EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 12, 2021 | 4:00 PM | USUSA Senate Chamber

- **CALL TO ORDER**
  - Approval of minutes: Senator Chowdhury-Magana: **Moved** / VP Casdorph: **Second** / Voting body: **Passed**
  - Officer accountability

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- **PUBLIC FORUM**
  - Tanner Marcum: I am the academic student representative on the Utah Board of Education. The Board’s mission is to equitably provide accessible, valuable, and affordable higher education for students to expand their economic mobility, enhance cultural awareness, and improve their quality of life. One goal in improving access is to increase the college-going rate of high school grads by 3% in 5 years, and increase the college-going rate of underrepresented groups by 4% in 5 years.
    - Senator Chowdhury-Magana: Are you able to tell us any more about the specific strategies for these goals?
    - Tanner Marcum: I would say follow up with me in six months, when we have our specific tactics finalized. For example, we are looking right now at a fee waiver for Utah college applications. Another is to diversify the languages offered in applications, most of which are available just in English. Another idea is to change applications so that Male and Female are not the only identities offered. Thank you for the question. Another of our
initiatives focuses on affordability, with a more specific goal to increase student ability to pay cost of attendance with strategies to increase FAFSA completion and evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid.

- **President Stevens:** One thing the Board could consider, and I’m not exactly sure who would actually make this decision, follows a conversation that President Cockett and my predecessors have had, to cover the cost of university employee increase in salary. President Cockett explained in a Truth in Tuition event explained that one reason that tuition is going up is tied to tenure and other things in employee salaries.

- **Tanner Marcum:** Good point, and I don’t have a specific answer but I am aware of the trend across the country that the largest part of student tuition goes to employee salary. I believe that the legislature would have the final say on that.

- **Thomas Smith:** Is OER (Open Educational Resources) being discussed at that level as well?

  - **Tanner Marcum:** Not that I’m aware of, although that is a great question. I’d like to talk now about one more initiative, which is to focus on completion. In Utah, the average college graduation rate is that 40% of students finish their degree in eight years.

  - **President Stevens:** I’d just like to add that those stats can be alarming when taken out of context, and there is a lot more that goes into this. For example, Utah’s trend to work through college and not borrow money, or other trends to get married or go on religious missions. So, there are other reasons here to be considered.

  - **Tanner Marcum:** The Board’s strategies to address this include a goal to structure awards to facilitate completion and transfer, as well as another goal to ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety.

    - **VP Harmon:** I’m wondering if you have any information about Equity and Inclusion in the Board’s plans at a statewide level?

    - **Tanner Marcum:** There is a slide about that coming up. It is absolutely imperative that our plan benefits all students.

    - **VP Casdorph:** Can you speak to whether there are any difference in graduation across gender, racial, or other categories?

  **Tanner Marcum:** I’m most familiar with the differences between white and non-white students; the completion rates are higher in white students than in non-white students. There is more information about this on the website, which I will have sent out to you. There has also been an equity lens framework adopted July 2020 that is useful for keeping us accountable in the work we do, especially so that our outcomes are what is best for students. We are working to make sure that equity is not just a buzzword for us, but something that results in actions.

    - **VP Harmon:** Is this DEI framework required or recommended to universities by the Board?

    - **Tanner Marcum:** It’s housed at the U of U and we are starting at a kind of upper level at the moment, I don’t know if it will be spread to all universities for their
faculty and staff.

- **Senator Chowdhury-Magana:** What are some reasons that Utah has a lower rate of completion than other states?
- **Tanner Marcum:** Great question, and I don’t know if Utah is much worse than other states in the country, I haven’t looked at this state by state. The U of U actually just increased their retention rates, they are maybe about 70% and USU is about 60%, so there are some other universities that may be on the lower end and bringing down that average.

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT

- **President Stevens:** Yesterday in Academic Senate there were a few questions about elections. To answer those questions, Elections will be done in two separate weeks. The first week is February 14-17 and that is for the Executive Leadership Board, which is the President, Student Advocate VP, and the Executive VP. Then there is a week break and then there will be elections for Academic Senate and campus specific positions, and that is February 28 – March 3. The declaration for both will end January 31st. A student can declare for an ELB position and an Academic Senate or campus specific position before July 31st so that there is a fallback option. Academic Senate positions are voted on by the entire state, so statewide students can run for those positions and vote for those positions. Students can look at the Constitution to answer more questions. Let the minutes show a link to the Constitution.

