CLS Student Senate Meeting

Minutes

Monday, April 7, 2008

I. Roll Call

II. Amendments to by laws

   a. Tonight we are amending only our by laws, because amending the
      constitution requires a school-wide referendum
   b. Still, the E-board suggests that next year’s Senate amends the constitution
      as it sees fit.
   c. Diversity Council
      i. Stephen Cockrell’s introduction on creating the Diversity Council:
         This council would address diversity issues as they arise. It would
         collect and share information, and respond to incidents if
         necessary. The amendment here reflects this purpose. Council
         will have six voting students, and five voting faculty and
         administration, with two ex officio members.
      ii. Q&A
         1. Are faculty on board with this?
            a. Philip Hamburger and Jim Tierney are already
               signed up
         2. How will the initial four senators be chosen if senators are
            chosen by the council?
a. Application process via the Senate for initial membership; after that, the power falls on the Council itself

iii. Debate

1. By laws accurately express what we are going for. Putting it in the by laws institutionalizes this effort.

2. A similar push is happening at the University level, and Senators who serve on the Council should collaborate with their University counterparts.

3. The by laws do not seem to reflect that the Council can serve to respond to emergency situations.

   a. Response: quick response is a Council capability, if deemed necessary by the Council itself. This capability is built in to the Council.

iv. Vote: this section unanimously passes

d. Section 2(C)(1): Academic Affairs Committee changes

   i. Tope’s introduction: since Committee responds to all Academic concerns, by laws do not need to mention issues of transfer and joint-degree students explicitly

   ii. Call for consent fails

   iii. Vote to vote passes

   iv. Since by laws amendments require 2/3 vote to pass, this one fails – the deleted language will remain in the by laws
e. Student Life/Social Activities Committee change
   
i. Dan shin’s introduction: the Rites of Spring Committee language
      would be deleted from the by laws, since there has not been Rites
      of Spring for years
   
ii. Q&A:
      1. who will run Rites of Spring?
         a. The 1Ls on the Social Committee are supposed to
            form a subcommittee that plans it.
      2. Is there a penalty for not being in compliance with the
         bylaws by not holding it?
         a. Nobody from recent years of Columbia Law School
            remembers what Rites of Spring is, and it has not
            been held for years. There was no repercussions
            against previous vice presidents or social
            committees for not holding it, but it is not good for
            Senate to be out of compliance with its by-laws,
            which is why we are attempting to update the by-
            laws to better reflect reality.
         b. A purported schedule of Rites of Spring from 2000
            was read aloud, featuring about a week’s worth of
            events from March of that year.
      3. Does Social Committee have the power to put on a Rites of
         Spring without it being in the by-laws?
a. Yes, definitely.

iii. Debate

1. Rites of Spring could be a good idea, but it does not need to be in the by laws. If we do not hold it, it should not be in the by laws. No greater need for it to be in the bylaws than other important events such as Barristers’ Ball.

2. What Social Committee has planned – an end of semester party – could be a good substitute.

3. If this is in our founding documents, it is there for a reason. We should respect the tradition and revitalize Rites of Spring.

4. Still, this does not need to be in the by laws. It has been since at least 2001 since the school has practiced this tradition.

iv. Motion to call to question passes

v. The deletion passes

f. Budget Committee changes: (a) on composition

i. Max Miller’s introduction: these changes seek to make the budget committee proportional with the Senate classes, so that at least three JD Senators and one LLM are on the committee.

ii. Q&A

1. Do JSD’s contribute to the Student Activity Fund?

   a. Yes
iii. Changes to (a) on composition pass

g. Budget committee changes: (c) on application for funds – passes unanimously

h. Budget committee changes: (d) on allocations
   i. These are cosmetic changes. Consistent language is strived for.
      Passes unanimously.

i. Budget Committee changes: (e) on approval of the allocation budget.
   i. This language makes the by laws reflect current committee practice, allowing the full Senate to accept, reject or amend the committee’s recommendations.
   
   ii. Call for consent – this section unanimously passes

j. Budget committee changes: (f) on the appeals process. Again, this seeks to bring the language in line with current practice.
   
   i. Call for consent – this section unanimously passes

k. Budget committee changes: (g) on distribution of funds. This amendment passes by a vote of 30-4-5.

l. Budget committee changes: (h) on audits. This was written to bring the audit section into conformity with recent committee practice. Since there is an audit section in the Budget guidelines, that should be the vehicle for small changes in policy, and this section clarifies that.
   
   i. Q&A: does this remove the mid-year audit from the committee’s powers?
1. The mid-year audit always had to happen; the end of year one was discretionary. Now, the end of year discretionary audit becomes repetitive.

ii. Call for consent – changes unanimously approved

m. Budget changes: (i) on ad hoc process. Passes unanimously.

n. Newsletter committee (§5): weekly newsletter to be produced by this committee.

i. Q&A

1. Who would chair orientation since this change deletes the orientation committee?

a. Orientation would be run by co-chairs, and this would remain unchanged.

ii. Debate

1. Maybe not requiring weekly newsletters would be better.

2. On the other hand, if it comes out less frequently, people will not expect and rely on a newsletter. Calendar of events useful in part because it is for the week ahead.

iii. Voting on this section: passes

III. Officer Reports

a. President

i. This is our last meeting for the year. Ten things Senate did this year:
1. Established a presence with the main campus through provost’s advisory committee for Manhattanville, voting on provost and president’s fun, etc.

