**STUDENT ASSOCIATION SENATE MEETING**

**Campus Center, Assembly Hall**

**November 20, 2013, 8:30 PM**

* CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING ROLL

*Chairman Witte convened the meeting at 8:35 PM.*

* Pledge of Allegiance
* *The following Senators were present:*

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| --- | --- |
| * Sen. Finney Abraham * Sen. Haris Alic * Stephanie Augustin * Sen. Nadia Belkin * Sen. Alexa Cappola * Sen. Devin Caravello * Sen. Patrick Cronin * Sen. Khadija Cuevas * Sen. Stanley De la Cruz * Sen. Skyler DeAngelo * Sen. Beroro Efekoro * Sen. Benjamin Engwer * Sen. Allie Faver * Sen. Alex Flood * Sen. Roevelle Gustave * Sen. Chenaniah Henderson * Sen. Brad Hershenson * Sen. James King | * Sen. Ashley Klingberg * Sen. Matthew Krush * Sen. Stephanie Leader * Sen. Michael Longo * Sen. Daniel Markisello * Sen. Cylas Martell-Crawford * Sen. Joe Messmer * Sen. Casey Olszewski * Sen. Kathleen Orlan * Sen. Zach Ripka * Sen. Johnathon Rood * Sen. Roger Rook * Sen. Brittany Russell * Sen. Vanessa Salamy * Sen. Emma Schwab * Sen. Jacob Sherretts * Sen. Connor Wilkins |

* **Absent with an excuse**: Sen. Anthony Balzano Sen. Rob Forman
* **Absent without an excuse:**, Sen. Michael Gray II, Sen. Shireen Ramnath, Sen. Diana Parisi, Sen. James Perry, Sen. Lyle Weintraub.

**Also in attendance** Director of Legislative Affairs Marc Cohen, Director of Academic Affairs Derek Comptroller Lee Stanton, Deputy Comptroller Tyler Paladino, Graduate Assistant Trey Price, Earth Tones, Model EU, Autism Speaks, Young Americans for Liberty, UAlbany Running Exchange

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

-Motion to skip reading of the minutes by Sen. Schwab, second by Sen. Cronin

-Motion to approve minutes with unanimous consent by Sen. Leader, Second by Sen. Rook.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

-Sen. De La Cruz: Last Thursday, Fuerza Latina hosted their annual Fuerza night with over 400 people in attendance, including several senators. Extends gratitude to those that came out to support.

OPENING REMARKS:

-Chairman Witte:

* In response to the recent opening for ranking member of the Committee of Community Engagement and Outreach, Sen. Efekoro has been appointed by default as he was the only one to submit a resume.
* The senate is currently working to fill open vacancies for the following semester. An opening will be available since Sen. Leader will be graduating. Upon inquiry, Sen. Sherretts announces he will also be graduating at the end of this semester.

-Vice Chair Krush: No comment

UNIVERSITY REPORT:

* Graduate Assistant Trey Price:
* Reminds senators that part of his job description as a graduate assistant involves working alongside Comptroller Lee Stanton, Chairman Witte and the Board of Finance to assist the Student Association in managing their finances.
* Has experience as former Comptroller, the senate's former Chairman, and a former senator.
* Urges anyone with any questions about SA's past history or student involvement to contact him at tprice@albany.edu.
* Announces there is currently an external review of SA being conducted by the university through student involvement.
* Informs senators they will be receiving an email by next week with a survey regarding student leader's perception on SA. More specifically, the survey will be inquiring on whether management is appropriately fulfilling duties.
* Strongly urges student leaders to complete the survey to provide ideas for improvement and feedback to help advisors better train senators.
* Beginning in January, student involvement will be following up on survey responses with Chairman Witte and the rest of SA's e-board to report survey findings. Some student leaders may be pulled for follow-up interviews regarding their responses.
* Opens for questions

*No questions, Steps down*

JUDICIAL REPORT:

No report

BOARD OF FINANCE REPORT:

-Sen. Longo:

* The Board met last night, November 19th, to approve the new budget packet.
* The approved packet was posted on the senate's group page for everyone to view and post their thoughts and comments. Overall, the packet has receive positive support.

-Comptroller Stanton:

* Time spent on credit card reconciliation has uncovered multiple charges not approved by myinvolvement.
* Further details will be discussed during Comptroller report.

EXECUTIVE REPORT:

Chief Of Staff Marc Cohen:

* Regrets that President Agyemang is unable to be present at tonight's meeting due to a personal emergency.
* Vice President Butler is not feeling well and also unable to attend, reports that everyone is being paid.
* Director of Community Engagement and Outreach Rose Avellino reports she needs student volunteers to serve on a community service committee.

