CALL TO ORDER

President Ahmed: Welcome everyone. Thanks for coming to our first Executive Council meeting. We usually approve minutes to begin but since we weren’t part of last week’s minutes we won’t approve anything.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mitchell Clover: Thanks for having us. I also want to introduce Eric Dickamore who is an undergraduate research assistant that works in our office. I direct what’s called the Center for Student Analytics. It’s a new center. How many of you went to President Cockett’s Truth in Tuition event? At that event she talked about this idea that we would have the opportunity to increase tuition at Utah State and then that money would be directed at several different important things, different opportunities. One of those opportunities that we want to call out in our presentation is this line that’s highlighted in blue. It’s about $8 per student, about .24% of what tuition was. That’s an increase that’s being suggested and the idea would be to fund what our center actually is and does. When I heard her double down on analytics in this way, my very next thought was, “we need to present this to Executive Council because they need to understand that.” Whatever else this money is and does is for students and should primarily be for students. Your understanding of that is really essential and your understanding of what that money can do and does do for the university is really an important part of our university’s ability to be function. I reached out and said, “can I come talk to Executive Council?” We tried to talk to Academic Senate yesterday but public forum ran really long and we were last on the list so I just said “I don’t want to take your time, I’ll come back in the fall,” so I’ll be doing that. For today we have about 10 minutes of content that we wanted to share with you so you can understand how we’re using student data to optimize the institution and make it a better place for students to exist and for students to function. The Center for Student Analytics is a new center, it was founded last autumn, 2018. I had been doing that work as a single staff member, the work of student analytics, and then our work was actually going so well that President said, “I want to formalize this with a center and I want to formalize this with a staff so that we can use it.” What is it that we do? We build these massive models. They’re predictive models, massive logistic regressions, and what we do is we look at patterns in student data all the way back to 1949; we get as much data as we can take. We look at how at Utah State there are students that do well and they persist towards graduation and there are students that do less well and it’s funny because they keep doing less well for similar reasons for year after year and that’s represented in the data patterns that we can find in these models. That show us how certain behaviors, certain experiences, meaningfully associate
with students’ likelihood to either consistently persist towards graduation or actually leave the institution without a diploma. Because those common patterns are so stable, we actually can look at our current students and overlay all of your data onto those models and actually start to make guesses about how you might be doing. We can use that in a few key ways. The first way is we kind of have these colors: blue, green, yellow, orange, and it says 0% red, but I happen to know 72 students who are red. The first thing we can do to impact student wellbeing is have academic advisors actually reach out to students and say, “I’m your advisor and I care about you and I’d like you to come in and visit with me so we can talk through any issues you’ve been having.” The students have been able to do that and a lot of times we catch students on their way out the door and help resolve their concerns. This can be really important work. You can see in this example that the data is actually being used to intervene on the students and that does happen. [Academic advisors] receive special trainings so as to not pigeon-hole students or to incite self-fulfilling prophecies, to not profile students based on either their demographics or any of these features. Instead, they actually empower the students and give them opportunities to thrive and flourish here at Utah State. We have really good stories and if we had longer I could tell you all kinds of stories about how students were intervened right at the right moment to help them persist towards graduation that otherwise might not have. The other way that we use it is actually the more important way. We have a lot of programs on campus that all students are eligible to participate in. For example, we do dances, we have a writing center, we have things like orientation and connections. All students are eligible to participate in these events, but only some of them actually do and what we can do is actually hold constant their demographic information and their academic engagement information, the data that we get from Canvas, to actually see how those successes are meaningfully interacting with the things that they bring to the university. Even though all students are eligible, analytics help us do some important things where we find similar nonparticipants because in order to tell whether or not a program’s working we actually control for things like student motivation. In research there’s this big problem called self-selection bias which means that, say, VP Lake goes to a dance and then ends up persisting at Utah State better than students who didn’t go to that dance. People would say, “VP Lake came to USU already well-prepared and the fact that he went to the dance was just a marker of his motivation which he already had to begin with.” That can be a problem in determining whether or not the dance made a difference so we actually use analytics to help us determine which students are more likely to participate in specific activities. VP Lake is the one who went to the dance, and that’s great, but we try to find a similar nonparticipant who’s so similar in their academic engagement, in their student motivation, and in their high school records that it actually makes a good match. Then we fast forward to see what actually happens and who sticks around. We determine how participation systematically associates with the increased likelihood of success. I have a binder here with a whole bunch of reports we’ve done. We’ve looked at Connections and students who go to Connections are actually more likely to persist at Utah State because they were in Connections. We have this one about orientation modules four and five (which are online) and students who do orientation modules four and five online are actually more likely to persist at USU even after controlling for how good of students they are. The list goes on; this is math tutoring... There’re all these different examples. Eric works in our center and one day he said, “I’m a volunteer for USUSA stuff and [I’m] on the A Team. Does that matter? Does that help me?” I said, “That’s a really good question, Eric, because the hard thing is that all the students who participate in USUSA as appointments or are elected or volunteers are the top of the top in terms of “go get ‘em” student motivation. It’s really hard usually for us to determine the impact that those kinds of programs and participation are having on student wellbeing. But, you’re in luck because we have this $300,000 software and this software actually helps us answer this question.” This software takes in 1,800 student variables (Weber State uses 72) and that’s because we’re really invested in making this work well. We actually can answer this. We’ll turn it
over to Eric to answer this question. Here are some examples of things we looked at: writing center, using the gym, studying abroad, these kinds of things. Eric wanted to look at SILC and he did. Now he’s going to share those results.

Eric Dickamore: This is interesting because we’re able to understand the impact of how participating in SILC affects what it means to be a student. The big thing we did was take the last four years of data (spring 2015 to fall of 2018) and we match 1,500 students. What went into our analysis was student leaders and volunteers.

