

NOTRE DAME STUDENT SENATE

Executive Summary

February 21, 2007

Notre Dame Room, LaFortune

I. OPENING BUSINESS

- A. Bill Andrichik called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.
- B. Chris Labadie led the invocation.
- C. Destinee Delemos, Maris Braun, and Matt Lodwich were absent.
- D. Luke moved to approve the minutes. Brian Corrigan seconded. *The minutes from the February 14, 2007 Senate meeting were approved at 6:08 p.m.*

II. PODIUM

A. Liz Kozlow Re: Election Update

- i. Liz introduced the Michael J. Palumbo award. It is given every year to an undergraduate student who gives outstanding service to the student union. He/She must be in good academic setting. Forms can be returned to Nancy Walsh in the student government office. The deadline is Friday, March 2. Liz read a statement given by the Executive Committee. An election complaint was filed by Bill Andrichik regarding an abstain campaign run by a member of student government. The committee voted 6-0 that the campaign was not unethical. They could not impose sanctions on the student because they thought that the student's actions did not alter the election results. They will review this further and discuss whether the violation should be brought before senate. They had a second violation on Tuesday regarding allegations by the Judicial Council alleging that the Frank Vento, Cristina Romano, Sean Callinan and Gavin Green ticket violated bylaws regarding a face book group. Because they could not reach quorum, they could not hold the meeting. The judicial hall representatives did not show up to the meeting. Drew asked what the ticket was running for. Liz Kozlow said it was for the class council of 2001. Alumni, Carroll, Dillon, Farley, Lewis, Lyons, Pasquerilla West, Sorin and Zahm Judicial Council Representatives did not come. The class council elections will be held Monday 26, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. There are 5 tickets for the class of 2010. There is one ticket for the class of 2009 including Bob Reish, Joey Brown, Callie Pogge and Alvin Adjei. The Class of 2008 also has one ticket including Bridget Keating, Chris Doughty, Megan O'Hara and Kathleen Coverick. Because there is only 1 ticket for both classes, Liz recommends that the elections are suspended and senate can approve these tickets as the winners.

B. Senior Class Gift Committee

- i. Aly introduced the committee. It is comprised of about 15 seniors. They will be hosting an event called Thanksgiving in February. They estimated that on the 28th, the university would have to shut down if it weren't for donations. Thus, this event is an opportunity to remind students of the numerous donations given to the university. There will be free food at this event. It will be held from 12 to 7:30 p.m. in the Sorin Room.

III. OFFICER REPORTS

A. Ms. Lizzi Shappell, Student Body President

- i. Lizzi said there a new election section for the constitution was passed out. They wanted to ensure that senators had the correct copy while approving the class council winners. Section 1, number 10 of the constitution regards the unopposed ticket. They are making progress into the prospect of the student union endowment. They have been in discussion with the Investors Office and the Controllers Office. CoR also met with St. Mary's student government yesterday. Bill will discuss this meeting further.

B. Mr. Bill Andrichik, Student Body Vice President

- i. Bill said members of CoR met with St. Mary's government last night to talk with the counterparts of their roles. St. Mary's now has a new student center and they were able to see the new conference rooms. They broke off into discussion groups and spoke with their respective counterpart groups. They discussed the different aspects of the student governments' set ups as well as the upcoming community summit. Josh asked if the Observer view point came up. Bill said it was discussed, but it doesn't appear that there will be any formal response. It is an issue that based on the discussion in senate they would like to continue working on. They are looking into long term solutions.

C. Ms. Liz Brown, Chief Executive Assistant

- i. Liz said nomination forms are out for the Irish Clover Award and the Frank O'Malley teaching award. The Irish Clover Award is give to two outstanding members of the Notre Dame community. The nomination forms are due Wednesday March 21 at 6 p.m. The Frank O'Malley Award is given to an outstanding faculty member.

