 2.5 proxy), Barbara Kasbergen (CFA, 1.5 absence), Chansaly Ker (CIT, 1 absence, 1 proxy), Kush Mangal (MCS, 2.5 absence), Bassem Mikhael (BHA/BSA/SHS, 2 proxy), Natalie Morris (SCS, 2 absence, .5 proxy), Daniel O'Toole (CIT, 2.5 absence), Stuti Pandey (HSS, 1.5 absence), Marcela Partida (CIT, 2.5 absence), Dina Patel (MCS, 3.5 absence), Zack Pierce (HSS), Robert Piston Jr. (MCS, 1 absence), Vivake Prasad (HSS, .5 absence, 2 proxy), Keshav Raghavan (CIT, 2.5 absence), Sonali Shah (MCS, 2.5 absence, .5 proxy), Prashanth Swamy (MCS, 2 absence), Benjamin Trump (BHA/BSA/SHS, 1 absence), Thomas Tuttle (SCS, 1 absence), Akshay Udiavar (CFA, 2 absence, 1 proxy), Brian Wade (TSB, 2 absence), Eric Wu (SCS, .5 absence, 1.5 proxy)

**Senators Absence:** Zexi Chen (SCS, 3 absence, .5 proxy), Stephanie Schneider (TSB, 2 absence, .5 proxy), Carolina Velez (HSS, 3.5 absence, 1.5 proxy),

**Members-at-Large Present:** Jarrett Adams (1.5 absence), Toro Adeyemi (.5 absence), Marcel Christian (3.5), Zachary Stockwell (1 absence), Vidi (1 absence)

**Members-at-Large Absent:** My Le (3 absence), Krishan Taylor (2 absence), Will Zhang (3 absence)

## 5:07 Call to Order

## 5:11 Agenda Approved

## 5:11 Minutes Approved

## 5:11 Audience Participation.

## 5:11 Committee Reports

- **Academic Affairs (Brian Wade):** Bookstore policy (return policy) and MCS and SCS classes are undervalued in unit value.
- **Business Affairs (Benjamin Trump):** Financial transparency initiatives—send to Deb Moon.
- **Campus Life (Chansaly Ker):** \$1,100 total sold, \$605 sold last Friday. Sign up in half-hour time slots.
- **Communications (Mana Ameri):** CS, TBS still need to do “Cookies for Comments.” Made a Senate Stamp.
- **Finance (Marcela Partida):** \$9,633 left. If we allocate everything today, there will be \$8,533. Last meeting is April 21<sup>st</sup>.
- **Internal Development (Cassandra Abernathy):** No paintballing this coming Weekend. End of the year dinner—next Tuesday evening? Send out an email—expect responses.
- **Chair:** Last meeting in on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Might be a joint with JFC to approve the JFC budget. Last meeting will go over the COSO bylaws, cmuTV proposal, final committee reports, then go into elections with new Senate members. Yearbook picture will be taken on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Senator of the month: Eric Wu...CONGRATS!!

## 5:18 Special Business: Joanna Dickert, Coordinator of Student Affairs & Evan Osherooff (Student Body VP of Finance)

- **Deliberative Loop and the Students Activities Fee Increase**
- Deliberate pooling—democratic polling, designed to measure the opinion of a community. Try to educate a community on all perspectives. Propose questions to a research panel.
- Campus conversations program—first systematic use of deliberative polling.
- Use polling to get opinion regarding an increase in the Student Activities Fee.
- Special thanks to Evan, Marcela and Gina. Also to a number of Senators who monitored roundtable discussions.
- 50 participants, from pre-poll to post-poll.
- Deliberation with Pittsburgh and Doha students. Process and technology—see if conversations

between the two are feasible.

- Evenly divided by the question on the fee increase, all 25%.
- 42.6% felt that the fee should be increased.
- Question posed was: “what is the max increase you would support?”
  - Mode was 10% increase.
- Focused on how the fee was allocated.
  - 21% no properly.
  - 37% probably not allocated properly.
  - JFC oversight, accountability on spending, assessing programmatic success. Policy around fundraising.
- Many reported that there is still much to learn about JFC, even after education.
- Majority believe that the current fee was fine.
  - 44% felt increase is not important.
  - 77% felt support retention of the fee.
  - Second most response was no increase.
- 60% of participants believe fee should be uncoupled.
- People want to hear about future deliberations.

### **5:37 Questions**

- (Jay Kapoor) How does the coupled process work? How do we affect Doha, Qatar?
  - Right now they are the same and they don’t get to vote in the process.
  - People feel empowered when they can collaborate on the issue.
- (Thomas Tuttle) For the increase, was it an open-ended question?
  - Yes, the most frequent (mode) was 10%.
- (Chair) What does the body think about the Student Activities Fee?
- (Brian Wade) Most students think the fee is worthless; need to show people that they’re not just getting screwed over by the process. It’s up to Senate and GSA to inform students where their money is going.
  - The sample size—want broader representation. More deliberations will help with name recognition. Don’t get many responses from random samples. If students have a positive experience, they’re more likely to participate in the future.
  - Constantly experiencing with models, especially with time commitment. Some faculty members are willing to get students to participate by giving out extra credit.
- (Cassandra Abernathy) Opinions depend on the student. Some students who don’t take part in the discussion just don’t know where their money is going. Need to help people consider other perspectives.
- (Aaron Gross) Find a lighter way to encourage more students to participate.
- (Zachary Stockwell) Is there any way you can actually know how many people didn’t read the materials?
  - I’m sure there was a certain percentage that skimmed the materials. It primarily provides the moderators with a certain set of materials; can review the data.
- (Jake Flittner) What effect has the audit been on JFC?
  - (Evan) Saw significant amount misallocated; can be used in a much larger way.
- Contact information available on the Dean’s Office website.

