

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME DU LAC

STUDENT SENATE

Executive Summary

October 1, 2014

- I. Opening Business
 - A. Matt Devine called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
 - B. Scott Moore led the invocation.
 - C. 1 was absent; 0 were late.
 - D. Kevin Bond moved to approve last week's minutes.
 - i. Jake Wittenberg seconded.
 - ii. Minutes approved.

- II. Officer Announcements
 - A. Lauren Vidal, Student Body President
 - i. Last week, Lauren was in China with Executive Vice President John Affleck Graves. More updates to come.
 - B. Matthew Devine, Student Body Vice President
 - i. Matt and Lauren met with Local Law Enforcement yesterday morning.
 1. They focused on visibility of officers and off-campus safety.
 2. They also discussed an email to send to the student body reminding everyone to be respectful of officers, especially on game days.
 3. The recommendation regarding crime report emails was not to send them to everyone, but rather to post reports online to highlight the importance of the emails that are sent.
 4. Respect is a huge element in ticketing and citations, so please remind your peers to be respectful of police officers.
 5. They also addressed the trend of more students moving off campus.
 6. An email will be sent out to the Listserv with a more comprehensive list of topics discussed at this meeting.
 - C. Shannon Montague, Chief of Staff
 - i. There is an Executive Programming Board meeting tomorrow evening.
 - ii. FUEL members are currently being split up among the departments, so please welcome the freshmen FUELers.

- III. Approvals
 - A. The Shirt Project President, *Abbey Dankoff*
 - i. Kristen Parkinson, Student Union Treasurer, introduced The Shirt Project and Abbey Dankoff, offering Abbey her full support.
 - ii. Abbey addressed the decision to use a 60/40 blend for The Shirt material this year. This material has been especially popular with the older alumni and they have received incredible feedback on The Shirt 2014.
 - iii. Abbey noted that the largest market for The Shirt is older alums, but the design committee tries to cater the design to students and younger alums as well.



- iv. Scott M. moved to vote to approve Abbey Dankoff as The Shirt Project President. Kevin Coleman seconded.
- v. Abbey Dankoff was approved as The Shirt President by unanimous voice vote.

IV. General Orders

A. Presentation Re: Fall Board of Trustees Report on Mental Health

i. Three-pronged approach

1. National Climate

- a. The American College Health Association (ACHA) does an annual assessment of overall physical and mental health of college-aged students, including both quantitative and qualitative feedback.
- b. Almost 50% of students reported feeling overwhelmed in the past two weeks.
- c. Close to 90% of students reported average to “tremendous” levels of stress.
- d. Members of Senate received a handout charting Counseling, Emergency, and Additional Resources offered at Top 20 American universities.
 - i. The University of Notre Dame has comparable resources to peer institutions.
 - ii. Notre Dame has additional resources compared to peer institutions, such as the Relaxation Room, but also lacks some resources offered at other universities, such as Sexual Orientation counseling.

2. Faculty Perspective

- a. Professor Carl Ackermann and Professor Xavier Creary, both of whom are known for making efforts to get to know their students well, reflected on trends they had observed in their students.
- b. Feedback from Professor Creary:
 - i. Extracurricular involvement is a significant source of student stress.
 - ii. Students have a commitment to excellence at all costs.
 - iii. Lauren cited the college triangle; students feel they must choose between sleep, a social life, and good grades.
 - iv. More and more students have requested to take exams in the Sara Bea Learning Center.
 - 1. The primary purpose of the Learning Center is to serve students with learning disabilities, ADD or ADHD, or other mental health or medical diagnoses.
 - 2. The Director of the Sara Bea Learning Center, Scott Howland, noted that most freshman do not seek help, but rather come in for help later in their college careers.
- c. Feedback from Professor Ackermann:
 - i. There has been no shift in academic expectations.
 - ii. There has been no increase in academic performance, despite increases in SAT/ACT scores and other admissions standards.
 - iii. More students are choosing running as their primary form of exercise because running is seen to be the most efficient caloric burn.

3. Student Feedback



- a. A survey was distributed to 100 random students in Lafortune and on the first and second floors of the Hesburgh Library.
 - b. The majority of students reported a regular stress level of 7 out of 10.
 - c. Most students are aware of resources on campus, but some are not comfortable using those resources because they do not want to take resources away from students who may need them more.
 - d. 75% of students reported academics as their primary stressor. Other stressors included extracurricular activities and financial stress.
 - e. Half of students get 7-8 hours of sleep per night.
4. Summary
- a. The University of Notre Dame has comparable resources to peer institutions.
 - b. Students do not tend to seek out faculty members to talk about their stress levels.
 - c. Students involve themselves in more rigorous academics and a breadth of extracurricular activities.
5. Plan of Action
- a. The Campus Life Council will divide into three task forces to look into benchmarking with other universities, evaluating social aspects, and focusing on academics and future careers.
 - b. Senate will also be an avenue for forward action.

B. Discussion

- i. Jake asked what the administration feels is the “appropriate” level of stress for students.
 - 1. An interesting element is the competition to be busiest. Students often feel like they are not doing enough if their friends or roommates have more homework or commitments than they do.
- ii. Ashley Calvani asked about the \$10 million donation.
 - 1. This donation will go towards the MacDonald Center, which will be housed under St. Liam’s.
- iii. Scott M. proposed a question about discernment. Does anyone feel stressed about future careers and/or about not knowing what you are doing or what you are supposed to be doing?
 - 1. Marissa Taylor noted that she feels most stressed when her work does not produce an instantaneous result. Sometimes, we are working towards a general goal, but it can be stressful when you don’t know exactly what you are working towards.
 - 2. Elena Silla noted that changing her major from science to social science has made her less stressed because she the classes she is taking.
 - 3. Jake noted that having a mild level of stress about what you are doing with your life is inevitable and can even be beneficial.
 - 4. Ashley brought up an interview experience where they asked her about tangible results she had produced. Honing in her activities on a tangible result has made her less stressed.



5. Pre-med and engineering students often feel that they need to have everything planned out, so having things fall through can be a source of stress.

V. New Business

- A. Kevin C. asked about the Senators who would sit on CLC.
 - i. Matt responded that senators who sit on CLC are appointed by the CLC Chair based on those who expressed interest.

VI. Announcements

- A. This week is Howard Hall's Totter for Water.
- B. Oktoberfest will be Friday from 3:00-6:00pm on North Quad.
- C. The Fisher Roof Sit will be from Thursday to Sunday to raise money for Habitat for Humanity
- D. There are 207 days until the Fisher Regatta.
- E. Matt reminded everyone to let Katie know in advance if you will not be able to make it to Senate. Department meetings are just as important as Wednesday Senate meetings, so please let Department Directors know if you will not be able to attend those meetings.
- F. Irish State of Mind Week is next week.
- G. Quad Market is next Friday, October 10 on North Quad.

VII. Adjournment

- A. Kevin C. motioned to adjourn.
- B. Elle H seconded.
- C. Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine L. Wood
Student Union Secretary

