

Notre Dame Student Senate
Executive Summary
March 24, 2004
Notre Dame Room, LaFortune

I. OPENING BUSINESS

- a. Chairperson Jeremy Lao called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
- b. Brad Tucker led the invocation.
- c. Amy Chambers, Mark Gerner, and Molly Griffin were absent.
- d. Dan Zenker motioned to approve the minutes; Meghan Hanzlik seconded. *The Executive Summary from March 17, 2004 was approved at 6:06 p.m.*
- e. Ryan Finlen motioned, per the Student Union Constitution, Senate by-laws, to elect Jack Laskowitz as chair of the meeting. David Osburn seconded. With a vote of 7:8:5, the motion failed. Ryan motioned to accept Jeremy Lao as the acting chair; Jack Laskowitz seconded.

II. PODIUM

- a. Jon Morgan—SCAS
 - i. Jon introduced himself as the founding member of a mentoring program, called Staying Cool After School. The program was started to help at risk middle school students and pair them with high school-college bound students as a mentorship. They have a five year plan, in which the activity will expand nationally. They already have three sites, through the Boys and Girls Clubs of South Bend, Manchester, NH, and Nashua, NH. Jon is looking to train Notre Dame Students to start the SCAS program in their hometown. He is looking for leaders interested in this opportunity. There is an informational meeting on Tuesday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m. in the CSC. He invites the Senators, and anyone else interested. Dan Zenker asked when the training will begin. Jon informed him that they will work weekends leading up to summer, and then they will take this back to their hometown Boys and Girls Clubs to implement. Laura Feeney asked about the summertime commitment. Jon Morgan noted that the leaders need to raise \$300-500, and find a restaurant to support dinner once a week. He will set up the training program, but the leaders will coordinate the activities. He thinks that the commitment is about 1-3 hours per week. To contact them, the website is www.stayingcoolafterschool.org and you can email Jon at jmorgan@nd.edu.
 - b. Joe Dickmann-GSA
 - i. Joe reminded the Senators of his visit last semester. He has returned to Senate to present an open letter regarding the Gay/Straight Alliance Club formation. He noted that they were denied club status on march 4, 2004. Joe hopes that this letter
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expresses all of his desires for the club, as well as addresses Student Activities' concerns regarding this issue. It is an issue that is big on campus, as noted by the overwhelming support of the t-shirts last Thursday. He does not want to stop talking about this issue, however sensitive. He noted that this issue matters to the Notre Dame community.

- ii. Also, Joe stated that there aren't many student resources for gay people at Notre Dame. There are three that are officially recognized: The Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs, Campus Ministry and University Counseling Center. He has found these to be no help, in his personal experience. Joe said that he found support on a personal level, but not for the University. He wants to give students the opportunity to help other students, not through counseling, but as a support system. He stresses the Student Activity reasoning behind the denial of club status, saying: there has been enough progress made on this issue. Joe Dickmann emphasized that once again, Notre Dame was identified as the number one homophobic university in the country. He feels this is unacceptable and incorrect, as indicated by the support he witnessed at their lecture and t-shirt giveaway last Thursday.
- iii. Joe recognized that this is a complex issue, but there were 1600 students that want to make a change in the University. They need a way for students to get involved. Gay students are not a problem, Joe emphasized, but human beings who need support. Since there is no appeals process, they are hoping that a letter, with the support of the Senate and other groups will show Student Activities the student support for the Gay/Straight Alliance. He wants to rally support for the cause and get rid of the stigma that we are a homophobic campus.
- iv. Kaity Redfield stated that the Gender and Diversity committees are in support of this measure. As a student, she saw many who wore the t-shirts on Thursday. They owe it to the people that they represent to take an action; this issue won't just go away. This is about discrimination. Kaity highlighted that this is not about sexual orientation, but about social justice. The discrimination in this complex issue necessitates a sufficiently complex response. Jordan Bongiovanni said that she would feel more comfortable if she brought this letter back to her hall to discuss. Ryan Finlen noted that they have the right to table the letter for vote at a later time. Joe said that he asked the Senate back in January to talk about this with their constituencies; he hopes for a vote tonight. Chuck Anthony asked if their goal was acceptance, why club status was important. Joe Dickmann said that they will keep operating, without club status. Mainly, it is symbolic, because they find this as a discriminatory practice. They cannot allow that blatant kind of exclusion. Patty Rose asked if programming costs and funding was

a concern. Joe noted that currently, they are operating solely on donations. This is the same as Outreach ND, which is not an official club. They can work with people to create programming, but without club status, they cannot schedule meetings and program events.

