

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES GENERAL STUDIES STUDENT COUNCIL

Present: All members are present. A quorum is established.

Updates (via e-mail)

Arash Yomtobian (President) – no updates

Josh Joseph (Vice President External) –

Richie Space (Vice President Internal) –

Pavan Surapaneni (Treasurer) –.

Matan Ariel (Senate) – 1) Jostens presented proposed diplomas. The task-force asked them for several improvements and will meet with them again in the near future.

2) The Senate Housing Committee is supposed to vote on my proposal regarding GS housing on Tuesday, Feb 24. I hope to have final news during the meeting.

3) I am still waiting for your “GSSC Guide” submissions. Tinishia is the only member that sent me a description of her position and tips for other GSSC members. Way to go Tinishia!

Marguerite Daniels (Social Chair) – 1) GS Formal Update - The formal tickets sales were amazing. We sold 126 tickets in four days! We are building a website in conjunction with the alumni affairs office so that tickets can be sold online. We hope to have that up and running soon.

2) The Billiards and Games event (co-sponsored by Abbey and Rob) is THIS Thursday at 9 PM in the Lerner game room (after Claudia's Literary Night). Drinks, food, and tokens are free, and students can compete to win gift certificates in a pool, poker and monopoly tournaments.

Abigail (E.) Becker (Academic Affairs Representative) – no updates.

Claudia Barrera (Alumni Affairs & Career Center Representative) -

Ariel (K.) Beery (Committee on Instruction Representative) – No update.

Scott Olster (Student Services Representative) –

Chris Danzig (Senior Class President) –

Rob Ward (Junior Class President) –

Stephen Davis (Sophomore Class President) –

Abbey Dubin (First-Year Class President) –

Tinishia Bass (CCSC Liaison) – The CCSC is contemplating on how they will handle the recent events on students of color. Since the CCC and the FED are directly funded by the CCSC and Columbia University, there should be

some type of policy in place as to what should and should not be published- They are deeply saddened by these recent events and are moving towards proactive steps towards a solution for all students. I have enclosed part of an attachment of the actual minutes pertaining to this issue.

Won Lee (ESC Liaison) -

Justin White (SGA Liaison) –

Jimmy Cesar Chiu (SGB Liaison) – 1) Columbia University’s Muslim Students Association are planning to have their last week of "Islam Awareness Month." Tuesday, Feb 24th will be Women's Rights in Islam with guest speakers Sister Debbie Almontaser and Sister Sarah Sayeed in room 106 Jerome Green Hall at 7pm; Islamization of Thought with guest speaker Dr. Robert Dickson Crane, room 107 Jerome Green Hall at 7pm; and finally, Coffeehouse

Night, Open Mic Night, Thursday Feb. 26 at 9pm in Postcrypt Art Gallery.

2) Hillel Bone Marrow Drive presented a proposal for co-sponsorship. It is my understanding that this group will contact us or present their proposal this week.

Constitution:

Arash- With regards to the Constitution, I wanted to know if you guys want to work on it during tonight’s meeting, or set up a committee that would be open.

Steven-I do not want to repeat what happened last meeting.

Josh-I have to say, we are pretty late in the year continue debating the Constitution, all of our meeting were open to the GSSC.

Richie: I was under the impression that only nominal changes were being made, I have reservations about the changes along with several other council members that have expressed this to me.

Steven-I think we should make specific changes, I think we need to review it once and then debate it.

Pavan-I feel taking it to committee’s would save the Council time, and allow us to work out differences on the side.

Richie: I agree.

Pavan-Lets vote now. 6 for committee. 5 against, 1 abstention. Motion fails.

Scott-Has the Constitution been passed?

Arash-No.

Matan-If we are going to continue to debate this I would like some timeline to make sure it is approved. Would the changes take effect this year?

Arash-Most of it would not apply for next year.

Scott-Were we to reform the committee, it might just be beneficial to look at this completely, what does it require 2/3's vote? It might be good to just look at it, here is what we have in front of us, and lets go from there.

Rob-People on the committee seem upset; we don't have to work on it.

Justin-I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel, now that different ideas are brought to the Council; we have the ones from last week. But, I think that we can probably sit down with you or whomever and see what the other side says and work out compromises. I do not like twisting people's arms, we should let people digest ideas and let them reconsider.

