SGA Meeting 1/31/2016

Meetings Start: 7:02

I. Attendance

Members Present: Senator Gogineni, Senator Raber, senator Sohn, senator Toy (via skype), Senator Boyle, Senator Rainey, Senator Parikh, Senator Chen, Senator Bhakta, Senator Han, Senator Singh, Senator Von Platen, Proxy Chang

MembersAbsent: Senator Allis, Senator Edwards

II. Acceptance of Minutes

Senator Gogineni: Motion to accept or amend last week’s minutes?

All those in favor of accepting last minutes. Minutes have been accepted. Moving onto the President’s announcements.

III. Announcements

President Gratch: Hi everyone. We have a packed agenda today so I will keep this brief. One update on last week meeting, I wanted to give everyone an update on the email we sent. We sent it on to BSU and others and got a lot of mixed feedback. I thought it was important for all of us to debrief this and we will discuss it later in the meeting. But I think we’re going to start with Doug, our trusted advisor. And then we’ll move on. Senator Rainey’s bills are on the agenda as well.

IV. New Business

Doug: Thank you guys. I am going to pass this around. The first thing I want to talk about was the schedule for the ridgeline housing project. It will be open this fall, which is exciting. The question is how should we best do this? When the project was announced under President Liebowitz, it was referred to as junior/senior housing. We haven’t opened new housing in a while – the last time was with the opening of Atwater – it was just opened within the Commons. Now it’s a different system so we want to engage everyone. How many people have gone through regular room draw? (All hands raised) The process we have now – there are a series of different ways we could do this draw. We could do a normal draw system – in large and small draw. Ridgeline town houses are 8 person. Suites are 3-4 person. An alternative to this: after announcing the housing project last spring semester, many students came forward to do something other than normal room draw. We asked them their reasoning and the feeling was the draw system, because they are small, really do bias the system towards group housing. I will tell you what was explained to me. The idea is if you belong to a large friendship group, they could pool their numbers regardless of whether the individual wanted it. The larger the friend group, the larger the group of people that could live there. Both types of groups came forward and said it is bias in the other way. There is that possibility but that’s just how the system works. Should we change this – offer a system which would be a separate draw? We are happy to do this. We offer a series of draws: academic and super block draws are generally competitive in nature. This
would be different – it would be much more like the off-campus lottery. You submit a list of names you want to live with and we draw them out of a hat. This would allow for it not to go through the regular draw. The question come up, of seniority within that system. Do we want to consider seniority? Or do you want mixed groups? How it’s set right now is completely based on seniority. I wanted to get your feedback on what you felt about mixed groups and the idea of a separate draw.

Senator Gogineni: Given the number of items on the agenda we could limit this discussion to 10 minutes. Motion to limit the discussion to ten minutes?

Senator Raber: Motion to limit.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of limiting discussion to ten minutes. Motion has passed.

Senator Boyle: Are there spaces reserved for juniors, like Coffrin apartment?

Doug: Yes, Coffrin apartment is limited to juniors.

Senator Boyle: Would ridgeline alter what spaces are open for juniors?

Doug: It would impact all housing on campus.

Senator Han: The goal of building the ridgeline housing was to keep people from going off campus, correct? Given that goal, to keep seniors on campus, I would say the draw should be based on seniority.

Doug: Yes, when building the new Ridgeline housing there were three goals: 1 – to eliminate the mods, 2 - Reclaim lounges (primarily for sophomores) 3 - Reduce the number of students living off-campus.

Senator Raber: Is there a move to move all students off-campus on campus?

Doug: We’re a residential campus. 60 off-campus was what was originally wanted. Since we’ve grown but our housing hasn’t, we’ve had a necessity to move off campus. Our goal is to get back to a smaller number of off-campus students.

Senator Raber: But not to zero, correct?

Doug: Depends on who you ask, but I don’t think, no.

Senator Raber: I agree with Senator Han then; seniority should play a role in the draw.

Doug: There are 96 beds with in town houses and 62 beds in suites. The idea was that we would offer suites in regular small-block draw. We would also like to hold 2 town houses out and offer them in singles draw. This would allow for the maximum number of students to live in them (groups, doubles or singles), especially in the first year. We want to makes sure that the
maximum number of students have access to the space. Our proposal is we would offer this as a separate draw. The seniority thing is the big question. Do we want them to be seniors only or seniors and juniors?

Senator Raber: Should we do a straw poll?

Doug: We could still do seniority. Groups of students would put their applications in a basket. If we got more than ten applications, we would have to draw. We would draw the seniors first till we had no more seniors left.