Mitchell Clover: It might surprise you that over the last four years 1,500 people have participated in all the USUSA sponsored leadership positions. Doesn’t that surprise you? Were you aware of just how many students participate? It’s huge. That’s the 1,500 that we were able to match on, to find an appropriate match for. There were actually 2,100 over the last four years. This is a big operation, and this is just for the leadership positions and those who volunteer and help out like PCab and whatnot.

Eric Dickamore: This is the big impact we found. There’s a 3.26% difference. You look at that and you’re like, “what does that mean Eric? Explain to me what that means.” What that means in real life—

Mitchell Clover: Do you see how we’ve matched? The first two dots are together because we’ve matched every participant with a similar nonparticipant, so those two numbers have to match because we forced them to. We don’t include anyone unless we can find an appropriate match for them in terms of their likelihood to participate in USUSA and the likelihood to be successful. Do you see how that gray line stays flat for comparison students, students who don’t participate? What that means is that nothing much changes for them semester to semester. They don’t participate in USUSA and nothing really changes as a result of that. They’re just as likely as they were before to be successful. That blue line is the gain that basically we can attribute to participation in USUSA, so this 3.26%. Is that great?

Eric Dickamore: It is great.

What that means in real life is 12 student who would otherwise not have persisted did persist. We can put a money sign on that and it’s over $100,000 per year in retained tuition. What that really means is 12 graduates that would not have otherwise graduated, 12 families that were able to say, “we had a student graduate from Utah State,” and an educated community member that has the experience of being involved which really means a lot. In addition to these big insights we’re able to drill down and understand smaller kinds of interactions. Students on all levels of term completion experience a significant change in persistence, but especially the zero terms completed students. The earlier students are able to participate and get into USUSA positions and volunteer... It really means a lot over their time here at Utah State. This is just a small sample of what we do and usually we’ll sit down, for example with Spencer and some others in the SILC office and go through a nine-page report of all this. It takes about an hour and a half to go through everything and understand where it’s all happening. If you guys are interested, you can reach out to Mitchell and me and maybe we can walk through the findings we have from SILC. That’s what usually happens.

Mitchell Clover: The images are examples of things that really matter that you probably already know about. One thing I wanted to ask: how many of you got involved in USUSA volunteering as freshmen? For those of you that did, does this ring true? Does this matter early on in your connection to Utah State? Does anyone have any thoughts that they want to share?
VP Brain: Are you measuring persistence by GPA or just staying in classes?

Mitchell Clover: Persistence is a very specific term; it means being enrolled in the fall and then enrolling again in the spring and being enrolled in spring and enrolling again in the fall. We skip over summer, we don’t really care about it. Persistence is actually a really good proxy for about six other things. A proxy just means that it stands in the place of something. It’s a really good proxy for graduation rate; it’s a really good proxy for student satisfaction with the brand and the university itself; it’s a really good proxy for student satisfaction with their curriculum and their major and where they’re headed in terms of that; it’s a really good proxy for students’ feelings that they’re being prepared for their career choice. We use it as a single measure because it’s quicker to measure than graduation (which takes six years to measure). We get it instantly every semester. It’s actually so highly associated with things that we really care about like student satisfaction and wellbeing that it’s just an easy way to measure that the university is healthy. As we see this increase we really know that we’re on the right track and it helps us optimize the university and make it better for students.

VP Rivera: You talked about participant match; what are the factors on how you match participants?

Mitchell Clover: There are 42 factors that we use to do a match. That’s called a density score match and you’re probably familiar with it. If you’ve taken any social science classes, you know that we like to do randomized experiments, randomized controlled trials where we actually randomly assigned students to get the pill or to not get the pill (get the sugar pill). In this case, we can’t randomly assign students to attend the dance or go to the writing center. It’d be weird if you got a letter in the mail: “dear student, we’d like to randomly assign you to go to the ARC 32 times this semester,” or “dear student, you’ve been randomly assigned not to use the ARC this semester at all because we really need to know how these factors work.” Because we can’t do that RCT we actually do what’s called a density score match where we use 42 motivation-based variables that help us to figure out how well a student’s on track to be successful or how likely they are to do the activity. For each student we know how likely you are to go to the ARC. We don’t really care student-by-student, but in the aggregate, in the big data stuff, it helps us to figure out if the ARC is that good (and spoiler alert: the ARC is very effective).

VP Rivera: Does it include factors like race or ethnicity or socioeconomic background?

Mitchell Clover: Really great question and an important question to ask and answer. If it did it could lead to inappropriate profiling of students and also some weight on a variable that is disadvantageous to students of color especially and other marginalized groups or minorities as well. The funny thing is that we actually asked the computer to tell us which variables are most important and almost all of them are student behavior data like working hard, going to classes, and logging into Canvas. All of the race variables actually dropped out of the model and we don’t use them at all. Gender might be used but I haven’t manually looked at the list of 42 variables recently. We trust the computer to actually dump those variables so that we actually get a much stronger model. Good question, an important question.

Now what I want to show you here is all of these different things that we are trying to look at. Every one of these reports as helped us to optimize the university: Aggie Rec Center, residence halls… You may be saying, “Aggie Rec Center? That’s only 1.7%, that couldn’t be that great.” If there’s 32,000 people that used that over the last year, the thing is this actually represents more retained students and revenue in
tuition than residence halls or on-campus computer labs. These aren’t even comparisons, but we know that, for example, academic advising matters a lot. Here’s right where USUSA leadership and volunteering falls and you see it’s pretty high on the list, it’s pretty important. When we saw it, we got excited and wanted to come and share with you guys. Everything we do is about empowerment: we’re trying to optimize this place for students like you and students not like you. We do that through this kind of careful, considerate work where we go into every single one of these directors and talk to them about the decisions that they’ve made and how those decisions have affected them and how they can kick up the juice a little bit to make the experience better for students. Every one of these directors has thought of opportunities and ways that, even though their programs are doing well, they can make them better. The data, the analytics that are so expensive that we’re trying to work on every day makes that possible. We wanted to come and talk to you about this idea that that’s what we’re for so that you can understand that we’re not just spending your money and not getting a return on investment to the university and especially students. It’s optimization analytics that we’re trying. That’s our whole presentation. Do we have any questions that we can address?

