

Notre Dame Student Senate

Executive Summary

October 8, 2003

Notre Dame Room, LaFortune

I. OPENING BUSINESS

- a. Chairperson Jeremy Lao called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
- b. Andy Vitt led the invocation.
- c. Mike Anderson, Christie Bolsen, Andrew Sandstrum, Cheri Smith and Peter Terilli were absent.
- d. Brin Anderson motioned to approve the October 1, 2003 minutes. Jack Laskowitz seconded. The minutes were approved at 6:06 p.m.

II. OFFICER REPORTS

- a. Mr. Pat Hallahan: Student Body President
 - i. Pat Hallahan stated that the resolution regarding Resident Assistant training was submitted to the CLC. The Resident Life committee of the Senate did a good job presenting the resolution. The council has moved to table the vote until next meeting.
- b. Ms. Emily Chin: Chief of Staff
 - i. Emily reported that the Campus-Wide fair took place last Saturday. They received a good report. Tonight at 8:00 p.m. starts the "Last Lecture Series" with Professor Downing in Lewis hall.
- c. Mr. Andy Vitt: HPC Liaison
 - i. Andy noted that the treasurers met with all the Presidents and allocated money for signature events. October 13 is the deadline for dorm improvement funding. They have also been discussing their budget process. In addition, the resolution regarding presidential terms will be discussed further, and put back into a vote.
- d. Ms. Lindsay Evans: St. Mary's Representative
 - i. Lindsay stated that this week is their Hunger and Poverty week. They are looking into building on-campus apartments, hopefully up by next fall. They would like these to prevent seniors from moving off campus. Therefore, these apartments will be available to Seniors with two to four residents.
 - ii. St. Mary's is also continuing their interview process for college president.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Committee on Academic Affairs
 - i. Ryan Finlen reported that they have formed a graduation committee. They are looking for suggestions so they can present a resolution by fall break.
 - b. Committee on Diversity Affairs
 - i. Laura Feeney stated that their group is getting the table tents approved by Outreach ND, and the standing committee on Gay and Lesbian affairs within the university.
 - c. Committee on Ethics
 - i. Dave Osburn said that they are still looking for a diversity seminar for Senators to attend. Jordan Bongiovanni stated that Ramzi Bualuan from the CLC is one of the leaders and they should get in touch with him.
 - d. Committee on Gender Issues
 - i. Kaity Redfield said that the posters on sexual abuse are out for all the dorms, and they will also put them in classrooms. They are writing a statement of purpose for Dr. Moss on the Women's Resource Center. This should be put together by Friday.
 - e. Committee on Oversight
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- i. Claire Berezowitz reported their group met to discuss what will be presented tonight.
- f. Committee on Residence Life
 - i. Brin Anderson said that the resolution they voted on last week came to the floor of the CLC. She felt it received positively. They are looking into things that can be done before they vote again on October 27. T
 - ii. Tomorrow, they will meet with Jim Fraley regarding basketball seating in the JACC. They are also working on the Golden Domes project, and reinstating the rugby team.
- g. Committee on University Affairs
 - i. J.R. Garcia noted that they met with the committee on oversight to discuss these constitutional changes. They have sent out their survey, and it should be back by next week.
- h. Ad Hoc Committee
 - i. Lauren Williams said there is a large response for the Hall Fellows program. The letters went out to all the faculty and they are working on getting the list together by the end of next week. This group hopes this becomes an annual event.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Resolution SS0304-14: Amendments to the Constitution and Senate Representation on Executive Cabinet
 - i. Pat Hallahan presented the resolution, which is slightly different from the one sent out last night. The idea for this comes from the last Board of Trustees report in May. Concerns came from inefficiency of Student Government. He feels that there is room for improvement, especially in the areas of collaboration. An idea came to create a more efficient group to work together. This brings all the leaders into one place. The best place for this is the Executive Cabinet is because that body represents every group except Senate. This new group would be a council that would be representative of the entire student body. Take a situation where all the policy people come together, and all the programming people come together which would make a unified set of all the student organizations. Understands that this is short notice, but this also came from Executive Cabinet, the Office, and even the Oversight committee is trying to work out these problems. They feel the best would be for everyone to have the same discussion at one table. He thinks the logical next step and the Board of Trustees Report is coming up next Thursday. He would like a first step from the student side, to give them incentive to get the administration more involved on behalf of the students. If we don't show the Board that we are working towards change, they might not respond to other things that we would like to do. That is why this is going so fast. The Executive Cabinet feels that this is the best decision for the Student Union. Some people have concerns about the budget clause. Pat would propose that article be taken out. Might have concerns on student representation on Exec. Cab., with three Senators, they will make up twenty percent of the vote. He is willing to amend the proposal and make it four Senators, possibly two from girls' dorms and two from guys' dorms. So there would be a fifteen member body, and they will begin the discussion to do everything better. Know there are questions, and Pat would be happy to answer them and make the amendments.
 - ii. Jeremy Lao opened the proposal for discussion on the floor. Ryan Finlen asked when the proposal was drafted Sunday night, were there any Senators present? Pat said no, but any Executive Cabinet member has the right to propose to amend the Constitution. This is not about a single person or a
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single group, but about the entire Student Union. This change does not affect Senate alone. Jana Lamplota asked if there was a specific committee investigating this proposal. Pat said that he had been talking with Senators, Exec. Cab, and anyone who would be affected by the changes. This came out of what has been discussed in many groups. Jana followed asking if there are many more issues that this body will address to make the Student Union more effective? Pat said the end goal is to make these groups better on collaboration. They have a common concern on this communication issues. The next step is to get everyone at the same table; it's not fair to exclude anyone.