Senator Gogineni: So the options are seniority or automatically saying its mixed groups. Straw poll of mixed groups
All those in favor of seniority: (8 votes)
All those in favor of mixed groups: (5 votes)
No preference

Senator Gogineni: So 8 to 5 for seniority.

Doug: Are there any other questions?

Senator Boyle: If it was a mixed group, if you were seniors and you pulled in a junior, then your number would go down?

Doug: Correct. That’s how the system works now. As we look at new housing/room draw systems. With the new system we have an opportunity to look at it more broadly. We first calculate the total number of class years in a group and then look at the individual numbers. So a group of seniors can work first. If you have a junior, you drop below the all senior groups. The more juniors, the more of a disadvantage that group is at.

Senator Chen: Have you gotten feedback from other people for junior/senior housing?

Doug: Yes, you’re the 4th group I’ve come too. It’s this group I keep coming back to in years past however. I think generally it’s something that could be open to the whole senior body. As we build new software we want to know whether this is something that’s part of it or not, so in that sense a decision is a little pressing. But not totally pressing. The idea of mixed groups – if you are seniors and have one junior, you move significantly down based on class year. It’s a question really for the system. Or do you want a system where juniors are drawn in.

President Gratch: I think that there should be some degree of seniority maintained. But I think it’s strange especially since we have so many students off by a semester (Febs). As a Feb, I would have been disadvantaged if I wanted to live with someone one semester below me more than one semester above me. In college, unlike high school, the grades are more mixed. It feels a little strange. I think this is something that could change campus culture – being able to bring a junior in with out being disadvantaged.
Senator Raber: I agree. If you’re pulling in 1 Feb or junior, it shouldn’t matter. But if you have a group of juniors and they find one senior and then jump ahead… I think there should be a threshold for how many juniors you could have. I’m not sure how you would do it.

Senator Han: I agree with Senator Raber and President Gratch.

Senator Gogineni: So that’s time, we can expand on the time if we need. Motion to extend time?

Senator Raber: Extend by 3 minutes

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of extending to 3 minutes? Time extended for 3 minutes.

Senator Han: You could have a threshold of 2 and 2. The bi-product – issues with pub safe. But if you’re housed with juniors and seniors, what happens there etc.

Doug: I can say with clarification – we try to simplify our systems. We’re happy to continue to expand the system but maintain its simplicity.

Proxy Chang: Is there a reason why you don’t add up all numbers that are applying?

Doug: We do; we look at class years first, then looks for the highest numbers. Additionally, you are only competing with people in the same block that you are in. This way adding up class years is always equitable.

Senator Boyle: Things like Homer Harris are not in the block system right?

Doug: Correct, but we look at class years first. In normal draw, the numbers are the most important but in the blocks, the class year is factored in first.

Senator Gogineni: Given there are 40 seconds left, is there one big question you want answered?

Doug: I think we will definitely pursue President Gratch’s question etc. If you’re talking to your constituents that would be really helpful or we could add this to the student life survey, which would be great. Adding it to the survey after this current draw would probably be better, so as not to confuse people.

Senator Gogineni: Great, thank you Doug!

V. Old Business

Senator Gogineni: So moving onto the rest of the agenda. Because of an activity we have planned regarding SGA’s roll as an organization, do we want to do the community council piece first? Then lump everything else together. Maybe we should cap this discussion to ten minutes as well.

Senator Rainey: And this is a bylaw amendment.
Senator Gogineni: Motion to limit discussion to 10 minutes? All those in favor of limiting to 10 min. all those opposed. Ok 10 minutes on the clock.

Senator Rainey: I’m not sure how many of you have read this bill. This is a bylaws amendment for mandatory attendance of senators at Community Council meetings. I’m proposing this because since early October, I’ve been to almost all CC meetings. As a freshman new on this campus, I wanted to listen to the community and bring in new perspectives. Going to meetings has helped me grow and develop and become a better senator. I understand there is a connection between CC and SGA however, I don’t think this connection is strong enough. Some solid facts: in our fall semester of past years compared to this year, there were 3 times more bills proposed in the fall semester:18 versus 6. I’m not saying this is directly correlated, but I feel there is a lack of bills/listening to the community. Or doing research etc. According to the SGA student life survey, 33.03 % affirmed that the SGA doesn’t adequately represent ideas of community. This was a survey from last January. Having senators go to CC meetings would be one way of fixing this. There are so many issues brought up in CC. I also think its irresponsible for us not to go. Seeing how faculty and staff would be impacted etc. I had so many bills I wanted to pass but after talking with faculty/staff I didn’t/hadn’t anticipated the impacts of those bills. What I am proposing is that it becomes part of our job description to show up to 3 CC meetings per semester and one during J-term. I don’t think this is that demanding and everyone has their own schedules/can go to meeting that work for them.