D. Mr. Philippe Collon/Ms. Linda Sharpe, Faculty Senate Liaison

- i. There is no new report because faculty senate has not met.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Committee on Oversight

- i. Chris said oversight met Monday. They discussed measures regarding FMB, SUB and the Judicial Council Representatives.

B. Committee on Community Relations

- i. Aly said they have their first Catholic Think Tank speaker tonight in 126 Debartolo. Justice Timothy Corrigan will be speaking on

Catholicism and Law. He is also an alumnus from the Notre Dame Law School. Aly's committee met Sunday to discuss the viewpoint article by John Klinger. They decided to further research the actual relationship between St. Mary's and Notre Dame. She also went to St. Mary's last night with CoR. She said St. Mary's is interested in doing cross campus work within the student governments.

C. Committee on Social Concerns

- i. Alcohol Awareness week is March 5-9.

D. Committee on Gender Issues

- i. Ashley said this past week, there was a meeting to discuss the future possibilities of an annual eating-disorders conference. Her committee will meet Monday to further critique the conference. They will make an all encompassing conference binder for future purposes.

E. Committee on Residence Life

- i. Mark Healy discussed the millennium village packet. The packet is for the future class councils regarding events that they can plan to participate in the project. As of now, they have a rough draft which they are continuing to work on.

F. Committee on University Affairs

- i. Josh said the community summit is March 2. Members of his committee went downtown today to discuss how to set up the event. They have received many positive responses. They are looking at how to better attack the South Bend guide book as well. Additionally, TC's Management will not be changing policies.

G. Committee on Academic Affairs

- i. As of Monday at 10 a.m., the tutoring program through Inside ND was launched. Josh passed out posters for students to hang up in their respective dorms to publicize this new program. Josh said this program can be an extremely effective way for students to interact. Next Thursday from 7-10 p.m. is Majors night.

H. Committee on Multicultural Affairs

- i. Analise said they met last week to discuss the recent meetings with the Office of the Provost. They are continuing to develop plans for their current projects.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposal of Resolution SS-0607-17

- i. Bill said this is the second proposal of the original resolution SS-0607-14. Luke moved to table the resolution until next week. Oscar Garcia seconded. *This resolution was postponed at 6:28 p.m. until next week and will be placed under old business.*

B. Vote on Judicial Council Recommendation

i. Liz introduced the resolution. There are two classes without opposing tickets. She recommends that the student senate approve both tickets and declare them as the winners. Article 17, Section 1 of the constitution was handed out today. It mandates that a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote is required to approve the candidates. They will vote on the first ticket, the Class of 2008 including Bridget Keating, Chris Doughty, Megan O'Hara and Kathleen Coverick. Chris Beesley said it makes sense to approve the candidates in senate. Brian Corrigan agreed and said there is little reason not to approve the candidates when there is no opposition. There is no election with only one ticket running. Lindsey moved to end discussion and enter voting. Brian Corrigan seconded. 26 yes. 0 opposed. 0 abstentions. *The Bob Reish, Joey Brown, Callie Pogge and Alvin Adjei ticket for the Class of 2009 was approved ticket at 6:32 p.m. Bill moved into voting on the Class of 2008 ticket. Oscar seconded. 26 yes. 0 opposed. 0 abstentions. The Bridget Keating, Chris Doughty, Megan O'Hara and Kathleen Coverick ticket for the class of 2008 was approved at 6:33 p.m.*