2. No wait list for Barrister’s Ball this year

3. More efficient Senate meetings

4. Most successful blood drive ever last semester

5. Graduation committee has worked hard to sell tickets and avoid further debt problems

6. Creation of Diversity Council

7. Black Letter has been a great communication tool

8. IT Committee has done an incredible job

9. Academic programming has been improved upon

10. We are not in debt anymore!

ii. University senate elections are coming up. It is a two-year position. Ask John Johnson if you have questions.

iii. Diversity Council will hopefully form soon.

iv. E-Board elections will be next Monday at 9:10 P.M. Only senators elected for next year can serve on E-board.

1. Nominations due before meeting, i.e. 48 hours before the meeting. Nominee must approve candidacy, and candidacy statements distributed 24 hours before meeting takes place.
2. Information on dropping down will be required beforehand, because we will not be taking nominations from the floor unless there is no candidate for a position.

3. You can submit questions ahead of time and they will be asked and answered.

4. 7-minute comment period will occur thereafter.

5. If candidate no longer wishes to run for a position, withdrawals from the floor will be accepted.

6. To win, candidate must receive majority vote. Uncontested candidates must still receive a majority of votes to take office.

v. Questions/comments

1. Who can vote for the E-board?
   a. Incoming senators. Outgoing senators can only comment.

2. How will decorum be ensured?
   a. Candidates will be in the room during the comment period.

3. LLMs have no right to vote. LLMs don't have any say in terms of the exec board. In order to give some say, would like to propose for next time to consider whether LLMs have any say in the election procedure. Maybe not all of them, but at least one voice, perhaps.
4. Worried about chilling effect on fair and useful observations on the candidates by removing the portion of the process during which the candidates are out of the room.

5. Would the advance emails allow for the sharing of some of those criticisms anonymously, helping to preserve that opportunity?
   a. Yes, and the President will have a chance to clarify questions that might be perceived as unfair and inflammatory ahead of time with the questioner.
   b. VP
      i. Social event going on in Lenfest café right now – watching final game of NCAA tournament
      ii. Last social committee meeting is coming up, and there seems to be enough money for end of year ice cream social
      iii. We also have money from the Emanuel Bar Review course for an event that will be planned soon
   c. Treasurer
      i. Two ad hoc requests were taken care of today
         1. One was for PILF, for $175 for a meeting regarding elections and how to run a 501(c)(3)
a. Committee determined that this seemed like a membership meeting, and committee voted to deny funding

2. EASLS had three requests, each for a practitioners lunch. These were for 10 individuals and were off-campus. Committee decided to fund $30 per lunch, in keeping with the $3/person standard for lunchtime events.

d. Secretary
i. CCO was a “great success!”
ii. Relay for Life this Saturday – contact Gabe or go to the lobby tomorrow from 12-2 to sign up!
iii. Clothing drive will be happening very soon

e. Parliamentarian
i. Please send in your outlines!

IV. Committee Reports

a. Graduation
i. 85% of tickets sold
ii. 18 people requested the public interest discount
iii. Community service date April 24th
iv. End of year celebration April 28th
v. Grad ball is May 18th
vi. Grad BBQ is May 20th
vii. Graduation May 21-22!
b. Housing

c. IT
   i. IT will be installing color printers either in the library or the 3rd floor lab
   ii. IT Dept. is working on a new computer application that will integrate calendars and other functions

d. University Senate
   i. Plenary meeting will be on Friday at 1:15
      1. Annual campus rent increases of 5% -- Senators are aggressively questioning the need for the annual increases.
         Go to the plenary meeting or speak to John if you care about this issue.
   ii. Rules Committee has been revived.
   iii. Subcommittee on Manhattanville continues to look at the expansion there.
   iv. John recommends serving as University Senator. His term ends at graduation and we will need a new U-Senator.
   v. World Leadership Forum Wednesday April 16 to discuss emerging leaders.
   vi. John feels that the Senate has been an effective body, especially in comparison to how other school student governments operate.

e. Faculty Committees – everyone should submit their reports to Gabe ASAP. Statement just clarifies what committee did or did not do this year.
i. Admissions & Financial Aid

ii. Advisory

iii. Associates

iv. Clerkships & Judicial Relations

1. Unfortunately, the administration does not seem very interested in meeting with students on this committee.

v. Comparative & International Law

vi. Curriculum

1. Barbara Schatz did set a meeting students could go to, and the faculty greatly appreciated student comments regarding the first year curriculum

vii. Graduate

viii. Information Technology

1. The school has hired some new staff to work on IT, so what has been no progress should turn into rapid progress.

ix. Journals

x. Library

xi. Public Interest Activities

1. They met regarding LRAP

xii. Resources and Development

1. Scheduled to meet next Friday, topics to include law school budget and fund-raising efforts

xiii. Rules
1. Actions of the committee are confidential

xiv. Student Services

1. They met on the 13th right before spring break. Discussed incentives to get students to fill out course evaluation forms. They will try to e-mail faculty to give more in-class time for evaluations. Revised academic probation policy was discussed, as there is a perception that some students can slip through the cracks and have many incompletes, etc.

V. Treasurer’s Report

a. We are still waiting on grad ball sales before we know exactly where we are for the year.
   i. If we sell 400 tickets, we will be where we want to be.

b. As far as major expenses for the year, we spent a total of $220,067.52
   i. We paid off $33,822.40 in debt
   ii. Student Group Allocations totaled $146,845.12
   iii. Administrative/Grad Fee was $39,400

VI. Announcements

a. Senate elections are on Wednesday from 10-4. We need more volunteers to help with elections.

VII. Adjourn @ 11 P.M.