Senator Gogineni: Ok, so any questions? We can open up floor for discussion.

Senator Han: How many people are in CC? Do you have any examples of when you wanted to pass a bill but conversations were had that deterred you?

Senator Rainey: How many people are in CC? – I’m not sure. It is open to the public. I would say maybe 15. I wanted to make a lot of small things: napkin holders on tables in dining halls or passing a bill to have mandatory MLK day off. Some of these are not feasible and I’m embarrassed about some of the I things. It acts as a filter and expedites the process. There’s a big amount of research there.

Senator Han: Do you think it’s more representative of the community than SGA?

Senator Rainey: Absolutely. It has representatives of staff, dining hall, public safety, the administration, President Gratch (SGA). I don’t think it’s enough for only President Gratch to be there. There are some students at meetings but they are not as experienced in institutional matters so they don’t feel as comfortable speaking.

Senator Gogineni: Regardless of how I feel about the resolution, I think that CC has a different goal than the SGA. They are not elected, they have to apply to be on it and I think there’s a reason why. CC doesn’t care as much for statistics/what portion of the student body feels that way. It’s more of an intersection of different voices. I think what might work better is if those students did that. I agree that maybe there is a filer component to bills we would consider, but I
think that could also be done by us reaching out to those CC students. I think it’s unnecessary to do this.

Proxy Sierra (CC): I think it’s a great idea. Have you asked how they feel about more people attending?

Senator Rainey: I have. I talked to Katy Smith Abbott. They love the idea that I’m a senator and that I’m involved in CC. I don’t have any direct quotes but we can ask them. I don’t have voting power and I don’t want it or want to control the ebb and flow of the meetings. However, I do think I contribute a voice that’s important. Me being a fly on the wall in meetings is important. There are so many problems that I didn’t know were real problems if I never went to these meetings. I feel like this could be a potential solution that could turn that around. I have talked to several members and they are open to it.

Senator Raber: In response to the survey is that the one… Motion to extend by 5 minutes

Senator Sohn: Seconded.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of extending by 5 minutes?

Senator Raber: I think that although there might be an issue of representation hopefully that will chance. Those were potential issues with Taylor Custer; it was an uncontested election etc.

Senator Bhakta: So we don’t have voting power, so we’re listening?

Senator Rainey: And your voice is important; you bring a voice to the table as well.

Senator Bhakta: I feel like the conversation should go through Tiff Chang. We have a representative at those meetings. It feels unnecessary if we don’t have an active role there.

Senator Han: I think if we did something it would be through commons council.

Senator Parikh: I think what Senator Rainey was stressing was getting motivation for senators. I do think that having to attend X amount of meetings might be excessive. Maybe make one meeting a semester be mandatory? And just get us on the email list so that we get sent the agenda. That way we can get an idea of what’s going on there.

President Gratch: The SGA president is automatically on CC every year. I would feel like that was repetitive with making it mandating that senators go as well, if we were to pass this bill. I guess I’m not sure what Co-Chair Chang’s role would be here and what my role would be there if it was just us merging the two bodies. I do agree there should be more communication. There have been years where there were more constant updates from CC. I’m sure Co-chair Chang would be happy to do that if we wanted weekly updates. And she would be happy to send us the agenda as well.
Senator Rainey: 1. I agree with some of your points. One we fundamentally disagree on however, is Co-Chair Chang’s role. It’s not realistic for President Gratch and Co-chair Chang to remember every little detail about our meetings and the CC meetings. And as someone who has gone to every meeting, I can assure you that’s not happening. I think there needs to be larger connections, and more community engagement. Would that be redundant? For those of you who were here when we had the comment from Zach, opinions are going to be swayed. I think going with your own opinion is important. That way we don’t have the issue of how things going on are being marred by our own beliefs.

Senator Gogineni: You have the opportunity to add/change the bill till after we get back. Ok let’s move on to the email about Justice Scalia/etc. Let’s limit this discussion again to 10 minutes?

Senator Raber: Motion to limit discussion to 10 minutes.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor, all those opposed. Discussion has been limited to 10 minutes.

