Student Senate General Meeting  
February 10, 2009

I. Call to Order and Roll  
a. 35 present, 40 voting

II. Anne Fiero, Development Coordinator Presentation  
a. Presentation of the Irell and Menlla Prize, awarded to a first year law student demonstrating outstanding leadership, academic excellence, and good citizenship in the community.  
b. Senators are encouraged to recruit people to apply for the position.  
c. Deadline: April 1, applications handed out.  
   i. Basic application, autobiographical essay, statement of purpose, two letters of recommendation

III. Ed Moroni, Associate Dean for Administration and Finance  
a. Administrator at the law school since 1987  
b. Fourteen departments report to him, everything except admissions and development  
   i. Including student services, financial aid, registrar, social justice initiative, career services, international programs, graduate legal studies

c. FY2009 Revenues, Current Estimate  
   i. $105 million dollars  
      1. Tuition and fees, 63% of income  
      2. Endowment Income, 25%  
         a. Invested along with the university endowment  
         b. Last year, the law school endowment was $500 million. It’s less now.  
   3. Gifts, 12%  
      a. Annual fund, foundation gifts, meant to be spent in the year.  
   4. Other, 1%  
      a. Mostly from law firms who take advantages of CLS library reference services

d. FY2009 Expenses, Current Estimate  
   i. Instruction, 33%  
      1. Budget is personnel driven  
   ii. Facilities and Overhead, 21%  
      1. University expense, money paid by the law school to the university for services including utilities to general counsel  
      2. Also includes direct law school expenses like debt services.  
      3. Some direct costs for renovations  
   iii. Financial Aid, 14%  
      1. Includes, LRAP, summer funding, grants  
   iv. Student Services, 8%  
      1. Departments including admissions and students services, financial aid, registration, graduate legal studies, career services, SJI  
   v. Library & IT, 10%  
      1. Staff, hardware, software  
   vi. Programs & Centers, 4%  
      1. Human Rights Institute, Centers  
   vii. Administration & Support  
      1. Development, alumni support, dean’s office, business office, HR  

e. Our $44,000 buys $70,000 worth of services. Two areas endowment income and gifts subsidize income, but those two areas are going down. Endowment will be down 8%, gifts will also be down.  
   i. Fiscal year ends June 30 for tallying amount of gifts to the law school.  
   f. Currently identifying areas for savings  
      i. Core areas will main untouched – instruction and financial aid (including LRAP and Guaranteed Summer Funding). Areas that directly effect students.  
      ii. Looking at what spending serves a strong purpose and what doesn’t.  
      iii. Potential area for cutbacks:  
         1. Personnel. Not letting people go, but there are opportunities for reorganization of personnel, looking at attrition.  
g. Questions

i. Role of centers: spending on personnel for the centers tend to be faculty, or faculty support people who are included in the instruction cost. Generally it’s not too expensive.

ii. Library & IT costs: does it go towards expanding or maintaining the collection?
   1. It covers salaries, there are 50 librarians. IT staff is 19 people. Collection is $3M a year, which is an area being looked at (paper, electronic subscriptions)

iii. Facilities improvements like the library expansion, will they get pushed back?
   1. In the last several years a lot of improvements have been made to the law school. Small renovations won’t be reconsidered but maintenance was happening at a high level (JG Annex, 9th Floor addition)
   2. New large scale projects won’t be taken on.
   3. Library expansion has funding that wouldn’t be available for anything else, so it’s likely to continue.

iv. Question about student costs, particularly housing rent.
   1. The economic environment calls for more rise. The central university is 28% funded by endowment income (whereas the law school is only 25%).
      a. Our peer schools, Harvard and Yale, are funded 50% by endowment income.
   2. Tuition goes up about 5% every year, and has been the case in the past.
   3. Consider the cutoff between raises and cuts.
      a. Student opinion that, beyond finding efficiencies, a student’s opinion will depend on what the cuts are. What kind of cuts are students likely to feel? (i.e. administrative support)
         i. The administration is still working on it.