Senator Fry: I think I remember you mentioning this during President Cockett’s presentation about tuition. Can you monitor grades through Canvas? Is that an option?

Mitchell Clover: Yeah. All of the data in Canvas is available for modeling purposes. We don’t use everything that’s there; grades are really important but they’re important in a special way. One of the ways that they’re important is that we don’t look at the absolute grade, we look at it relative to the section average. If you’re in a really hard class and you’re getting 54% overall but the class average is a 43 then you’re actually doing pretty well for yourself. We look at that in terms of the contextualized data set. It’s an important piece of information but it’s not even the most important. Like I said, there are 1,800 variables we look at and those are rich elements of the dataset but they’re not even the ones that we look at so carefully.

VP James Morales: Mitchell, your statement about the AC and the fact that it has a relatively small effect by number and yet reaches a large number of students: if you look at something that high impact but they’re reaching a few number of students, it really underscores the need to get that out further, broader, and unveil the speed of that service better. There’s that corollary.

Mitchell Clover: One thought that we had in coming to talk to you guys is this realization that this information, if leveraged towards recruiting volunteers, could actually lead to recruiting more. By the way, USUSA doesn’t only help your community of students but it also helps you be more integrated in the success of Utah State. Also, to reach out to a student you might not otherwise think of as being likely to volunteer, if we could get a student that’s maybe a little bit on the rocks and give them an opportunity to come into this fold and to have a really high quality experience, that’s amazing. If you did that for them as a freshman, it’s even more amazing. There is an optimization opportunity even in this space where you guys can think about this data and this information and say, “wow, if we reach out and advertise in the right way to the right people it not only helps the university and this community because of this volunteer opportunity, but it helps those students themselves just like it’s helping all of [us],” so that’s a really good point.

VP Low: The proposal is for an $8 increase per student, right? That’s going toward the new program the new software that you guys are going to use?

Mitchell Clover: Yeah. Those dollars are currently coming out of Academic and Instructional Services. It’s a temporary budget for six years, and we’re in year three. The idea that it would
come from tuition would make these services permanent rather than temporary. Noelle’s pretty supportive of this idea. One of the things that we know is the trends in the United States: every university is trying to find ways to move dollars around to increase optimization opportunities because even though we’re spending $300,000 a year, by optimizing these things we already produced. For example, with academic advising we’ve maintained year over year and we’ve pulled back about $800,000 to $900,000 in retaining tuition revenue that was going to leave if it weren’t for these optimization activities. We’re already paying our keep, but we can’t do that off of these temporary funds. Because we’ve pulled in all this extra tuition then it actually comes back in the tuition account itself so there has to be not just in the ENG dollars, but it has to be in the tuition tables themselves and actually produce.

VP Jessop: The 42 factors you mention for matching the student together: are those factors fixed or are they continuously evolving with each new class as the student body evolves?

Mitchell Clover: Really great question. Those 42 factors are actually set nationally as a benchmark standard and that allows us to compare these numbers institution to institution. They do evolve, but we just are allowed to contribute to the idea that those would change; we don’t change them independently. Having said that, that’s only for these impact analyses. For the massive predictive model that we saw at the beginning with the colorful wheel, those change dynamically semester after semester. There’s 1,800 in there and we usually do about 126 a term, or 140, 130, but those shift and change as the university population changes. That’s an important aspect of this work and funnily enough those also get used because we use two different models: one to predict student success and one to predict student participation. So yes, there is this dynamic evolution which is an important aspect of the work that we do.

Director Olds: Who would have access to this data? I look at this and it’s pretty impressive. It’s a great PR campaign that I would be interested in. I mean, it’s pretty persuasive. Would someone such as myself and my office have access? Or could we collaborate?

Mitchell Clover: Yeah. We produce these white papers. This one’s for SILC and USUSA volunteers and leadership. It’s nine pages and it’s all of the interesting things. We like to go over this with people; we don’t like to just hand it out because there are a lot of opportunities to misinterpret and then mislead so we try to just make sure everyone’s questions get answered. We haven’t even met with Linda yet but we’re on your schedule next semester and I think Mark and someone else, so we’ll go over it with them. After that they’ll have copies that will go directly to them or you can come to us. It doesn’t matter either way. Absolutely yes. The point of making the white papers is eventually to be online and you can download a copy.

We really appreciate this time for this important conversation and it’s just the beginning of this. We wanted to come to you guys early in your tenure so that this conversation can develop over a long period of time instead of just the short time before we’re back in here.

VP Brain: If you find out more about what we can do to foster this further I think that would be really well received. Just suggestions and maybe come back?

Mitchell Clover: We’re happy to come back. We have a wheelbarrow full of stuff to be shared and this is just the first bunch. I appreciate that.

Thank you so much.

