CALL TO ORDER

Approval of minutes: Senator Karras: Moved / Senator Chamberlain: Second / Voting body: Passed

Officer accountability

PUBLIC FORUM

Bryce Johnston: Here in behalf of the Student Sustainability Office. I’m in charge of Earth Week, which is centered around Earth Day. This year we’re writing a Blue Goes Green grant that will include the USUSA senators.

Last Earth Week we had an Eco Hunt, which was basically a scavenger hunt for sustainability activities. We also had a big event at First Dam with hundreds of people. We watched Wall-E. We had professors give TED talks that we called Lightning Talks. We tabled on the Quad to increase visibility.

I am here to ask if any of you and your committees would be interested in helping with Earth Week, which is April 15-22. We have a list of events already, so we’d love to have your help and work together.

VP Lake: That will be after inauguration, so you can incorporate your closing socials and your new officers into this.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

VP Lake: Next week we’re starting QPR and Diversity trainings next week. You have to be there.

Senator Karras: Do our councils have to attend?

VP Lake: No.

Senator Karras: It’s required by my charter that they go through it.

Spencer Bitner: You’ll need to schedule it with CAPS to have your committee attend.
Senator Chamberlain: What is QPR?

VP Lake: Question, Persuade, Refer. It’s about supporting and responding to people who are contemplating suicide or self-harm.

Download for Donuts is this week. The TSC and the Library have to be full all the time, so please be where you’re supposed to be.

The early registration test run is tomorrow after EC at 5:00.

Faculty Senate is next Monday at 3:20 and they’ll be reading ASR 2020-01.

Members of my council met with Herm Olsen, a city council member, about improving lighting and infrastructure around several intersections.

Remember to update us on your Fee Board Meetings.

We need to decide if we’ll have AS on the Monday of Thanksgiving Break and give the public at least one week’s notice.

Cancellation of 11.25 meeting: Senator Chamberlain: Moved / Senator Fry: Second / Voting body: Passed

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VP Lake: Spencer and I met with Teya Flores and Lauri Clark about the Sophomore Scholarship Fund. We discussed what would be most reasonable.

The current criteria is, “Must have demonstrated academic excellence as well as extracurricular involvement during their freshman year at Utah State University Logan campus. Students must have completed at least 24 USU credits but no more than 45 USU credits (credits received in high school will not be used for consideration). The upcoming fall semester must be the student's third or fourth semester at USU, or the student must have completed at least one full academic year at USU as a full-time student. Students must be a full-time student during the semesters for which they will be receiving the scholarship. Full-time student status is considered as having at least 12 current USU credits. These credits may include online classes and/or classes associated with a pass/fail grading option. If you are receiving any full-tuition USU scholarships for the upcoming academic year, you do not qualify for this scholarship. Logan campus.” What has to stay is the 24-45 USU credits.

Spencer Bitner: AwardSpring automatically links to Banner to show what you qualify for and then you submit a general essay for all applications.

VP Lake: We talked about keeping it to Logan campus, having a range of GPAs accepted (2.75 to 3.5), and having it needs-based. We talked about whether it should be awarded to resident vs non-resident. We need to decide if we’ll keep it as a lump sum or having an algorithm determine how much they need at any point in time.

Spencer Bitner: AwardSpring calculates what people need based on all of their awards and costs.

VP Lake: I would prefer a lump sum because there are variable needs like food, textbooks, and housing.

Senator Dent: If it determines whose needs are already met and eliminates them, why do we cut students off again?
Senator Lyons: I agree.

Senator Chamberlain: Why are excluding Statewide Campuses?

Spencer Bitner: The funding comes from Logan campus tuition, so it is kept to Logan campus students.

Senator Ward: To determine needs they must do FAFSA, so are undocumented students ineligible?

Spencer Bitner: I don’t believe they are eligible because it is Education Grant Tuition.

