University of Oklahoma Student Senate Association  
Graduate Student Senate  
General Assembly Minutes  
January 27, 2013 7:00 p.m.  
Sarkeys Energy Center, Room A235

Call to Order 7:00 by Chair – James Cook

Reading & Approval of the Minutes: December 2, 2012 Moved 83 & 44

Officer Reports:
- Chair – State of GSS Report – (See Special Orders)
- Vice Chair – email sent out about email addresses for senators. Asked those who did not get an email to sign up at the end of the meeting.
- Secretary – NR

Committee Reports:
- Academic Affairs - NR
- Development & Philanthropy – Committee will be sending out signup sheet for big events. This is for University wide service day.
- External Affairs – Reviewed joint resolution GF 13-01. Voted unanimously to send to GSS general assembly with a do-pass recommendation.
- Human Diversity –
  - Feb. 7th speaker…Dr. Bryan Gilly at the multi-culture center. Everyone is invited.
  - Cross culture potluck on Feb. 24th for GSS. More to come later regarding what to bring and times.
- Internal Affairs - NR
- Problems & Projects – working with Human Diversity on the cross-culture potluck dinner.
- Public Relations - NR
- Ways & Means – there is a new grant application on the website which should make the process of awarding travel grants more anonymous. Deadlines are March 1st. For questions email Melissa or go by her office. Part B of the application was initially left off the website but is now posted.

Special Orders
- Turned over the floor to _Ivan Osbolt of Alt-Ac_ for presentation. For more information on the organization go their website. https://sites.google.com/site/altacgroupou/
Comments from the Chair – Today we have roughly 80 senators representing 47 colleges and schools. I know our time is valuable and we are hard-pressed to make meetings, grade papers, doing research, working on theses and dissertations. I appreciate your making time to participate as you do make a difference.

I want to address an issue that has been floating around for some time. I have been listening to it and never gave it much credibility before now. But senators, there is a movement of doing away with the senate and going to a unicameral form of government. Most of you know what that is, but if you don’t you need to check it out. It makes for a good debate and is a good topic. I have done some research on this talk and it is not a rumor. I have contacted our general counsel and been in conversation with them and they have not seen anything to this affect so far. But they will notify me if and when this issue is brought to them.

Basically, anybody draw up a petition and take it to general counsel, general counsel will review it and make sure all of the I’s are dotted and T’s are crossed and this is how such a move will begin.

I will argue we should maintain our bicameral form of student government. I have done some research and out of 50 states, Nebraska is the only state that has a unicameral form of government. We are part of the checks and balances for student government. The problem with unicameral form of government is all funding winds up being lobbied for so you can imagine what a fiasco that would be. Some argue we are the only college in the Big 12 to have a bicameral form of government. So what! We are the leaders in the Big 12, so if it means anything to you, you need to start checking these things out, pay a little bit of attention, read up on the subject and make your own opinion. This has been addressed before on this campus, two times I believe in recent years. It is a serious matter because if you think of all the funding that goes through student government there will be no checks and balances if we change to a unicameral form of student government.

I think the senate has been a good citizen over the years for OU. We passed 30 odd pieces of legislation brought to us last fall. I could go over some of them. 20 of these pieces of legislation were authored by our student body president but the senate and congress are the legislative bodies and most of the legislation should come from these bodies. I don’t mind sharing with you, nobody has walked across the “midway” as I call it to invite us to write any legislation until the last few days. Now, Senator Mack is going to introduce a resolution tonight and we are involved, but we are not, in the senate creating new legislation and changing law. We basically have supported congress and the executive branch and one could argue we have basically rubber-stamped everything. As I mentioned we have seen 20 pieces of legislation from the student body president and we’ve seen legislation authored by Batman and Robin.

You all need to think about this. It is a serious matter that is not to be taken lightly. I will be available for any questions. My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00 to 3:00. I will there more but these are my basic office hours. Vice Chair
Race Clark’s office hours are Monday and Wednesday afternoon’s 3:00-5:00 and Tuesday from noon to 1:00. Secretary Jerry Overton’s office hours are Tuesday and Thursday’s from 11:00-3:00. We are available for any questions on this matter.

As I have said, I believe we have been good citizens as members of the graduate student senate. What is a good citizen? In the words of Khalil Gibran, “it is to acknowledge the other person’s right before asserting your own.” We have done that. “But always to be conscious of your own.” So let’s be conscious of our own rights while we acknowledge the rights of others.

Old Business:
- GF12-32 “Smarter Spending” Act of 2012 (tabled @ previous GSS meeting) – Senator 31 moved to bring the bill to the floor- Senator 76 second. Sean Bender, Student Congress chair addressed GSS to explain the bill.