-Comptroller Stanton:

* Finished the first portion of credit card reconciliation, which involves matching up charges with myinvolvement reports.
* The vast majority of charges were reported on myinvolvement, however there are presently some charges not accounted for. The comptroller office is in the process of searching for the remaining charges.
* The amount that has not been approved on myinvolvement and has been red flagged ranges from $15,000- $20,000 and marked as debt.
* The rest of the unaccounted balance was merely accidental, charges that were forgotten to be put up on myinvolvement

-Sen. Faver: How does the comptroller office intend on retrieving the unaccounted funds?

-Comptroller Stanton:

* The Comptroller office is going through all check records and receipts.
* Believes there is good reason for why some purchases were made without permission (i.e. unanticipated purchase needs such as water bottles for Parkfest). In such circumstances, the Comptroller is able to write a memo requesting approval of the purchase even if there is no receipt available
* Any other purchases made outside of this category will require sending a formal letter to the previous card holder to retrieve the amount.
* The Comptroller office has recently created a Chief Integrity Insurance Officer position to address these sort of discrepancies. Deputy Comptroller Tyler Paladino has been appointed to fill this position, which involves monthly inventory checks, monthly credit card reconciliation and internal investigations as needed.

-Sen. Engwer: How many charges were made without approval?

-Comptroller Stanton: At least 20, but cannot speak to the actual number at the moment. Can easily access the specifics of the charges by referencing the report in his office.

-Chief Justice Bogil: Does the report speak to what the charges were?

-Comptroller Stanton: Yes. A majority of the charges were made to the Amazon website, for things such as trophies for a student group and other objects of that nature.

-Sen. Efekoro: Were the purchases made by a student group or a member of SA?

-Comptroller Stanton: There is strong reason to believe it was a former SA card holder, however conclusion is still pending further investigation.

-Sen. Schwab: During which semester were these purchases made?

-Comptroller Stanton: Between January and November.

-Sen. Longo: When was the last flagged purchase made?

-Comptroller Stanton: In October.

-Sen. Schwab: When was the last time purchase confirmations were looked into before this recent credit card reconciliation?

-Comptroller Stanton: Allocates question to former comptroller, Vice Chair Krush.

-Sen. Krush:

* A huge credit card reconciliation was made after the 2012 fall semester, everything was in order entering the spring semester of 2013.
* At the beginning of October 2013, discrepancies began to arise where things weren't being paid.

-Comptroller Stanton: Strongly believes unauthorized card swipes were made in good faith but failed to be referred to the myinvolvement website to be reconciled properly.

*No further inquiries, steps down*

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Chair of the Rules Committee Sen. Messmer:

* Committee met on Monday and officially removed a senator from office for the first time this semester, Sen. Nevins.
* Sen. Nevins read but did not response to an email sent over two weeks ago.
* He was invited to the committee meeting this past Monday to discuss his unresponsiveness. He did not show up and the committee voted to consider his impeachment. Vote was approved and in voting to impeach him, the vote was 6-0 in favor of impeachment.
* This vote is considered a final decision unless it is overturned by a 2/3 vote tonight by the senate.
* In conclusion, one senator has been impeached while seven senators have resigned. This leaves eight total vacancies to be filled for the next semester.

-Chairman Witte: Elaborates that two out of the seven resignations have been due to graduation.

-Sen. Messmer:

* The Rules committee will be conducting an audit in two weeks and looking into attendance just one more time this semester.
* Attendance concerns represents senate accountability efforts to ensure all senators who are in the senate consciously want to be here.
* Those that fail to actively participate should be replaced with those that do.
* If any senator cannot attend a meeting they must email Vice Chair Krush or Chairman Witte to ensure an excused absence.

-Chair of the Appropriations Committee Sen. Engwer:

* The committee's last meeting of the semester was held last night, November 19th.
* Sen. Rook facilitated last night's meeting and will be speaking on behalf of the bills on tonight's agenda.
* Appropriations current budget is $46, 500.98 before tonight's allocations.
* Appropriations has been keeping a spread sheet of all of this semester’s expenses that will be updated at the end of the semester to be sent out to all of SA.

-Chairman Witte: Bill (1314-070), to allocate initial funding of $250 to a student group, was passed in committee though not added to the agenda. Will entertain a motion during the legislative agenda to add the bill to be voted on tonight.

-Community Engagement and Outreach Committee: Sen. Markisello (on behalf of Chair) No report.

