Formal Meeting Minutes

USG Senate Meeting
Lewis Library Bowl 120
Sunday, December 3rd, 2017 7:30pm

Winter Elections Cycle Appeal

Michael Asparrin
Asparrin was running for Class Senator. Last Tuesday at 12pm was the deadline to submit all the materials. He submitted the petition at around 1pm to the USG mailbox. He saw the petitions were still in the mailbox at around 12pm, so he continued getting signatures. He sent an email to Laura telling her that he sent the signatures in late. He thought it was a good idea to be transparent and honest with Laura. Asparrin main argument is that because the petitions were still in the mailbox at 12:30pm, it’s possible that someone submitted petitions at 12:40pm and neglected to send an email about the late submission. Asparrin would not have appealed if the petitions were collected at 12pm. He believes that he his being penalized and held to a different standard. The rules and the standards are being applied unequally. USG should pick up the petitions at the time of the deadline.

Question: Just to clarify, when you turned your petition in, were there other petitions in the mailbox?
Answer: I wasn’t able to tell.

Question: When were the petitions picked up?
Answer: A personal situation prevented the petitions from being picked up on time. Patrick helped out, and the petitions were picked up between 12:50 pm and 12:59 pm.

Comment: USG hopes to convince more students to run for USG positions. It would hypocritical to reject this appeal.

Question: What exactly are you appealing? What are you looking for?
Answer: This appeal is focused on whether the rules are being applied equally. If you expect the petitions should be turned in on time, then the petitions should be picked up on time.
Comment: I appreciate the honesty. I agree and I would have loved to see the petitions picked up at noon. There’s a deadline. Should it be met, the candidate should be granted eligibility. If not, the candidate should not be granted eligibility.
Response: I think the exception has already been made in that USG did not pick up the petitions on time.
Comment: Whether or not the petitions were picked up does not alter the fact that you did not turn in the petitions on time. There were four sources where you could have seen that the deadline was Tuesday at 12pm. An analogy is that if the cameras only saw one criminal and wasn’t able to see the other criminals, the police wouldn’t let the one criminal go because they couldn’t see the other criminals.

Comment: I would not equate this with criminal activity.

Question: Could you tell me how many people applied for the USG positions? I think this is relevant because if there is no one applying to the position that Michael is running for, then it may be difficult to fill the position.

Question: Why did it take you so long to submit the petition?

Vote for extending time: 10 in favor, 11 opposed

Ryan Ozminkowski
Ryan has a friend helping him run for President this Winter Elections Cycle. Ryan turned the petitions at 9:50am PT, which is after 12:00pm EST. All that matters is the individual’s interpretation of the deadline. If it is possible that a candidate misinterpreted of the deadline, then this should be considered. The deadline does not indicate time zone. This is open for interpretation and the only person who can make this interpretation is Ryan. The lack of standardization of treatment is also an issue with this appeal. He can attest that another individual looked in the mailbox and saw that the petitions were not picked up at 12:15pm. It’s not fair to disqualify a candidate when there was so much ambiguity involved. USG has a lot of unopposed candidates. USG is the best group on campus, has the best resources, etc. This is Ryan’s first election at school. USG should be striving to get more candidates to apply.

Comment: I find the timestamp argument to be very unconvincing. Princeton doesn’t have any campuses on the Pacific coast. If a professor says that class starts at 9am, it starts at 9am EST not 6am PST.

Question: What was the reason the petition was late?

Answer: The reason for the lateness is ultimately irrelevant. To put some context, we put into effect a group of 10 to 20 students who were tasked to collect signatures.

Comment: It’s interesting that you had so many people on this task force, but you still didn’t turn the materials in on time.
**Question**: Did you communicate with the Elections Manager?

**Comment**: The email was sent at around 1pm.

**Comment**: The two other elements of registration were turned in before 12pm. The Handbook mandates that I put into effect the rules of the Handbook. We are looking at whether the Handbook was abided by.

**Comment**: I feel like the crux of this argument falls on the lack of standardization. Also, Princeton doesn’t have a major emphasis on elections. We should be encouraging more students to apply.

