

# Notre Dame Student Senate

## MEETING MINUTES

02 September 1998

Foster Room, LaFortune

### I. OPENING BUSINESS

- A. Chairwoman Andrea Selak called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.
- B. Chaplain Philip Donner led the invocation.
- C. The following senators were absent Ryan Costantini (Morrissey Hall) and Mickey Doyle (Off-Campus Senator).
- D. The minutes from the 26 August 1998 meeting were approved unanimously.

### II. OFFICER REPORTS

#### A. Officer Reports

##### 1. Student Body President Peter Cesaro

- Thanks to all those who went to the Beat-the-Blue Barbecue today. It was a huge success. I would also like to thank “Whose Your Daddy” and “Letter 8” for playing at the event. I think everyone had a great time.
- I am happy to have Gerry Olinger as Department of Relations Coordinator, and I look forward to his approval tonight.
- On a personal note, I would like to thank the Senate for the flowers and all who signed the card for the warm support and kind words. It really means a lot and I was really touched by it.

##### 2. Student Body Vice-President Andrea Selak

- There is now located in the Student Government Office a Question Box where senators and anyone interested in a particular issue can write the problem or topic down and drop it in the box. I will then read the slips of paper and assign the issues to a particular committee.
- Former Morrissey Senator Matt Szabo has left his files to us, which are presently in the Student Government Office. There is a lot of research there, and I look forward to sifting through it.
- Soon, there will be a poster in LaFortune and in the Student Government Office listing Senate actions and how we have executed a particular bill—the result. So, be looking out for that soon.
- A Notre Dame-Saint Mary’s Student Leadership Retreat is on September 10, 1998 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Senators there are only a limited number of spots available—I believe approximately eight to ten spots. Saint Mary’s did ask that there be a representative from each of the Standing Committees.
- Student Government is currently working on the Board of Trustees’ Report, which will be presented on October 02, 1998. We are trying to finalize a topic, so please if anyone has any ideas as to the direction of the report, let Peter or I know. We have a couple of topics in mind, but we are open to suggestions. The topic will be finalized this Sunday, September 06, 1998.

##### 3. Student Union Secretary Michael Palumbo

- Senators, just a reminder to please pick up your Senate Dogbook Questionnaire in your mailboxes after the meeting if you have already not done so.

\*Chairwoman Andrea Selak opted to avert the Senate Agenda, which she has the power to do according to the Constitution (Article III, Section III, No. 11), placing Podium ahead of Committee Reports. There were no objections from any of the senators present.

### III. Podium

#### A. Student Union Treasurer T.J. Wolfe

- On the sheet that I passed around to you is the Fiscal Summary for 1997-1998. The fiscal year runs from July 01, 1998 to June 30, 1998. As the assistant treasurers and I were reconciling the group accounts on Sunday, August 30, 1998 we discovered that the Student Union had exceeded its budget by \$66,000.00. Now that amount is still being worked out as we continue to try to account for all of the money. It could be slightly less but no more than this amount. You can see on the Fiscal Summary who exceeded the budgets by the number in red---Student Union Board, Office of the President, Executive Cabinet, etc. After we discovered this deficit, the assistant treasurers and I talked about the situation. At the bottom of the sheet is the Carry-forward Account Summary (July 01, 1997). The Fall Activities Fees is \$210,000.00 plus the Excess Carry-over accounts for the \$220,000.00. Now if you move over to the right, you see the Carry-forward Account Summary (July 01, 1998). The Fall Activities Fees is \$247,000.00 is more than enough but minus the deficit of \$66,000.00, the Student Union is left with \$181,000.00, which is simply not enough to meet current budget allocations. The actions that we have taken since learning of this deficit was to immediately notify the Financial Management Board of the problem. I have scheduled a meeting for Monday, September 07, 1998 to discuss ways to handle this matter. I would not label this a crisis, but the deficit is going to cause the Student Union problems. There is probably going to be some budget cuts; yet we all understand that the budget and its allocations is not an exact process. We do not expect each entity to meet its needs exactly; in the past, we have acted in a good faith manner to groups, meaning that if a group runs out of money, they do not spend more until they receive permission. Really, this is the first year in which the Student Union has had a problem. Possible solutions are to increase communication among the different branches and between all of the groups' controllers or treasurers and the Office of the Treasurer; secondly, the Senate could amend current bylaws regarding the budget process.
- (Senator Roberts): I see on the Fiscal Summary under Student Union Board and Office of the President "admin." What is meant by "admin?"
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): "Admin." means administrative costs, which range from phones to supplies such as paper to pizza.
- (Senator O'Donoghue): I would like to address this question to Ryan Stecz. What happened Ryan, why are you over by \$38,000.00?
- (Student Union Board Manager Ryan Stecz): Recently I have been in communication with T.J. and SUB's Controller concerning this matter. When everyone left last summer, some accounts were over but most were not. A lot of bills we had not anticipated came in over the summer. For instance, movies: the company where we get our movies from charges us a flat rate. Say a particular movie makes \$2,000.00, and we originally thought that the movie would make \$1,600.00. Well, the company charges us an extra \$200.00 because they want 50% of our profit. Thus, we thought that we had money in the account, but it turns out that we had not. Now in the administrative department, I am still investigating that right now. But events like the Collegiate Jazz Festival and AnTostal, well those bills do not come in until the end of May when everyone is already gone.
- (Senator Olejnik): Is the movies' money dispersed?
- (Student Union Board Manager Stecz): No, the money that we make off of movies stays in that particular account.
- (Senator Shannon): Ryan, don't you have an idea of what you guys are spending?

