Commission on Student Affairs

April 6, 2006
3:30-5:30 p.m.
Brush Mt. B
Squires Student Center

Minutes


Absent with Notice: Jamie Kalista, Margaret McQuain, Brian Warren, Brian Whitaker

Absent without Notice: Brandon Eason, Caryl Gray, Gary Kinder, Laura Morgan, Jerrine Morris,

Guests: Ray Plaza, Ken Stanton

I. Call to Order

Ms. Jory Ruscio, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Ruscio called for adoption of the agenda. There was a motion to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was seconded and approved.

III. Chair Report

Ms. Ruscio indicated she had nothing to report.

IV. Old Business

- University Policies for Student Life – Ms. Frances Keene presented “CSA Resolution 2005-2006A: Resolution for Changes to University Policies for Student Life, Part III.” Parts I and II were approved at the March 23 meeting. Part III is “Reciprocity Statement for Jurisdiction of Off Campus Misconduct.” The agreement is with other universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. If a student from another Virginia institution visits our campus and causes serious problems or damage, it will be reported to their home institution. This is already a practice among universities in Virginia. This policy will clarify how these incidents are handled and make sure students know about the
policy and realize the boundaries are within this state. There was a motion to waive the first reading in order to pass the resolution through University Council and present it to the Board of Visitors in June. The motion was seconded and approved. Following a brief discussion, there was a motion to vote on the resolution. The motion was seconded and approved. The resolution was approved and will go to University Council with Parts I and II.

- **Green Fee** - Mr. James Tyger asked that this discussion be postponed until the next meeting when Ms. Katelyn Keefe could be present.

- **LASO Concern** – Mr. Brian Marroquin, chair of the Latino Association of Student Organizations (LASO), made a point of information about the charge of the commission: “Areas which are considered by CSA include: student relations with peers, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and the community....” Mr. Marroquin distributed copies of some e-mails and letters that have circulated between LASO and the Hispanic Caucus (faculty/staff) beginning October 2005. These documents refer to concerns about changes made to the Multicultural Center (MCC) in Squires during summer 2005. LASO requested that the Hispanic Caucus support their concerns about the MCC in a letter to the administration, but the matter was not handled in a timely manner. This caused a disagreement between the two groups that has been on-going since October. There has also been a disagreement between the two groups about the Latino Achievement Ceremony scheduled for May 11. LASO initially felt they could handle the situation internally, but it has been going on for a long period of time and they felt it should be brought to the commission. Ms. Ruscio indicated that she has discussed mediation with both groups, but Mr. Marroquin requested that CSA hear their concerns before mediation occurs. Mr. Ray Plaza, chair of the Hispanic Caucus, was in attendance and indicated that he would like to share the caucus’s perspective in the future and would welcome the opportunity to mediate the situation with LASO. Mr. Marroquin asked the commission to review policies that relate to student organizations and their relationships with faculty/staff groups. Following a discussion on how to proceed with the current situation, the commission decided that mediation between the two parties is the best course of action. Dr. Zenobia Hikes indicated that she, Mr. Tom Brown, and Ms. Frances Keene have been in the process of developing a mediation process for the university and they will be able to help appoint a mediator. Ms. Ruscio thanked Mr. Marroquin for bringing his concerns to the commission and they will be in touch with both parties regarding mediation.

V. **New Business**

- **Student Budget Board Annual Funding** – Mr. Steve Burrell presented the 2006-2007 Budget Board Appropriations Strategy for review and approval. Fifteen student organizations requested funding from the Student Budget Board. In addition, 40 groups requested funds from the SGA Budget Board and 10 groups requested funds from the GSA Budget Board. Total amount requested was $1,546,312; total funds available and appropriated were $878,070.
The floor was opened for a question and answer period. Several commission members expressed concern that a number of the underrepresented groups had their budget requests reduced so drastically. The Principles of Community should be taken into consideration even in the budget process. Mr. Burrell responded that the Budget Board is very concerned about the diversity of the university and many of the groups who did receive more funding also provide diversity programs to the university. He pointed out that many groups didn’t do well with their funding because they didn’t attend the workshops on how to prepare their budgets and weren’t able to present their cases very well at the budget hearings. This year they had 20 workshops and six help sessions for groups so they could review the budgets before they were submitted. They are working to increase the training opportunities for groups. Student organizations are encouraged to utilize the workshops and training sessions that are offered. Mr. Bagai also pointed out that student organizations are invited to sit on the budget boards and help make the funding decisions, but they don’t have many volunteers to serve.