Senator Rainey: I’ve brought this up in meetings in the past. I’m not going to waste time reading it. I feel passionate about this bill. I guess I want to hear what other people have to say. I will add to some things. There was an email sent on Friday from Laurie Patton about inclusion. I know these ideas have made it to her ear. There was no mention of MLK or Justice Scalia in her email, which I should hope should frustrate you. I have two statements from distinguished men of color and Alianza. President Gratch sent the statement to BSU as well. There was some negative feedback there. I talked to the co-president of BSU and they said they would like to see a revision before it is sent to students. Their comments are along the same lines.

Senator Sohn: I have a question for President Gratch and the Chief of Staff. I remember you saying you were going to discuss this with President Patton. Did you hear back from her?

President Gratch: We were supposed to go to their leadership on Wednesday. That meeting got cancelled last minute but we have it rescheduled for this Wednesday. I’ve also spoken to Katy Smith Abbott. I will give an update next week.

Senator Bhakta: I think it’s cool that Alianza and DMC are behind this. I don’t think its within our scope that the SGA should send something out. We should be pursuing this from other routes.

Senator Rainey: I don’t think it’s out of our scope to affirm the place of African Americans on campus.

Senator Chen: I would love for President Gratch to elaborate on what the feel from SGA and the reaction from BSU has been.

President Gratch: So the feel from SGA; we’re all here so everyone can speak to what their opinion is. Some people think it wasn’t going far enough and some people didn’t think it was going far enough. After that I sent the statement to BSU. They were appreciative that we reached
out and that while a lot of them shared sentiments, they didn’t feel a student wide email would be appropriate but rather an active conversation with the administration on this issue would be better. That was the response I got so I didn’t feel great going forward with it. Just to give a little more context, I also spoke with the Dean of students, the Chief Diversity Officer and Katy Smith Abbott. They are of course on board with being part of that conversation. They also made it pretty clear that President Patton knows that this desire exists. Recommendations made to community council are then made to the president and Miguel was at community council to give her response. He read her thoughts. I don’t remember what she said exactly but she said but it was along the lines of not going to send a statement and that she was going to write an article about affirmative action more broadly. She also mentioned having a conversation between the Professor organizing the MLK and students of color would be more appropriate. That conversation happened, I was there Charles was there, we can talk about that. So that’s the information I have. Just so you all know the next activity on the agenda is to talk about what our role is as an organization in representing traditionally marginalized groups on campus. We have a structured activity for this. The all school email is part of what we want our role to be.

Senator Rainey: So yes, the email sent out by BSU is heard and I’m aware of that email. However, I think it’s important to note that BSU is not representative of all students of color on campus. There are others including DMC, Alianza, women of color etc. I have talked to members of the board. I don’t think this is a stretch to ask for. I don’t think Laurie Patton meant she would or would not make a statement but obviously our president needs some nudging on this issue. And I encourage all of you to help with that nudging. Quite frankly I think the silence from the administration on these issues is wrong and it’s the SGA’s role to help and urge.

Senator Gogineni: Time is over; we can choose to do 2 things: continue this conversation or come back to this, if that would make a difference on how we vote on it.

Senator Han: Motion to extend discussion by 3 minutes.

Senator Raber: Seconded.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor or extending by 5 minutes. Time has been extended.

Senator Singh: When you make a statement its very definitive. It’s like saying there’s no debate about this. I did read about the Justice Scalia comment. It’s debatable what he was saying and how it was meant. Instead of focusing on issuing a statement, I think it’s more about what will happen next year and how we can work to fix this.

Senator Han: We understand you Charles. I talked to some friends about this and they voiced concern about how the MLK event was structured. How we can restructure it? The best thing we can do now is to move forward.

Senator Raber: I had a comment on what BSU’s response was. It would be really good to understand why it wasn’t appropriate. They’re not representative of all black students on campus but they still an important voice we should listen to.
Senator Gogineni: I would urge anyone who hasn’t spoken yet to do so, you have a chance to speak now.

Proxy Sierra: Co-Chair Chang is very much for this bill.

Senator Parikh: Just to clarify the BSU’s statements were about the SGA statement. I don’t think it’s beyond the scope of the SGA to have the president speak on an issue that’s important for students on campus. Maybe they wouldn’t be for an all school email but wouldn’t be against a statement.

Senator Rainey: Motion to extend this discussion by 10 minutes.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of extending by 10 minutes: All those against. All those abstaining. Ok time extended by ten minutes.

President Gratch: I just wanted to say that I do think the activities are directly related to this conversation.

Senator Rainey: There’s no guarantee that people will stay for this discussion though.