v. Dean Moroni asks if there are areas where the law school could cut spending.
   1. The 50 librarians.
   2. The hard copies of books aren’t really used that much.
      a. Raises question about how an institution of higher learning that is not for profit should cut spending differently from a for-profit company. The number of books you have is a benchmark of prestige and academic strength for a university. Therefore we have to consider technology and how the institution views itself.
      b. Part of the law school’s vision is to maintain a lot of information. Linking to a URL is less permanent.
      c. There are cost-efficient ways to store books off site.
      d. There are two schools at opposite ends of the spectrum. Stanford maintains very few books whereas Yale continues to invest in its collection.

vi. Rent. Rents in Manhattan are down 10% and while CLS housing is subsidized, it seems unfair to have a rent increase while rents elsewhere in Manhattan are falling. This could be bad for student life because community is built in student housing that is subsidized. Students would start to move off campus.
   1. Are there plans to decrease rents or keep them where there are?
      a. Lenfest was built on debt so there are debt service costs and rent increases have to cover this.
      b. The law school will try to work with the University.
      c. University enrollment is expected to go up in the coming years, which will strain housing.

vii. The total budget of the law school endowment lost since September? 15% decline in the total value.
   1. Law school budget will be reduced about 5% for next year.
      a. Won’t come out of instruction or financial aid, but how can 5% come from personnel attrition? Where will the 5% cuts come from?
         i. Truth is that the administration doesn’t know yet.
         ii. Thinks for the most part students won’t notice, i.e. registration service has one fewer employee, something students probably haven’t noticed.
         iii. Student services. Last year for graduation communications developed a newspaper that profiled students. It was great, but cost $18,000 to print. Enjoyed by graduates and their invited guests. This covers the cost of coffee and cookies for the year which has a larger impact on student life.
      iv. Mandatory academic 1L event will probably serve pizza instead of box lunches.
      v. The hope is that cuts will come from areas that don’t impact students heavily.
vi. 1Ls got binders that cost $7 each this year. They could get binders that are $2.50.

vii. It’s a line-item by line-item inquiry.

viii. Less funding for the barbecue.

ix. Fewer nice flowers at the 1L dinner.

viii. Will increase in enrollment at the university impact the law school?
1. Just a guess, but shouldn’t impact the law school aside from housing because law students can use UAH housing.
2. Law school will maintain the same 1L entering class size (aim for 365). Hard to get it down to a science but applications are up.

ix. In the line-item cuts, will there be room for a student voice/input in the decision making? (Directed at Dean Moroni and Dean MGK)
1. Individual assistant deans are putting together their own plans.
2. Is there room for student input?
   a. The input would be helpful, but to the extent that the administration is discussing personnel it wouldn’t be appropriate.
   b. A lot of the time there’s a balance between student input and confidentiality. Students can express what they think is unnecessary. Students can ask how much things cost, but not about salaries. Student input on excesses is helpful.

x. Personnel. Is the law school considering personnel and faculty salary freezes?
1. President Levin of Yale suggested they might be capping faculty salary increases at $1500, but there was some change after and it’s no longer under consideration.
2. CLS can’t discuss faculty salaries with our peer schools because of antitrust considerations.

xi. Even if the 1L class stays the same size, is the school considering admitting more transfers to bring in more tuition?
1. The school has a target of admitting 50 transfers every year, this year it was 54. The target will remain the same, but it’s hard to estimate yield.

xii. LLM program will remain the same size as well.

xiii. Student input: for students that have an input, it’s hard to give productive input without knowing where money is being spent. To the extent that students can be helpful, access to the line item budget would inform those judgments. It’s hard to pick things out of the ether about where cuts can be made.
1. Dean Moroni says some information can be pulled together for students.

