Commission on Student Affairs  
February 1, 2007  
3:30-5:30 p.m.  
Brush Mt. B  
Squires Student Center  

Minutes  

Present: Ashley Anderson, Sumeet Bagai, Scott Cheatham, Kristin Clarke, Ron Daniel, Michael Dunleavy, Rick Ferraro, Tim Filbert, Monika Gibson, Monica Hunter, Frances Keene, Gary Kinder, Tanya LeRoith, Ennis McCrery, Margaret McQuain, Jacqueline Nicholson, Amanda Olejarski, Ann O’Neal, Manisha Patel, Marshaun Glover for Jory Ruscio, Greg Sagstetter, Karen Sanders, Sarah Saxton, Robert Sebek, Guy Sims, Ed Spencer, Devin Stone, Mike Stoupa, James Tyger, LaChelle Waller, John Gray Williams  

Absent: Saurabh Attarde, Virgilio Centeno, Rob Dalton, Zenobia Hikes, Adeel Khan, Pris Martinez, Shane Moore, Aaren Salido, Brian Whitaker  

I. Call to Order  

Mr. Sumeet Bagai, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. and opened the meeting with an icebreaker exercise.  

II. Adoption of Agenda  

Mr. Bagai called for adoption of the agenda. There was a motion to adopt the agenda as written. The motion was seconded and passed.  

III. Chair Report  

Mr. Scott Cheatham, Vice Chair, announced that the commission now has a listserv (CSAREPRESENTATIVES@listserv.vt.edu) and all CSA members should be able to send e-mails to the listserv. Mr. Bagai announced that the commission has six remaining meetings this semester and asked everyone to attend or send a representative.  

IV. Old Business  

a. Student Budget Board – Discussion of Changes – Mr. Bagai indicated that he had asked Ms. Monica Hunter to provide a brief overview of the Student Budget Board (SBB) discussions from fall semester. Ms. Hunter outlined some of the changes and improvements they have made this year, including the following training opportunities: 1) 18 mandatory workshops for organizations applying for annual funding, 2) advisors workshops that trained the advisors on how student organizations
should complete their applications; 3) drop-in budget workshops. Ms. Hunter announced that 68 organizations submitted applications for funding. The total amount requested was over 1.3 million, and they have $870,000 available to allocate. They are still working on moving the small grants process to a completely electronic format, but the process remains the same as last year for the time being. Ms. Hunter also reminded the commission of a change to the funding guidelines that CSA approved last semester: when a performance contract fee is $5,000 or more, the event must either be co-sponsored by another organization and/or a university department. In addition, if the contract fee is $2,500 or more and doesn’t have a co-sponsor, they will require a $5 ticket fee for the event.

Ms. Nicki Cantrell, Director of Student Activities, was present and indicated that Ms. Hunter has been meeting with the SBB to make sure they are aware of the student organizations’ priorities. She also informed the commission they are in process of filling the faculty and staff spaces on the SBB. As discussed with CSA in the fall, in an effort to make the funding process more equitable, a review group will study the budgets to ensure they are fair to all groups. This review will take place before the budgets are presented to CSA for approval. She indicated the review group will only study across-the-board funding issues; they will not have any say in the actual budget amounts that are allocated. The floor was opened for discussion. Ms. Cantrell was asked if students could attend the review meeting, but after discussing the matter, the commission decided it would be best to let the review committee complete its review, then report its findings back to CSA. Ms. Cantrell and Ms. Hunter were asked to explain how they arrived at the decision for co-sponsorship of events. They responded that the purpose of this policy is to foster collaboration with organizations, and it will keep the cost of events from falling to one organization.

Mr. Bagai closed the discussion period and asked that in the future when changes to the SBB guidelines are made to include students in the discussion process to make sure their viewpoints are taken into consideration. Mr. Bagai announced that the SBB needs two teaching faculty to sit on the board and asked the commission to see him after the meeting with the names of faculty who might be willing to serve. Names may also be e-mailed to him by February 2 at sbagai@vt.edu.