Senator Gogineni: Also I want to remind that you’re supposed to stay here till nine. That’s the official rule.

Senator Boyle: I just want to make a personal defense to that. I do leave at 8:30 because of community council meeting. They have ignored the fact that we need to be here. I apologize for that. I talked to one of the members of the board of BSU. She was talking about how she personally feels that this group of the SGA has been better than previous ones. I do want to have her voice heard. I also think that I’m not really against a statement by the SGA. I think students of color have a place here and the fact that we need to talk about that is disgusting. If President Patton is saying she does not want to send an email maybe she can present us with different routes; maybe we can go about it in a different way.

Senator Sohn: Thank you Senator Rainey for bring this up. I think it’s important to look forward but at the same time I think there are a lot of people who need closure on this issue. Maybe it’s not the smartest option to combine the SGA’s statement and President Patton’s statement. Maybe we should separate that, especially since there seem to be mixed feelings regarding that.

Senator Rainey: I wasn’t aware that I needed a bill to control what the SGA does. I think the SGA should send out a statement. I want to emphasize that it’s not debatable to affirm the place of African Americans on campus. That should not be a debate. And that’s what Justice Scalia said, those were the comments. I don’t want to linger on that. 2. BSU, even though they didn’t say its appropriate to send an all campus email, did want to send this to the faculty and staff, to the administration. That’s exactly what this is. It’s our community wanting to send this, the community that is effected wants to send this. It’s irresponsible of President Patton to attain this silence. And writing literature on affirmative action in general is not the same and is ridiculous. It’s also ridiculous that a micro-aggression on campus was considered a success and even if it
was in the past doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t address it. And we’ve already had the conversation about how to make it better etc. But I think that we need to have the person in the highest office on this campus recognize that calling it a success was a mistake.

Senator Bhakta: I would encourage us to re-read that quote and interpret it.
Senator Von Platen: Maybe send out a survey so people can give feedback.

Senator Parikh: In response to senator Bhakta. Regardless of how Justice Scalia’s comments should be interpreted, this email just goes to affirm those that were affected.

Senator Rainey: Why not both Senator Von Platen? I’m refusing to tiptoe around the administration on this and I hope, as an organization on campus that are supposed to represent students, would not tiptoe around the administration either. If we’re going to come at it, we need to come at it. This bill is specifically for Laurie Patton addressing Justice Scalia’s comments and calling the MLK event a success. Of course it’s no secret that the SGA should send an email. Her not including these things is a slap in the face to me. As an organization sending a statement is in our control.

Senator Gogineni: Two more comments but try to limit them given time.

Senator Raber: I think that although there is some debate on exactly what was meant by Scalia’s comments etc., that’s not the point. The point is that if there were black students here that are questioning their role here, that needs to be addressed. I think that’s where this email/statement is coming from. I think there is some wording in the bill that makes some blanket statements that could be problematic. Do we need to vote on this today?

Senator Boyle: And the vote would be that Laurie Patton should send an email?

Senator Rainey: How can we go about voting this? Include SGA comment as well (the one that’s supported by Allianza, DMC and Women of Color).

Senator Gogineni: I would recommend that splitting the vote would also be important. Is there a motion to vote?

Senator Rainey: The very reason why we don’t have a relationship with people of color on this campus is because of how afraid we are to make statements that affirm their place on this campus. The debate I’m seeing here about this bill makes it clear why this feeling exists on this campus. BSU – they want to be more supportive than activist. But what factors made them want to have that role? This campus, this SGA, they are being supportive in themselves so whose job is it to be an activist for them?

Senator Singh: Could we split the vote between MLK and justice Scalia’s comments? I think everyone thinks the MLK event was inappropriate. This was not what Scalia’s comment said and I’m not opposed to supporting students of color on this campus. Can we not have a more broad statement.
Senator Rainey: I think the very point is recognizing Scalia’s comment. I’ll urge you to think about when diversity became an issue on this campus with sombrero girl. It didn’t matter what the intention was it was the interpretation that mattered.

Senator Toy: She supports this bill. But amend in 3 days to “as soon as possible” or something along those lines

Senator Rainey: Yea, that’s ok.

Senator Gogineni: That’s something we should vote on.