**Comment**: There has to be some level of reasonability when it comes to the interpretation of the deadline.

**Response**: Some aspect of this problem is that I’m not a part of USG and there’s no one really there to help candidates with the process. I wouldn’t be appealing this if the petitions were picked up on time.

**Comment**: The Handbook is not very descriptive in terms of what should be done in this situation.

**Comment**: The point of this is that USG already made an exception, therefore we should be willing to make an exception for these candidates.

**Questions**: Do substitutes stay for the Executive Session?

**Answer**: Based on the Constitution, it is my opinion that the substitutes should stay.

**Comment**: It was made extremely clear where the petitions should be turned in.

20 in favor, 2 opposed, 0 abstaining

**President’s Report**

President Myesha discussed the CPUC Executive Committee Meeting, the Social Justice Lunch Chat, a message from Vice Presidents Calhoun and Sullivan-Crowley and Dean Kulkarni.
Regarding the proposal for University Office Support Office Liaisons, positions will be added in to ensure there is better representation across student identities. This was modeled from other campuses, particularly UPenn. This will be moved under the USG umbrella. It is a good idea to have these centers represented more authentically. More focused on student identity and support and try to focus on all demographics.

Suggestion: Recommend a Google form to make easier collect feedback from students.

**SGRC Group Approval**

Six groups up for approval today. The groups are:

- Princeton Global Brigades
- Finding the March
- Astronomy Club
- Princeton Play - This is the most controversial club, because it is focused on BDSM relationships. They try to preserve the confidentiality of the members, but they can’t 100% ensure confidentiality. One cannot attend a session of this group without talking with a public officer. The first thing they have to do is when they reach out to students, they have to tell them that they can’t 100% ensure confidentiality. Members are told this before they go to the first meeting. The policy will be advertised extensively.
- Princeton Southeast Asian Society
- Princeton University Pluralist Society

**Question**: How do they go about funding these groups? More specifically, Princeton Global Brigades.

Answer: They can apply for funding.

**Question**: Is there a way to ensure compliance with what the Princeton Plays group is doing?

**Comment**: Every group is required to list a President and Treasurer. Within Princeton, it lists the student who is the President and Treasurer. Groups can decide what information to put on the website. This may cause difficulties in terms of confidentiality. If the Treasurer goes to get reimbursed for something, it may reveal their affiliation with the group. It is allowed for student members to come in and conduct business on behalf of students.

**Comment**: There is a color-coding system. For example, green may stand for open to the public.

Motion to extend time by 2 minutes
Comment: It depends on the activity. It is allowed for groups to have meetings not open to the public. If there is no auditions involved, it is expected that the group is public. Issues with inclusivity. We want to ensure that this is fair for everyone.

Comment: Someone may not want to go to green events because they may not want to reveal their affiliation with the group.

Majority in favor of voting on whether to pass these groups.

Question: Are we going to vote on these individually? 8 in favor, 12 opposed, 3 abstaining. Therefore, the USG Senate voted on these student groups as a package. 15 voted in favor, 2 opposed, and 6 abstaining.

Motion to Vote in an Executive Session to Eliminate Clarification

2/3rds majority

The appeals of Micahel Asparrin and Ryan Ozminkowski were accepted and both were reinstated as candidates in the Winter Elections Cycle.

Honor Committee Responses to Proposed Changes
The Honor Code at Princeton is 130 years old. It has changed over the 130 years, but it hasn’t changed overnight. The Honor Committee understands that many students on campus would like to see changes to the Honor Committee. Many Honor Committee members are able to pinpoint things they would like to change about the Honor Code.

However, the Honor Code is a pact between students and pact. A task force of students, faculty, and administrators will review the Honor System during the Spring 2018 semester. Patrick will be serving on this task force.

Investigations and hearing processes will be reviewed. This aspect speaks to the second and fourth referendum. The penalty will be considered. There was a recommendation on penalty by a previous task force. The recommendation is that a semester-off rather than a year-off as a penalty. However, the pushback is from the Registrar. Right now, students are not allowed to take a semester off. Making it so that students can take a semester off would help both students facing penalties from the Honor Committee as well as students who want to take a semester off for other reasons.
It is true that students have a right to review, change, and enforce the rules. However, this is a contract. One party cannot simply change the contract. It is uncertain how the faculty would respond. However, it is possible that the faculty could respond. Therefore, it is important to gauge the reactions of the faculty.