### **5:49 Special Business (continued)**

#### **cmuTV Proposal and Request of funds from SGOR**

- Money will come from reserves.
  - Their proposal asks for significant portion of the budget.

- \$37, 500 total. \$20,000 for this fiscal year, \$17,000 next fiscal year.
  - Original request was lower.
- Broadcast on channel 17.
- Original show creation, documentaries, webcasting live events, content broadcasting from organizations, professional training, projector screen rentals, recording of lectures.
- Examples include: CMU Politics, DS, Mayur Salsa...have a wide reach.
- Cameras are 9 years old—beyond lifespan. Lots of equipment broken—limited to one camera.
- Lots of requests for high-definition.
- Not able to get current equipment repaired.
- High Definition cameras are only about 25% more expensive.

## 5:52 Questions

- (Brian Wade) What phase is this for?
  - All three phases.
- (Mana Ameri) Why HD cameras?
  - Recent discontinuation and cost effectiveness.
  - HD equipment is cheaper than are backwards compatible with standard definition equipment.
- (Marcela Partida) Didn't you purchase an HD camera this year?
  - Yes, but one of our cameras died this year. Talked with advisors, and went over options about using standard definition.
- (Jay Kapoor) How long will this last?
  - Right now this is no investigation into an even higher definition in television; HD will be the standard for a long time.
  - Some discounts are from buying in bulk.
  - Could potentially cost more money if we buy something that is not compatible.
- (Marcel Christian) Talk about the operating costs of HD cameras?
  - They don't use tape drive—which is the most common thing to fail (uses flash memory or something else). Also have removable or swappable lenses; things are interchangeable.
    - How do you evaluate your viewership?
      - Don't really have the technology to do so.
      - However have looked at a study done by NYU. One-third of television sets receive HD signals.
- (Jarrett Adams) I know you've just released a website, but how exactly are you advertising to the student community?
  - Don't have scheduling capabilities. With launch of new website, video on demand is very successful.
  - Usually will poster for big events.
- (Eric Wu) What will you do with operating surpluses?
  - Give back to finding resources, talked to Gina and VPF.
- (Mana Ameri) Percentages of on-campus housing that have televisions? Do you know how many views per day you get?
  - No way to determine that.
  - Like AB tech—provide services to live events—count that as viewers.
- (Kush Mangal) Regarding the website, currently HD uses a lot of bandwidth, so who do you tackle with this issue?
  - Posting on external website, such as YouTube. Have a bandwidth

exemption.

- (Jarrett Adams) Why aren't you getting numbers on viewership?
  - We could conduct some sort of polling, but we have a pretty good idea.
  - Have a lot of students visit the website—significant portion of the campus.
- (Stuti Pandey) What constitutes such extravagance in the new equipment?
  - Want to make sure the equipment will last for several years and it's more cost effective in the future. Even lower end cameras will net to the same cost with modifications.
    - Regarding audio equipment, have you looked into ways of reducing costs; is it the necessary quality level that our station needs?
      - It's not any sort of top of the line audio gear.
- (Thomas Tuttle) Will flash memory wear out eventually?
  - Extremely reliable and under warranty—no issue for at least the next 8 years.

### **6:21 Initial Thoughts/ Discussion**

- (Eric Wu) Not feasible for them to get figures on viewership. This is only a meager push into HD capability. Don't need to question them.
  - SD cameras replaced, parts will likely be discontinued.
- (Jarrett Adams) I really do believe that there should be concrete figures. Doesn't really seem they are trying to reach out to the student community; more beneficial to themselves.
- (Thomas Tuttle) Find some way to come up with a poll, just to get an idea where to focus your efforts.
- (Mana Ameri) Stress that this is \$30,000 out of the students' pockets. I want to feel comfortable that this will benefit the students. If we upgrade quality of cameras, want to make sure the quality if it is upgraded too.
- (Natalie Morris) Bring in numbers regarding who visits the website. Encourage Senators to poll people and see how many people actually watch cmuTV.
  - Lots of issues necessitated a cmuTV strategic plan to improve the quality of cmuTV. This initiative is mostly to make sure that cmuTV will have enough.
- (Brian Wade) Didn't have enough support, size, and lack of facility.
  - Have about 30 or so active members; 20-30 peripheral members.
    - We want to make sure we get utility out of this. Perhaps collaborate with the Tartan. Let people know who cmuTV is. Collaborate with other organization to boost your stature.
- (Stuti Pandey) To whom is the channel available?
  - Around 3,500 students—campus cable connection...but not off-campus housing.
  - Plan is to sustain cmuTV.
  - Dollar amounts for individual people; cheaper for cmuTV to broadcast events than to hire out to an outside organization.
- (Kush Mangal) Request is quite moderate. I think that they need a wide range of cameras, such as "adventure cameras" for new members. Price of HD is dropping. Doing a public service by visually archiving our experience at CMU.
- (Marcela Partida) Money paid back to Dean Tucker will come out of JFC. Not being straightforward about where the money is going. Financially irresponsible

to approve this. The reserves are for emergencies only; need to be more informed about this. No need for this to be done in such a rapid manner..

