EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

December 3, 2019 | 4:00 PM | USUSA Senate Chamber

CALL TO ORDER

Approval of Minutes: VP Jessop: Moved / VP Rivera-Soto: Second / Voting body: Passed

Officer Accountability

PUBLIC FORUM

Bryce Johnston: I’m an intern in the sustainability office. I’m responsible for raising awareness and interest in sustainability issues among students. Utah State has been working towards being carbon-neutral for over a decade, but we want to keep working and do more. On January 30th at 5 PM, Robert Davies will be presenting on the state of the climate and Patrick Belmont will discuss what the university is doing. We want to reach out across campus to engage everyone. We’d love your help in that.

VP Low: This is great. I think putting this in front of students will be important. Nearly every week in spring is dedicated to a set of events, but that week is free. My committee can help with distribution.

VP Brain: I think we’re on board. We’ll move forward with you and have people distribute.

Bryce Johnston: Thank you. I’m trying to foster a stronger relationship between USUSA and the sustainability office.

John Mortensen: I’m here to see what you think about a proposed bell schedule starting fall 2020. We plan to change from MWF afternoon classes that are 50 minutes long to just MW afternoon classes that are 75 minutes long. Both professors and students have reported being more inclined to take an afternoon class if it doesn’t happen on Friday. We really want to utilize classroom space and also offer as many options as possible. The associate deans and department heads across campus are in favor. This change will be optional, so once-a-week classes won’t be affected. There is some concern that students will leave on the weekend now that they don’t have later classes, but it seems that students do that anyway. Any feedback is welcome. They hope to make a decision by Thursday.

President Ahmed: I think this is a good thing. I don’t think it’s an undue burden.

VP Jessop: So after 1:30 on Friday there would be no classes?

John Mortensen: There could be. There are still labs and studio classes that could be on Friday,
and professors have the option to keep the MWF schedule.

VP Rivera-Soto: I’m in favor of this. Students who are going to leave are already going to leave. If we can keep that from affecting their schoolwork, I think that’s great.

VP Low: Yesterday Senator Brost mentioned the advantage of this for those working through college.

John Mortensen: I still have kids in high school and it seems common for Fridays off.

VP Lake: Another thing Senator Brost mentioned was just that those Friday afternoons could actually improve the social and professional development, giving students more time to connect to campus.

John Mortensen: Any negatives? I don’t know if it’ll have a huge impact because we don’t have a shortage of classrooms anymore, but it could allow us to repurpose rooms and utilize them as well as possible.

Linda Zimmerman: John is currently the Assistant Vice President for Academic Instructional Services. He’s the former Athletics VP from ’86–’87. He bought Big Blue’s first suit! It ended up being more royal than navy so we put it in the closet and didn’t bring it out for a while until we got it fixed. I credit John with bringing Big Blue to campus.

John Mortensen: I’m passionate about student leadership. If you need help with something, let me know.

Rearranging meeting: VP Lake: Moved / VP Rivera-Soto: Second / Voting body: Passed

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Linda Zimmerman: Tim has been working with legal on this, so he’s presenting this to help us understand what they mean and what they’re strongly recommending.

Tim Olsen: The eligibility requirements were the first issue. Legal wanted to appeal the use of Vice President for Student Affairs, but once we explained who that is and how irreplaceable that position is, they changed their stance.

Next is the coin flip. We are changing that to Linda’s position.

Linda Zimmerman: There has been one coin flip. Dr. Morales feels that after all of the work and effort, they deserve an extra day.

Tim Olsen: The last part is the biggest. They want to eliminate any university employee from pretty much any process. Legal advises that everything should be done by the students and for the students. The recommendation is to eliminate the appeals process. UVU does this and they use language that says,

“I do further declare that I have read and do understand Article V of the USUSA Constitution and Article VII of the Elections Bylaws and agree to comply with any decisions made by the USU Hearing Board.”