VP James Morales: President Ahmed, I appreciate the time to come and meet with the council. I wanted
just to brief you on some changes that will be happening here within the TSC as a building. These are changes that we’ve been looking at for the better part of a year and a half. It began with President asking me to create a working group that would look at optimizing the space, what is already a very tight, overly occupied building and you all know that as well as I do. We went through this process and came up with some recommendations that included such things as a wellness center concept up here on the third floor by CAPS and remodeling the space where the Math and Stats Tutoring Center currently is and actually moving our Veterans Resource Office there. There were these ideas related to the outcome of the groups and the price tag was, unfortunately, in the multimillion dollars— in fact, six-plus million dollars to make it happen. From anybody’s vantage point, putting that kind of money into a building that’s 65 years old just didn’t make sense. We scaled back and said, “what could we do for whatever life this building has how can we add some life to it?” We went back to the drawing board and these are some of the changes that we’ve ended up with. They’re fairly cosmetic in the sense that it’s not a lot of money in remodeling expenses. There are some changes programmatically that I wanted you to be aware of. I wanted you to be excited about some of these thing because I think they are exciting. These come from a meeting that President convened last week that I was part of and they’re not out there widely yet but I want the council to be aware of these. There may still be some changes as we move forward, there may be some fluidity to these changes yet so don’t completely rest your expectations on this, but again it’s my practice to inform you ahead of time rather than having you be caught off guard. I already briefed President Ahmed, before last week in fact, and so he’s aware of some of these ideas. One of the most important things has to do with bringing back the International Student Council to the building. As you know, years ago they were moved out of the building and I actually fought really hard to not let them move. They didn’t want to go. The provost at the time wanted the space up here on the TSC for the new Center for Women and Gender. That was a priority and that was accomplished but it meant displacing some offices, one of those being the International Student Council and the students said that they did not want to go. I offered them an office here in the building that I had available, but they said they didn’t want that office and they were going to stand on principle and reject that offer because they wanted to show how displeased they were in having to leave. Anyway, that’s how they ended up in the Military Science, not the most ideal place. Ever since then we’ve been talking about how to bring them back and that’s one of the changes we want to put into place. We’re going to carry that out through a series of dominos that need to fall. The very first one is moving the Math and Stats Tutoring Center out of the building. It was created years ago because the math department didn’t want to create a math tutoring office or department and I don’t know all of the history, that predates me and predates probably everybody except Linda (she’s been at the university a while) but the point is they didn’t and we felt it was a service needed for our students so we created that center. It was always recognized that that was really an academic function and it was an important function. The idea that it would move over to the math and stats department is logical and it makes sense. We are willing to give that up in the interest of students being served by that department. The idea is that it would go into the Geology building into a space newly renovated there and that’s where that stats department is located. The vacated space then would be remodeled to house the Veterans Resource Office. They are in dire need of space and where they currently are just doesn’t function well for them. Through the years I’ve had student veterans come see me and say, “can you help us out? We really need a better location.” That space is ideal for a number of reasons: one, they would take the math and stats tutoring space but also the Fireplace Room and the Fireplace Room would be serving as a more private lounge for student veterans. The rest of the space would be renovated with some offices and other areas for services for them. The reason it’s really ideal is that it has two entrances and I don’t know if any of you are veterans but what I’ve learned from them communicating with me about their needs is that some come back with PTSD, some come back with other
challenges related to their service in wartime and in combat and it’s very hard for them to be in environments where there’s only one escape route. Now, to most of us that may not seem very troubling or difficult to deal with, but for some of them it is and the idea of having multiple exits is a reassuring environment for them. The lounge space is very private, there are no windows. It’s a place where they could get away from the din of the rest of the university environment when they need that escape. That’s domino number two, if you will. After that, the space up on the third floor where they’re currently located will become a series of other offices moving in there. That will free up some space for the International Student Council to come and occupy an office there and then a number of other related moves that again are not completely solidified but once we know a little bit more about them I’ll bring those back to you. I wanted you to know about the International Student piece in particular. Now, President Ahmed and I have not yet met with their leadership.

President Ahmed: I’ve met with their leadership, just not with you and the provost.

VP James Morales: The Vice Provost, Janice Boettinger, she’s in the Office of Global Engagement where the International Student Council is currently housed. My assistant’s scheduling a meeting where we will brief her. In the times I’ve talked to her about these ideas she’s always been very supportive so I don’t see any real barrier there. I think it’s really a cause for all of us to be really excited about having that important student union back in here rubbing shoulders with all of you and being engaged in activities and planning and all those sort of areas. I hope you welcome that and welcome them when the change happens and I hope that the move and having veterans have a better space really is consistent with your goals and values in supporting that important student population. I’ll leave it at that for now, I’ll brief you again once the pieces are solidified a little bit more. Again, the reason why, and I should have started with this, as you know the Division of Student Affairs is no longer manager of the TSC: we’re tenants in the building. I’m not the only one involved in these discussions, so I want to stop there because there are other people that are involved and things in play that really are their purview and not mine. As soon as I have some more clarity on that we’ll be back to you. Any questions for me?

VP Rivera: I was wondering if there were any plans or any talk about moving the LatinX cultural center from where it’s currently housed which is in the library. I had heard that the plan was to hopefully be within the TSC so that it’s visible to students.

VP James Morales: There is discussion, that’s one of those that doesn’t fall under my responsibilities so I don’t really feel like I should comment about it but there is discussion about making that happen. Another one of those dominos. Anything else?

I appreciate your time.

President Ahmed: Thank you, Dr. Morales. I’m excited about the International Students thing. Maybe it’s because I’m part international.

Ryker Moore: We’re actually from the social work program, we’re junior students. Over this whole year we’ve been doing a project to study opioid use and substance abuse throughout Cache Valley as well as in our communities. We wanted to present to you today as student leaders because we’ve found interesting data that was directed toward students. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.

Nidia Ramirez: We’re talking about the TCI survey, which is Transforming Communities Initiative. It’s a community-based survey created by social work students every year (in collaboration with faculty) in order to assess pressing social issues, gain knowledge, and better understand to achieve change. Social work students from Utah State collected surveys regarding substance abuse and misuse in the northern
part of Utah. The purpose of this survey was to better understand the perceptions, attitudes, and experience of the public.