President Gratch: I think this is a pretty big moment if we did this in that making a formal recommendation to the President in the form of a resolution would be changing the nature of what resolutions have been. Which is why we should have a conversation about our role as an organization before we do this. It’s a vote that would change the role of SGA a little bit and we should address this. SGA changes every year but after speaking extensively with Miguel and Katie and receiving mixed messages from you I think we need to do some soul searching as to what our role should be. Instead of voting on this I would prefer that we do this activity first and if something comes out of this that one thing we can do to be supportive to black students is having Laurie send an email, then we can do that. I am 100% in support of the spirit of the bill, I think there is a ton more we can do. As someone who has been meeting with Miguel every week, they are trying and I wonder if I would rather invite her in, sit down and have a conversation with her instead of sending an email that to me feels rash because we don’t necessarily have the support form the people that I would want to have support from. I just think we need to have a conversation about what our role is first before sending this to the president.

Senator Rainey: Does this bill go against anything in our bylaws or constitution currently?

President Gratch: No.

Senator Gogineni: Motion to do something. Vote, table etc.

Senator Toy: Motion to vote. And to split the vote between the SGA statement and the Laurie Patton statement

Senator Gogineni: Ok so that’s already agreed. All those in favor of voting on this right now?

Senator Parikh: Can I ask a question. Motion to vote on both? I think we’ve talked a lot about sending an email to Laurie. I don’t think tonight we have talked enough about the SGA statement. We would want to have a lot more discussion about the SGA statement.

Senator Toy: Seconded.

Senator Boyle: We have all seen the bill have we not?
Senator Gogineni: Motion to vote on recommending it only to President Patton. All those in favor of voting on responding to Laurie Patton right now. (One hand was raised)

Senator Gogineni: All those against voting for this bill right now? Ok, we are not voting on this right now.

Senator Gogineni: Motion to move onto the session and agree to come back to this. In terms of the session it’s very organized, in front of you are blue post-it notes. The activity is broken down into 3 sections. On the blue post-it write down your response as to what you think the SGA’s role is in representing traditionally marginalized groups on campus. After than we break up into groups and then come together as an SGA.

Senator Rainey: Motion to put a time limit on this activity. 15 minutes

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of limiting activity to 15 minutes?

President Gratch: Limit to 15 minutes tonight but we can come back to it. Just before we start. I want to give everyone little piece of information. From JusTalks. It’s an acronym and something we can think about

PROCESS: participate and be present, respect others and their opinions, be open and kind, confidentiality, lean into discomfort, make space, self-care by checking in with yourself.

Senator Gogineni: If everyone is done I am going to start. Again, these are random.

- Our role is to voice opinions and most importantly take action so there can be actionable change in the community.
- The SGA should have no role in discussing marginalized groups. That is for other organizations to do. They should be their own activists. Let’s do real SGA things. I feel strongly about this but cannot discuss it here.
- We should engage in discussion but not be an outlet for final decisions. That should be done by the CC.
- It’s important to support minorities. This is best achieved by collaborating with student orgs.
- Gather feedback from different groups, if there is a consensus among those marginalized groups, then we can take action based on their recommendations.
- The SGA plays an important role in representing marginalized groups but that we understand that some voices are not as well heard. Open discussion with this and act as a loudspeaker for their voices.
- To listen to past grievances and act as an ally. Students of color and diverse sexualities should be represented evenly on campus. Our relations with BSU and QUISH suffers advocacy on quality of life. Need to accurately represent opinions. Communication is important. We should invite marginalized groups here or submit statements.
- We need to listen to them and make sure we discuss concerns thoroughly. We should not be hesitant to act especially if it’s to make students feel more included on campus.
- Our role is to represent marginalized group to the best of our abilities. The way we strive to do with our constituents. Create a more open environment.
- Can we have a representative or senator from AFC to make sure we are representing these voices correctly?
- To engage marginalized groups regarding policy changes
- To advocate on behalf of them through CC, cultural boards, and AFC in whatever way feels right to the SGA.
- Listen to cultural orgs, work with the AFC to make sure their voices are heard.
- We are a body made up of representatives. Should not be making statements on things that happened. We shouldn’t speak for the cultural orgs but should rather strive to work together with them
- Having frequent dialogs with orgs, listening to them when expressing themselves.

Thank you for the opinions. Right now having heard everyone’s opinions, we will break into groups of 2’s to discuss your opinions on this. We have 4 minutes so let’s say 2 to three minutes of discussion.

Senator Gogineni: Time. So the clock has run out but obviously this is useless. Motion to extend time?

Senator Rainey: by 7 minutes.

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor, all those abstaining. Let’s go around each group and get a summary of what was discussed.

President Gratch: Senator Toy and I talked about how we can listen to cultural orgs. But how do we do that? The logistics of how to do a better job of that. We can sit here and say we need to listen more but how are we going to make an active attempt to do that? I’m thinking about the individual steps to what I can do. We should talk as an org about this. Senator Toy agrees and that the SGA can do so much more.