xiv. Is it true that universities poach funds from the tuition of professional schools (i.e. med school, law school, business school). Is this only applicable at public schools?
1. No, university is cutting back on its rate of increase that the law school has to pay the central university. Could be bad because it means the central university administration is really cutting back and might cut back on central services.
2. What does this mean for students?
   a. Cutbacks will impact facilities. It will be harder to keep the buildings clean.
   b. Other areas where we interact with central university offices.

xv. The tuition increase is 5% per year. Is there a point when this becomes unsustainable because it outpaces inflation?
1. Law school is improving services and giving more and more every year.
2. Personnel driven, there are no savings, there are no economies offshore that we can take advantage of.
3. How long is it sustainable before people can’t afford to come here?
   a. Unclear, it’s perhaps a trend of elite higher education. Agreement that at some point it’s not sustainable.

xvi. As the salary of big law firms goes up, tuition for law school goes up – is this trend true of CLS and will tuition freeze like salaries are freezing in the legal industry?
1. No, there’s not this sort of direct impact.

xvii. Facilities. Keeping the building clean. A lot of the money goes to expensive union work. Are there any plans to renegotiate some of the expensive union contracts?
1. Dean Moroni would love to see renegotiations with the unions.
2. Some of the unions are very hostile. There are some 4 unions in the law school. Also, the central university negotiates with the unions, not the law school.

xviii. To what extent are student groups required to use Columbia Catering? Their prices are very high.
1. Depends on the venue. Some buildings require that you use Columbia Catering.
xix. What’s the status of the faculty enlargement program?
   1. Faculty enlargement programs have been very active in recent years.
   2. Harvard and Yale and Columbia have all increased their faculty.
   3. Activity slowed during the fall but hasn’t halted. Columbia will continue to be a strong player in attracting and retaining top faculty.
   4. The greatest number of faculty members hired in a single year are 7 last year.

IV. Officer Reports
   a. President’s Report
      i. Building Services report on Basecamp
      ii. Senate is considering buying a keg tap, because broken taps are
         1. E-Board has discretion to spend up to $100.
         2. We’re looking to spend between $25-$50 on a tap.
         3. Call for objections. None.
      iii. Special projects
   b. Vice President’s Report
      i. Thursday activities. Grad Committee has Sweet Treats. Social Committee is sponsoring Valentine’s Day karaoke at 420, Heartbreakers Ball downtown with other NYC law schools.
      ii. Pilot program for Columbia grad students to go to sporting events. Currently you have to pay $20. This Friday’s Columbia-Dartmouth game will be free.
         1. Social Committee will probably host a tail gate type event before. Call for input after the full senate meeting.
   c. Treasurer’s Report – budget committee met
      i. If you’re the head of a committee and have not informed the treasurer, correct that. Keep a running tally of expenses with explanations and receipts.
   d. Secretary’s report – nothing to report
   e. Parliamentarian’s report – nothing to report

V. Committee Reports
   a. Graduation Committee
      i. Sweet Treats Date Auction this Thursday
         1. Volunteers needed from 6:30-9:00
            a. Dimia, Kevin, Christina, Kelley, Dustin, Pete
      ii. Fantastic attendance at events.
         1. Met event had 50 people show up.
      iii. Grad committee is currently 30% under budget.
   b. Housing Committee – nothing to report
   c. IT committee – met last week, nothing to report
   d. Black Letter
      i. Max reports on changes, streamlined format. Call for comments. None.