- Get reduced prices if we purchase things in bulk. We think it's financially responsible to do it all at once.
- Both bodies must vote in order for it to pass. JFC didn't recommend this proposal, only to come before Senate.
  - (Jay Kapoor) Have two weeks to vote on it...ask constituents! Get educated. Also keep in mind it's not just their television allocation, but also their service at live events.
  - (Jake Flittner) It's their responsibility as well to present the general body with numbers. Need something tangible to look at to determine how to vote.
  - (Dan O'Toole) What about funding from JFC?
    - Went to SDC in the past and they are usually very hesitant.
  - (Stuti Pandey) If cmuTV didn't exist, who would be coming in to do the filming?
    - They would charge \$8000-\$9,000; what cmuTV charges about \$1,400.
  - (Thomas Tuttle) Either upgrade this now, or will be forced to replace it over the next several years. Look at it as a one-time investment. And the campus has a need for their services.
  - (Jarett Adamas) We need to see your strategic plan and how it relates to the students.

#### **6:59 New Business from Committee**

##### **0809-068: Special Allocation of \$605 to Lambda Sigma for Cow on the Cut**

- Painting the CFA lawn, where cow poops a person's square wins a computer.
- Novel way to fundraise; great way to get people out.
- Goes to PittsburghCares.
- Great way for campus to give back to the community

##### **7:04 Questions**

- (Brain Wade) What kind of laptop?
  - Acer, to lesson costs.
- (Dan O'Toole) Advisor?
  - Started with \$3,000. Came from dues last years. Initiation costs \$1,000 but still want to leave money for new members.
- How much are you contributing as a club
  - Estimate \$400.
- (Jake Flittner) How many squares?
  - 235—how many sold.

##### **7:06 Discussion**

**7:70 Move to Vote. Simple majority voice vote. Passed. \$605 to Lambda Sigma for Cow on the Cut**

##### **0809-069: Special Allocation of \$275 to Zeta Beta Tau for ZBT "Get on the Ball" Event**

- Still have other funding motions to go to.
- Will advertise Student Senate.
- Bill ball that is rolled around campus. People sign the ball and then each signature brings in money.
- Also having a BBQ as the ball is rolled around.

##### **7:10 Questions**

- (Dan O'Toole) Was there a BBQ involved in the past?
  - No, new this year.
- (Jake Flittner) How much per signature?
  - About \$8,000 to \$9,000 in total.

#### **7:11 Discussion**

**7:13 Move to Vote. Super majority hand vote. 13-0-6. Passed. \$275 to Zeta Beta Tau for ZBT "Get on the Ball" Event**

#### **6:40 Points of Discussion**

- Point of information: you can limit discussion and a person's responses.
- Actually read the proposal fully.
- It's all about fiscal responsibility. JFC gives 40,000 a year to crew, for instance. They could come back every year with funding needs that could net the same amount as this.
- This is a lot of money...almost a full semester's funding.
- People are looking for a viability plan.
- Make concrete suggestions to them regarding viewership and hits. Can make a request for it.
- Ask ourselves, is this what the student body wants? Is this what our reserves funds should be used for?
- I support them switching to HD but I don't support them using the reserve fund.
- Analysis of what it'd cost to have a HD transition.
- What impact do reserves have on the campus community? The third floor of the UC is full of organizations. Will people use cmuTV in the same way?
- We need to figure out what the alternatives are. See how much it'll cost if they use the regular JFC budget. As a television station, it's a bit of joke. Dumping money on them might evolve them into a better campus resource.
- We should propose that they present alternatives at the next general body meeting.
- Other organizations rely on cmuTV and it could negatively affect the campus if it is not passed.
- One Night in Beijing, for instance...cmuTV is saving AARC money.
- Not every organization is meant to survive. "I'm not saying we should bail them out."
- "The Senate bailout, should it happen?"
- The reserve is purely for emergencies; \$35,000 is money that they should not be getting.
- This is not an emergency. Their JFC budget allows them to purchase a new camera.
- They rent cameras that aren't theirs
  - "They are getting their whatever shit for buggy."
- Who has HD in a college dorm?!
- If we fund this, it sets a really bad precedence for other organizations.

#### **7:39 Announcements**

Campus Gear Sale This Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>  
 Senate Dinner (TBD)  
 Last General Body Meeting of the Year, April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
 Senate/SDC Barbecue, Date TBA

#### **7:39 Adjourn**