C. Discussion on Article XVII, Section VI of the Constitution

i. Bill said there has been at least one amendment brought forth regarding this section. They can not vote tonight because a committee must review the amendment. Because it is an amendment, Bill can not surpass this rule. There will be discussion tonight. Because the discussion is relevant to the closed senate meeting on Sunday, keep in mind that all senators made their comments in the setting of a closed meeting so any remarks regarding that meeting should be made carefully. Chris Hollon said no one liked what happened at the past meeting. He said in any discussion, we must separate two realms. One includes election and procedures and the other includes the actual voting. The actual procedures have nothing to do with their handling of the constitution. Chris said there should be two goals: to make this section fair to the candidates and fair to the student body, accurately reflecting the student body interests. There are three key issues to be discussed: should an abstention be considered a valid vote, what threshold should the candidates meet either a plurality or majority, to win and how senators are able to vote. These amendments address these different issues. Luke submitted one of the proposed amendments. Luke introduced the amendment. He did not like how he was forced to vote one way. The dorms weren't involved in the first two situations and then they were automatically involved in the third. He feels that senators should vote how they want. He feels like abstentions should count because people do take the time to vote. Because it goes to senate, they should be able to choose freely. Mariana proposed the second version of an amendment to this section. She said abstentions shouldn't be counted. In this election, abstentions received 6 percent of the vote. Abstentions were key in this election. This amendment is important because it provides a third option. It

would limit the number of times that elections go to senate. The meeting does not have to occur if the dorm chooses anyway. It's important that senators recognize their obligations to their constituencies. Luke said he doesn't feel that voting by plurality is right because it could turn out unfairly. Liz carried two dorms but it could have turned the other way if senators chose freely. He doesn't like how senators voted without regard to their interests. Danny said he likes Mariana's intent. Abstention wouldn't matter with her resolution. It could be a simple word change because we should recognize who got more votes. He said we are here as well informed individuals and have more information than our constituents. If we believe that they do not have the full information, then we should vote which way may be better. Kevin said he doesn't understand in acknowledging the abstention vote but not counting it. Mariana said this change would prevent it from going to senate. Kevin asked then why would they maintain the option in the second election. Mariana said they could change it to not have an abstention option at all. Lauren asked what happens if abstain does win more votes than the other tickets. If it doesn't have a purpose, then we should not have it. Liz Kozlow said it is not clearly defined in the constitution. The abstention ticket would have to have a petition signed. Then, eliminate the option to abstain in the runoffs. Drew Clary said there is no point in including abstention because the students that did not vote silently abstained. It makes sense for the senator to vote freely, because the student body was indecisive in the first two elections. Chris Beesley said abstention is valid. There was an original intent to include this option. He said this election is a lot more personal because the senators knew at least one person on each ticket. He said it is ok to bind a student to their dorm's vote. It would eliminate problems if the student body gave a large plurality of votes to one ticket. Jim Lockwood said he didn't like how senators were forced to vote one way or another. If the abstain vote does win the majority, it will be ignored anyways. Having an abstain vote and then not counting it would be misleading. As senators, they work directly with the candidates and know them better. This will play an interest in how they vote. Constituents may not be aware of what goes on within student government as well as the senators. It's not fair, if a dorm ties, that senator is allowed to vote freely and no one else is able to. This person is getting a third vote. If the dorm splits, that person should abstain to be fair. It's also not fair that the chairman gets to pick if there is a tie. Mark Healy said that he thinks there is significance to having abstained as an option. If someone takes the time to go online and abstain, it is making a statement that they are willing to participate but are not content with the options. They want it to count so it should. It should be brought to the senate if candidates do not receive a majority. Senators do have better knowledge of the candidates.