- (Student Union Board Manager Stecz): When SUB runs an event, they often hire out the University's Department of Facilities Operations. They charge us up to \$800.00 per event depending on the nature of the event, but we never see the bill. I have been discussing this with our advisor; the charge it just shows up on our monthly bill. Thus, it is extremely hard to budget accordingly when you don't know what the charges are. Say you are setting up for the Collegiate Jazz Festival, well, SUB is billed for the event having no idea how much Notre Dame is going to take out of the account.
- (Student Body President Cesaro): Running a deficit is unacceptable. There is plenty of blame to go around, but we have to realize what went wrong here and realize how we can solve this problem to prevent this from happening again. Over the summer, the Office of the President has started to make some changes. We have developed some contingency plans. So the Financial Management Board knows, the Office of the President is prepared to cut 20% of our budget or approximately \$8,000.00. We may not make our accounting professors happy, but we will definitely make our management professors happy.
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): Guys, no one intentionally did this. Everyone made an effort...
- (Senator Mamak): T.J. and I have talked about change to the bylaws concerning the Financial Management Board and the Office of the Treasurer. We need to provide mechanisms for them to keep up on these aspects of the budget.
- (Senator Foy): What are the ramifications of this deficit?
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): No money is available for capital improvements such as computers. That is for sure. As expense accounts close, maybe shut them down. That is an option, maybe not the best one or the fairest one. From a business point of view, we should try to eliminate this deficit as soon as possible.
- (Senator Linster): So you are saying that we should make budget cuts now?
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): We must cut at some point; it is now or later. We will discuss this at our next Financial Management Board meeting on Monday.
- (Senator Roberts): Do you have a specific way to distribute budget cuts, or is it according to how much you were over last year?
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): The Financial Management Board has not discussed this option yet. We don't know where the money has to come from.
- (Senator Linster): Well, I don't want SUB to get cut. I think SUB does a great job. They shouldn't get cut for what happened last year. Their funding is tight as it is, and that the programming they offer is important to many students. The point of all of this is to help the students. Maybe we should raise the Activities Fee again?
- (Student Union Board Manager Stecz): I really appreciate you saying that. When you take that money away, you take it away from what SUB can do on campus. If SUB funding gets cut, it's going to hurt the entire student body. That is an important point to realize, we are trying to provide entertainment for this campus and to keep people on campus during the weekends.
- (Senator O'Donoghue): As Treasurer of the Freshmen Class, I knew where every dollar went. I think that is what you need to do, tighten control over funds.
- (Student Union Board Manager Stecz): We can make the cuts, but since our budget is the largest it is difficult to account for everything.
- (Senator Olejnik): Do we have to approve a new budget if we make cuts?
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): I believe it is a Financial Management Board decision, but we will run it by this group.