Linda Zimmerman: They feel that because Executive Council choses and trusts the students on the hearing board, the outcome will probably be agreeable.

Tim Olsen: I’m going to study what other universities do with this, but with the elections packet going live possibly tomorrow, that won’t be done this year.

Linda Zimmerman: It could be that we eventually have two different boards, one for elections and one for conduct.
Tim Olsen: Just so you know, we do plan to continue evolving. That’s just likely the best option this year. The appeals language was copied and pasted from the student code of conduct, so it had a lot of holes in its application to election, so we plan to revisit this. Because these students have been picked and trained, we should be able to trust them to render a fair decision.

VP Low: They will still hold a hearing so that the defendant will be able to plead their case.

Tim Olsen: Yes, the hearing process is the same except I think Kristyn sat in on those.

Linda Zimmerman: Yes. That will become the head of the hearing board’s role.

Tim Olsen: That will be the same. There just won’t be an appeal if a candidate doesn’t like the decision.

VP Low: If someone does feel like they were discriminated against, could they still go to the Office of Student Affairs?

Linda Zimmerman: The USUSA Constitution says that the VP of Student Affairs can rescind that. We would just have that signature stating that the hearing board is the final approval. No matter what, one of the two parties will walk away feeling like it’s unfair because they won’t win. Legal is very adamant that it needs to be a student board.

Tim Olsen: They don’t want it to be placed back on the university.

Linda Zimmerman: It’s not an academic or conduct matter.

VP Rivera-Soto: I love this. I feel like the current grievance process drags on so long. If there’s an option for appeals in the constitution, I don’t see the need for another system here. I really like the fact that this is a student organization and that students get to run it.

VP Tomlinson: How are people removed from the hearing board due to bias?

Linda Zimmerman: I think that’s in their training. It’s the same in any case across campus.

President Ahmed: According to Kristyn, if they are associated or biased, they are supposed to remove themselves.

VP Tomlinson: I just don’t want to have the same issues we had last year with making people who should have removed themselves but couldn’t because they needed a certain number of members.

VP Rivera-Soto: Would the best way to handle that be legislation or training or...?

Linda Zimmerman: I think it would be in the training. You’re all involved students, so everyone knows each other. The issue is when it becomes more personal. You picked the people that you picked because they can handle the stress and make good decisions.

Tim Olsen: I don’t know how big the pool of members for the board is, but only a minimum is set, not a maximum.
President Ahmed: So we could have more, but only need seven.

Approval of 2020 Elections Bylaws: VP Lake: Moved / VP Fry: Second / Voting body: Passed

Linda Zimmerman: People can start declaring on the 13th of January. We still have a few dates and locations to put in the packet, but it should be live soon.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Ahmed: The new leadership course only has one USUSA member in it, so I encourage everyone that can to take that.

Linda Zimmerman: We’re really excited. We have 40 slots, but only have 10 registered because word hasn’t gotten out. We’re now opening it up to anyone on your councils. Eventually we’d like all USUSA officers to take the course.

Senator Fry: If you require officers to take it in the future, it would be great to eliminate the grad student tuition rate.

VP Low: The class is 4:30 on Wednesdays, right?

Linda Zimmerman: Yes. They can’t change it. It does interfere with Blue Crew.

VP Rivera-Soto: How long is the class?

Linda Zimmerman: I think an hour and a half?

VP Low: Is it the same as the Greek leadership course?

President Ahmed: I presented in front of Faculty Senate about the State of USUSA and they liked it. They like us a lot. They were very happy about the Welcome Back Week Ferris wheel.

Linda Zimmerman: We’ve been showing VR of that as we’re recruiting, and they love it!

President Ahmed: I want to encourage you to get as many new people to the third floor as possible. We want to be able to engage with them.

COUNCIL UPDATES

VP Low: It’s Festival of Trees! Last night’s tree decorating went well. We’ll donate those trees to families in need in Cache Valley. Voting for that is going on.

President Ahmed: There’s a QR code you can scan.