- v. Meghan Hanzlik asked what the University could do better to help homosexual students. Joe responded that there is a lack of student awareness. They can talk to a priest or counselor, but cannot receive student support. There are only six students on the standing committee. There is nothing official that a gay student can get involved with officially outside of these six positions. Jana Lamplota asked if they could expand the number of representatives on the Standing Committee? Joe said it might be possible, but all of those students are gay, and they are not recognizing the straight students that want to help their peers. They cannot get rid of the application process. Plus, the Standing Committee acts as an advisory board; not a coming together of all types of students to end discrimination. Kaity Redfield said that the resources that are available now want to say that homosexuality is a disease. GSA is a social justice group. They are looking to create an environment where students are supportive and a coming together of gay, lesbian, and straight students. They want to affect the way others are treated. Jordan Bongiovanni yielded the floor to Brad Tucker. Brad asked the difference between Outreach ND and GSA. Joe said that Outreach is a confidential small network. There are a large number of straight students who want to get involved and help their friends. JR Garcia asked if Joe had been working with the clubs to put on programming. Joe responded that they are working on it. They already had t-shirts made and a forum with help form the psychology club, among others. They will meet with the Standing Committee to discuss their mission. Joe concluded that their hands will be tied until they become a club.

III. OFFICER REPORTS

a. Mr. Jeremy Lao, Student Body President

- i. Jeremy noted that CLC created a Social Awareness task force, stemming from the Senate legislation. They are working on charting a plan of action. They will possibly write a resolution, so this work continues in the next year's CLC. Now, they will begin the research necessary to create a course addressing social awareness. Jeremy also stated that the Board of Trustees Report in May will focus on Student Programming Endowment and the TCE issue. He was informed by Kate Schlossner, Academic Delegate, that the committee created by the Academic Council has encountered a roadblock; the main concern being that TCEs are used in promotion, salary and tenure decisions for faculty. Cheri

Smith stated that the promotion issue was a large concern. They have also found that there is a correlation between grades and TCE reviews. Those with poor grades often give bad reports for their professors. That is how they find that the form is flawed. They are looking to make a form that helps both sides equally. Brian Agganis asked about the publication of a separately released survey. Cheri said that this has been suggested in Faculty Senate before. Jeremy said that the argument is, if the students want to publish professor reviews, the Student Government can put out an independent survey, and collect the data themselves. Chuck Anthony noted that a good time to give out TCEs would be right after mid-semester break, because students are not wholly aware of their grades, and also have a half of a semester's experience with a certain professor. Kaity Redfield expressed her concern with allowing students to compile the results; instead of professional statisticians Jeremy echoed that problem. Brian Coughlin said this was tired in the past, but that the University would not allow them to publish negative comments, and it was not beneficial in the process.

- b. Mr. Patrick Corker, Chief of Staff
 - i. Patrick noted the success of Alcohol Awareness week. They are pleased with the result, and hope it continues next year. The office is sponsoring a Texas Hold 'Em Tournament on April 2, 3, 4 for Project Adopt. They need volunteers to man the sign up tables. Patrick encouraged everyone to attend.
- c. Mr. Andy Vitt, HPC Liaison
 - i. The new co-chairs have been elected. The hall of the year applications are due next week. He asked all the Senators and presidents to work on transition for the next two weeks.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Committee on Academic Affairs
 - i. Jack Laskowitz said that they had a resolution on the floor tonight regarding Pharos printing. They were also working on the transition report.
- b. Committee on Diversity Affairs
 - i. Laura Feeney stated that they were working on the support for the GSA open letter.
- c. Committee on Ethics
 - i. Dave Osburn said that they pick the winner of the Michael J. Polumbo award, so the ethics committee needs to meet to evaluate the nominations.