Josh-Basically the committee came up with proposed changes and all were under review by the entire council. Correct me if I am wrong, we did not bring this to a vote, but were going point by point and also accepting changes and debates, rather saying besides just yes and no. I think we spent a fair amount of time, having the entire council comment. What you are doing is shrinking the size in the group, whoever and that committee when they come up is still going.

Ariel- I give all respect to you and the work that the committee has put in. It is hard to try to conceive of a vision, I disagree with the results. I have a different vision, to make it more agreeable. I feel there was not that communication, I wish I would know when I said that I was not able to come. It has always been important to me. When it comes to physical changes there a couple that are not important to me. If this is a constitution, and it needs to be ratified by 2/3's right now it works, if it takes a process when you can read it over and think about it and it is fine to wait. Any democratic process is about compromise; lets open it up to a separate committee. Create a conversation about the ideas of a Student Council for GS what it means to be a body and how it is lead. I hope conversation will be good and we can input our own ideas.

Pavan-Pass

Rob-To vote would not prohibit ideas.

Justin-Only thing I want to say is it has worked this way, where initial committee worked through things, from there we took proposals, and people met with committees, this is not without precedent.

Chris-The process is inevitably another committee is going to meet, if that first process it seems to me in terms of being efficient, outside of these meetings, more efficient here.

Matan-If there are groups within a council who want to suggest alternative language, let's do this, I will print and email copies and give groups the time and language it takes to be appropriate to finish it once and for all. If people are not happy with what we have, please lets do that.

Arash-If other people want to meet outside, and then next week we can all work on it again that is fine with me, lets set up a time and place.

Decided: Committee meeting to be held Sunday, February 29, 2004.

Agenda Item-Columbia Statement-Ariel

Ariel-Any money given by a foreign national or direct national bank to an educational institution in America needs to be declared. \$250,000 was given to Columbia to fund the Edward Said chair. This money was not declared, until threats were made and local sources revealed what went on. The donor remains he remains unidentified, the only ones with money are the royal family, this prince gave 250,000 to influence money, I am asking the council to tell President Bollinger that we are disappointed that state federal laws broken, a stake in moral standard and reputation, we are disappointed, we the reps of the students of the GS.

Matan-I have two issues 1. The fact that the university broke a law, the second is the identity, and I would like to separate the two issues. I agree with the 2nd paragraph, 3rd and 4th imply that you know who gave the money. I do

not want to make connections that it was a Prince, a political statement rather than following the law statement. 2. If it is illegal issue, then why are we writing to Bollinger and not the legal council?

Ariel-Without any correction to interest, if anybody wants to give money to fund bio-medical research, this is similar to a situation that occurred in Harvard, a center was funded and built by a man who has another center in Oman which is the largest propagators of holocaust denial. Harvard accepting money shows influence on the institution.

Marguerite-I agree with what Matan said, I find the tone of this draft very assumptive and kind of I don't think we can support it as it is. We do not know the direction it would have to go, want it completely re-crafted, on a writing point; we do not actually know that it is what they are teaching us.

Won-A comment regarding structure of letter, the last part seems to be a public statement.

Josh-A reasonably good idea for a letter, however as Matan pointed out the position you take draws on legal aspects, and I am not comfortable with that. The 2nd and 3rd paragraphs can go out of the window. I could not approve the letter in its present form; there is too much conjecture.

Scott-Taking into account what Josh said with regards to the content of the letter, I am really questioning the reason why GSSC needs to be the impetus for this letter. This seems to primarily be a public issue and not really our platform.

Richie-I think that as student council's role is to question surreptitious and illegal activities by the administration.

Chris-Everything I was going to say has been well said.

Justin-I agree with everything that has been said so far regarding issues with the letter. In the article it states that in 2003 alone, 23 donations were made to Columbia in excess of \$250,000. Highlighting one country could be seen as racist. I do not think any of us are too knowledgeable on the specific legal issues, if inaccuracies are present it would put the GSSC in a bad light. We could take out specific country names, and just address the letter to make a statement on irregularities in general.

Steven- I would be more comfortable if the GSSC name and logo were not on the letter, or if "DRAFT" were placed clearly on the letter. If a letter like this were to reach the public it could cause problems given that we have not approved it.

Won-I wanted to add that personally I feel that new ideas should be introduced, produced and welcomed. I wouldn't want people to confuse new ideas and immediately label them as terrorist activity.