V. New Business

a. **Student Legal Services Funding Approval**—Ms. Cantrell said that last semester CSA approved a funding change for the Student Legal Services but asked to see and approve the budget. She distributed copies of the Student Legal Services 2007-08 Budget Proposal for first reading. The total budget is $71,758, and there is no increase in funding from 2006-07.
Following a brief question and answer period, Mr. Bagai announced that second reading will take place at the February 15 meeting.

b. **Undergraduate Honor System**—Mr. Greg Sagstetter explained the process and workings of the Undergraduate Honor System. He said that during fall semester the Undergraduate Honor System was nearly in failure and had a backlog of cases that were 12-24 months old. This backlog includes withheld degrees because some cases weren’t settled before the students graduated. The Undergraduate Honor System has felt a lack of support from the Provost Office. Mr. Sagstetter distributed and discussed a handout showing a chain of events that happened recently, after he resigned as chief justice of the Undergraduate Honor System. He and several associate justices feel the Review Board for the Undergraduate Honor System did not follow the Honor Court Constitution when appointing his replacement for the chief justice position. Three associate justices have resigned from their positions due to this divide, and two other associate justices have also considered resigning unless the disagreement can be resolved. Several associate justices were present for the meeting and expressed their concerns over the current situation.

Mr. Sagstetter distributed a copy of a resolution, “Provisional Withdrawal of Support from the Undergraduate Honor System” for first reading. The resolution reads “be it resolved that the Commission on Student Affairs temporarily withdraws support from the Undergraduate Honor System, including all decisions made by the Review Board from January 26, 2007, until further action is taken by this Commission. Furthermore, the Commission on Student Affairs asks the Office of the Provost to convene a committee, comprised of at least 50% students and representatives of the university community, to study the current situation at Virginia Tech regarding issues of academic integrity (including but not limited to the Undergraduate Honor System), review strategies for improvement based on an analysis of best practices, and propose specific action items that will ensure a community based on mutual trust, respect for shared governance, and intellectual honesty.”

The floor was opened for a question and answer period. Mr. Sagstetter was asked what happens to pending cases if this resolution passes, especially the cases that are already in limbo. He responded that the resolution could keep some cases in limbo, but they hope the situation will be resolved by fall and all cases can resume at that point. There was a question about whether CSA has the authority to stop operations of the Honor System. Mr. Bagai responded that CSA can support the resolution, but any decisions about the Honor System would fall under the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies. CSA does not have the authority to stop the system from operating.
Dr. Ron Daniel commented on improvements the Provost Office has made in their support of the Honor System, a number of which are recent. In previous years funding from the Student Budget Board supported the Honor System, but the system will now need to be funded by the Provost’s Office. They have added a full-time employee to handle the Honor System, provided parking passes for the justices, and added financial compensation for the chief justice and associate justices. They have also sent several of the members to national conferences. Dr. Daniel said that the Provost had requested the periodic unit review of the Honor System be delayed from this year until next year so the immediate problems can be addressed; however they would be agreeable to starting a review of the system sooner. Dr. Daniel stressed that the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies has jurisdiction over the Honor System and any changes will have to go through that commission. He also suggested the legalities of the situation be discussed with Kay Heidbreder, General Council of the University.

Dr. Ed Spencer made a motion that the legislation be amended to read: “Be it resolved that the Commission on Student Affairs: 1) expresses its serious concern to the Provost and to the General Counsel over the current status of the Undergraduate Honor System and the possibility of its inability to function; and 2) requests of the Provost that a committee of students, faculty, and staff be formed immediately from those members of the Commission of Students Affairs and the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies who are not involved in the Undergraduate Honor System to review and make recommendations regarding the present and future of the Undergraduate Honor System.” The motion was seconded and approved.

Dr. Spencer then made a motion to suspend the rules on two readings so resolutions on the topic of Undergraduate Honor System could be considered and voted on immediately. The motion was seconded and approved.

Mr. Sagstetter made a motion to approve his resolution as written, with no amendments. The motion was seconded but did not pass.

There was a motion to approve the resolution with Dr. Spencer’s amendments. The motion seconded and passed.

VI. Committee Meetings

a. Committee Progress/Semester Plan—In the interest of time, this agenda item was suspended. The chair and vice chair will e-mail information about committee progress to the commission.

VII. Open Forum
VIII. Announcements

Announcements were also suspended in the interest of time.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Sanzenbach
Recording Secretary