**Ryker Moore:** Before we go into how this affects students, here’s some general demographics for the survey. We completed over 676 surveys through canvassing neighborhoods and social media campaigns. Two out of three of our respondents were female and the average age was 21. You can see the breakdown of race and religion, and I think it’s interesting that almost every political party is pretty well represented in our survey sample size. Some of the interesting things we found overall is that for all of our recipients, you can see personal connections, which was something we studied. One of the higher ones we saw were “friends who are currently experiencing substance misuse or abuse.” This is an important one. About 38% of our respondents said that someone in their life (that was a friend) was experiencing this. That will play a factor when we look at college students. Another big one we saw was “family...” and then “currently suffering...” was low. We think that might have just been self-disclosure; a lot of people didn’t want to disclose on their own. Barriers was a big thing: we wanted to see what was stopping people and if there were issues that we weren’t realizing or aware. We had a scale of “strongly disagree” all the way to “strongly agree.” As you can see, there are quite a few barriers that are why people aren’t seeking treatment. Some of the highest ones were “concern about losing a job” or “facing possible discrimination,” as well as “judgement from the religious community,” “cost of treatment,” and then “fear of family and what they would think.” Those are some of the things we noticed from the survey and overall

**Aubri Ebollero:** I’m just going to go over some of what we felt was the most relevant data that we found. We had about 219 USU participants, which we recognize is a small sample when you look at all the students that we have but it’s a good place to start in understanding their experiences and perceptions of abuse and misuse. Here in the middle we have their direct relations to this problem. Here on the left we’ve got 18.7% of students who reported that they have a coworker that is experiencing these problems, in the middle the struggling family member was 28% (so a little over one-fourth of our participants), and then there on the right we see that 41.6% of the USU students reported having a friend currently experiencing problems with substance abuse and misuse. Here at the bottom we see that four-fifths of the students that we surveyed said that they would seek help from a friend first, so it’s really important. A lot of them are having friends with these issues, so if their friends come to them they need to know what resources are available so they can help their friends. Like Ryker was saying, these are some of the most relevant barriers that students reported to seeking treatment on their own. You can see up at the top that “negative stereotypes” is a really big one; about 50% of students said that would have a really huge impact on seeking services for themselves. Also listed here is “difficulty finding helpful information” and “feeling like it’s too late to solve their problems.” Going off of that, this is the students’ report of their likeliness to seek help for themselves. It’s really high, but we know that in reality there are barriers, there are other things that would stop them from actually seeking help. That’s where it’s important to make sure students understand the resources that are available to them.

**Josi Thorpe:** I looked a lot at what resources Utah State has right now to help students, specifically those who are struggling with substance abuse and use. One thing that I found as I was pulling information and talking to a lot of my peers in organizations that I’m involved with and my roommates and other friends on campus, was that it was easy to poll resources (“oh, we have the CAPS office and we have SAAVI. We do have resources here on campus!”) but when I try to specify what resources are there for students who are struggling with substance abuse, all of us just drew a blank. Even myself. I was like, “I’m not exactly sure right now.” What I found is over at the Health and Wellness Center we do have a lot of materials for students such as DVDs, pamphlets, and books, and all these materials are based off of substance and
alcohol use and abuse. Then there are lots of programs that are offered. There are individuals that come out to different organizations and give a presentation on alcohol and drug use and abuse. Also through the Health and Wellness Center are different classes, especially for students who are mandated or for students who have broken the student code. A really cool one that I found that I thought was interesting was the student support groups. What’s better than the Aggie family? I love when I find out that our Aggies are supporting our Aggies, so I really think that’s a cool opportunity for our students. Then, of course, we do have the USU Counseling and Psychological Service Center. This isn’t on campus but I thought it was important to throw in this slide: we do have the Bear River Substance Abuse and Counseling and they provide specific treatment programs for any individual who is suffering with any problem. I think it’s so important to come out to you guys today, especially just because you are our elected leaders and we put you guys in these positions for a reason. We trust you guys. I know, for myself, I just want to be really informed so that if any friend or roommate comes and confides in me and shares with me their experience and what they’re going through, I can direct them to specific resources that will help them with their need in that moment. We do have opportunities on campus and Alan is going to introduce some more opportunities and ideas that maybe we can start implementing next year.

Alan Buys: These are some best practices. I’ve been conducting some of this research to find some of the things that we could possibly do to improve our community response and campus response to substance abuse and misuse on campus. The main thing is that we have to have these best practices. The first is to interface with other universities. This allows us to provide homogeneity of care so that students who transfer in can have their same services offered here at Utah State. We also need to work on interfacing with community resources like Bear River Substance Abuse and other health agencies in the valley who are better equipped to provide outpatient and inpatient care. Peer supports is the one that if I could stress one the most I would stress this support. We already have the support groups and things that are available and different trainings that are available for people who break student conduct and who are mandated to go there, but a proactive approach of having peer educators who are like you and other students here and other faculty that can understand of the resources that are available and the impact of substance abuse and misuse. They can go into our classrooms, Connections, and other things like that to share the different services that are available, especially since our research found that 82% are most comfortable disclosing to their peers, to their friends, and they’re most comfortable seeking help through a friend first. The more we can engage the student body, the more helpful we can be. The last is amnesty and supportive service. Many barriers exist in coming out. We talked about the stigmatization that students feel around being somebody who has a substance abuse or misuse issue, as well as worrying about being discriminated against at their place of employment or that they were going to be here at the university and having different sanctions taken against them or expulsion or other things like that. Amnesty for them if they want to come forward, especially if they’re experiencing something that could lead to overdose, means that they can come forward and not be penalized but instead be helped so they can have a higher likelihood of succeeding.

