

## Notre Dame Student Senate

### Executive Summary

September 17, 2003

Notre Dame Room, LaFortune

- I. OPENING BUSINESS
    - a. Chairperson Jeremy Lao called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
    - b. The invocation was led by Peter Terilli.
    - c. Mike Anderson and Chuck Anthony were absent.
    - d. Dan Zenker motioned to approve the September 10, 2003 minutes. Jack Laskowitz seconded the motion. The minutes were approved at 6:04 p.m.
    - e. Brin Anderson moved to invert the agenda and move item B from New Business above Officer Reports. Aaron Zielinski seconded the motion. Seeing as there were no objections, the agenda was inverted.
    - f. Ryan Finlen moved to table item A of New Business and asked to reschedule this discussion. Jack Laskowitz seconded the motion.
  - II. NEW BUSINESS
    - a. Mr. Jeremy Staley: TCE Publication Proposal
      - i. Jeremy introduced himself as head of the Academic division in the Office of the President. He notified the Senate that his office would be proposing that Teacher Course Evaluations be published for students to use in their selections of classes. It began last year, when the Senate learned that there were no resources for students to find information on professors for their classes. They decided to research the top 20 Universities across the country to see how they handled this situation. They learned that of the 20, 13 published their evaluation results to their students. It was also discovered that Notre Dame used to allow their students to run this program themselves. Many students now go to NDtoday.com to find information, but it is the opinion of the Academic division that this resource is inaccurate and incomplete because there are so few students who make reports. He feels that students have a very limited view of their professors before they take the class.
      - ii. The Academic division met with the Faculty Senate, and their concerns centered on the problems with the TCE itself. They believe it is not a fair measure, and too quantitative. The Academic division sympathizes with this viewpoint. They came up with the idea of a text box, where the professor has the ability to write whatever they would like to explain their teaching style, personality that numbers can't show. For this proposal to pass, and students could see the results, then each could find their professors easily; however, this is the same tool that is used to give promotions and advancements at Notre Dame, so the subject is very sensitive. He reiterated that many of our peer Universities is doing this very thing. The letter given to the Senators is the proposal that will be given to the Academic Council. There are four student representatives of the sixty member body. The rest are faculty and administrators. Jeremy noted that it is very important that the Senate closely considers who they elect to the Academic Council. They see this proposal as the most significant, student-initiated academic proposal in recent years. Ryan Finlen asked if this proposal is currently on the agenda. Jeremy responded that the Council has not even named the members of their group, and even when they do, the struggle to get the issue on the agenda will be their primary problem. Ryan Finlen then asked how effective the student representatives would be. Because there are only four, representing the four respective colleges, on the Council, Jeremy said that these students will be
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the voice of all students, and their job is very important to the success of the project. Jana Lamplota asked if there was any other way to get more support from the faculty. Jeremy responded that there is no way to gather all of the faculty together on this issue. There is an issue of secrecy within the University, and information that does not reach the community at large. So he feels like this publication could help the cause of communication. But because there are divisions among the faculty and the University, they might see this as a step in the direction of opening the discussion among the University, students and faculty. There are also professors who see their NDtoday.com rating and think it is not an accurate portrayal, and want something to be done. Lauren Williams asked, if this proposal does not get on the agenda, does the issue drop? Jeremy said that the Academic Council meets relatively seldom, and have limited space for agenda items. If it does not make it on the agenda, we might have to take another route. If it does make the agenda, it might be a long time before a decision is made. Claire Berezowitz asked if the Student Government could take this to individual professors and bring it on a more personal level. Jeremy Staley said that the best thing to do right now would be to discuss it with professors, see what they think about the issue and respond directly to those concerns. Then, these professors will ask others about what they think, and make a represented statement with their views. In the end, they understand if faculty is opposed to this proposal that is why they have given professors the option of opting out of the system. The question is raised if the entire faculty opts out of the system? He does not see this as a problem, because now all the students are aware of the academic culture on campus, and will put pressure on University to validate the TCEs or change them. They see this proposal as balanced, as well0-researched, and as fair, and in the best interest of the students. He concluded that if there are any concerns, or any additions to be made, to let Jeremy Staley know, so that he can submit this to the Academic Council as soon as possible. Brin Anderson asked how a student is chosen in the first place to be a representative on the Council. Jeremy is not sure of the exact procedure, however, the Deans of each college ask for professor recommendations, and then the students are selected by the Dean and approved by the Senate.

### III. OFFICER REPORTS

#### a. Mr. Pat Hallahan, Student Body President

- i. Pat commended Jeremy Staley for his work on this proposal. He reminded the Senate that this was a great and rare opportunity to make change that affects every single student. To make these results available will help students so much, so they can get the most out of their education at Notre Dame.
- ii. Pat Hallahan stressed that the Church in Africa conference begins this Sunday, and it is important that there is a large student turn out for the speech by President Obisanjo. The speech will be made at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 21 in the JACC. It is rare for a head of state to come to this University, so we should take this opportunity to hear him speak. They expect many Bishops, Cardinals, and other heads of Organizations to make the conference. The conference will discuss healthcare, foreign policy, and business, religious and political participation. He encourages everyone to participate in this opportunity.