Senator Bird: Why do we eliminate students that have a 3.5-3.99? Those students are doing really well.

Spencer Bitner: What we need to determine is the importance of GPA, resident vs non-resident awards, and the percentages. Criteria work best in Boolean form, which is true or false.

Senator Fry: Is weighted involvement not in the plan anymore?

VP Lake: We didn’t mention it because it requires essays.

Senator Fry: I think we talked about having essays split the difference between students that were very close.

VP Lake: Because all of the factors, it’s unlikely for there to be a tie. If there is, it’ll be the students at the bottom of the range.

VP Lake: Spencer and I will work on a Qualtrics survey for you all so that we can have more organized thoughts and later a more organized discussion.

It seems like we’re all in favor of the needs-based index, residency status, and some weight of GPA.

Senator Karras: I agree with the Boolean format with line items instead of essays.

Senator Brost: Why can’t we decide now? Every time we wait a week, we forget details and have to cover things again.

VP Lake: We could. We’re not prepared today, and I’ve only given the headlines.

Senator Brost: I just feel like a private survey that we then discuss publicly is obsolete.

Senator Karras: I think a survey would help us prepare to have a better discussion.

Senator Dent: Will we have the results of the survey or will you compile it?

VP Lake: I can do whatever you’d like.

Continuation of discussion in person: Senator Brost: Moved / Senator Dent: Second / Voting body: Failed

Senator Fry: I think it would be valuable to discuss but a vote might be too rushed.
Continuation of discussion without a vote: Senator Fry: **Moved** / Senator Dent: **Second** / Voting body: **Passed**

VP Lake: Let’s discuss GPA first. I agree with Senator Dent and Senator Lyons. I think a minimum of 2.75 is important. It’s also notable that those who already have scholarships will be eliminated anyway, so we don’t have to have a maximum.

Senator Lyons: If they have a full-ride they’re immediately ineligible, but even if they have some scholarship and then don’t have a very high need, then they will also get weeded out. If there are people with high GPA’s that still have high needs, I think they should get it.

VP Lake: It’s important to note that AwardSpring doesn’t take FAFSA awards into account.

Senator Karras: If the university has no information on their needs, are they eliminated?

VP Lake: If we award based on needs, then yes.

Senator Fry: FAFSA doesn’t even factor in grants. If we focus on needs-based, out-of-state and married students have an advantage because FAFSA awards aren’t considered, but students under 21 who still have to list their parents on their FAFSA are at a disadvantage.

We could take the index and eliminate anyone who has a need over $1,000.

Senator Bird: When things are looked at based on needs, the middle class gets put out every time. Parents are not always helping their students, but if the parents make enough the students aren’t eligible.

Senator Chamberlain: What does FAFSA consider?

Senator Fry: Just your parents’ income.

Spencer Bitner: They can account for how much you could get in subsidized loans.

Senator Dent: We’ve talked about FAFSA needs and also how much money is outstanding on their account. Those are different.

Senator Chamberlain: I agree. If the university can look at everybody’s outstanding tuition, it should be possible.

Senator Ward: I am familiar with the anecdotes of parents not helping with tuition because there is research that supports that the more financially secure your parents are, the more financial support you have through college. There is value in needs-based scholarships, but FAFSA complicates things.

VP Lake: President Cockett did a needs-based scholarship totaling $34,000. They used this formula: Needs Index - $3,500 (which is the maximum subsidized loan) = Needs Value. USU awarded 25% of the Needs Value. President Cockett wanted to require students take out a subsidized loan before awarding money.

Senator Fry: I think the issue with FAFSA is that there are other needs-based scholarships. I feel the best way to gauge the fulfillment of those is a weighted system of GPA and involvement and then a brief essay. If there’s only going to be a tie in the bottom, there would only be maybe 10 essays to actually focus on.

VP Lake: There is a lot of bias towards people who are involved in things we’re familiar with versus things we’re not familiar with.
Spencer Bitner: I’m not sure if AwardSpring can do essay responses based on criteria. The essay is very general so that AwardSpring doesn’t have to function like that.