Ryker Moore: Why does this matter? You are student leaders you all ran a campaign on how to better our community. I know Dexton, I talked to him about how he ran on wanting to improve the outlook for victims of sexual assault. That’s what we want from you. That’s why we’re giving you this flyer. It tells a little bit of the important statistics and then right here is your pledge. We’d love for you as student leaders to sit down and take some time to think over how you can implement those things. I know that we gave some best practice ideas. As with the student leaders in previous years, you guys all go on field trips to different universities to see how they do things. Wouldn’t it be awesome if one of the questions you asked them was, “what do you do for substance abuse?” We’d love our student leaders to know of
this issue. I know sometimes it’s not brought up in the light and so that’s why we wanted to present to you today. If you have any questions, we can answer those now. If not, we can leave our contact information and that way if you have questions about this research or this survey or anything like that...

VP Rivera: I’m over something called the Government Relations Council, which is to inform and engage students about civil and political issues affecting the community and campus and so forth. One of the things that I really want to do is put this information out there a little bit better, like on Twitter and things like that where students have more access to it and it’s a little bit easier. Everyone’s on social media. I was wondering if I could reach out to you and we could see ways that we could put this information out there so that students are aware that this is a problem and that maybe if this is something that they’re personally struggling with, they don’t feel so alone.

Ryker Moore: Definitely. There were 47 questions on this survey, so there’s a lot of other data. If there are certain things that would be most helpful, you could post those.

President Ahmed: Your goal in visiting us here is to have us be aware of what’s happening. What are you wanting us to do as student leaders? How can we help you?

Ryker Moore: The biggest thing is that we wanted to inform you as student leaders. I followed a lot of your campaigns and they were all focused on different issues which was great, I’m not saying those issues aren’t important, but we want you to know these issues. Each office fills a different role. For example, I know Cooper pretty well, and as Student Events VP how could you fulfill this role? That could be, when it comes to the Howl planning, “how do we look at substance abuse? Are we informing our volunteers of what to do on ODs or how to use a Narc pen?” Things like that. I’d love for you to take time for your own individual offices because obviously you’re going to touch students in different ways. You, as the president, aren’t going to fulfill that role as Cooper and Cooper’s not going to do it vice versa. If you would like, we’d love to meet with you anytime you’d want if you want to go over and bounce ideas off of each other. We wanted to leave it for you because we know you have a lot on your plate so even if it’s just pledging to be an advocate and to be aware of it, that’s great. That’s what we want. Or, if it’s, “I want to make sure changes are happening for my events and I want to make sure that my student volunteers are informed of how to identify abuse,” if you want to go further into that, that’d be great. We’d love to help you out with that planning. We wanted to leave it open so we weren’t like, “We expect $32,000 in funding towards the Health and Wellness Center.” We wanted to make it realistic, something that student leaders could do to make an impact immediately.

Alan Buys: We recognize that you’re the experts in your own lives and you’re the experts in this process. We can’t tell you how best to do these things, so we hope that your brains and your collaboration with different offices and organizations will hopefully give you the opportunity to incite change. We just wanted to hand you the information.

Ryker Moore: Thank you.

President Ahmed: Unfortunately we have $32,000 to spare, but you don’t need it so...

Josh Johnson: I just want to go over this real quick: I know you’ve had discussions already about the Clubs Director increase in stipend. A couple of the questions that have popped up and have been brought back to me were that you want to know what this individual is going to be doing and also want to know some
more structure and time expectations. This is the charter that already exists, it's already uploaded onto my folder on Box from last year. These are some of the basic responsibilities, committees, assignments, and programs that the Organizations and Clubs Director oversees. They’re on USUSA Council of Student Clubs and Organizations (CoSCO for short) and as co-chair along with now Jenny’s position with diversity. They also are part of the USUSA monthly club presidents’ meeting, they manage the clubs portal for all the 90+ clubs on the campus, they are part of the committee that approves new club requests as well as funding for clubs, and they also are in charge of club reregistration. They assist the Organizations and Diversity VP with that as well as planning and executing Aggie Fest, the spring involvement fair every spring semester. Here are the time expectations: it will be a minimum of four hours a week of office time. Given that background, let me get to the actual presentation. Here’s a breakdown of how the office itself operates: we have here Jenny Patino and then underneath her currently are four different positions. When I first got in here, there were only three: the Clubs Director, the Diversity Director, and then the Clubs and Diversity Liaison. During my time, I realized that with the two separate branches that are underneath that position, it’s impossible to cater to the international students while also taking care of diversity and clubs and etcetera. We created a new position which is the International Student Ambassador. As it stands, the Clubs Director, Diversity Director, and Clubs and Diversity Liaison each receive $300 in stipend a semester. This new position that I created, the International Student Ambassador, is pro-bono. They receive nothing. Chase Jensen is the Clubs Director, Kezetl Morales, Ashley Jimenez, and then Cole Noel. What you would be doing, essentially, by approving this $2,000 increase is giving $1,000 for the Clubs Director per semester. It wouldn’t be $1,000 on top of the $300 they’re already receiving because instead that $1,000 would go to the Clubs Director which, as we went over, has a lot of responsibilities already. The remaining amounts of money would go $300, $300, and $300 so that way the three other positions can actually have incentive and have the means and whatever else to do their jobs. Does that portion make sense?

President Ahmed: So, $300 to the three others?

Josh Johnson: Yes.

