

Formal Minutes

USG SENATE MEETING

February 24th, 2013

Frist 309, 7:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm.

President's Report

- Shawon Jackson welcomes the Senate and updates members on a number of administrative meetings, including a meeting with Vice Presidents Cherry and Durkee on intersession programming. Vice President Durkee has shown interest in working with USG to better integrate eating clubs and independent/co-op students into campus life. Provost Eisgruber is interested in increasing international opportunities for students to go abroad during the semester and the summer. Mr. Jackson reminds the Senate to promote the Spring Break buses by email, as the deadline is Wednesday the 27th.

“What I Be” Project

- Shirley Gao, student coordinator for the “What I Be” Project, presents to the Senate the results of the project as a precursor to Mental Health Week. The Senate agrees that the project is high-impact, low-cost, and has sparked a substantial conversation about mental health on campus. USG would be interested in bringing back the photographer for the project, Steve Rosenfield, for future Mental Health Weeks. The project’s website is currently being updated with the photos of Princeton students and their stories.

Spring Break Buses Funding Request

- Elan Kugelmass stresses the importance of raising interest for the Spring Break Buses, as the project will not happen unless it can break even financially. The Senate suggests advertising earlier in the future. The fund request is approved with 19 votes.

“J-Term” Idea Discussion

- Gavin Cook leads the Senate in a discussion on the idea of a “J-Term” (January Term), which would implement programming during intersession and encourage more students to stay on campus. During the discussion, senate members brainstormed “pros” and “cons” of the idea.
- Some liked the idea because:
 - It would give students a chance to take a class or workshop on an unconventional topic.
 - It would give clubs incentive to provide additional programming.
 - It would help groups of friends bond before going into the eating club bicker season.

- It would show students who else is on campus.
- Some disliked the idea because:
 - It would cut down on much-needed relaxation time.
 - It would be ineffective at keeping students on campus, especially those that wish to see friends and family.
 - It would exclude clubs that travel during intersession.
 - The “Halftime” program already exists and serves a similar purpose.
- The Senate suggests providing programming and encouraging other clubs to provide programming during intersession, but not requiring students to stay on campus.

Mentorship Group Evaluation

- Carmina Mancenon gives an overview of the USG mentorship group program, which pairs newer and older members for recreational bonding. Ms. Mancenon takes suggestions for improvement from the Senate, including a standard of meeting once per month and encouraging activities between different groups.

Agenda Setting

- In their next meeting, the Senate will hear a presentation on the Ivy Council Conference, an update on the Princeton 2017 project, an review of the Bike Tune-Up event, and a funding request for Dean’s Date activities.

Executive Session

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

Informal Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm.

President's Report

- Shawon Jackson: Had a meeting with Vice Presidents Cherry and Durkee about programming for students on campus during intersession. He also had a meeting with Provost Eisgruber, who is interested in increasing international opportunities for students to go abroad during the semester and the summer. Vice President Durkee oversees campus life, and intends to look into integrating eating clubs and independent students on campus. Shawon Jackson and Carmina Mancenon will meet with the new ICC board and develop a relationship with USG/ODUS. Durkee also wants to look into social and residential life, such as independent and co-op students being more integrated into campus life.
- Elan Kugelmass: How will the students be better integrated?
- Shawon Jackson: Durkee wants us to look into independent meal exchanges, and build a more supportive community by providing additional resources.
- Zach Ogle: What is Provost Eisgruber looking to do for international programs?
- Shawon Jackson: He is looking into funding for summer research for engineers. Also, Wednesday Feb 27th is the deadline to register for the spring break buses, which USG should promote to listservs.
- *(Secretary's Note: at this time it is noted that Camille Lin will be substituting for Farrah Bui.)*

"What I Be" Project

- Shirley Gao: Should we bring Steve Rosenfield back for next year's Mental Health Week?
 - Charissa Shen: It's a moving project and there's so much more to come. What measures are being taken after this week? How do we continue the dialogue? What would he add next year if he were to return?
 - Zhan Okuda-Lim: A lot of the actions are being taken - by working with so many groups on campus - to keep the conversation alive long after next Friday. The organizing committee members were skeptical at first of bringing in Steve, but as one of the first people to share my story it was a tough yet worthwhile decision. The most humbling part of the experience was having friends and strangers tell me that they were finally ready to seek help. That is the power of this project: showing people that they're not alone. It has touched people's lives on campus and may have saved lives.
- Shirley Gao: You have probably have seen this project blowing up your social media. This project is a precursor to mental health week. I've been working with Bruce and the president of Sustained Dialogue. Steve is a photographer from my hometown. I know

I'm living in a narrow world, but in my view I think this project was a huge success. There were 59 spots available, and within 3 hours, all of the spots were taken. People started writing to me, and asking to participate. There were 20 people still on the waitlist after the project ended, so maybe we should bring Steve back next year. All of the images are online on Steve's Facebook. In terms of programming, we have a lot of ideas; we booked 9 spaces on campus to put up art installations including the Carl A. Fields center, the Pace Center, and Frist Campus Center. In addition to formal exhibitions, we'll be putting up posters around campus. The idea is that this is visually present in people's lives, and makes people question this culture of perfection. Whitman is holding a reception from 5-7 pm, and also, participants have approached me and asked for some sort of debriefing space. I'm in the midst of planning that. Another thing I wanted to talk about was the cost of this project. Looking at cost-benefit, this was high-impact, low-cost. Are there any questions at this point?

