CLS Student Senate Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

I. Roll Call
II. Senators Survey
III. Officer Reports
   a. President
      i. Friday November 16, Provosts meeting regarding expansion and hunger strike. On the academic end, hunger strikers’ goals in many ways dovetail with university plans, but waiting on final approval from faculty; on Manhattanville, a vote passed two days ago and it now moves to the next phase. Also, next Friday Tope is meeting with the Student Outreach Coordinator, who wants to learn more about law students’ views on Manhattanville. One issue for law students is obtaining more classroom space. Contact Tope with other suggestions.

      ii. Tope also attended a meeting on university student services, including registration, IT, financial aid, and others. She forwarded law student issues to them, including unifying the passwords across multiple portals, increasing international student loan options, language class availability, and making degree audit services available online for law students.

      iii. Transition from Dean Liebman to MGK: E-board met with both of them to wrap up loose ends with Dean Liebman and smoothly transition back to working with MGK.
         1. Lenfest Café – MGK was under impression that progress was going to be made and is following up on this. Specifics include bringing back soda fountains, power outlets, changing the food options, expanding the hours.
2. In terms of coffee on the fifth floor of WJWH, they switched to Fair Trade coffee at no additional cost.

3. Coffee in JG seems unlikely, because the reason Student Services has coffee at their office is to draw students in. Alternatives may be worked into the remodeling of Lenfest Café.

4. Student-faculty lunches – it seems that Mondays and Wednesdays next semester will be possible days to hold these. Details are still being worked out, but this initiative is going forward.

5. Rooms 728 and 722 will hopefully be made available for study groups during finals time.

6. Security issue: having someone stationed at the desk in JG while the building is open or even until midnight is not within the available budget. Senate can pass a resolution compelling the administration to take action on increasing security, but they would still have to find funds.

7. Tope has been working with undergraduate student leaders and graduate leaders, particularly in following up on the meeting with Pres. Bollinger. They have drafted a letter, which asks for transparency and the establishment of definitive plans on the part of the university administration.

8. Student Activity Council is meeting this Friday at 12:30. Treasurer Max Miller will explain how to prepare your student group budgets for next semester and more.

9. Day Out Against Hate – both the Senate and Student Services sent e-mails out about this today. Ehi Oviasu has prepared a petition, which will be circulated in connection with the Day. She will be tabling tomorrow from 12-4 and needs volunteers from 2:30-4:00. Gabe will table from 3-4, and Larue and Sharmila can help from 2:30-3.
10. LLM Senators circulated two petitions to the LLM class, one regarding the introductory class in American law they have to take, and one regarding housing problems LLM’s face.

11. Guide to Columbia – Meredith working on Public Interest and Career Services chapters

12. Mentorship Program for 1L’s is being improved for next year Jennifer Clark & John Johnson working with Student Services

13. LLM/JD community-building initiative: MESO project is culminating in initial event this Friday, and they are hoping many JD’s show up!

b. VP

i. Last big event was thanksgiving. Over 30 people participated in the community service project this time, some of whom did not attend the dinner which was free for service participants. 45 people attended the dinner @ Radio Perfecto, which went very well.

ii. Social committee event on the last morning of 1L classes: Bagels and Brownies! This will be on Dec. 5th.

iii. Iron chef had 60 participants was a very successful event

iv. Health services issues should be communicated to Dan before Friday

c. Treasurer

i. Budget is looking good for the year. Most expenses come second semester, though. Currently, we have $129,000 left for the rest of the year, but this includes Barrister’s Ball, and Grad Ball. We have already paid off last year’s debt, and even after doing that, we have $3,000 left for this semester. We could go up to $15,000 in debt for the semester, but we will not have to.

ii. Ad hoc requests:
1. $120 for CRLS
2. De Vinimus one event allocated money the other was not
3. $400 for ACS/Fed Soc Quizzo
4. Christian Legal Society allocated $235 for a movie screening event

d. Secretary
   i. Faculty advising system discussion with Liebman & MGK there are some faculty discussions taking place
   ii. Clothing drive (need help getting clothing to Senate office)
   iii. Next semester: NY Cares Day and Columbia community outreach. Also, canned food drive.