- (Student Body President Cesaro): On the positive side, this situation will make executive Cabinet more significant. We can use the clubs, Office of the President, SUB, and the classes to still put on events, but in the spirit of co-sponsorship. This will also give a chance to get more students involved.
- (Senator Roberts): I believe that it should be the organizations that were in deficit that should make the cuts. They need to talk to their controllers or treasurers and establish more communication and better ways of oversight.
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): I think you are right, we need to get those people more involved in the process and decisions.
- (Senator Foster): I have a question: where does the \$66,000.00 come from. Is it on the sheet?
- (Student Union Treasurer Wolfe): The calculation is not on the sheet. I thank you for bringing that point up. I am still in the process of going through other accounts and transactions to discover where all the money went. There maybe possible errors in the accounting, and the deficit might be lower.
- (Senator Mamak): I think this situation is an appeal for Accounting majors. But I think we should let the Financial Management Board members do their thing, after all they are the experts. I do think it should and it must come back to the Senate for our approval, this budget. We need time to debate it and make any possible reallocations as we see fit.
- (Student Senate Advisor Joseph Cassidy): I think the important thing in all of this is how to avoid this problem. Reorganization can be a positive thing. After all, Senate is supposed to be an overseeing body. In years past, this body has not performed that function well at all. I think it is time to do it for the sake of all involved to avoid this problem in the future.

## II. OFFICER REPORTS

### B. Committee Reports

1. Academic Affairs (Senator Drew Olejnik, Co-Chairman)
  - The Academic Affairs Committee has Resolution S9899-09 back on the agenda. Hopefully everything is in place for a vote tonight. Remember that if we table the bill, it is killed.
  - We did have a meeting this past week, and we will be meeting at 7:00 p.m. this week.
2. Ethics (Senator Jason Linster, Chairman)
  - The Ethics Committee has not had a meeting yet, which I guess is a good thing.
  - Kevin and I would like to be in charge of the Senate T-shirt, which I guess passed. So if anyone is interested and is artistic, feel free to join our committee.
3. Gender Relations (Senator Sophie Fortin, Chairwoman)
  - The Gender Relation Committee met yesterday.
  - We discussed the d-tex issue. What to do about it? What are the pros and cons to the problem? Spencer agreed to go to the Security Office and find answers to those questions. Why is it needed and what are the issues?
  - Another topic that came up was a non-discrimination clause. Last year, the Faculty Senate passed a non-discrimination clause. Now it is going to the Academic Council, where if it passes again, it will go to the Board of Trustees.
  - (Senator Stefko): Why don't you ask Mr. Cassidy?
  - (Student Senate Advisor Cassidy): I really don't know.
  - (Senator Fortin): Well, I know the Chair of the Faculty Senate. He gave me a copy of the resolution that they passed. I am asking that all senators go back to their dorms and see how everyone feels about a non-discrimination clause.
  - (Senator Linster): A Residence Life Subcommittee is also looking into this matter.

4. Multicultural Affairs (Senator Stephany Foster, Co-Chairwoman)
  - The Student Leadership Retreat on Race and Prejudice will occur on November 13 and November 14. The Multicultural Affairs Committee will meet with the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and with Campus Ministry to plan this retreat.
  - We have received a proposal from the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs for an Office of Multicultural Student Affairs Center. Our committee will be looking at this proposal.
  - The Observer will be sent a letter from Senate Multicultural Affairs Committee concerning the Race and Prejudice Retreat
5. Residence Life (Senator Matt Mamak, Chairman)
  - At our last meeting, we broke up into five subcommittees, which are Bookstore Subcommittee, Food Services Subcommittee, Dorm Life Subcommittee, Building and Construction Subcommittee, and Security, Parking, and Gate Subcommittee. Each specific subcommittee will be able to focus on issues relevant to their area, then report back anything or propose anything back to the full committee before it arrives on the Senate floor.
  - We met Monday to hammer out the issues of main importance. For instance, backpacks in South Dining Hall, which Jill will talk about it in a few moments.
  - Last year, there was a Food Committee forum, which was a little confusing.
  - (Senator Olejnik): Yes, I was on that committee. We met over dinner, and we were very disorganized.
  - (Senator Esenwein, Vice-Chairwoman): I called Mr. Prentkowski over the backpack issue in South Dining Hall. He said that the policy has been effect for twenty-five years. Obviously, it has not been enforced but why? He noted that this year the space in the aisles and around the food is congested if not scary. If backpacks are allowed in the dining hall area where it is narrow, people could trip and fall. Mr. Prentkowski told me that there are coin lockers for students to use, lockers that will return your quarter to you after you leave. This issue is mainly a response to safety issues.
  - (Senator Rompf): Where are the coin lockers?
  - (Senator Esenwein): He said to the left. They try to keep balance in the dining hall to the two sides, but there are not enough employees to achieve this goal.
  - (Senator Mamak): Soon North Dining Hall will have waffle machines installed for daily use. The Residence Life Committee will be writing a resolution concerning backpacks for next week. After this meeting, if any Residence Life Committee member can stay ten minutes, I would like to discuss the resolution with you guys. Another issue that cam up was the football ticket distribution process and the off-campus party problem. Both of these issues have been referred to the Campus Life Council Alcohol Committee, chaired by Mickey Doyle.
6. Oversight (Senator Brian O'Donoghue, Chairman)
  - At our last committee meeting, we started to look at the bylaws and the transition process from Constitution to bylaws. For now, the committee is working on a bylaw to allow the presenter of a bill or the chairperson of a committee to speak more than twice when it is their bill being debated.
  - As a result of the deficit issue, we will have to work more closely with the Treasurer's Office.
  - (Senator Mamak): When the Constitution was rewritten a few years ago, everything was left in there with the hope that one day, all of it would be removed and replaced with bylaws. Our Constitution is approximately forty-five pages long. It says things like who are members and when committees meet. This should be changed.