- iii. Kaity Redfield asked what they see as the concrete benefits of getting everyone together. As she sees it, this will only create one more meeting and more confusion. Pat thinks that if they do this it will be less confusion. If they all sit down together to hash out the problems in the constitution and make coordination better. The Executive Cabinet is already talking about this, and he wants Senate involved. Kaity then asked is this to get rid of problems, or address new issues. Pat said that all the work that everyone has done to be more efficient and bring them to the Executive Cabinet so they can address new problems that come along. Karsten Steinhäuser then addressed the third clause. If the goal was to create a body to decide how to best do policy, how to best do programming, but in the third clause, they have already decided where they want policy to go. He feels that they are defining what the body's power is before that body's purpose is even formed. Pat clarified that the body would be talking about what the organizations should be doing. He does not want to dictate policy, but have everyone decide on their own fate. The office of the President and the Senate do the policy now, and they should be brought together. Karsten stated that the power to amend the Constitution is a strong one, and should not be transferred to an undefined body. Pat said that this resolution is clear. A representative from every student group would be in the union. They would add all their insight into one place. They are all there now, except for Senate. J.R. asked who sits on Executive Cabinet right now. Pat said virtually every group other than Senate, and they are affected even though they are not represented. Jeremy made a point of interest that the composition of Executive Cabinet is on page seven of the Constitution.
 - iv. Claire Berezowitz stated that the oversight committee was working on the large projects concerning the budget and the constitution. But as students they aren't really aware of the views of the Executive Cabinet and how it affects the larger Student Union. It is a good idea to put everyone together. She would like to put Senate in the discussion, and then have a separate resolution to transfer budget powers. Since so many people have tried to address this issue, it is a good idea to put Senate in this group, and then work through the constitution. But she strongly believes that something needs to be done. Aaron Zielinski feels that the formation of this body is good, but he has problems with giving the powers to amend the constitution to this body. Pat thinks that this is the group that has the widest representation and the capacity to make the best changes. Instead of going to each group individually and then proposing to Senate, this would create less confusion. The Senate is there to voice student concerns to the administration and that is the work they need to continue. This new body is better suited to make decisions for the entire community. Any one group would resist changes made by the Senate about their by-laws, then having them all there to discuss these very changes.
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- v. Jack Laskowitz agrees with the first step in creation of the body, but he asked why they need the power to amend the constitution right away. Pat thinks that the constitution should be amended by the groups it directly affects. It is more confusing if they go back and forth between all the groups involved. This is a long term change that will bring efficiency in the long run. Ryan Finlen said that he favors collaboration, but why can't they move the Senate first, and then bring the power to amend the constitution back to Senate to approve. Pat stated that if they did that, there would be no reason for this proposal. It's a bad idea to create a group, but give them no power. You need to give the groups the ability to change themselves. But altogether, it would be a stronger voice to the administration. It is more powerful, because it affects all student groups, and is decided by all student groups. It cuts out steps and creates more efficiency. Sujal Pandya asked if Executive Cabinet meetings are open to the public. Pat said they are when they are official meetings, but right now they are just discussing their organization. The new body will have to make that judgment. Sujal is concerned that this new body will look secretive. Too much power would be with one body. He feels it would be helpful if they separated each of the issues of the proposal and debated these one by one. Pat is happy to take out the clause that discusses the budget, but the other two go together. They need a purpose and direction and power. It will be hard for other heads of organizations to talk if they have no real stake in the issues at hand. They will not cooperate if it all comes down to how the Senate feels in the end.
- vi. Amy Chambers said that as it stands, the Senate would get four representatives plus eleven others, and that group would approve the budget. Right now, Senate approves the budget, and none of the dorms have a particular interest. Senators don't represent clubs. The Executive Cabinet does represent clubs and they have an interest in how the budget comes out. She doesn't want to give the budget power to this new body, because if something changes, they can never have that back. Pat is all for asking out the budget clause. Amy then said that the first and third should go together, if we give them this power at all. Andy Vitt stated on behalf of HPC that they support this resolution. This is a good way to increase the efficiency of Student Government, and supports the idea of giving this body a purpose and ability to amend the constitution.
- vii. Jana Lamplota agreed that it was a good idea to bring them all together, but she asked if this does not already exist. Pat said that it does to a certain extent, but FMB and JUCO don't have a vote, and Senate isn't represented at all. Jana then asked what the limits will be for this body. Will they have the authority to dissolve Senate? Pat noted that the Senate has the ability to dissolve any body they want right now. And this group will have that. Jordan Bongiovanni clarified the three parts of the proposal. She doesn't feel that they have a good communication with the Executive Cabinet. They don't know what they talk about. Just the fact that some Senators would be on it would be a huge improvement. Three Senators and the Vice President would be on the group. Pat said that actually, the Vice President would be the chair of this body, formed to advise the President. Voting would require 2/3 majority, so every change would have to be virtually unanimous. Jordan added that this gives Senate substantial input in this group. She would like to ask James and Charlie, members of Executive Cabinet, what they think about this. Pat said that Jordan made a good point mentioning that this is about input, and not about power. They are all working to bring the Student Union together. Everyone agrees with this, they are working for the students