e. Parliamentarian

IV. Committee Reports
a. Graduation – Grad ball and its speaker are looking good. Party this Thursday for graduating students, don’t forget to pick up your wristbands!
b. Housing – survey is now complete, more than 300 people responded. They are analyzing results now, and putting list of issues together to discuss with housing liaison.
c. IT – meeting will be scheduled in the new year.
d. University Senate
   i. Hunger strike was because of Core Requirements focus on Western thought, Office of Multicultural Affairs and its needed expansion, concerns regarding recent hateful incidents on campus, and also Manhattanville expansion and some students’ reservations regarding it. Note that the university seemed to make concessions in response, which can be viewed as concerning. Does hunger strike take relevance away from formal student government and the process it represents?
   ii. JKJ is meeting with Spectator writers on Friday, to talk about the lack of coverage of graduate events. Let John know if you believe this issue is relevant.
iii. A University Senate representative spoke at the recent MTA Hearing

e. Faculty Committees

i. Advisory Committee Elliott Ash received letter in group mailbox and will send an e-mail to the Senate listserv summarizing it

ii. Comparative/International Law committee did meet but Esha was the only student member who attended meeting. Discussion of partnerships currently in development for the Global Governance Exchange program being planned. There are several plans in the works with law schools in Paris, London, Amsterdam, and China which should take more concrete shape in the next several months. They are still in talks so probably China won't be a go until fall 2009.

iii. Curriculum committee has met twice. At the first meeting, Legal Practice Workshop was discussed; student representatives gave their input, and committee was receptive. In terms of the first year electives, the faculty does take the evaluations very seriously. Committee reviewed the past two years’ reviews and discussed them. Please communicate with committee members any issues you have regarding curriculum. The committee is also planning to hold a forum for all 2L’s and 3L’s regarding the curriculum’s strengths and weaknesses, e.g., the need for more environmental law professors. Seminars were also discussed. They questioned whether the 2-credit and 3-credit breakdown and whether that makes sense. Craig’s suggestion about the work-life balance for various courses was also brought up, but the committee seemed to find this type of initiative unfeasible. They did ask the student reps to write up a report about the Senate’s discussion and to present it to Chair Barbara Schatz.

iv. IT – they met last week. Two views in tension: internal and external needs. Profs focus on internal needs for website, whereas
Dean Schizer is pushing the web person to focus on making it a “brochure.” A new hire will join the IT team, focusing on making needed website changes. It should take 3 months to hire someone due to Columbia’s hiring process, so it will be a while before changes are effected.

v. Resources and Development – the committee met on Nov. 15th. This committee deals with the law school’s finances. Dean Schizer has been trying to increase the law school’s support for public interest work, and the school recently started guaranteeing summer funding for public interest work. The next step is improving the LRAP (loan repayment) program for public interest jobs. We currently lag as against our peer schools. Senator Arjun Garg sent around an e-mail summarizing the relevant data.

Applicants look at this information and we need to improve. Example: the income threshold at CLS is $25,000; at NYU, Yale, and Stanford, it is at least $45K. Committee proposed doubling the CLS threshold to $50K, which would cost around $1 million per year. The proposal is not finalized yet, but it seemed to be moving forward. Dean Schizer also told the committee how great the fundraising efforts are going: we are up from $17 million/year, to around $36 million/year. This happened via more large gifts ($500K+), fundraising at alumni reunions, and outreach to young alumni.

1. Issues/responses from Senators
   a. PILF helps to guarantee summer funding and so the administration should not take all the credit
   b. Miscommunication between different parts of the administration: one Senator was told that there was no income threshold at an admissions seminar
   c. Where is the extra money going to come from?
vi. Student Services committee met Nov. 7th, and much of the
discussion focused on faculty advising and mentorship. They are
almost certain that classes will begin next year at 9 A.M. and this
will allow a full lunch hour. There was also a discussion of course
evaluations and ways that the system can be improved.

1. Last year’s Senate debated whether people should be
required to fill out course evaluations before they could
receive their grades. This could be something to discuss
again.

V. MTA update from David Peters: David attended a meeting in the Bronx, and
everyone there spoke against the fare increase. David spoke to the pressures
on students’ budgets. While the fares in general have been frozen, there has
been no special action regarding student fares.

VI. Recognition Guidelines
a. We are considering Section E at page 5. This section is in response to a
memorandum the Senate passed last year, to fill the gap that exists that if a
student group ceases to exist in terms of dealing with its finances.
b. Q&A -- none
c. Debate -- none
d. Vote – Senator Shin calls for consent, and the recognition guideline
changes passes unanimously

VII. Announcements
a. This is our last meeting of the semester. Thanks everyone for your hard
work this semester!
b. As of now, our meeting time for next semester will remain the same. If it
seems like the present time will not work, after schedules are released, we
will determine a better time.
c. The importance of receipts – give Max Miller your receipts so we can
accurately track our expenses

VIII Adjourn at 10:08 P.M.