- Also, yesterday was Mental Health Day, and if you’d like t-shirts there are some left over in the office. Last week, USU Eastern voted overwhelmingly to join USUSA, which is an exciting step forward and we look forward to inviting them into USUSA. Our statewide meeting yesterday was a success and it was great to meet and talk with all of our statewide officers. This is something we’d like to repeat in January as well. I’m also excited to talk about the new Aggie Blue Mint cookie at Crumbl, which was first debuted at the Aggie Blue Conference in August. Next weekend, we are having a meeting with a group of statewide officers where we will finalize a template for bylaws, elections, and position descriptions, so we will have more updates after those meetings. With the UNLV trip coming up on Thursday, we are excited and hope that you all got tested today. If you didn’t get tested, then you won’t be allowed to go, and I will let Linda discuss that more in advisor announcements. I’d also like to have a discussion about honorary degrees and commencement speakers. We have about five or six names now, and we’d like to see a lot more come in.

- **Senator Chowdhury-Magana:** Are honorary degrees for people who started but didn’t graduate from USU?
- **President Stevens:** It is more of a show of respect. A lot of celebrities are chosen, for example. I’m hoping to brainstorm some names that we could suggest.
- **VP Harmon:** Tan France, he has a Utah connection. He is on the TV show Queer Eye and is an advocate for diversity. Also, Quinn Snyder, that could be cool.
- **President Stevens:** I was thinking that Bobby Wagner could be cool, or maybe
Rudy Gobert. We also have a few Olympians from Utah, or Dwyane Wade. We extended the deadline, so we have this whole month to make nominations. The application asks for a resume and letter of recommendation, which could be just a suggestion from another student. Could each of us take a name and submit it?

- VP Harmon: Are you looking for well-known people? Like a household name?
- President Stevens: Sure.
- Senator Chowdhury-Magana: Another name is Paisley Rekdal, who is Utah’s poet laureate. I can submit that suggestion.
- President Stevens: VP Needleman, can you do Dwayne Wade? VP Sampson can help as well.

- **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
  - There was no unfinished business

- **NEW BUSINESS**
  - Assistant Alder: We didn’t have any edits or changes last week, and we have talked with advisors about any other possible issues with the resolution to change the Administrative Assistant title to Chief of Staff, so we’ll proceed to a second reading. [Second Reading of ECR 2022-01]. Any comments or suggestions? If there are no recommendations, we will move to pass this as a second reading.
  - Motion to pass as a second reading: VP Casdorph: Moved / VP Needleman: Second / Voting body: Passed

- **COUNCIL UPDATES**
  - VP Harmon: We had our clubs meeting last week, which went well, and we educated club presidents on marketing. We have been granting club funding requests for the upcoming year. We are also working to welcome back clubs that slowed down over the pandemic. I am working with three Senators to work on a DEI bill; we met with some faculty and are now changing direction to something that will be more effective.
  - VP Needleman: Aggie Hallows is our next upcoming event. Tickets to the Howl, Mr. USU, and the throwback dance are now available at the Card Office. We are starting sign-ups for the Howl; I will have Colton send out the sign-up sheets for volunteers, please send those to your committees.
  - VP Sampson: We had a bye week last week for football so we went out and supported Women's soccer this weekend. For this week we have our biggest volleyball game in the Spectrum the 14th at 7pm, vs UNLV. We are finding ways to get as many students there as possible. During this down time, I have also been meeting with coaches from various sports to see how the HURD can effectively help them. I have been able to create some ideas with Men and Women's basketball for the upcoming season, including special events to get students to attend Women's basketball. We are also in the works of planning powderpuff; Registration opened Monday and will be going until 10/17. Powderpuff will be held on 10/20 and will be from 3-6p on Legacy Fields and then 8-9p in Maverik Stadium for the championship game.
  - VP Casdorph: Facilities Enhancement committee will be meeting at 5 pm on Monday October 25th. Tuition committee does not meet until February. Administrative fee
committees with students-at-large, those students are available to work with you. I was also planning on doing legislation about Title IX training, but we will just include those in our charters when we are changing them.

- Senator Chowdhury-Magara: Right now, I am working on a committee to improve mental health and climate on campus and two projects in that are cultural competency training and getting transportation on a regular basis to Salt Lake City to help students who are isolated. We are also planning an event in the Skyroom on Thursday.

- ADVISOR ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - Linda Zimmerman: We will be emailing out an itinerary for the UNLV trip tonight.

- ADJOURNMENT
  - VP Casdorph: Moved / Senator Harmon: Second / Voting body: Passed

IN ATTENDANCE: President Lucas Stevens, VP Porter Casdorph, VP Emilee Harmon, Senator Niyonta Chowdhury-Magara, VP Alexis Needleman, Assistant Madeleine Alder, Linda Zimmerman, Thomas Smith, Tanner Marcum.