- (Senator O'Donoghue): When we do this, senators will receive a huge packet of information.
- (Senator Herlihy): When we do do this, are you going to bring everything at once to the floor?
- (Senator O'Donoghue): Before my committee goes any farther, does everybody agree with this process...OK, then when it does come to the floor, it will be a packet of information, and we will vote on this in bloc.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Resolution S9899-09: Increased Student Involvement in the Selection of Commencement Speakers at Notre Dame  
 (Chairwoman Selak): Since Ryan is not here to answer any questions, Drew would you mind doing that.  
 (Senator Olejnik): Sure.  
 (Senator Linster): I move to previous question.  
 (Senator Mamak): I call for unanimous consent.  
 (Chairwoman Selak): The motion is for previous question. Is there a second?  
 (Senator Ogorzalek): Second.  
 (Chairwoman Selak): All those in favor of moving to previous question, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands, and abstentions. (The vote passes by a margin of 26 to 0 to 0.) OK, we will vote on Resolution S9899-09. All those in favor of the resolution, please raise your hand, all those opposed, any abstentions. (The resolution is approved by a margin of 23 to 1 to 3).
- B. Formal Approval of Student Government Executive Coordinator of Relations Gerry Olinger  
 (Senator Dittmar): I move for unanimous consent.  
 (Senator O'Donoghue): Second.  
 (Chairwoman Selak): Are there any objection to Gerry Olinger being named Student Government Department of Relations Coordinator? Hearing none, he is approved.

#### V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resolution S9899-13: A Resolution Commending the Work of the University for Summer Improvements
- (Senator Mamak): We have never commended the university for their hard work over the summer. Many individuals have, but we have not done so as a body. This has been done in the past. We do this to get Senate approval and the President's signature. This resolution talks a lot about the progress made, and it lists several of the improvements by name. I really want to pass this. If someone can think of a better way of doing this, let me know.
  - (Parliamentarian Mark Higgins): Technically this is not a resolution but a letter.
  - (Senator Mamak): I know but I want to get Peter's signature.
  - (Senator Stefko): I move for unanimous consent.
  - (Senator O'Donoghue): Second.
  - (Chairwoman Selak): Are there any objection to Resolution S9899-13? Hearing none, it is approved unanimously.

#### VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

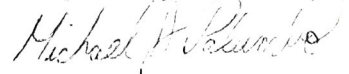
- (Senator O'Donoghue): Oversight Committee has a meeting tomorrow. Friday is Pat Foy's 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday.
- (Senator Foy): You guys are all invited to the party in Castle Point after the rally on Friday.

- (Senator Linster): Dillon Pep Rally, tomorrow, 6:00 p.m. is when the bands play including us. Then, 7:00 p.m. is when the rally starts.
- (Chairwoman Selak): I would like to thank all who attended the barbecue.
- (Senator Penton): Can we move the AA meeting, so it does not conflict with the rally?
- (Senator Olejnik): No meeting this week!

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

- (Senator Linster): I motion to adjourn.
- (Senator Shannon): Second.
- (Chairwoman Selak): The Student Senate is adjourned. (The Student Senate adjourned at 8:22 p.m. Its next meeting is on Wednesday, September 09, 1998 at 6:00 p.m. in the Notre Dame Room of LaFortune Student Center).

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. Palumbo  
Student Union Secretary