they represent. They want to make this better for all concerned. Jordan then asked the Senate to listen to their opinion. She yielded the floor to James Lieto and Charlie Ebersol.

- viii. James Lieto introduced himself as the President for the Class of 2006. He agrees with the Office in that this transition is not about power. It is about communication. He comes to all the Senate meetings to have a better understanding of what goes on here, and feels that there needs to be an equal tradeoff. Charlie Ebersol said that when this came together, he and Pat agreed that there was too much confusion within the Student Union. He encourages them to consider why they have organizations on equal footing, but only one organization gets to determine all the laws that changes these other bodies. In addition, this one body does not get represented among the other six. He understands that the Senate represents all the dorms, and they are the most widely represented group in terms of student life. Based on this, they must consider that other groups are given so much money a year, that students pay, and they are beholden to the student, why wouldn't they work together?. This would be the ultimate statement that the attitude of the Student Union needs to be positive collaboration and communication. It's not about giving up. It's about coming together. Brin Anderson moved to limit the debate for 10 more minutes. Amy Chambers seconded. There was no opposition. Brian Coughlin would keep the time.
 - ix. At this point, Pat Hallahan moved to take out the budget clause and add four Senate members to the group. Jeremy Lao moved this amendment into debate. Brian Agganis commented that giving away the budget approval process would be a good idea. They had no idea what to do last year. The Senate should not have this power. He proposed to keep the first clause regarding the budget. Dan Zenker seconded that change. Karsten Steinhäuser would like to remove the clause. The reason is that a big part of the budget is a student fee. The senate represents the students. The Executive Cabinet will come to the table with a biased opinion. The Senate would be the most objective body to consider the budget, and therefore should keep the power of approving it. Chuck Anthony said that this is overall a good idea. But the Executive Cabinet could be biased on the budget. Maybe after they pass it, they could amend it further and let the Senate act as a check on that power. Patty Rose thinks it's a good idea to form the body, but she would like the group to be formed, and then come back and decide who should get the power over the budget.
 - x. Dan Zenker motioned to table the entire resolution. The best interest is to give it a week to discuss to think about this and discuss this with the students they represent. Karsten Steinhäuser seconded. Jeremy Lao stated that they would move into discussion about tabling the proposal. He will allow Amy and Andy speak, and then Pat will be able to include. Amy Chambers would like to approve the entire thing, and not the budget clause. She supports this because it is the best way to create union. Andy noted that there is no biased view in the budget proposal. This new body will have fourteen other members who will stop the biased viewpoint from going ahead. That is why they bring everyone together so that everyone's voice can be heard.
 - xi. Pat said that if this is tabled, he would suggest calling a meeting on Sunday. Second, the last two parts go together. If you pass this resolution, it would be a strong statement. If you don't, it is a sign that you don't trust the other members of the Student Union, and you don't want to work together. They are willing to give up what it takes to make the Student Union better. It is
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hard to change the opinion of the administration of the Students, so with this strong voice, they will be with us.

- xii. Jeremy moved the tabling the resolution into a vote. Without opposition, the proposal was tabled to the next official meeting of the Senate. Jordan motioned to move the next official meeting earlier than Wednesday. Brian Agganis seconded. Jordan motioned to meet Sunday night at 7:00 p.m. Ryan Finlen seconded. The Senate moved into voting procedure. With the majority approving, the next meeting was moved to Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Karsten Steinhäuser called roll call vote. After the roll was called the, result was the same, the next meeting will be Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

V. ADJOURNMENT

- a. J.R. Garcia motioned to adjourn. Meghan Krembel seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m. The next Student Senate meeting will take place on Sunday, October 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the Notre Dame Room, LaFortune.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meg Smith
Student Body Secretary