If the Honor Referenda changes, there will be a major difference between the Committee on Discipline as well as the Honor Committee. This could put the University legally at risk. If a student looks up code on Github during an in-class exam, they would face less than a year off, if the referenda passed. On the other hand, if a student looks up code on Github during an out-of-class assignment, they would get a full year off.

Many students are frustrated with the bureaucracy. Things shouldn’t take two to three years, but they shouldn’t take nine weeks either. The Honor Committee just wants the best for the Honor Code and the students.

There are four referenda. The main referenda that people will likely be discussing is the change to the standard penalty, which is one year.

Patrick Flanigan was invited to serve on the Subcommittee over Thanksgiving Break. Patrick, believes that the best way to figure out what the students think is through the referenda.

Comment: This is an argument over whether students should be allowed to voice their opinions when it comes to the Honor Committee. It would be wrong for a body to rob students of their right to voice their opinions. If there was a change, it would not occur overnight. This shouldn’t be left to a committee of faculty members and just a few students, including students who have an invested interest because they serve on the Honor Committee. If the Committee on Discipline has bad rules, that does not mean the Honor Committee should be bound by those rules. We don’t need representative samples when we have the entire sample.

Comment: There is a difference between collecting the opinions of students and actually making a change. If this were a survey question, the Honor Committee would not be concerned with this decision. The Honor Committee operates on the larger backdrop of the disciplinary apparatus of the University. Administrators are of the opinion that academic integrity should be valued. This is not an empirical claim.

It would be highly problematic if the Honor Committee has a different standard of penalty when compared to the Committee on Discipline. The Honor Committee doesn’t want to do anything that is legally problematic for the University. Constant parity between the Committee on Discipline and the Honor Committee.
**Question:** Are the other three referenda fair game then?

**Answer:** I don’t think the other three referenda are fair game. It is still necessary to reach out to the faculty and the administrators.

**Comment:** The job of USG is to determine whether the referenda is clear and good enough to be voted on. Even if this referenda would be a disaster, it is not up to USG to decide whether the referenda is good enough. USG is not in charge of any substance. USG already decided that the referenda is clear and understandable.

**Comment:** The Honor Committee didn’t know that the referenda was submitted. The Honor Committee found out about this on the Tuesday morning after the Senate voted. The Honor Committee wasn’t informed that the referenda was submitted.

**Comment:** Before 1991, the Honor Code and the Committee of Discipline had different penalties. It was upgraded. Princetonians are smart enough and informed enough to make a decision.

**Question:** For past referenda related to the Honor Committee, do the faculty vote?

**Answer:** I don’t think there has been referenda this impactful before. I’m not sure. There is a federal law after 1991 that mandates that it is important to have standardized penalties.

**USG Social Committee - Internal Funding Request**

The USG Social Committee is proposing a Dean’s Date based on the 2013 Silent Disco. The Social Committee is requesting $15,000. It wouldn’t be a silent disco, but it would be a DJ. The headliner is budgeted at $17,000, but Liang is talking to an agent to attempt to lower this number. $14,000 was already allotted for Dean’s Date in the summer. It would be very beneficial and worthwhile if this was passed.

**Question:** Fully in support of Lavinia’s request, but does this reflect the current budget for USG?

**Answer:** The current budget doesn’t reflect this, but the numbers can be recalibrated.

**Comment:** $14,000 was accrued from the Thanksgiving Buses. If the agent doesn’t lower the amount, it is understood that Lavinia would be able to come back and request more.

Budget was approved with 19 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstaining

**Senate Resolution 7-2017**
The resolution was changed to help ensure the amendment would go through as easily as possible. Two rather than three members will be selected from the USG Senate and/or Class Governments. There must be at least one member from any of the class governments rather than one member from the sophomore, junior, and senior class governments. The members at large shall be appointed by the USG USLC Chair and Eating Club Relations Subcommittee Chair, subject to Senate confirmation. The Chair shall be chosen by application and interview by the previous Chair of the Subcommittee in consultation with the USLC Chair.

**Question:** There are no upperclassman who are totally independent, as in not affiliated with any Eating Clubs on campus?