I am here to give you a brief history of the bill and its background. About a year and a half ago, the way SGA had to advertise for any of its appointive positions was five days of advertising in the OU Daily. This was for any appointment that had to come before GSS for approval. This included all of the president’s cabinet, superior court justices, general counsel, any of these positions we had to purchase five days of advertising. If any of you have looked at advertising rates you would realize how expensive this could be. Some offices of the executive branch were spending the majority of their money buying ads. We had two problems with this. First we didn’t think it was cost effective and second, we didn’t think this was getting the word out very well because the OU Daily does not have a high readership. So, a year and a half ago we passed a bill called the “Smart Spending Act” which was an attempt to improve our ability to get the message out and reduce cost. The new bill reduced advertising in the OU Daily to two days. In addition, we will add all of the other things such as announcements in all meetings, chalking, and posters placed around campus as well as two campus wide e-mails and an announcement on the home page website. At the time, I thought this was a great idea, but we have had a semester since this has been implemented and it has not worked out the way we thought it would. By writing such a restrictive piece of legislation which stipulates you must do one, two, three, four, five every time you appoint one of these positions, we find that sometimes you have things fall through the cracks. This past year the SGA leadership has worked well together, we have a fulltime advisor and we still have things fall through the cracks. In the last UOSA general election we almost did not have a general election because we did not send out two campus wide emails for election chair. We only sent out one. So at the last minute we had pull back two appointments, send out two campus wide emails, do additional chalking and we got no new applicants, but the entire election process was almost derailed because we have legislation saying all of these things, X-Y and Z must be done and if you don’t it’s invalid. So, what I am proposing with this new bill is to change the rules from you must do all of these things to you must choose four of the seven items listed in the new bill. That will allow us more flexibility. We have added posting on the Facebook page because I think this should have been one of the
options before because it is an effective form of advertising today. I have changed it from two campus wide emails to one email because we have had comments from students who think they are getting spammed because we were sending out so many emails from all of these positions that must be filled. Instead of posting and chalking together, we have separated these into two separate items so it is now posting or chalking. I think this will be easier for us to stay in compliance. We now have a law that is so arduous and complicated that even people who look at the law can’t follow it. The Smart Spending Act, the original bill was a good idea and I supported it, but it has not worked out the way we thought it would. So I propose these changes to help us better advertise our open positions in student government. I will take any questions.

Chair James Cook stepped aside and turned meeting over to Race Clark to chair.

Clark – there will be a ten minute limit on questions.
Sen. 4 – Will using only four of the items listed in the bill be enough to adequately advertise these positions?
Bender – We want as many applicants as we can get. We do not want to hide things and one of the other concerns with the old legislation is it didn’t actually make sense to use the same things for every position at all times of the year. For example chalking, chalking in the fall is great, but chalking this time of the year it is much colder and rainier so this doesn’t seem like a good idea to blindly require chalking regardless of weather.
Sen. 50 – Will there be one place where information will always be posted?
Bender - We will always post vacancies on the Student Congress website. There is a tab for vacancies on the website. I think OU Daily advertising will always be something we use. Last fall we used campus wide email and that generated most of the response, so I think that is something we will always use as well.
Sen. 34 – It says seven days prior to the election event. Is that seven business or seven concurrent days?
Bender – If you have an amendment I would entertain that. I think we are basing this on seven concurrent days.
Sen. 5 – Moved the previous question. Second Sen. 4 second. No objections, the previous question passes.
Clark – We are now in line for debate. Is there any debate. No, then we are now in line for a final vote on the bill. Again, everything in GSS is by default is vote by consent. Is there consent on the bill? Any objections?
Cook – I object.
Clark – we have an objection so we are now in line for a placard vote.
Sen. 5 – Point of inquiry, the Chair (Cook) is not a Senator.
Clark – Sen. 5 you are correct, so, since the Chair is not a senator and cannot object, are there any other objections to passing the Smarter Spending Act?
Sen. 34 – Is the chair aware of why the objection was made?
Clark, No and I think we should allow the Chair to explain himself and raise his concerns. Chairman Cook – First and foremost I object to the title of the bill. It relates little or nothing to spending. Then, I want to note that one of our own senators was one of the authors of the original Smart Spending Act of 2012, now we have the Smarter Spending Act of 2012. What’s next, the Smartest Spending Act of 2012? Additionally, there are a lot of things I object to with regard to this bill. If you look at how many times they talk about the student newspaper on two consecutive days, that doesn’t strike that out so that’s where the money comes in. They reduce the student wide emails from two to one and I think that excludes the people we actually represent and who we recruit from for these positions.

Clark We are once again in line to vote by consent. Are there any objections to passing this piece of legislation. Senators 50 and 83 have both objected. We are now in line for a placard vote on the motion.

All senators in favor please raise your placard: 39, 23, 57, 79, 56, 80, 48, 5, 6, 44, 78, 77, 72, 87, 89, 21, 7, 32, 31, 3, 53, 71, 91, 92, 60, 43.

Clark – Did I miss any senators who wanted to vote in favor of the bill? We will now move on to senators who wish to vote against the bill. All senators opposed please raise your placard: 95, 17, 90, 54, 33, 27, 36, 45, 20, 46, 11, 4, 76, 61, 50, 83, 1, 10, 34, 9

I will now call for abstentions: 73, 98, 47, 22

The body will stand at ease while we tally the vote.

Overton – 26 have voted in favor, 20 have voted no, 4 abstentions. Does this require a majority or two thirds vote?

Clark – It requires a majority vote.

Overton – The majority has voted in favor of passing the bill.

Clark – The senate has voted to pass the bill by a vote of 26 in favor, 20 against with 4 abstentions.

Clark – I now turn the chair back to Chairman Cook.

New Business:

- GF12-01 A joint resolution commemorating the lives of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting – Author Senator Dustin Mack –
  40 – What are we proposing? Bill commemorates the lives of those affected by the shooting.
  5 – Bill should be labeled GF-1301.
Chairman – Senator 39 moved to approve the resolution, second by Sen – 90. No objections… bill passes by unanimous consent.

Announcements:

- Recognized new Senators
- Next GSS meeting February 10, 2013 7:00 p.m. –
• Bill 12 Conference on the Hill will be March 4-6. If anyone wants to go please see one of the GSS officers.

Adjournment: Move to adjourn Sen - 6 – second Sen. 44. No objections. Meeting adjourned 7:42 p.m.

Printing funded by SGA