- d. Committee on Gender Issues
 - i. Kaity Redfield mentioned they are wrapping up work on rape kits research. They will send a letter to SOS and University Health Services.
- e. Committee on Residence Life
 - i. Brin Anderson said that the CLC RA training task force created a new survey, because they asked for more research. They have reworded some of the questions. The Senators need to drop them off with their rectors. It is important that all of these are returned; the responsibility to get them to the RAs is the rectors' responsibility, but the Senators need to turn them in on time. There were only 12 dorms represented on the last survey, and the CLC expressed their disappointment. Jana Lamplota said that advertising for the Presidential Pass and Review was underway. They are highlighting seniors who are preparing for duty, or extended schooling.
- f. Committee on University Affairs
 - i. JR Garcia noted that they are finalizing the telecommunications work with *ND to run next year.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- a. COR Update
 - i. Dan Zenker reported that they are finalizing the constitution. They have discussed many general provisions including a Student Union Ethics committee, amendment power back to the Senate, Chief of Staff's role, Secretary and Website administrator.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. SS0304-24: Resolution Expanding the Pharos Student Printing Account System to University Libraries
 - i. Ryan Finlen presented the resolution citing the need for the library printers to go onto the Pharos account system. They are experiencing budget cuts, and the costs of maintaining the printers without cost to students are hurting their operation. He is asking for Senate support to put these printers back to the student account system. Jeremy Lao opened this issue to discussion. Jack Laskowitz noted that he was not necessarily in favor of this measure, but he feels it is good for the University. There were many questions regarding the specific printers involved and the main costs that were being affected. After some discussion about responsible use of the printers, Aaron Zielinski asked PQ; Laura Feeney seconded. *With a vote of 16:4:2, the resolution was approved.*

- b. SS0304-25: Open Letter Regarding Club Status for the Gay/Straight Alliance
- i. Kaity Redfield formally presented the letter. She is asking for student Senate support of this letter. The intention is for the Student Activities office to look once again at the application of the GSA and call a reversal of their decision. Jeremy Lao then opened the matter up for discussion. Laura Feeney said that they have talked about this issue extensively; they even asked the Senators to talk about this within their halls before break. David Osburn expressed O'Neill hall's support, and he hopes they can vote on this tonight. JR Garcia brought up the fact that they have not specifically shown this letter to their dorms. He motioned to table the letter to next week. Karsten Steinhäuser seconded. Jeremy Lao opened the tabling of this letter up for discussion. Jordan Bongiovanni noted that events have transpired since she has talked about this with her dorm. She has a strong feeling about signing her name to something that she is unsure her constituency will support; especially with the sensitivity of this issue. Chuck Anthony noted that it would not hurt to let this sit another week. Kaity Redfield said that this will always be a divided issue; there were 1600 students, however, who wore the t-shirt in support of the GSA and those students need to be represented. The senators much choose at some point. Brain Anderson motioned to end debate on tabling the letter. Michael Maus seconded. Without opposition, debate ended. The Senate then moved into voting procedure; *with a vote of 14:6:1, the letter was tabled.*

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Jana Lamplota urged the Senators to attend the Presidential Pass and Review, and encourage others to go as well.
- b. Brin Anderson reminded the Senators of the RA surveys that must be returned next week.
- c. Laura Feeney said that she will begin a book drive for the children of Nigeria. She will be asking for their help, as well as that of the new senators coming very soon. She also mentioned Badin Spring Breakdown Karaoke contest.
- d. Kaity Redfield noted that the open letter is accepting individual signatures.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Michael Maus motioned to adjourn; Karsten Steinhäuser seconded. *The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.* The next (and final!!!) meeting of the Notre Dame Student Senate will take place Wednesday, March 31, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. in the Notre Dame Room, LaFortune.
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