CALL TO ORDER

Approval of minutes: Senator Brost: Moved / Senator Fry: Second / Voting body: Passed

Officer accountability

PUBLIC FORUM

John Mortensen: We’re proposing a new bell schedule for fall 2020, involving afternoon classes being moved from Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 50 minutes to just Monday and Wednesday for 75 minutes, similar to Tuesday-Thursday classes. We think students and faculty will be more interested in afternoon classes if they don’t take place on Friday, which will distribute registration from just 8:30-1:30 to the entire day. Research has shown that students who stay over the weekend are better retained, so there’s concern that this would decrease the students that stay.

Senator Brost: I think this helps students who are working their way through school. I think this is very helpful for work hours.

Senator Dent: I think the longer classes allow us to learn better; 50-minute classes don’t seem to be the most effective.

VP Lake: The Provost told Faculty Senate that departments would have the choice to keep MWF afternoon classes. Also, if I plan to go home for the weekend, I do it anyway; I may skip school or just wait until evening, so I don’t think it will affect that.

Senator Chamberlain: I think this is great. I plan my schedule around skiing on Fridays and this would make it easier!

Senator Lyons: I think this is great. The people outside of this room would also appreciate it.

Senator Bird: My Mondays and Wednesdays are kind of scheduled this way already and it’s so nice. I love the set up.

Senator Brost: I think that, contrary to the concern of students leaving on Fridays, this will provide lots of opportunities for interaction and professional development.
Senator Karras: The College of Engineering is mostly Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, so I’m interested to see how it would affect curriculum there. I find it beneficial to have three opportunities to meet with the professor.

John Mortensen: I’m mostly focused on having as many options as possible.

Thank you for your feedback!

Senator Chamberlain: We want to do a campus-wide game of Clue for Welcome Back Week.

VP Low: The storyline is this: a shipment of Aggie Ice Cream (assuming we get their permission for the usage) on its way from the dairy got hijacked and the ice cream was stolen. People would have to go around campus to get clues and do challenges and figure out the story. We’ll have people added to a private Facebook group based on which steps they’ve completed, and they’ll be added to the next level group at the next checkpoint.

Senator Chamberlain: We have themed characters from around the university.

VP Low: There will be seven clues throughout the week. If you want to be involved, you’ll be responsible for one of the clues. That would be great for you to promote your own events that week as you interact with students.

Senator Chamberlain: Also, if clues are in your college building you can help with that.

Senator Brost: I think the Facebook group will work really well! Plus, the publicity is built in!

Senator Dent: If they can only start at the beginning of the week, you’d have to market it really well that day.

Senator Chamberlain: On the first day we’d have a big crime scene on the Quad with a QR code.

Spencer Bitner: What if you didn’t start officially until Tuesday?

Senator Karras: Maybe Monday and Tuesday’s clues would be less critical but advantageous so that people can join later.

Senator Chamberlain: Or we could start the Facebook group later.

VP Low: Like on Wednesday!

Senator Lyons: Maybe something simple for the first two days and then you close it off.

Senator Brost: Could Monday’s task be inviting others to join?

Senator Dent: Is there an incentive for this?

VP Low: We wanted to see who is on board and then make an ad hoc committee to figure that out. We want to have the grand prize at the end and maybe a little prize halfway through, like a sticker.

Do you guys want to talk to your councils before committing or make executive decisions?
Senator Chamberlain: It would really only be like maybe two manhours-worth of time, just manning a station.

Senator Karras: Will you give us something more defined regarding your expectations of us that we can send to our councils to get their input?

VP Low: Yes, we’ll do that. We’ll loosely assign dates and things and then send that out.

VP Lake: Even though we’ve written ASR 2020-01, there’s another committee on Faculty Senate that actually writes the mandate, so Patrick Belmont will be coming in to discuss how to bridge the differences and what Faculty Senate wants clarified or changed.

Patrick Belmont: I’ve been meeting with Dexton regularly about ASR 2020-01. I think it’s great and our department in NR has done it for a while.

Working with so many faculty members can be difficult, but the majority is very supportive of this! Some concerns brought up were the liability issues of having students access confidential information and students accidentally asking the discriminatory questions that you legally cannot ask. Either of those could lead to lawsuits and students could be held personally liable, just like a faculty member. The last concern was the frankness of the conversations in those committees and how it would affect the working relationships between professors and students.

Faculty are recommending a separate student committee. If you’re one of six committee members, your voice can be more easily paved over than if you’re an entire committee of students. I’d love to hear your feedback.