-Chair of Government Operations Sen. Wilkins: No report

-Chair of Constituent Relations Sen. Cronin: Committee met to deliberate on permanent recognition for 2-3 student groups, currently on the legislative agenda for tonight.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA:

Motion to add Bill 1314-070- Autism Speaks as new and unfunded on the legislative agenda by Sen. Leader, second by Sen. Cronin.

No objections, *Bill 1314-070 has been added to the end of the legislative docket*

**-1314-065 (Appropriations-Earth Tones)**

-Sen. Rook: Student group attended last night's committee meeting requesting $1000 for a trip.

-Earth Tones:

* Every January the Earth Tones travel on tour singing at different places.
* This year’s tour will be on January 9th to January 17th in numerous cities including NYC, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Virginia and ending back at NYC.
* Group will be performing in high schools all over these destinations. Purpose is to show young students they are more things to become a part of in college besides course work, incentive to pursue higher education after high school graduation.
* The Earth Tones have gone to various organizations on campus including OSI, UAS, UAlbany Athletics and Alumni House requesting donations to fund the tour.
* Will write SA and all other donators in as sponsors and promote the Student Association at each event they perform at.

-Sen. Henderson: Has the group made efforts to fundraise?

-Earth Tones: The group has raised some funds through selling shirts and CD's.

-Sen. Henderson: Why wasn't the cost of the tour originally requested in your budget?

-Earth Tones:

* The budget the Earth Tones receive is for PAC reservations and sound equipment.
* In the past group received more funding from elsewhere, this year the economy is tight and outside funding is no longer an option.
* Have meetings scheduled in the upcoming week with Athletics, UAS and alumni house to request the additional funds need to complete trip costs.

Motion to vote via roll call by Sen. Efekoro, second by Sen. Cappola

25-0-6

*Bill passes*

**-1314-066 (Appropriations-Albany Running Exchange)**

-Sen. Rook: Group attended last night’s meeting requesting $550 to cover entrance fees to a Jingle Bells 5K run.

-Sen. Krush:

* Would like to speak on behalf of the group since he is currently their treasurer.
* The requested funds will cover the cost for 20-22 runners to register for the race.
* The group currently has more members and are participating in more races than in the past, which costs the group more money
* The race benefits the Arthritis foundation.
* The Running Exchange has been hosting bake sales on Mondays to raise funds to help minimize cost constraints. There will be two more fundraising events at 5 guys and at the Capital City Diner.

Motion to vote by voice vote by Sen. Crawford, second by Sen. Cronin.

All in favor. None opposed

*Bill passes*

**1314-067 (Appropriations-Model EU)**

-Sen. Rook:

* Group has had major problems being recognized.
* Although they have been present at the Rockefeller College for several years, due to technicalities and circumstances outside of their control, they are applying to be recognized as new and unfunded and receive their initial budget of $250.

-President of Model EU:

* The group takes on roles representative of each brand of the European Union.
* After preparing vigorously to properly represent each of their assigned nations, Model EU attends a convention along with all other participants to model that of the real European Union, held either in NYC or Europe.

Motion to vote via unanimous consent by Sen. Cronin, second by Sen. King.

No objections

*Bill passes*

**-1314-068 (Model EU Waiver)**

Motion to move bill to the end of the legislative agenda by Sen. Krush.

*Bill has been added to the end of the legislative docket*

**1314-069 (Appropriations- Young Americans for Liberty)**

-Sen. Krush: Group is requesting initial budget of $250 as a new and unfunded group in order to apply for their second $250 allocation in the spring. Two budget allocations will qualify Young Americans for Liberty to be included in next year's budget process.

-Young Americans for Liberty Recruitment Chair:

* Group does a lot of traveling around the country, particularly in Washington, D.C. and represent SUNY Albany in a positive light.
* The group does a ton of fundraising on their own, thus seeking primarily to be formally recognized by the university.

-Sen. Deangelo (President of Group):

* Every semester group compiles a report of all expenditures and amount they have fundraised.
* The group started their first year with no allocated budget and fundraised $1,400.
* Group has been fundraising 100% of their own budget since their presence on campus (in accordance with their libertarian philosophy do not seek to be a financial burden on SA’s budget).
* Group intends to continue fundraising even after receiving initial budget from SA.

-Sen. Cappola: Why wasn't this bill seen by the Appropriations committee prior to coming to the senate floor?

-Chairman Witte:

* Clarifies that because today is the last day to add legislation before audit begins, he approved Sen. Deangelo’s request to include the bill on to today's agenda.
* Although it is last minute, if they did not get the bill in today, would not be able to have a budget for next year.