Senator Fry: When I log into AwardSpring, it asks “are you involved in Greek Life?” There are functions like that. There would also only be a tie in the bottom few, so we’d only have a few essays to read.

We had the same issue with the Grad Student Enhancement, so we just removed identifiers and randomly assigned them. There would be no name bias, though there would be organization bias.

Senator Karras: I like what Spencer mentioned. I think we should focus on bullet points and potential criteria and then we can come prepared for our next meeting.

VP Lake: I got three responses regarding this fund the first time I asked. If we’re going to delay, I expect more responses.

Senator Fry: I suggest a weighted GPA and involvement criteria.

VP Lake: We now have a GPA minimum, needs-based, remaining tuition, and a weighted criterion

Senator Brost: If we award a flat lump sum, that will limit the number of students we can help. If a student needs $500 this semester and $450 next semester, we then have extra funding to be able to help another student.

We need to determine whether we want to help a few students more or more students a little.

VP Lake: We should decide if we want to change the lump sum awarded.

Senator Fry: We should also note if we’re willing to grade essays.

Senator Brost: We should also decide what the essay lengths will be.

Senator Karras: Another option is line items instead of a bulky essay.

VP Lake: The points I mentioned were general suggestions from our meeting this morning. The only point we haven’t included again is residency.

Senator Brost: It sucks that out-of-state students have to pay more tuition, so I’m in favor of awarding 60% to residents and 40% to non-residents.

VP Lake: I was a non-resident student but because I was within 100 miles of campus. There’s also the Alumni Out-of-State scholarship where they only pay resident tuition because their parents or grandparents came to Utah State.

Most students can qualify for residency within that first year.

Senator Karras: Now that we have a list, I think we have better opportunities to see what our individual opinions are and develop thoughts for a discussion.

Senator Chamberlain: If a student has to be a sophomore, having taken that many credits on the Logan campus, are there still sophomores that aren’t residents?
Spencer Bitner: Some just don’t look into it. Statistically, those that don’t are on non-resident scholarships.

Senator Dent: I agree with Senator Karras.

Compilation of survey and later discussion: Senator Lyons: Moved / Senator Fry: Second / Voting body: Passed

COUNCIL UPDATES

Senator Dent: We’re focusing on improving Focused Fridays. We don’t have classes on Fridays because we spend the day focused on career development. I feel that Focused Fridays are often more directed by administration than students. We’re putting together a survey.

We’re putting together a Women’s Summit. In the past, we’ve only brought in divorced women, which tells me I have to sacrifice my relationship in order to be successful. That’s not an intentional message, but it’s still there.

We’re having a retreat on Saturday.

I’m putting together a council of club members to increase communication in the school.

Senator Scott: I met with the dean about Arts Week. They gave me suggestions and support, so I’m excited. They suggested a networking breakfast during Arts Week.

We’re putting together events to increase the transparency of the dean. We’re putting together an event that will likely be in the atrium with some sort of refreshments. We’d like to do the same thing with the new CAPS counselor who was hired to give priority to CCA students.

I sent an email about food options to all of the office assistants in each department in the college. Hopefully we will get those food options very soon. We’ve received a lot of feedback verbally, I would just like to have the physical evidence.

Senator Fry: We’re working on getting an ombudsperson for the School of Graduate Studies.

We’re working on dental insurance still.

We have two events in November: the pop-up social and the Grad Student Gripe Night.

I’ve been tightening up the schedule for Mental Health Week. If you’re interested in helping, let me know.

Senator Lyons: We have Science Week next week. Everyone is welcome to come to all of these. Some may not interest you, which is fine.

This Friday is our Observatory Night. It’s a nice, free date night.

Monday is Hoagies with Hagen in the atrium of the Life Science Building. With the College of Natural Resources, we’re holding the Women in Research night in the TSC Ballroom. There will be a representative from every college.