Senator Karras: I don’t think administration would take a separate council of students seriously. We’ve seen better results when the faculty and students are paired together.

Senator Brost: If the faculty wants us to be adults then we need to be treated as adults. Having a separate committee will be more time-consuming for the candidate, and it also feels like a way to shut our mouths. I’ve been on a search committee as the only student and I was able to ask questions that the other members didn’t consider, and they thanked me for the insight those questions brought.

Senator Fry: I’m concerned about a student-only committee would lead to confusion about what to ask and how to carry out an effective interview.

Patrick Belmont: I think a way to circumvent that is to create a list of recommended questions.

Senator Dent: If students are limited to a list of questions, I think that takes away my voice.

Patrick Belmont: I think the list could be developed by students and faculty together to be more consistent and informative. And they wouldn’t have to be the same across colleges nor would they be the only questions that could be asked.

Senator Dent: Why is the separate group the solution for legal issues?

Patrick Belmont: It’s not. There are ways to decrease the likelihood whether students are with faculty or on their own committee.

Senator Dent: I don’t see the need for a separate committee then.
Senator Ward: Do the faculty on search committees receive training to avoid legal issues? And if so, couldn’t students receive the same training?

Patrick Belmont: Yes.

Senator Bird: I don’t see the difference between the legal issues that can be caused by students versus faculty.

Patrick Belmont: There isn’t a difference. The concern is just whether students want to accept the same personal liability.

Senator Bird: I think as long as students are aware of that and what information is confidential, then it shouldn’t be a big deal.

Senator Brost: I don’t think the list of questions needs to be defined as long as we have the proper students with the proper training.

Patrick Belmont: I agree. At the same time, a student released my confidential information.

Senator Scott: I think having the outline of questions is valuable so that it can be effective and also legal.

Spencer Bitner: The university will not step in in defense of a student or staff member in a lawsuit. If we consulted the legal team about this, we could have solid information.

VP Lake: I don’t remember everything about that, but Dr. Morales said that the interviewee could sue the student who released information.

VP Lake: If there’s ever been a supporter of USUSA, it’s Patrick. He and I meet monthly and you are all welcome to join or send discussion topics for those meetings. We’ll let this percolate and discuss it later.

Patrick Belmont: You all are why we’re here and the faculty wants to get you engaged and professionally developed, we just need to figure out the best way to do that.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

VP Lake: I appreciate those of you who took the time to fill out the survey. I wish I had sent it out earlier so that I could improve earlier. I want to go through some that were common or will help the whole group.

Ultimately, we’re accountable to the students. One of my biggest responsibilities is to make sure this body is being accountable to the students. President Ahmed does the same in Executive Council. You’re not accountable to me as an individual, but to the students through me. One thing I plan to improve on is following up with each of you if you miss your office hours, MyVoice, and info booth. I also want to be better on following up with you when you say you’ll do something in this meeting and then don’t. It’s publicized if you say it in this meeting, so I’ll follow up.

You are welcome to have USUSA meetings during your office hours.

There is a separation between what we vote on in AS and EC. I hope you understand how critical your vote is regarding issues that only arise in Academic Senate. You’re doing work that EC doesn’t do, and it’s important.
A good time to counsel with one another is during council updates. I’ve asked you to keep your activity descriptions short, but if you ever have a question in your college the council updates are a great time to do that. I won’t ever cut off a conversation, and if I have, I apologize.

I know I can be strict on following agendas and also perpetuate my opinions often, but I’m working on being more of a facilitator.

Thank you for taking the time to fill that out!

Please follow up with your fee board administrators about the new description. Make sure they’re alright.

Remind your people about Facilities Enhancement. USU Police is planning on submitting a Facilities Enhancement application which should be cool.

You do not have to do office hours during finals.

Next Monday at this time is our Secret Santa potluck! Exchange your gifts before the party and we’ll reveal Secret Santas there. Bring some fun dessert and deliver your present.

For those of you who are not re-running, I recommend seeking out competent students who could replace you and encouraging them to run.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Senator Scott: We’re meeting tomorrow to wrap up final details for Arts Week. We have all of the events planned, we just have a few more logistics.

We have an event tomorrow with Stacy Gerberich where she’ll give advice for dead week and finals and handling the stress. That’s open to anyone.

The application for Arts Council has opened again, so let me know if you know anyone who should apply.