VI. Approval of Spring 2009 Student Group Allocations
   a. Presentation by the Treasurer.
      i. $136,000 in requests. $60,000 made in allocations. 6,000 ad hoc.
   b. Motion to amend the budget
      i. Dustin Crawford motion: Motion to allocate golf trip to $0. Event subsidizes members to attend an event.
         1. Presentation: Funding sports is dubious. No indication given of how many people would attend. Aversion to funding such a event that doesn’t build community or has an academic aspect. We shouldn’t reward organizations that game the system and ask for funding for poorly planned events.
         2. Question and Answer:
            a. Distinguish this from the softball organization?
               i. Dustin: Softball is a team sport, more about team building. A large number of people participate. A golf excursion doesn’t build community.
               ii. LDP: Softball is contentious every year, the amount of funding they get is limited. A lot of the funding goes towards the UVA trip. Funding softball is the exception, not the rule.
            b. How many people are in the golf club? Is the subsidy only for members?
               i. LDP: By policy, all events that receive student senate funding must be open to everyone. Subsidy can be bigger for members.
ii. It’s unknown how many people are involved.
   1. Ben: When they submitted their recognition application, they had 8 members.
   2. They could have more or less now.

c. Did the budget committee consider that the golf club hasn’t advertised itself or any event since they were recognized?
   i. LDP: Yes, it was considered that they were a new group so their event was only funded at 2/3 of what was requested.

d. How is this different from the running club, which also doesn’t team-build?
   i. LDP: Running team doesn’t get money to run, but to do community building events.

e. Is each event one trip? Yes. # of attendees not indicated.

f. Does anyone play golf and have they ever had problems finding people at CLS to golf with?
   i. One golfer indicates that he has not had problems finding golf partners.
   ii. Golf outings require a lot of planning.

g. The entire CLS community will be invited and subsidies will be applied across the entire group.

3. Debate
   a. New groups should have a chance to get off the ground, they should get some money.
   b. The group should get their core funding and be allowed to host events, but they shouldn’t get funding for events that are generally exclusive and not available to the community at large. They should be encouraged to have a more all-encompassing event.
   c. Core funding is not meant for events. Budget committee members shouldn’t try to pass a resolution against the deliberative party that they sit on.
   d. Support for giving the group a chance. No one knows how many people they’ll attract.
   e. Most groups have a coordination problems paying for a bus, for example. If the golf club they could do so. The people should do this rather than request student activity fee money.
   f. Concern about how non-specific the request is. Where are they going? Who’s going? To do what? They should come back for ad-hoc funding.
   g. We shouldn’t mix up whether or not they should be recognized, the issue is whether the event should be funded.
   h. Alternative system could not fund the golf club at all. They should do some events on their alone and try to organize group discount rates rather than organizing a few friends.
   i. Forcing the group to host events w/o student senate funding could be valuable, but isn’t realistic in the law school. Every group gets this first chance and it’s only fair.
   j. Slippery slope of saying the group is too exclusive to certain individuals. The same could be said of lots of groups.
   k. The group can have a chance, we shouldn’t get distracted.
   l. Motion to extend time by one minute. No objections.
   m. Group isn’t representative of other groups in the law school (consider Deviminimus, cheese tasting) Coordination problems require money.
   n. We shouldn’t cut them off. We shouldn’t assume they’re not going to invite the whole law school and they can be penalized after the fact if they don’t.

4. Vote on the amendment:
   a. 7-22, amendment fails, budget line item remains at $200.

c. Question and Answer Period
   i. Running club - why does the beer run get funded?
      1. It’s a bar crawl, a community building, they host the bar crawl when it gets too cold to run.
      2. The event was approved last semester.

d. Debate
   i. Jason Lear: David did a great job and the budget is more transparent and accessible to the rest of the school than it’s ever been. There were a reduced number of requests and a lot of inactive groups, so everything is funded as it should be which is nice.

e. Vote
   i. Call for consent – no objections – budget approved.
VII. Resolution: Examination Schedule
   a. Sponsors: Dan Shin, Dustin Crawford, Hiram Pagano, Yael Fischer
   b. Presentation (Dustin Crawford): Resolution to encourage faculty to release information about course evaluation (take home exam, proctored exam, project, paper) should be submitted to the registrar sooner. Registrar takes this information and enrollment information and releases it to students, which factors into student course selection. Limiting factor for the registrar is the faculty relaying information to the registrar.
   c. Question & Answer Period
   d. Debate
      i. Clarification about procedure. Amendments are allowed after Q&A and only during debate.
      ii. Jason Lear motion to amend: Line 15 language change to “as early as possible...” and instead of “specifically before the Add/Drop period opens.” To “and before the add/drop period opens or the add/drop period will be extended until the schedule is released.”
         1. Dustin Crawford: Unfriendly, changes the tenor of the resolution
         2. Amendment withdrawn.
      iii. Support for the resolution.
      iv. Concern about classes where professors let students debate about what form of evaluation would be appropriate. Dustin clarifies that professors can amend their examination style after the date.
   e. Vote (voice vote). Resolution passes unanimously.

