

Notre Dame Student Senate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

23 November 1998

Alumni-Senior Club

I. OPENING BUSINESS

- A. Chairwoman Andrea Selak called the meeting to order at 8:01 p.m.
- B. Fisher Hall Senator Philip Dittmar led the invocation.
- C. The following senators were absent: Melissa Balchunas (Lyons Hall), Mickey Doyle (Off-Campus), P.J. DuWors (Sorin Hall), Erin Herlihy (Welsh Family Hall), Spencer Stefko (Zahm Hall), and Bridget Tomes (Cavanaugh Hall).
- D. The Executive Summary from 18 November 1998 was unanimously approved.

II. REPORTS

A. Officer Reports

1. Student Body President Peter Cesaro

- Mr. Cesaro reported that the Office of the President was starting a service project called Irish Elves and looking to do a joint activity with Saint Mary's College and possibly Holy Cross College for Mother Theresa's Service Week.
- Mr. Cesaro reported that the Louisiana State Bonfire was a huge success. A couple of players, a coach and the Glee Club participated in the event. The footballs passed out were compliments of Addidas.
- The Office of the President is going to work on *duLac* revisions soon, so those senators who have displayed interest should be receiving more information soon.
- Mr. Cesaro announced that academic pride lunches would continue next semester.
- In conjunction with the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, the Office of the President is attempting to institutionalize residence halls' diversity workshops or presentations.

2. Student Body Vice President Andrea Selak

- Ms. Selak announced that next Sunday, November 29, 1998 there would be no Student Senate Committee Chairs meeting. If anything for the agenda, please e-mail Ms. Selak at <selak.1>.
- Ms. Selak thanked Ms. Boselli, Ms. Esenwein, Ms. Mendoza, and Mr. O'Donoghue for their help on the Hurricane Mitch Relief effort.
- Ms. Selak noted an outline of building renovations planned for the next few years from the *Notre Dame Magazine* included in the Student Senate packet.

3. Student Union Secretary Michael Palumbo

- Nothing to report.

B. Committee Reports

1. Academic Affairs (Senator Ryan Costantini and Senator Drew Olejnik, Co-Chairmen)

- Senator Olejnik reported the Academic Affairs Committee held a brainstorming meeting in which the differences with Letter S9899-40: A Letter Encouraging Professors to Allow Students to Submit Drafts of Papers were resolved and what the Committee intended to accomplish by the end of March.
- Academic Affairs Committee will not meet on Sunday, November 29, 1998.

2. Ethics (Senator Jason Linster, Chairmen)
 - Senator Linster reported that the Ethics Committee met on Sunday, November 22, 1998 to discuss some matters.
 - Student Senate T-shirts should arrive by the end of the semester, now since all is ordered and the proper paperwork has been completed.
3. Gender Relations (Senator Sophie Fortin, Chairwoman)
 - Senator Fortin announced the Gender Relations Committee would not meet on Tuesday, November 24, 1998.
 - Senator Rompf noted that the Detex Resolution had received praise in the Office of Residence Life even before Student Senate contacted them.
4. Multicultural Affairs (Senator Stephany Foster, Chairwoman)
 - Senator Foster reported that the Multicultural Affairs Committee is continuing its work on Celebration of Cultures Forum, which will be held on January 21, 1999 in the LaFortune Student Center Ballroom. Presently, the committee has an opening and a closing speaker for the event. Now, the committee is focusing on creating the panel of speakers.
5. Residence Life (Senator Matt Mamak, Chairman)
 - Senator Mamak reported that the Residence Life Committee had Letter S9899-42: A Letter to Mr. Lyphout for Reviewing Backpack Policy in South Dining Hall on the agenda.
 - Senator Mamak announced his intentions to remove Resolution S9899-41: Resolution in Support of Social Space in the Library from the agenda.
 - Senator Mamak announced that Mr. Ryan Harding, Club Coordination Council Coordinator, would like to meet with any senator to discuss a new funding idea for the Student Union in LaFortune. The idea concerns how the clubs are to be funded in the future.
 - Senator Esenwein announced that all senators in the North Dining Hall area should e-mail Senator Ogorzalek with their suggestions for the North Dining Hall menu.
6. Oversight (Senator Brian O'Donoghue, Chairman)
 - Senator O'Donoghue reported that the Oversight Committee reviewed and approved the following Student Union organization's Transition Reports: Office of the President, Student Union Board, Class of 2001, and Off-Campus Council.
 - The Oversight Committee granted extensions to the following Student Union organizations for their Transition Reports: Club Coordination Council, Judicial Council, and Office of the Treasurer. Other Student Union organizations' Transition Reports are still being reviewed.
 - Senator O'Donoghue reported that two constitutional amendments will be on the Senate agenda for December 02, 1998: Amendment One--strike Article IV, Section V, Clause 8 of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Body and adjust numbering accordingly; Amendment Two--strike Article IV, Section IV, Clause 5 of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Body and adjust numbering accordingly.

III. PODIUM

- A. Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs' Symbol: Senator Ryan Costantini
 - Senator Costantini spoke on the flier that was posted around campus from the Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs intended to promote "a welcoming place on conversation about issues related to sexual orientation."