- Dean Dunne: I noticed on Steve's site there's a narrative that goes with the image. Will those go up soon?
- Shirley Gao: Yes, Steve's site is being updated. For now, blog posts are being put on the mental health website and their Facebook pages. More than half of the images still have to be posted. (*Secretary's Note: at this time, a powerpoint presentation is shown with participant's pictures and responses.*) It's been great to see how this conversation is unfolding. I'm sure more people wanted to participate, but some probably didn't message me because they saw that all the slots were filled. Steve would love to return to campus again and satisfy this need.
- Deana Davoudiasl: USG should definitely bring this back next year. I know Steve said people can start their own "What I Be" project, but it would be great to have Steve come back.

Spring Break Buses Funding Request

- Elan Kugelmass: The spring break buses will not run unless we have more interest in them. If it's not effective for students, we won't run it, but if it is an effective program then we need to raise interest.
- Zach Ogle: When did promotion begin?
- Elan Kugelmass: Promotion began last Sunday. We have a much larger advantage during Thanksgiving because our buses' cost is so much lower than regular pricing. However, for the Spring Break buses our cost is similar to regular bus pricing.
- Zach Ogle: Advertising should begin earlier to catch people who are making plans in January.
- Christina Yu: Is there a cancellation fee?

- Elan Kugelmass: The buses will not be booked unless we know that we can break even on them.
- Motion to approve funding
 - 19 vote to approve, 0 against, 0 abstentions. The motion passes

“J-Term” Idea Discussion

- Gavin Cook: One idea is to implement programming during intersession, making it a "staycation." This would promote deepening friendships before going into bicker. It would also allow time to provide programming to develop life skills.
- Elektra Alivisatos: The reason why students like intersession is because it's the one break where you don't have work - no looming deadlines. Also, not everyone needs to deepen friendships before bicker since not everyone bickers.
- Charissa Shen: This is modeling Dartmouth's sophomore stay-on, but it won't work with the Princeton schedule. There could be workshops during intersession, but there should not be official enrollment and students should not be required to stay. There should, however, be programming on campus for students during intersession. This may not be a USG function.
- Sarah Wiley: Going into mental health week, students already need a break. With the workaholic culture, everyone feels obligated to constantly advance but intersession is our time to relax.
- Dillon Sharp: Having classes during intersession is silly. We could have some structured programming for those that stay on campus - perhaps a pickup basketball game - but the programs must be simple ideas that don't take up too much time.
- Gavin Cook: By providing additional opportunities on campus, we would reach the critical mass of people who stay on campus. This would reach out to those that might leave normally and incentivize them to stay on campus.
- Dillon Sharp: I don't think that would work. We can't convince people to stay on campus instead of seeing family and friends. Athletes and performing groups also travel during intersession, should we discourage them from travelling?
- Gavin Cook: If there was programming during intersession and it became culturally popular to stay on campus, how would that affect the travelling groups?
- Dillon Sharp: There would be no effect.
- Ella Cheng: Other schools have comparative programs wherein students can take unconventional classes during their break, but I don't think that works for intersession because it's such a short period of time. Even though there are a lot of freshmen on campus, it's still boring and some wish that there was more to do. We should put on events that allow students to know who else is on campus.

- Haebin Kim: Rather than classes, we should think of it as providing programming. One example is to provide community service opportunities to encourage people to stay, but they're not required. Clubs could be encouraged to have events during intersession so there's a pool of events to choose from.
- Elan Kugelmass: We can tell people there's programming and hope they stay.
- Zach Ogle: The week is great for travelling, so we could look into providing other travelling opportunities for students not already travelling with a club.
- Camille Lin: The "Halftime" program already does something similar, and helps sophomores bond.
- Gavin Cook: This would be different because some students think that Halftime is "too structured." It's a great program, but it's awkward because of the small groups.
- Elektra Alivisatos: How would classes promote relaxation?
- Gavin Cook: Katherine Clifton believes there should be more programming while I want to promote relaxation.

Mentorship Group Evaluation

- Carmina Mancenon: USG has been divided into different groups with returning and new members. Do USG members want more structure?
- Zhan Okuda-Lim: It would be nice to have talking points. There should also be team mentorship group activities.
- John McNamara: Our mentorship group challenges other groups to Murray-Dodge taboo!
- Carmina Mancenon: Should there be a standard number of times that a group should meet?
- Ella Cheng: Once a month would be a good standard.
- Deana Davoudiasl: We shouldn't require anything, groups should naturally want to hang out.
- Zhan Okuda Lim: Once a month as a standard but it should be flexible.
- Carmina Mancenon: Should there be additional bonding/leadership activities? Mixers?
- Deana Davoudiasl: We should go to each other's performances/games.
- Carla Javier: I will be contacting you for your activities and we will create a master list.
- Shawon Jackson: Please give Carla show dates/games you want USG to come to, and CC Molly in the email so that she can add it to the USG calendar.

Agenda Setting

- Shawon Jackson: Eduardo went to Ivy Council, will give an update and share ideas to the senate. Paul will update the senate on Project 2017. Paul and Eduardo could give an initial discussion on the project to consolidate office hours.

- Dillon Sharp: There is a bike tune-up event this Friday from 1-4pm in the back of Frist! Will give an update next Sunday about how that went.
- Carla Javier: Will submit a funding request for Dean's Date activities.
- Eduardo Lima: Will have a fund request for an air mattress rental idea.
- Shawon Jackson: As a reminder, fund requests must be in 2.5 weeks before they're needed. He and Christina will review before bringing it to the senate.
- Dillon Sharp: If a senator doesn't accept revisions, they can still bring it to the Senate.
- Shawon Jackson: You are not forced to make revisions, but we will provide recommendations before the request comes to the Senate.

Executive Session

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