Motion to vote via unanimous consent by Sen. Cronin, second by Sen. Orlan.

No objections

*Bill passes*

**-1314-070- Autism Speaks**

-Sen. Engwer:

* Group is new and unfunded and requesting initial $250
* Attests that this bill was voted and passed in committee last week but not added to the legislative agenda to be voted on by the senate as whole.

Autism Speaks Representative Paul:

* The program was started in his fraternity to mentor Autistic teens.
* Students with autism have significant difficulty adjusting to a college campus environment, especially social interactions. As a result, they are at higher risk to drop out.
* Autism Speaks main objective is to make it easier autistic students assimilate to college life easier.
* Group intends to start initiatives in February.

Motion to vote via unanimous consent by Sen. De la Cruz, second by Sen. Efekoro.

No objections

*Bill passes*

**1314-068 (Appropriations- Model EU Waiver)**

-Sen. Rook:

* This bill is in regards to the group just introduced in Bill 1314-067.
* Model EU will be attending an international conference in Belgium.
* Group has already purchased flight tickets and is looking for authorization to overspend budget to help defray expensive hotel costs.

President of Model EU:

* This year’s conference will be held in Brussels, the capital city where EU officials congregate.
* The conference is held in Europe since a large number of participants are European.
* Group has been assigned to represent the role as prime ministers for the UK, Croatia and Belgium at the conference.
* The group would really appreciate help with hotel costs. The cost of attending the program is really expensive for students and they have already spent a large amount of money out of pocket.

Chief Of Staff Marc Cohen:

* Attests that the group has worked diligently with SA to get themselves recognized. Have not had time to fundraise since they have been directing a lot of their efforts into being formally recognized by the university.
* Due to circumstances out of their control, the group is making this request completely last minute however, fully endorses their request since he can attest to how hard they have worked to formalize their group.

-Sen. Efekoro: Rockefeller College is unable to help fund conference costs?

Model EU President: Clarifies that the Rockefeller College no longer has funds to offer the group, is currently only playing an advisory role.

Motion to debate by Sen. Engwer, second by Sen. Krush.

*Debate forum*

-Sen. Engwer:

* Remarks that the senate has only done this once before with Men’s Club Soccer, which represented a special situation in which they haven't been recognized for 10 years and wanted to attend an upcoming tournament.
* Understands that the students have already put in a lot of their personal funds into this trip, however the group has only just been created this year.
* Afraid that this sets a bad precedents for future requests; any group could make a club and ask to overspend their budget as soon as they are recognized.

-Sen. Cappola:

* Main issue of concern is failing to hear any future plans for how the group intends to develop itself.
* Unsure as to whether the group intends to secure external funding for future conferences or whether they will habitually depend on SA for funding conference costs each year.
* Would like to see more out of the group to ensure they intend to grow and fundraise, as well as whether they will hold events outside of the annual conferences.

-Sen. Cronin:

* Agrees that allocating additional funds for a recently recognized group will set a bad precedent.
* Strongly believes the budget allocation process was implemented in that particular way for a good reason. A group should start off with financial restrictions until they prove their sustainability in order to receive more.

-Sen. Rook:

* Points out that this is not a new group on campus.
* Model EU was recognized by Rockefeller College and have been suddenly let go due to the department's financial hardships.
* Group has been working hard for a long time to be recognized by OSI and SA. Although the request seems last minute, they have been working towards this request all semester.

-Model EU President:

* Elaborates on issues Model EU have encountered while trying to become recognized.
* The group was originally founded 5-6 years ago under the Model UN group. Advising professor specialized in international relations and ultimately left the school.
* The Model UN's constitution did not explicitly include Model EU as part of their group. Upon their return the following semester, they encountered issues to be formally recognized as part of the Model UN's group.
* Model EU has been trying to figure out recognition issues since the beginning of the school year and have been working to be formally recognized despite numerous setbacks and complications they have encountered.

-Sen. De La Cruz:

* Acknowledges that the students have invested a lot of their personal funds, nonetheless this is a very expensive trip.
* Personally believes that if they do not have the money they should not go.
* Providing the additional funds to attend this sort of trip places the group in a privileged position.

-Sen. Caravello:

* Although the group has invested their own money into the trip, this does not necessarily indicate it is SA responsibility to fund the rest.
* $6 thousand is a lot of money. SA's budget will suffer if we continue to grant expensive requests in response to every single group.

-Sen. Longo:

* Granting such a large request is not specific to the $6,000, but whether the group will return in two years expecting a $40 thousand budget to fund future conferences.
* Concerned that the group will require a large budget and continuously expect SA to fund their expensive trip costs.
* Inquiries should be made tonight on how they expect to fund themselves in the future.