Senator Raber: We had a similar discussion. It’s important that we are voicing voices that aren’t always heard. How do we go about that? In our meeting earlier this year, we should be asking people to come here, do we all go separately to their meetings? Are we infringing on safe spaces for students of color especially as a white student, as in my case, if we go to their meetings?

Senator Rainey: We talked about how if we put our ear to the community, we may not even hear some voices that should be heard because they are not comfortable speaking up. Maybe going more than halfway.

Senator Von Platen: We are very for the idea of supporting marginalized groups. For me it’s hard if we should be a neutral org or one with a stance.

Senator Han: Collaboration is key with the organizations that we have been mentioning. Facilitate conversation with these allies.
Senator Singh: We agreed that the SGA has a role in representing marginalized groups. We like the AFC idea, or an inclusive liaison who are responsible for maintaining some sort of contact with these groups.

Senator Gogineni: Abby and I were talking about who should bring this idea about. Even if we are reaching out to groups, maybe those people reach out to us first and then we can highlight those voices but perhaps that should come from the source instead.

Senator Gogineni: Now we should talk a bit more – concrete ideas, more general ideas about what has been said. That there is a consensus on what we are doing. Anyone want to start? What the SGA’s role is in the future:
[written on board] Anonymous medium to reach out to us, if there are elements that aren’t being discussed that are being problematic. A forum or something.

Senator Rainey: With the support of cultural orgs highlighting and speaking to the misrepresented groups on campus with their support that are normally afraid to speak out.

Senator Raber: but how? Highlight voices how?

Senator Rainey: Statements.

Senator Raber: Once a semester meetings to keep constant contact – this would require minimal effort from those groups involved. At least twice a year discussion about what SGA can do.

Senator Sohn: Coalition of all orgs. Reaching out to this cluster board.

Senator Rainey: Just for clarification, the cluster is solely for financial needs. Consulting with the financial SGA groups.

Senator Gogineni: I feel uncomfortable speaking in open on behalf of other people in terms of how to word things. Maybe publish statements by people and incorporate it in our email. And that the SGA supports this statement. More powerful if it comes from those people effected.

Senator Singh: If the cluster is going to happen then we would know all the cultural orgs. And could assign an org. to a senator and each senator could meet with those orgs and report back.

Senator Rainey: We have a number of senators that are in the process of leaving.

Senator Gogineni: This is great the conversation and it doesn’t end here. Please if you have suggestions, email them to the SGA account.

Senator Gogineni: Motion to vote now.

Senator Rainey: Motion to vote for the recommendation to President Patton and 2. For SGA sending a statement.
Senator Gogineni: Recommendation first. Seconded? All those in favor of voting?
Ok. All those in favor of approving the part of the bill that the SGA should recommend to Laurie Patton the comments regarding Justice Scalia: all those in favor (6 votes), opposed (4 votes), abstain (2 votes). That bill has passed.
Senator Gogineni: In terms of the second part of the bill, all those in favor of us sending out the email drafted last week?

Senator Chen: What is it signed, the SGA senate?

Senator Rainey: When we were talking about this statement it was going to have the people that agree with it have their names on it.

President Gratch: That should be included in the writing of the resolution. Then we shouldn’t vote on it. The purpose of voting on it is so that we can sign it as a senate. Otherwise individuals would have to sign it.

Senator Rainey: Would it be sent to all students? Clarification: second part of the bill with SGA – sent to all students from the SGA email. You want the names of the people but from the SGA email?

Senator Gogineni: In virtue of sending it from SGA email. That already comes as if the Senate agrees on it.

Proxy Sierra: As a non-senator it would be more powerful if it was just signed as the Senate.

Senator Gogineni: That’s not how it works: if we’re voting on it we need to vote on a specific resolution.

Senator Rainey: Ok the resolution is for it to be signed the SGA senate. And if it fails I urge you to send it to your constituencies.

President Gratch: It is my sincere hope that we all support black students on campus. And we have not yet said as a group that we do. If we are going to send out a statement, we need to read the statement, we need to have language in a bill that says what we are reading. The strength of this organization relies on having a bill that is written. We can vote on it here but we need to write it in a word document.

Senator Parikh: Motion to leave voting procedure and have conversation about this. Continuing discussion for ten minutes. First vote to vote is nullified.

Senator Gogineni: Ok.

Senator Raber: I support this statement and I think we should send it out.