- NETWORK hopes to increase Notre Dame's tolerance of sexual orientation. Senator Costantini did not object to the reason behind NETWORK for all Notre Dame students could learn more about this issue.
- Senator Costantini objected to the flier's symbol. The flier depicts the shadow of the Dome, the image of Mary, and a rainbow—the universal symbol of gay rights. He offered three reasons why the flier should be changed: placing a symbol of gay rights next to the most visible Catholic image on campus is morally questionable; this image is a political symbol; and a drive to win acceptance on the part of gays and lesbians at Notre Dame.
- Senator Costantini urged the Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs to remove the symbol of the Dome and of Mary as well as urged the Student Activities Office to revoke its approval for this flier.
- Senator Roberts suggested that the symbol of the rainbow is open to personal interpretation, thus it would not be wrong to have it next to a Catholic symbol since the message is rights, basic human rights. Any conversation, furthermore, would contain negative comments. In order to progress, both negative as well as positive comments must be aired.
- Senator Fortin believed this symbol was part of gay pride: one can be gay and proud to be a student at Notre Dame. The symbol itself is laden with different interpretations, however, and causes many people to have different perspectives.
- Senator Roberts mentioned that perhaps the picture itself was not the problem but the interpretations of the picture. Thus by asking for the picture to be changed, it be seen as hiding, not deal with the real problem.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Letter S9899-40: Letter Encouraging Professors to Allow Students to Submit Drafts of Papers
- Senator Olejnik motioned to bring Letter S9899-40 to the Senate floor; Senator Shannon seconded the motion.
 - Senator Olejnik stated the differences that this letter faced last week were resolved in committee. Board of Trustees Report Coordinators—Mr. Massoud and Mr. Tomko—also reviewed the letter and changed some of the language to make it softer, so as not to appear that the Senate was forcing this upon the professors. Dean Kolman, finally, approved the use of her quote in the letter.
 - Senator Olejnik called for previous question if there were no objections; Senator Foy objected to this motion.
 - Senator Foy believed this letter to be telling professors how to teach their classes, i.e. students interjecting their ways on professors.
 - Senator Dittmar, on the other hand, envisioned this letter, a way to produce better drafts and better papers, as encouragement to students for spending more time in their drafts hence preventing professors from reading papers of essentially “first draft” quality.
 - Senator Linster offered a counter-argument to this letter: students do not use office hours that are exactly for this purpose of writing drafts and discussing how to do better through the written word. Senator Gertken likewise felt students need to have a stronger initiative themselves, utilizing all means necessary at their disposal.
 - Senator O'Donoghue questioned whether this was a grade inflation maneuver or an educational maneuver.
 - Senator Costantini motioned to send Letter S9899-40 back to the Academic Affairs Committee; Senator Linster objected.

- Senator Penton restated the point of this letter: Notre Dame students are not as good of writers as they should be. This letter encourages professors to submit drafts of papers in the hope of making Notre Dame students better writers and better candidates for prestigious scholarships.
- Senator Shannon motioned to send Letter S9899-40 back to the Academic Affairs Committee; Senator Costantini seconded the objection.
- Parliamentarian Higgins asserted personal privilege, limiting debate to five minutes on this matter. The motion was defeated by a majority of the senators present.
- Senator Mamak moved to dissolve the Student Senate into the Committee of the Whole. Letter S9899-40 was discussed.
- Senator O'Donoghue moved to dissolve the Committee of the Whole and ascend back into the Student Senate.
- Senator O'Donoghue called for previous question on the motion to send Letter S9899-40 back to the Academic Affairs Committee; Senator Foy seconded the motion. The motion was defeated by a majority of the senators present.
- Senator Dittmar called for previous question on Letter S9899-40; Senator Ogorzalek seconded the motion.
- The Student Senate with a vote of 14 to 7 passed Letter S9899-40.
- Mr. Cassidy asked the record to state that some senators actually wanted a new letter altogether.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Formal Approval of Oversight Committee's Transition Reports
 - Senator O'Donoghue motioned to bring the selected Transition Reports to the Senate floor; Senator Mamak seconded the motion.
 - Senator O'Donoghue called for previous question; Senator Roberts seconded the motion.
 - The Student Senate passed the selected Transition Reports with a margin of 19 to 2.
- B. Resolution S9899-41: A Resolution in Support of Social Space in the Library
 - (Withdrawn from agenda)
- C. Letter S9899-42: Letter to Mr. Lyphout for Reviewing Backpack Policy of South Dining Hall
 - Senator Esenwein motioned to bring Letter S9899-42 to the Senate floor; Senator Mamak seconded the motion.
 - Senator Esenwein mentioned that a few changes were made to this letter in the Residence life Committee and asked if there were any further changes to the letter that senators wished to be made.
 - Senator Shannon motioned for unanimous consent of Letter S9899-42; Senator Costantini seconded the motion. Senator O'Donoghue objected to this request.
 - Senator O'Donoghue offered a friendly amendment to Letter S9899-42 that Andrea M Selak (Chair of Student Senate/ Student Body Vice President), Matthew W. Mamak (Chair of Student Senate Residence Life Committee), and Jill E. Esenwein (Vice Chair of Student Senate Residence Life Committee). Senator Esenwein and Senator Mamak accepted the friendly amendment.
 - Senator Mamak moved to unanimously approve Letter S9899-42; Senator Shannon seconded the motion.
 - The Student Senate unanimously approved Letter S9899-42.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Senator Rompf announced the results of Howard Hall's Student Senate Special Election. Ms. Christine Jacobs won the election to become Senator-elect of Howard.
- Senator Foster congratulated Pasquerilla Hall East on becoming Inter-hall Football Champions by beating Breen-Phillips.
- Chairwoman Selak noted also Keenan Hall's victory in the Inter-hall Football Championship by beating Sorin Hall.
- Senator Foy announced that Carroll Hall would be putting up a giant Christmas Tree on their lawn on Saturday, December 05, 1998
- Chairwoman Selak announced that she was looking into reserving Rocco's for a Senate dinner.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- The Student Senate adjourned at 9:15 p.m. on Wednesday, November 23, 1998. Its next meeting will be Wednesday, December 02, 1998 in the Notre Dame Room, LaFortune at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Palumbo
Student Union Secretary