Abstain should stay and senators should vote freely. Brian said one problem he has is the presence of the senate. He said it should be as close to impossible before the election is brought before the senate. It is unfair to the candidate who is campaigning for votes not for dorms. The problem with the current situation is that if there is a close election, it goes to who won the most dorms or who has the most supporters on senate. He said either getting rid of abstention and making a runoff a simple plurality is a viable option. He said he has a problem with going through two elections and having a group of people who make the final decision based on who they support or who won their dorm. He said there is merit in bringing the election to senate if there is a tie. Elections should end this with the student body. Lizzi said she hopes no one thinks people were coerced during voting. No matter the outcome of the election, she thinks they did well in upholding the integrity of the constitution. There was a desire to limit the personal bias. She does agree that senators are more knowledgeable. She would like to address the discussion of two years ago regarding the right to abstain. The senator from Zahm defined abstain as expressing one's right to vote, yet not voting for either ticket. She would argue that Mariana's version holds the spirit of what the senate decided two years ago. She did like Danny's suggestion of changing the word to plurality rather than majority to avoid bringing the election to the senate. Josh said he was against including abstain. The election should only be brought to senate in the most unlikely situation. He is strongly against having senate vote freely. It comes down to personal relationships which aren't fair to the student body. It makes it almost impossible for an outsider to win as well. Chris Hollon agrees with Josh and the proposal of a plurality. He said abstain would likely cause several more elections down the road to be brought to senate. He said it is elitist to say we are more informed. There should be more weight as to what constituents want. Emily said there is a difference between abstaining and not voting. The ones who abstain are informed and the fact that they did vote, should be counted. She agreed with making the election a plurality. The popular vote should be enough. Mariana said she has a concern if it is by popular vote of the senators, that there would be a higher chance of coercion than ever. There could be a candidate that knew they wanted to run and befriended senators for political reasons. It could be that the candidate just wants a vote. It would be unethical. Greg said people should be able to get their first choice. He said they should keep the abstention vote, but should implement a runoff by plurality in the first election. Luke said he agrees with Mark with the significance of abstain, but a plurality would be good in the runoff not the first election. Then if it goes to senate, they should vote freely. In the beginning, it wasn't a dorm by dorm vote. Therefore, senators should be able to vote freely. Drew said making it a plurality, then having an

abstention option is pointless. If the candidate is going to win a plurality regardless of the abstention votes, then the abstention vote has no purpose. He sees why it's bad to have senators vote freely, but the senate may not be the correct institution to do that. They should just tally dorms. Therefore, senator's names would not be attached to a vote. Danny said the idea in a run-off for a plurality seems to be the better idea and the need for abstention is needed. He said if it does come down to a tie, it is extremely possible that the vote will be extremely close. He has a problem letting the chair of senate decide the vote because it is a tremendous burden. Additionally, voting should not be done by roll call but rather privately. It should also be difficult for the election to get to the senate. Danny moved to limit discussion. Brian Corrigan seconded. Discussion limited to 7:11 p.m. Chris said he disagrees with Greg in making it a plurality in the general election. If two candidates have similar platforms, the runoff allows for students to learn them better. The senate should not be allowed to vote freely. He also thinks we should keep the abstain vote an option. He said he does not like plurality in the runoff because when the student body can't pick a majority, it makes the abstain ballot even more important. Then something else should occur besides a simple plurality. Lauren said if the students who abstain do care, they should be made to vote one way or the other. She said maybe the chairman should have to vote by plurality. Callie said it's a chance for people to pick one person. Jim said the plurality seems as the best way. There are objections to it, but in a run off election, not much changes. Senate will not include the interests of the constituents who do not vote in the majority of their dorm. Greg said he did care when he abstained. He said he did not dislike either candidate personally, but abstention is important. Seniors still want to voice their opinions. Drew said he thinks the abstention is pointless in the runoff. If there are three tickets in the general election, two tickets will be left in the runoff and one will have to make it. Sheena said she thinks that we should take the chair's deciding vote out. Chris invited senators to come to a special meeting of the oversight committee Friday at 1 p.m.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Aly announced the Catholic Think Tank event hosting Timothy Corrigan who will speak in 126 Debartolo at 8 p.m.
- B. Oscar said this Saturday, MAES is having a soccer tournament to raise money. Any one can sign up to raise money and play soccer.
- C. Drew announced the Clary-Murphy-Thomas run. The run raises money for a scholarship fund in memory of three Notre Dame students who died of leukemia in 2002. The run will take place March 3. Last year, they had a walk as well.
- D. Chris thanked everyone for discussing the constitutional topics thoroughly tonight.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A. Luke moved to adjourn. Brian Corrigan seconded. *The February 21, 2007 meeting of the Student Senate was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Martinez
Student Body Secretary