The commission discussed the need for additional funding for student organizations. Dr. Ed Spencer reminded the commission that when Mr. Dwight Shelton and Mr. Tim Hodge attended the March 23 CSA meeting, they requested a benchmarking to determine how much more money is needed for the SBB. Dr. Spencer also suggested that SGA and GSA conduct a survey of students to determine support of increased funding for SBB, and write supporting documentation. This information could be presented to the Budget Office in the fall at the budget hearings.

Mr. Burrell indicated that once the budget has been approved, student organizations will be notified by letter of their funding amounts and given the opportunity to appeal. Groups may appeal the funding recommendations for the following three reasons only: 1) established policies and procedures were not followed; 2) the organization was denied the opportunity to present significant evidence at the time of hearing; 3) the funding decision was arbitrary and capricious. The fact that the Board did not fund an item at the requested level does not constitute grounds for appeal.

There was a motion to table the vote on the budget to allow more time to study it. The motion was seconded, and a discussion followed. Tabling the vote would require an extra commission meeting on April 13. The motion was voted on and did not pass. There was a motion to end discussion of the budget and vote on whether to approve it. The motion was seconded and passed. There was a motion to approve the budget. The motion was seconded and passed.

- **CSA SBB Appeals Board** – Mr. Steve Burrell asked for five volunteers to serve on the SBB Appeals Board. The chair must be a faculty or staff member. The board will only meet if an appeal is submitted. The student groups will have fourteen days to appeal. April 21 is the deadline. Ms. Jennifer Crook, Mr. Robert Sebek, Mr. Bavik Shah, Mr. Michael Goode, and Ms. Jennifer Jessie volunteered to serve on the appeals committee. Mr. Sebek will serve as chair. If any appeals are won, the funding will be taken from contingency funding for next year.
• CSA Nominations Open

Ms. Ruscio announced that elections for the 2006-2007 CSA chair and vice chair will take place at the April 20 meeting. Ms. Ruscio opened the floor for nominations, and Mr. Jamie Kalista was nominated for chair. Mr. Kalista wasn’t present, but will be able to accept or decline the nomination at the April 20 meeting. There were no immediate nominations for vice chair. Nominations for chair and vice chair will continue at the April 20 meeting and may also be made by e-mailing Ms. Ruscio at jzmuda@vt.edu.

Ms. Ruscio also announced that the commission needs to appoint student representatives to the Academic Support Committee and to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity for next year. Volunteers or nominations for these two positions will be open until the April 20 meeting.

VI. Announcements

Mr. Burrell said that he and other members of the Student Budget Board are interested in meeting with people who are concerned about the process, and will entertain ideas about how to improve it. He announced that Student Leadership Employment Program (SLEP) applications will be available in the Student Activities office the week of April 10 and encouraged those who would be here over the summer to apply. It is an excellent opportunity for student leaders to work together over the summer, as well as giving them a chance to meet and work with administrators.

Mr. Bavik Shah announced that International Week takes place from April 7-14. Events will be taking place throughout the week, including the Parade of Nations, the Street Fair, movies, luncheons, a talent show, and a soccer tournament.

Mr. James Tyger announced that applications for next year’s SGA Executive Committee will be available the week of April 10. He will forward information to the CSA e-mail list.

Mr. Scott Cheatham encouraged everyone to arrive on time for the next meeting because elections will be taking place. Under parliamentary procedure, you aren’t allowed to vote if you don’t hear all nominees speak about their qualifications.

Ms. Elizabeth made the following VTU announcements: Memoirs of a Geisha, April 7 and 8, 8:00 p.m. in Squires Colonial Hall. She also announced that Rudy Ruettiger, a motivational speaker, will be here on April 26, 7:00 p.m. in Burruss Auditorium.

Ms. Jaquisha Kearson announced that the Corps of Cadets is sponsoring an ROTC basketball tournament starting at 4:30 on Saturday, April 8, and going all day on Sunday, April 9. 13 schools have confirmed they will attend.

Mr. Navin Manjooran announced that on March 27 the Board of Visitors selected Ms. Ennis McCrery as the graduate representative to the BOV for next year.
Ms. Jennifer Jessie announced that the BOV selected Mr. Greg Sagstetter as the undergraduate representative.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Sanzenbach
Recording Secretary