**Response:** In the charter, there needs to be a 10% representation of independent students. The reason they left it as is is that there are going to be three more members added from the Senate and one from Class council. They wanted to see whether Independents would apply. They would consider electing from the student body at large to appoint Independents.

Majority votes to vote
17 in favor, 3 abstaining

**Question:** Is USG going to be notified at the same time as the student body about individuals who have been confirmed to run for the Winter Elections cycle?

**Comment:** Recommendation to remove the GSG portion from the USG-USLC Charter. For now, Rachel does need to speak to the GSG for approval.

**Referenda and Elections Schedule Update**

Jonah Hyman gave a short presentation about the referenda and the elections schedule to the Senate.

There are four main controlling documents
- Honor Constitution, Article VI
- Senate Constitution, Articles VII
- Referenda Handbook
- Senate Resolution 6-2017

This presentations should be shared with the rest of the Senate. Normally, there are four weeks for the Referenda process. This is on page 2 of the USG Referenda Handbook.
What changes did we make this year? There were technically four weeks, if the process started the next day, which is unfeasible. It is unfair to require sponsors to collect signatures during Winter Break. Resolution was approved to amend this issue. Campaigning will begin next Tuesday on December 12th. The resolution was sent out over Thanksgiving break and Senate members had about 30 hours to vote.

This week, USG Senate was in the process of approving referenda wording. The subject of review was “Neutral wording and clarity.” The change in language between drafts was largely an issue of clarity.

It was high priority that the referenda language be approved by the email was sent out. By the time that Excomm had finished its duties on that Monday, the questions had to go out the next day by noon. President Qian did everything in his power to ensure that the referenda was sent out on time.

Runoffs can occur. The most likely situation for a Run-off is when no candidate receives the majority votes.

**Question:** What was the reason for the late start date at the very beginning?
**Comment:** The reason for the late start was 1) The original timeline we had outlined would have had the elections finish the 14th. However, the referenda process wasn’t started on time.

**Question:** Why did the referenda process not start on time?
**Answer:** This might been a communication issue.
**Comment:** It’s important to figure out the chain of events. The origin story is important to figure out.

**Answer:** When the Elections timeline was made, the referenda process was not taken into account. The referenda process and the elections timeline must occur concurrently.

**Comment:** Who made the calendar for the elections timeline?
**Answer:** It was made by the Chief Election Manager.

**Question:** Is this the first year that we’re using this system?
**Comment:** It’s been done three times before.

**Question:** How does this process start?
**Comment:** There is supposed to be a public call for Referenda.

**Comment:** One option is to have run-offs move into Winter Break. Should we change the rule that this can’t be done over Winter Break?
Comment: Students shouldn’t be focused on both campaigning and studying for finals. The system is being changed during the process.
Response: Basically, we have to figure this out. At this point, it’s not productive to play the blame game.

NEW SOLUTION
Comment: This may be the way that we change the rules the least and still come to a solution. Take the words out “Before the Winter election.” This vote needs to occur at a meeting.

Question: Would this would be a one-time measure?
Comment: Yes.

Comment: Personally, pushing this into Winter Break would be difficult for the candidates.

Question: Would it be possible to shorten the campaigning the election?
Answer: Doing this would be more egregious.

Question: Would it be possible to make the IRV work through Helios?
Answer: Both options should be left available. Confirm both resolutions so that they can be left as options for the next Senate meeting.

Comment: It has never been the case that campaigning has stopped. This is more of an issue of enforcement.
Comment: Time is needed to contest elections.

Motion to Vote to remove before Winter Break for this elections cycle. The Elections Handbook states that candidates are prohibited from campaigning until noon.

Regardless of how this works out, the three candidates will be made aware that this is a situation that they will have to face.

Question: Would the Senate have to convene a remote meeting?
Answer: Last year, the results were contested. So it does happen. Last time, the complaint was resolved within hours. It was resolved between the aggrieved party and the Chief Elections Manager. We could do a Google Hangout?

Motion to Vote on Patrick’s 3rd Draft
16 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining
Motion to Vote on IRV
12 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstaining

Vote on IRV
11 in favor, 2 opposed, 3 abstaining,