Abby-Letter seems accusatory; I do not believe that we should take this strong of a stance. Shouldn't an issue like this go to President Bollinger or the PR office?

Matan-Have you received a statement from the PR office with regards to a legal response? I would like to see what they say?

Ariel-I asked and did not receive a response, I will ask again. I will also redraft the letter and bring it to the next meeting.

Agenda Item-Tuition Proposal-Matan

Matan-Tuition in GS is structured differently than the other colleges on campus. GS students pay per credit. Looking at the bottom of the proposal you see there is a difference between what a GS student pays, versus a

SEAS or CC student. The tuition per point increases for GS students until you reach 17 credits I heard a rumor that it used to be 16 credits and I am looking into that. I submit this proposal for any comments that you might have.

Arash-If you guys agree on the letter, there is no need to debate.

Josh-Minor language, I will just hand them to Matan at another time.

Rob-A quick point, for someone taking no more than 15 credits a semester, if you took 15 credits for four years; you are still 4 credits short. They are advertising a certain number of credits that would not allow a student to graduate in 4 years.

Justin-I would definitely approve this right now; people can work out the language on the side.

Chris moves to pass-

Josh-Seconds-

14 vote for

0 votes against

2 abstentions

Agenda Item-110th Varsity Show - Pavan

Pavan-They are increasing 110th varsity show, so it is going to be bigger this year.

Steven-Last year did we chose to fund?

Pavan: Yes.

Chris-Where are we at with money?

Pavan- \$9100.00

Chris- So they are asking for about 1/10th of budget of our current budget.

Justin-How many GS students are participating?

Pavan- The cast and support are open to all students.

Justin-I want to know if GS students are involved, if no GS students are included, if no, I do not think we should fund.

Richie: I believe we should allocate \$100 for goodwill. They skirted question, if they had GS students they would have placed that on the funding request form.

ESC Liaison-I don't recall any GS students who auditioned. I was there for review process, and they didn't single out positions based on what schools individuals went to.

Ariel-I think that whether or not GS students are in the production, if there is no GS students involved in the creation of the show I would not want to pay for the show. If no GS students want to participate, they why give money to it. Other schools are capable of running and funding show. We pay into ABC. Don't we?

Pavan- If we are going to give them a token amount, we should take one stand or not. GS participation is chronically low and that is a sad fact. We use money to facilitate participation, yeah if we don't give money we can still buy, buying made possible by funding.

Josh-Basically as a GS student involved in theater here is the thing, the theater community at CU screwed up, nepotistic, and varsity show is probably the worst offender, most exclusive and self-perpetuating. That having been said, the Varsity show is a major campus event.

Matan-They also advertised at beginning of year. So every student including ours could have participated.

Tinishia-Where do proceeds go, back to them?

Pavan-They try to break even.

Josh-I propose that we give \$375, within our means

Josh proposes \$375

Justin 2nds

4 in favor

8 opposed

4 abstentions

motion fails

Chris motions to give \$110.00

Steven seconds

9 opposed

motion fails

Arash-No money

2nd -Tinishia

4 in favor

9 opposed

motion fails

Marguerite proposes \$250 with a rider letter attached stipulating that we want to see more GS involvement

Justin seconds

8 in favor

4 opposed

4 abstain

motion passes

Agenda Item – Students Against Silence – Presented via Budget Request

Pavan-I believe we should give them \$100.00. Most of their funding is going to fund the speakers.

Abby-What do they do?

Arash- They are a group that is committed to helping with regards to suicides.

Pavan-Just bear in mind that we will have many groups approaching us in the next few weeks about co-sponsorships.

Ariel-Thank you for reminding me. I think an amount from 100-150 would be appropriate.

Justin moves to allocate \$150.00

Ariel seconds

10 in favor

1 opposed

4 abstentions

motion passes

Agenda Item – Hillel Bone Marrow Drive

Arash-The presenter left early, basically this is a drive to find suitable bone marrow donors.

Pavan-I am curious as to why Hillel is not putting up more funding for this event.

Josh-I do not believe that this is a specific Hillel event; rather they are offering to host it. There is a current PHD student who needs this procedure.

Arash It would probably be better to have the presenter back to answer more specific questions. Postponed until next meeting.

Meeting is adjourned.