Senator Karras: Since we’re great at coming up with event names, we’re having Cram Slam from 3 PM to midnight to prep for finals.

We had our Dean’s Forum and it went well. We’ll be having forums with each department as well.

Clubapalooza will be January 8th from 10 AM to 2 PM, piggybacking on Jenny Patino’s club event for Welcome Back Week. We’ll be in the ballroom. Please reach out to all of your clubs this week to tell them about this and ask them to prepare for this. It’s a great opportunity for CCC and having clubs recruit from other colleges to enrich lives.

Senator Dent: Will you send out a description that we can send to our clubs?

Senator Karras: Yes. We’ll need an RSVP too, so I’ll send that information.

Senator Brost: Do you have marketing being made?

Senator Karras: Because we’re piggybacking with all of the university clubs, it will be out with Welcome Back Week things. It would be beneficial for each of us to advertise within our own colleges and explain CCC.
Senator Dent: Is there a feature of the event that will help CCC?

Senator Karras: That will take proactivity on our parts in helping our clubs realize what other clubs are out there and the needs they can fulfill for each other.

I will be doing research about how seriously IDEA surveys are taken, so if you know anything about that let me know.

Senator Fry: We had over 65 RSVP’s for our grad student gripe night but only 30 people came, so that was disappointing. We found out the grad program coordinators didn’t send the emails we asked them to, so we’re compiling our own list.

Mental Health Week is almost finished.

We’ll host a few more pop-up socials in the spring.

Senator Lyons: We’re working on some modifications to the mentoring program.

We’re asking the college about what they’d like us to do.

My executive council will be finding ways to improve Science Council.

Senator Chamberlain: We have a closing social with our clubs on Wednesday where I’ll announce Clubapalooza.

We’re brainstorming about NR Week. I’m planning on delegating events to our clubs and then supporting them in order to increase involvement.

We’re considering a Facilities Enhancement application.

We’ve been working with Cooper on the Welcome Back Week thing.

Senator Brost: I met last week about a Year of the Woman Networking/Resume-Building/Skill-Building event for ag students. That will be March 13th. We’ll probably have workshops throughout the day and then a panel in the evening. We’ll have enough professionals to pair with four or five students each.

We had a club meeting two weeks ago about our club policy and they were supportive of it. They’re excited about Clubapalooza and also want to have a dance, so we’re working on that.

I think the hardest thing is retaining contact information for each club, so we’ve made an email address for each club and will pass it along each year.

Senator Bird: I’m trying to figure out how to do more with clubs. We’ve had some issues that I’m trying to figure out.

I’m trying to build unity in my council, so we’re having a party tomorrow.

Senator Ward: We had our gala last week which went well! Don’t plan events like that on Wednesday, but the calendar made that tough. We have plans for improvement. The silent auction went really well so I suggest that!

We’re not having a Light on the Hill event because our clubs will be at Clubapalooza!

We were supposed to have a town hall, but instead we’ll send out a survey for this semester and then we’ll have a live event next semester.
The sustainability fellowship will keep making progress next semester.

Senator Dent: Having food at town halls is very effective.

We’re hiring new people for Business Council as well.

We’re having a Women’s Week in the business school and it’s the same week as your event, Senator Brost. We want to have a TED night and mocktails and a women entrepreneur event and salary negotiations.

I met with the dean about differential tuition today. There’s a proposal for increasing differential tuition and I’m in favor. We’re looking for ways get student input. The increase would be used for faculty salaries, which we pay a 90% premium on compared to other colleges at USU, and for increasing the scope of the MIS program so that everyone has the computational skills involved there.

ADVISOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spencer Bitner: If you want to know about the changes to the Election Bylaws, come talk to me.

The leadership course for next semester is now open to anyone on your councils. It’s a 2-credit course on Wednesdays. It’s optional, but someday we’d like it to be required so we would like to see how it works with officers.

Keep advertising for AOF. There’s still a lot of money to give out. You are the primary engine for that.

If you have a meeting scheduled with me for next week, let’s chat before then.

Congratulations on finishing your first semester as senators!

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Fry: Moved / Senator Scott: Second / Voting body: Passed

IN ATTENDANCE: Spencer Bitner, VP Dexton Lake, Senator Jared Fry, Senator Sara Dent, Senator Sakia Brost, Senator Nathan Scott, Senator Rachel Chamberlain, Senator Naomi Ward, Senator Alex Lyons, Senator Tiffanee Bird, Senator Cooper Karras, Assistant Anna Kremnev