VIII. Follow up of on Goal Sheets
   a. Presentation of goals. There are senator teams. E-board wrote up informational briefs.
   b. Goal sheets were used as an indication of where to place people. Many people didn’t submit goal sheets. If you are interested in getting on a project, contact the head senator in bold.
   c. Projects:
      i. Daily Email Digest
      ii. Lenfest Café and Student Amenities
      iii. Earlier Exam Schedule Release
      iv. Senate as a zero-credit course
      v. Scheduling administrator visits to the Senate
      vi. Senate Office Hours
      vii. By-Laws Revision
   d. Bring new goals to the attention of the e-board. Also inform the e-board if you want to be taken off a project or added to a project.
   e. Those interested in Student Health initiatives should contact Adam Sparks.
   f. Comment that the agenda is ambitious and this is the harvest time of the Senate when things get done. Ra-ra!

IX. Student Refrigerator Access: Status of the refrigerator
   a. Presentation by Brittany Schoepp. Trying to assess whether this is a project we should continue with.
      i. Issues:
         1. Funding, but it’s a one time expense
         2. Placement, the fridge can’t go in Lenfest Café because of NYC health codes.
            a. Potentially could be put near the vending machines.
         3. Maintenance and cleaning is the biggest challenge
            a. Survey was done of similarly sized schools. Most schools report that their senate cleans the fridge with varying levels of success.
            b. Another option would be to pay to have the fridge cleaned, which is an expensive hourly rate ($40-50 per month).
         4. The fridge would be convenient, but most CLS students live nearby and it’s not a commuter school.
         5. Kosher students would prefer to bring food to school.
      ii. Idea of coop type system, to use the fridge you have to sign up to clean it. If we make it public, cleaning the fridge is a big obstacle.
   b. Comments:
      i. Faculty members have fridges, we don’t know how they’re cleaned.
      ii. The fridge would probably benefit relatively few people. Also, people are really messy.
      iii. Wildly unnecessary because we’re not a commuter school and there’s cheap food everywhere.
      iv. Student analogizes fridge to the booze cruise. It sounds great, in reality it’s disgusting.
      v. Students here are messy, by 4:30 it’s clear that CLS students are way too used to having a janitor pick up after them.
      vi. People can just use igloos if they really need cold food
vii. $300-$350 is not a HUGE expense, given that we fund events at that level all the time, so if it only benefits 30-40 people that’s okay.

viii. Having a fridge would save students money.

ix. Suggestion that commuter students should have access to the pantries and existing fridges in the law school.

c. Brittney will continue looking into the fridge, but needs more feedback and input. We need to figure out cleaning or the coop model.

   i. Volunteer: Steven Wu

X. New Business

a. Steven Wu: Senator reports that Lenfest Café is well into 6-digits as a loss. Is it worth that much money? It’s university money, but as members of the university, perhaps that figure should bother us.

   i. Max reports that the Lenfest Amenities group will report on this. Dean MGK will present on Feb. 24 about Lenfest Café and potential changes/options.

   ii. Request for show of hands that the operating loss is not worth it. Straw poll indicates a majority.

b. Craig Greiwe: Discuss a statement of common purpose that reiterates the behavior of conduct that should be upheld in the classroom but also emphasize that we live in a common space, which involves cleanliness and civility.

   i. Will be included on the next agenda.