#### b. Mr. Andy Vitt, HPC Liaison

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- i. The HPC has created a spreadsheet for dances. It contains contact numbers, reservations and catering information, that will be available to the hall presidents.
- ii. The presidents will be meeting with the budget committee to request funding for their signature events within the next week.
- c. Ms. Lindsey Evans, St. Mary's Representative
  - i. The college is in the middle of their Presidential Selection process. They are reviewing the applications and the top three candidates will come to campus, and student government will be involved in that.
  - ii. They are also helping Holy Cross develop their student government board. They ask for support if Holy Cross needs help in their development.

#### IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Committee on Academic Affairs
  - i. Jack Laskowitz announced that they were reviewing the undergraduate nominees for the Academic Council. They also met with representatives from the Engineering College to discuss distance learning. The group formed a graduation committee as well as looked over the TCE proposal.
- b. Committee on Diversity Affairs
  - i. Laura Feeney stated that the multicultural workshop for commissioners is being planned right now. The table tents are still being formatted, and each will have different themes. Once they finalize these plans they will report back to the Senate.
- c. Committee on Ethics
  - i. Molly Griffin said that anyone that needed to sign up for the diversity seminar should be contacted soon.
- d. Committee on Gender Issues
  - i. Kaity Redfield reported that the sexual assault posters will hopefully come out next week, because the group ran into some financial issues in printing. They are still working with the Women's Resource Center to formulate a plan so Student Government can help.
- e. Committee on Oversight
  - i. Claire Berezowitz said that the group was working on a resolution for budget process. They are also looking into the construction of the CLC. They want to learn about the council and maybe re-work the composition. They were contacted by the SEA who wants to work on a new environmental project.
  - ii. She also stated that she was the head of the new graduation committee, and anyone interested in serving as a member should contact Claire Berezowitz. They will be reviewing what has been done in the past, as well as investigating what to do for the future of graduation ceremony. Jeremy Lao noted that he will be acting as ex officio on this issue, and that the Registrar's office takes into strong consideration any recommendations that the Senate committee gives, so this will be an opportunity to affect change.
- f. Committee on Residential Life
  - i. Brin Anderson noted that the first project of printing the menus from the dining halls a day earlier will not take place because the Observer is no longer printing them at all. They are working on The Golden Dome project. They had a meeting with Bill Kirk regarding RA training. It was a positive meeting; however, she feels that nothing can be done at this point. They will be writing a letter on their official position shortly. The group is still working on the SYR and ticketing issues.
- g. Committee on University Affairs

- i. J.R Garcia said that they have been contacting NDSP and will have a meeting to discuss security, guards, and posts in girls' dorms. They will also meet with officials on the water issue.
- h. Ad Hoc Committee
  - i. Lindsay Williams reported tat the group is working on the Hall Fellows program. They are also setting up a dinner with the Student Senate and the Faculty Senate, tentatively set for the Thursday before fall break.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Letter SS0304-03, Multicultural Commissioner Workshop
  - i. Laura Feeney said they letter was to all multicultural commissioners in each dorm expressing which clubs would be involved in the workshop. She encourages Senate members to attend as well. They do require that at least one person from every dorm participate in this activity.
- b. Letters SS0304-04 and SS0304-05, Ad Hoc Committee on Student and Faculty interaction
  - i. Lauren Williams stated that these letters concerned the Hall Fellows program. One letter is going out to the Department Chairs, and the other to hall rectors to keep everyone informed of the program.

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Kaity Redfield announced that the Pangborn Foxfire will occur Friday night on Holy Cross Hill from 8:30-10:30 p.m.
- b. Jack Laskowitz said that October first there will be a speech made by a Psychology professor who specializes in U.F.Os speaks in Dillon Hall.
- c. Andy Vitt said that the Fisher Hall Roof Sit will start on Friday night on the roof of Legends. If the dorm has 25 people sign up saying that they came to the event, and then the University will donate twenty-five dollars to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- d. Emily Chin reminded the Senate that the Irish Inquisition takes place tonight at 8:00 p.m. in the Oak Room, South Dining hall.
- e. Mike Adams reported that tonight, Father Hesburgh will speak at Alumni hall to kick off their Night of Faith program. The speech will begin at 8:00 p.m.
- f. Mike Ryan reported that he will resign as St. Edward's hall Senator. The new Senator will be in place for the following week.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

- a. Aaron Zielinski motioned to adjourn the meeting. Karsten Steinhaeuser seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m. The next Student Senate meeting will take place Wednesday, September 24 in the Notre Dame Room, LaFortune.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meg Smith  
Student Body Secretary

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