As I said, there are two main branches which is the big reason why we put this forward at this time. It’s come up a couple different times in the past that this positions, Organizations and Diversity VP, should be two separate positions: Organizations VP and Diversity VP. Just to highlight that, I think all of you have a council or a committee or a cabinet underneath you; VP Patino’s current position has two councils: the Council of Student Clubs and Organizations (CoSCO) and the Diversity Cabinet. Just off the bat, there’s already this crazy, tangled mess that starts to run from that office. On top of that, these are all of the duties. These are the committees and university assignments that Jenny alone is expected to fulfill. There’s just a lot. Here are the programs and events. On the programs side, she’s also in charge of the clubs portal and she’s in charge of the annual university-wide organization reregistration. I want to hit on that for a quick second. Because of the settlement that has occurred, we have a bunch of new things. Some of them, for example, are Ms. Paige Eidenschink, FLS advisor (she’s amazing). We have a lot of new, very stringent rules for fraternities and sororities across campus which is also very productive for our future. We also have the reregistration. The reregistration goes to ADC clubs, USUSA clubs, departmental clubs, campus rec, and FSL. It’s a lot. That all ties back into this office in one way or another which is why this position is so important. As we said, the problem is that it needs to be two separate positions. We haven’t done it yet and we’ll get into why in just a second but what we’re hoping to do with this is have it grow the other side of the Organizations and Diversity VP so that it can break off in the near future, within the next year. The what’s required for the solution is the approved stipend increase needs to occur, that $2,000; the continual growth of both sides of that position also needs to occur; finding space and money;
and then passing legislation and putting it to a student vote. Where it comes to you all is the first and the fourth points. It wouldn’t be impossible to do without, it would just make it much more difficult than it already is to split these two positions in half. To the transparency and why we haven’t done this already: Linda spoke to this yesterday (please Linda, at any moment hop in) but quite a few years ago these two positions were separate. They were combined to one because it was viewed at the time, and I believe rightfully so, that there wasn’t enough work for either side. However, now, because of what I did this last year in growing both sides of it and the emphasis that President Cockett has put on increasing and fostering diversity at our university and also the settlement, it’s gotten too big to handle for one office alone which is why the splitting in half is important. Is there anything else you’d like to add on that Linda? In that case, I know I’ve been blasting through, I don’t want to take any more of your time.

Director Olds: This isn’t necessarily about just giving more money to a position, this is about laying the groundwork to split this office in two in the future?

Josh Johnson: Exactly. In fact, that’s the primary goal and reason behind this.

President Ahmed: You’ve told us why it’s good for this to happen. Do you anticipate any potential cons that we can evaluate?

Josh Johnson: Absolutely. One immediate one that we’ve been trying to figure out is your quorum here within Executive Council. Within Executive Council, you currently have a set quorum which is that should there be the event of a tiebreaker, the president would in fact have a tiebreaking vote. The president isn’t allowed to vote unless it’s a tiebreaker. If you added or if you split these two positions in half then you would no longer have a quorum which means that the president would no longer have a tiebreaking vote. That was something, even before the election, that Linda and I were sitting down and talking about, and I was very against it. That is something that solutions are being explored for, however that’s in your court to deal with as you see fit. The other two are space and money. We’ve already been exploring space options, and for money options I have a couple aces in my pocket, however, we’ve also been exploring that as well. As we said, this the beginning step. If this is approved within the budget now then next year it would be even fewer minutes needed in order to fund a separate position.

I encourage you all to approve it. Thank you.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Ahmed: This Friday we’re doing breakfast with the President. It’s going to be at 7:25 at the President’s house. I don’t have the address on me so if you need it, get together with Linda or Sophie.

Linda Zimmerman: I believe Sophie’s already sent you the map.

President Ahmed: 7:25 is critical. We’re going to wear our polos. The outgoing or the former council is going to be all dressed up, but we’re just going to do polos for us. The next one is that we’re having our End of the Year Bash where X Ambassadors are coming. We need as many people as possible to help clean up after, so for those of you that can help and be there, we could use it. It’s a good way to volunteer.

VP Lake: Is Event Services going to be there too?

Linda Zimmerman: They are there until the concert’s over and then it’s our responsibility to clean up.
VP Low: I know that Event Services is enlisting organizations to help clean up the stands and then Student Events is handling a lot of the stage and floor.

VP Brain: Does that mean we will be sweeping the stadium?

Linda Zimmerman: Event Services are the ushers during the actual concert and then we contract for a group to clean. We’ve already got one, I believe a fraternity is going to do that for us like the sweeping and the cleaning. This is literally tearing the stage down and hauling everything out into the big truck after. It’s taking everything you see on the stage down and hauling it. The more, the merrier and the quicker it goes. Wear close-toe shoes.

VP Jessop: What time is the president’s breakfast expected to finish on Friday?

President Ahmed: 8:30

Any other questions? Alright.

ACADEMIC SENATE REPORT

VP Lake: The Academic Senate members are choosing their councils; they’re all in various stages of that. There are two senators that sit on the tuition review committee: one is the Senate Pro Tempore and then one is another appointed senator. That appointed senator is Senator Dent who is the business college senator. We made charter changes to the Senate Pro Tempore charter, trimmed it down and made it less fatty. Their committee assignments are primarily to sit on the Tuition Review Committee and any ad hoc committees as well as sitting as a member of the Sophomore Scholarship Committee which is an as-needed committee. Lastly, the Senate Pro Tempore election took place yesterday (it’s part of my charter that it has to take place in the first Academic Senate meeting) and our new Senate Pro Tempore is Senator Brost from the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences. That is my report and I yield.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Ahmed: I will now swear in Director Olds.

[Swearing in of Director Olds]

Our next item is just to approve that budget that we all discussed last week in our training. Just a reminder, we’re going to table that $5,400 till August for all of us to think about it and see what the best way to use that money is. We’re just basically having that as a floating amount in there for later. We’re voting on everything else.