Tuesday is Simple Science Trivia in the Hub. There’s a Research Mingle that night.

Fear Factor on Wednesday in the Hub. Elemental Bingo is our main event. There will be lots of prizes.
Thursday is our Coral Reef Acidity Activity. We’re showing the damages of acid to coral reefs. We have a movie and a raffle fundraiser that night in the LSB Auditorium. We’re watching Apollo 13. Donations go to The Family Place.

Friday afternoon is Corn Hole and Cocoa on the library quad. Science Unwrapped is that night.

It’s busy and starts this Friday.

Senator Chamberlain: We’re getting the marketing up for the Women in Research night. I’ll send you the flyers. Please disseminate those, and if you have any women-specific groups, send it to them.

I had a productive meeting with my dean and assistant dean. We proposed a climate change course and a Traditional Ecology course that will share how land has been used by the peoples of the West. They’re working on both of those and are very responsive. We also talked about increasing faculty diversity, and we talked about different ways to reach out to diverse group. They received it well.

We’ve been selling Logger’s Ball tickets and finalizing everything. I’ll send information. We’ll have pigs in a blanket and crickets in a blanket.

We had a Climate Change Town Hall last week, hosted by one of our clubs. We invited city council members and candidates and many of them came. We came up with a grading criteria of their positions on various issues like social equity, the environment, and community development. If you’re interested in that, it can inform you in your voting on November 5th.

We’re looking into a Facilities Enhancement Fund application to increase the water efficiency in our building because all of the bathroom sinks leak.

Senator Karras: We had a spook alley on Friday. It was successful!

I’ve been meeting with department heads routinely to discuss the Facilities Enhancement Fund and the Academic Opportunity Fund. I recently met with Dr. Barr who is being promoted within the university, so we’ll have an interim department head for the civil engineering and environmental engineering departments.

We’ve spoken with our dean again about the feedback we’ve received from students. We had better reception this time. We have a Dean’s Forum in November where we’ll display the changes being made. I’m excited to inform students that their opinions matter.

Senator Ward: We had our Cup of Joe event on Friday. It was successful and we’ve taken note of what can improve.

Gala planning and advertising is almost done.

VP Rivera-Soto is planning a Vote for Women Week in the spring. We’re possibly partnering with the Poli-Sci department to invite women in politics to speak or maybe a joint event where they read poems written by women. We’re in the early planning stages, so we’re tossing around ideas.

I added responsibilities to one of my council positions to increase bonding within my council. I felt like it was hard to get my council to commit, so I wanted to improve that. We had a Bonding Brunch potluck and it was helpful and cheap! If that’s something you want to implement, I suggest it.

We addressed the concerns from different departments about the limited sections and professors. The next step is probably to go to department heads to get the administrative perspective.
Senator Bird: We’ve been working on our ListServ and it is now done! That’s a huge thing and I’m very excited. We’re going to test it for Education Week.

Education Week is in two weeks. Everything is planned, we’re just working on the little details.

I talked with my dean about departmental clubs and that’s something administration was not aware of. They are now looking into what we can do based on those differences.

I’m working on Facilities Enhancement with some of our department heads.

We started a new undergraduate degree that’s entirely online called Human Experience Design and Interaction. It’s an undergraduate degree for the ITLS department.

Senator Brost: I emailed Ray Cheedham about that wall downstairs. I haven’t heard back, but I’ll persist.

I discussed with the Dean’s Leadership Council about having Dr. Colver come discuss College of Ag analytics. He’ll be coming soon.

We’re planning a leadership Christmas party.

We’re writing a tentative policy for departmental club standards. One of my platforms was unifying our clubs.

We’ve decided to do a Club Bash for the spring to promote clubs for those who weren’t here fall semester.

We discussed doing student takeovers on our social media.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Scott: Moved / Senator Ward: 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