-Sen. De La Cruz:

* In perspective, SA granted $10 thousand to Autism Speaks for initiatives that will benefit over 800 students.
* In this case, $6,000 will benefit only14 students who go on this trip.

-Sen. Messmer:

* If there are reservations about spending $6 grand for 14 students, reminds senators that they voted to approve a $12,000 donation to the football stadium that directly benefited 0 students.
* The senate has not denied any group's requests all year. This is the last bill of this year’s legislative session, regarding a last minute situation outside of the group's control, why turn away a group now.

-Sen. Rood:

* Believes this is a great way for SA to support student initiatives.
* 14 students will get the once in a lifetime experience to travel to and learn European culture.
* A great opportunity for UAlbany students to debate international issues in Europe.

-Sen. Leader: In reference to a comment previously made, does not concur that just because the senate has voted yes to all other requests indicates they should blindly vote in favor to all other requests that come on the floor; each bill should be scrutinized and voted on separately.

-Sen. King:

* Reiterates that because Model EU was unexpectedly dropped by the Rockefeller College, they could not have foreseen nor account for this.
* Clearly the group has been undergoing the long process of trying to become recognized and is not intentionally making this large request last minute.
* Does not believe a decision should be reached by considering hypothetical future cases, but based on the group’s specific circumstances alone.

-Sen. Cappola: Encourages senators to vote for the right reasons and stay away from voting based on what has happened in the past and without voting a particular way just because it is the end of the year.

-Sen. Messmer: Clarifies that his previous comment was meant to depict how other groups in similar situations have had their budget requests granted.

-Sen. Wilkins: Concerned that there is no record to how the group has managed their money in the past and whether they will raise costs requests in the future.

-Sen. Sherretts:

* The group has already raised $30 thousand on their own for their trip, demonstrating their ability to be financially responsible.
* They were suddenly dropped by Rockefeller College, and if they had adequate notice they could've been farther along in the budget process and made this request earlier.

-Sen. Engwer:

* His previous comment compared this group to the Men's Club Soccer situation, where he was in favor for granting them their request since they have been around since 2002 and represented UAlbany on a national scale.
* Acknowledges that this group will represent UAlbany on an international level and is worthy of $6 grand.

-Sen. Orlan: SA began this legislative session with $60 thousand, and at the end of the semester still have $46 thousand. Spending money too quickly is not sound basis for turning the group away.

-Sen. Rook:

* Reminds senators Model EU has raised over $35 thousand on their own, demonstrating financial responsibility.
* Funding 14 students to represent UAlbany at the European Union will positively reflect our university.

*Debate forum capped*

*Questions forum*

-Sen. Efekoro: Will you be promoting anything at this conference?

-Model EU President: Will be representing the UK prime minister in the conference.

-Sen. Efekoro: Will you be representing UAlbany at the conference or the UK?

-Model EU President: During the conference will be representing the UK as her assigned role. When meeting European Union officials, will be representing UAlbany.

-Sen. Longo: How does the group intend to secure future funding for trips?

-Model EU President: Aware that it is not SA's responsibility to fund their entire conference costs. The upcoming trips will be to NYC and will not be as expensive nor requested so last minute.

-Sen. Longo: Does the group have a budget estimate for next year?

-Model EU President:

* The trip costs differ each year depending on conference location, however they do not anticipate them to be as expensive as this trip.
* Expect budget to range from $1thousand-$2thousand.
* The group intends to become actively involved with student government and SA and thus appreciates support to help them get started.

-Sen. Alic: Has the group exhausted all other possibilities to secure funding?

-Model EU President: Yes. The group has also tried to get in contact with the President's office to discuss their current situation. However, tension exists due to the group's past president and efforts have been unsuccessful.

-Sen. Faver: What does Model EU do besides attend these conferences?

-Model EU President: The group has regular meetings and holds mandatory library hours to properly prepare for their roles.

- Sen. Faver: What will the group do for the rest of the academic year after the conference?

-Model EU President: The group is planning to host a conference in Albany and to hold meetings representing all countries, even those outside the European Union.

-Sen. Cronin: Did members attending the trip pay all $30 thousand out of pocket?

-Model EU President: Yes, every student attending the trip has paid for costs on their own.

Motion to vote via roll by Sen. Leader, second by Sen. Faver.

20-9-4

(Represents a 2/3 vote in favor)

*Bill passes*

OLD BUSINESS-

NEW BUSINESS-

CLOSING REMARKS

CLOSING ROLL and Adjournment

*Senators adjourned.*