Senator Rainey: I agree with Senator Raber. There are also notes from Co-Chair Chang that she wanted us to hear.
Senator Parikh: In the first paragraph, the SGA and statements made by Justice Scalia – the SGA deplores Scalia’s implication that students of color belong in less advanced colleges. So that there is no debate as to that we deplore the fact that anyone was offended. Secondly how late this statement has come is fine but I think saying it twice is a little redundant. Third, Financial resources is a little weird.

President Gratch: When we read what Pomona college wrote, one of the things the SGA has is the power to allocate the million-dollar student organization budget. Given student climate, the implications of that have been that it’s been a really hard year and giving them resources for their clubs would be good. It’s not about individuals, it’s about organizations.

Senator Rainey: We should make that clear then.

Senator Raber: Maybe if “you or your club are looking for financial resources”.

Senator Chen: I would get rid of “you”, that’s weird.

Senator Parikh: Put “you” for a reason maybe - like an independent project.

Proxy Sierra: I like what Co-Chair Chang said: instead of black students just have “students”.

Senator Rainey: I liked Co-Chair Chang’s point about “too late”, it’s not too late, maybe “extremely late” etc. or maybe just “late”.

Abby: Senator Rainey, what do you think about just “students” or “some black students”

Senator Chen: I think what Senator Parikh said, I think it makes sense that the interpretation of it or the way that the interpretation by students makes more sense.

Senator Toy: The hyperlink goes directly to the supreme court document.

Senator Rainey: If you want to link it to the statements, you don’t want to take the statements out of context, the interpretation is important. If we want to highlight an interpretation, we should link it to the interpretation.

Senator Toy: There are some people that haven’t heard the statements so putting it towards one direction is important.

Senator Parikh: We’re linking to a 100-page document – that’s overwhelming. Linking a page in that document would be useful. I think it’s ok to link it to the document if we talk about how people have interpreted these comments. So it becomes a little bit more targeted. But that we know people were offended by this because they felt a supreme court justice said they don’t belong on the college campus – we should make that clear.
President Gratch: I’m thinking about the conversation we had about our role as the SGA. These are good ideas. – great first steps as a group. I personally feel really weird going forward with this when the board of the BSU felt this statement was inappropriate. That doesn’t mean they don’t want us to be allies, but after extensive conversations with Miguel and this specific statement, I want to make sure we do this right.

Senator Rainey: BSU, I want to emphasize, does not represent all black students. I’ve talked extensively with the orgs that support it. BSU is one fourth of the groups that represent that. One fourth was hesitant and wanted changes but didn’t deplore the idea immediately. I understand some people may feel iffy, but we have the majority of cultural orgs on our side. From my conversations with the community – this is the right thing to do.

President Gratch: You’re right. That is true. My feeling is that if our goal is to be the best ally we can be, be the most supportive as an organization. To me it seems more impactful to be making some internal changes, we’re revamping, we’ve been here talking and making changes. That is why we are being functional allies. “SGA you’ve done nothing”– and I know this because that’s what people have told me. I don’t want our efforts to be lost/mistranslated by making a statement on two very specific things. Like BSU said to you, it should include the changes that we are making – that to me is more powerful. I am trying to think about how we can have the greatest impact. That’s why I’m struggling with this statement. And that’s not because I’m not supportive of black students – it’s not that I don’t think about it everyday, because trust me I do. It’s that I don’t know if it’s the right moment or action.

Senator Rainey: Why not both? We keep sidestepping. Why not this and that. We have three other cultural orgs that support this statement. BSU is not a full representative. And you’re concerned about that. We have writing from cultural orgs that are in support of this. They are supportive of this campaign. They are going to feel some type of way about it if we do not publish this statement. They are willing to step with us again and we should take them up on that opportunity.

Senator Han: We don’t want to make a rash decision but rather take this plus what are some next steps are so that when we send this out, it’s more impactful.

Senator Gogineni: We keep repeating ourselves. I haven’t heard new things in the past 10 minutes. I don’t think a lot of us will change our minds with more comments. Is there a motion to vote?

Senator Han: yes.

Senator Rainey: Seconded.

Senator Parikh: Pages of the pdf are

Senator Gogineni: All those in favor of voting? (majority votes) Great. All those in favor of sending out this draft as an all student email (7 vote). All those against (5 vote). All those
abstaining (1 vote). The email will be sent out with the added changes of the pages as well as written in “by the SGA senate”.

VI. Adjournment

Senator Sohn: Motion to adjourn

Senator Gogineni: Meeting has been adjourned. Meeting End: 9:15 PM