VP Brain: Since this is our first meeting, I just want to get a feel for what the deal is. For example, I have the Center for Community Engagement final banquet that is at five. We know it starts at four, but should we just block out the next two hours?

President Ahmed: Yeah, just plan to block the two hours because in this situation where we had public forum with four people we usually say about ten minutes, but I wouldn’t have any events that are right at five and five thirty.

VP Brain: But it would be reasonable to say six?

President Ahmed: Yes, six would be good. I would leave the five o’clock hour for Executive Council. VP Rivera?
VP Rivera: Is there a time limit for people going up for public forum?

President Ahmed: I gave everyone 10 minutes except Mitch because he didn’t get a chance to present last night, he came and didn’t present at all and went home so we gave him about 15 minutes and I think he kind of stayed around that. The others were about 10 minutes. Dr. Morales stuck to that, others tried, so we’ll usually say about 10 minutes if they prearrange it with Assistant Kremnev. If they prearrange it with her, we’ll give them about that much time. If they just show up, we can put a hard limit on them, like two minutes or a minute if they just show up to speak because they didn’t let us know.

Any other questions?

Linda Zimmerman: If you recall, we are taking $5,000 out of the student activity fee and out of the $20,000 of the Academic Opportunity Fund into the Academic Opportunity Fund for grad students, increasing that budget by another $5,000 so in the end it would be $15,000 for undergraduates plus an initial $10,000 (which is ENG money) as well as the overall budget for the grad students to be able to come and request Academic Opportunity Fund. The other one that failed is the $2,000, which we will revisit in August. Service was approved for $2,600, $2,100 of that is going towards the Campus Kitchen and the other $500 towards the Aggiethon. The total budget approval is $1,194,412.42, leaving $5,400 as a float to discuss in August.

Approval of budget: VP Rivera: Moved / VP Brain: Second / Voting body: Passed

Linda Zimmerman: Brooke went through everybody’s changes per all the legislation that was written last year or this past year and Upstander training needs to be added to both the Athletics VP charter and the Diversity VP charter. It was never changed in there. She would like to propose this language be put in both of their charters to make it equal to everybody else’s charters per legislation that was passed.

Assistant Kremnev: Point of information: the language itself has already been approved, it’s just the matter of putting it into the charters. We don’t have to play with commas and semicolons like we did in our practice round.

President Ahmed: Are we voting to approve this?

Approval of addition to charter: VP Lake: Moved / VP Brain: Second / Voting body: Passed

COUNCIL UPDATES

VP Jessop: Are the council updates an opportunity for all of us to update what our position is doing?

President Ahmed: Yes.

VP Lake: How council updates typically work is literally that, to counsel one with another about any issues that may be existing in our individual offices and also to just give updates about any student events that could be happening that could impact us all. Particularly in the case of Academic Senate, we clarify that unless it affects everybody, restrain from just prolonging your talk about student events. Whatever you feel is pertinent to the group is what you bring up during council updates. We typically just go around the circle. When you’re finished, it’s appropriate in terms of parliamentary procedure to say "I yield."

President Ahmed: Thank you, VP Lake.

VP Jessop: Something that I wanted to update everyone on is that Miss USU is happening tonight and it
would be awesome if you guys could all attend. I feel that this is pertinent to everybody because we want these positions to be much more involved with each college or with each organization they’re representing for following years. We hope to, for example, include the senators in choosing who their Miss is and include involvement more, include diversity more, include Greek life more because we want to see this position be a lot more than just a title and a spot in the parade. We want these girls to have initiatives to enact and we hope to be able to work with you guys in seeing those through. If you guys could come tonight it would be a really great opportunity to see how this works.

Director Olds: Point of clarification: this comes out of your office correct?

VP Jessop: Student alumni.

I yield.

VP Brain: No report, I yield.

VP Rivera: This is something that could be of interest: I was actually contacted by a couple of student athletes and a lot of them are international students and they wanted to see ways that they could get involved on campus more because they have busy schedules so they can’t make the time commitment to apply for a committee or something. That’s something that I was hoping to talk to Sami about in the future to see if maybe we could put something together, maybe we can get to know some of them and maybe see issues that affect student athletes that we might not be aware of. It’s a good opportunity to bridge the gap a little bit more. I yield.

VP Low: I know this isn’t directly what you’re talking about, but Braden reached out to me and during Weeks of Welcome we’re going to have a meet and greet with all of the athletes as a lunchtime activity for students to meet them. But seeing more on their end with the issues that they’re facing in regard to USU is something great.

VP Patino: No report. I yield.

VP Low: I’m going to be sending out an email with regards to Weeks of Welcome so if you have any ideas or things you want to implement as part of Weeks of Welcome. There are a lot of things that are already on the calendar from your office and as well as VP Brain’s office. I’m going to be sending that out because I’m in the works of planning Weeks of Welcome and so I’d love to see every position well-represented.

VP Lake: Point of clarification: are you going to send that to senators as well?

VP Low: Yes.

Director Olds: I yield.

Senator Fry: I selected my Graduate Director and have a council meeting set for next week. I yield.

ADVISOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Linda Zimmerman: Please wear your nametags to the president’s house. We’ll make some just in case, but it just looks more professional. The president’s going to want to know your names. I yield.

ADJOURNMENT

VP Lake: Moved / VP Jessop: Second / Voting body: Passed
IN ATTENDANCE: Linda Zimmerman, President Sami Ahmed, VP Dexton Lake, VP Tarren Jessop, VP Paulina Rivera-Soto, VP Cooper Low, VP Jenny Patino, VP Emma Brain, Senator Jared Fry, Director Cameron Olds, Director Sarah Rasmussen, Director Cy Robinson, Director Nicole Chiaramonte, Assistant Anna Kremnev