VP Low: Tomorrow is Big Blue Holiday. There were issues bringing local elementary school kids, but Big Blue will be there in a Santa outfit in the ballroom from 11-12.

Thursday is the Ugly Sweater Cereal Soiree. There will be prizes.

The PJ Power Hour is an hour-long dance party.
PoBev is in pajamas too, which is on Saturday.

We need more people to apply for Elections Committee. We’ll send the graphics through Slack. Please tell people to apply.

Welcome Back week includes Aggie Voice. The girl from High School Musical, Casey, is coming to judge. We’ll also have an event called Aggies Funniest Videos. Please help promote that over the break. We’re also doing an outdoor dance party before True Aggie Night called the Freezing 40. Welcome Back Week will be lit.

VP Jessop: We’re going to be moving the Snowman Gallery to Welcome Back Week because there’s never snow during Traditions Week. We’ll work with Cooper’s office on that.

SAA Committee applications are open again. We’re looking for people who may not have had the chance to get involved yet! That application is at ususa.usu.edu/apply.

VP Patino: Aggiefest is in January. We’re combining with the senators to have a big clubs event involving all of the USU clubs in the lounges on Wednesday of Welcome Back Week.

VP Brain: We’ve raised about $4,000 for the backpack program through Friendsgiving.

VP Lake: I was in a meeting with Dave Cowley, the VP of Business Services. I ended up with some clarity regarding Business Services’ definition of some fees. Their definition of the building fee says that it can be used for housing buildings’ maintenance, but that is exclusively covered by housing rent. It’s a minor change, but big enough to be warranted. We also talked about building bonds and it was useful.

Do your Secret Santa, if you are participating! We’ll have a potluck/dessert party on Monday at 4.

Patrick Belmont and I have been working on clarifying ASR 2020-01. That will probably go beyond his tenure, but he’s been a great supporter.

My committee and I have worked with Director Olds on getting student fee definition videos filmed. Fee administrators have been assigned definition summaries. We’re working with city council to improve the safety of roads around campus as well.

VP Rivera-Soto: This semester was mostly planning.

Our tenants’ rights event will be next semester.

We’re partnering with the Hurd for a Year of the Woman tailgate before a women’s basketball game during Weeks of Welcome.

Senator Fry: Two weeks ago was Grad Student Gripe Night. We had 60 RSVP’s but only 30 people came. We found out grad coordinators didn’t send the emails we asked them to, so we’re developing our own list.

We’re still planning Mental Health Week.

We’re hoping to have two or three more Graduate Pop-Up Socials in the spring.

We’re still pushing for dental insurance, but it won’t be in place until next academic year.

Director Olds: Thank you to everyone who is on top of submitting your projects. Everything will be done and printed
and delivered by January. We’re not beginning any new projects until the beginning of next semester, starting with events that take place in the second week of February or later. If your project for an event before that isn’t done by the time break starts, please stay on Slack so we can communicate.

We’re still trying to staff Elections Committee. We’re at about half as many people as we want, so please advertise that.

VP Tomlinson: Next week is Coach Smith’s birthday, so this Saturday we’ll be handing out 200 free bald caps to students in white shirts and ties.

We’ll probably be holding a public forum in January with food so that people can come talk to the HURD president, the Campus Recreation Director, the marketing committee, and myself about what they might want changed in athletics.

Last year we did a USU Greek Kickball Tournament and we’ll do that again in January.

ADVISOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Linda Zimmerman: Have a nice break and pass your finals!

ADJOURNMENT

VP Lake: Moved / VP Rivera-Soto: Second / Voting body: Passed

IN ATTENDANCE: Linda Zimmerman, President Sami Ahmed, VP Dexton Lake, VP Braden Tomlinson, VP Cooper Low, Senator Jared Fry, Director Cameron Olds, VP Jenny Patino, VP Tarren Jessop, VP Paulina Rivera-Soto, VP Emma Brain, Assistant Anna Kremnev