

Senate Steering Minutes
February 23, 2007
4:30 PM - HUB 304F

Respectfully submitted by Senate Secretary Alex Gwozda

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Hala called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM.

Hala Dillsi – present
Mikhail Smirnov – present
Charles Cadwallader – present
Alex Gwozda – present
Sam Al-Khoury – late excused
Erin Shields – absent excused
Rene Singleton – present
Cullen White – late excused
Jessica Kang - present
Jono Hanks – present
Stephanie Adler – present
Melissa Aar – present
Selma Dillsi – present
Jon Solomon – present

Yutaka Jono - present

II. Approval of the Agenda

Jon moved to committee appointments to item III. *Objection.*

Jon said last week we didn't get to committee appointments.

Mikhail withdrew objection.

Selma objected. Yield to Doug.

Doug said we could have it after officer's report.

Jon moved to amend motion to place after officer's report. *Seconded. Without objection.*

Charles said the GPSS representative has a vote if present.

Stephanie moved to approve the agenda. *Seconded. Without objection.*

III. Chair's Report (2 min)

Hala said we should aim for an hour or hour and a half. She encouraged to yield if someone has already said something. She said she had comment sheets downstairs, and we are compiling results received from senators.

IV. Officer's Reports (2 min each)

Mikhail said board bills 1.04 and 1.05 were tabled again. He said 1.04 was tabled until Senate approves it. He said Medal of Honor was referred to Finance and Budget. He said the legislative directive was passed. He said he will work with **Alex** to update the website.

Mikhail said **Dr. Sheila Lange** will come on April 10th. He said he did not receive any responses yet about what she could talk to us about. He encouraged people to talk with him.

Hala asked if **Mikhail** can talk about having a Medal of Honor Forum.

Mikhail said he sent it out in the email. He said we are required by second week of spring quarter to do a public presentation.

Alex said he'll work with **Mikhail**.

Charles said he had no report.

V. Committee Appointments

Hala read the appointments:

Ashley Craig – General Affairs

Nicholas Gibson – Campus Affairs

Jess Terry - Publicity and Outreach

Jono moved to approve committee appointments. *Seconded. Without objection.*

VI. General Discussion

Jessica Kang said she got an email, and she said that felt that senate needs to air out a few issues. She said she would like to the discussion time to not be limited but a set amount of time, and to also maybe limit their comments to one before everyone else has spoken. She said the email said if there is a controversial subject there needs to be a plan – with each side having a representative and 5 minutes limited discussion on the big picture.

Hala said the agenda next week has no general discussion period yet. She said she is letting Steering decide.

Selma said she thinks it would be best to encourage senators to try to speak within the allowed discussions. She said they could discuss in the online forum or Steering. She said we should try to encourage debate within allotted time and encourage other outlets afterward.

Charles said he is in favor of discussion at all times, but he said some individuals said it would be a problem that the same ten people that always speak will speak again. He said if those ten people speak they have a 3 minute time limit each, and if they each use that it would be 30 minutes total. He asked how long we would want to have it.

Jon yielded to **Holly**.

Holly said she has concerns about discussion period during the meeting, having an adverse effect on the less outspoken senators, and some might consider it a waste of time.

Jono asked what if we had 15 minutes added onto committee meetings at 5 PM, having discussions in committees until 5:15. He said then that could be discussed in Steering afterward.

Mikhail said we should not talk about anything in Senate, and it could be very personal and ugly. He said if we are going to have a discussion period, we will need specific points to address. He said it needs to be things we can make a Senate decision on, and we should not end discussion without some action taken. He said he is not sure if we should attempt consensus, or what format that would take exactly.

Rene said she was out with the flu and asked what the topic is on the table.

Stephanie said we have several issues. She asked if the issue is the same people talking in Senate all the time or what our discussion became about. She asked if it is about amendments that may have made it not representative of what the sponsors intended. She said we should figure out what we're talking about right now.

Yutaka said we may be afraid to talk about the racial tension in Senate.

Jon Solomon said he agrees with **Yutaka** that it was an issue last meeting, but there are other issues such as repeating speakers. He said we had a meeting some three weeks ago about what needs to be improved, and we need to choose some things and work on those.

Cullen said he had many questions about what his intended legislation was. He said his intent with **Tyson** was to have broad overarching support for any process that took steps towards renovation of the ECC/T and IC. He said he is not sure that was what was passed. He said he was thankful Sheila could be there while he was in Olympia, and wished he could have been there to provide more context for the resolution. He said it sounds like it was more about the disregard that the ECC/T and IC has a significant meaning to underrepresented communities on campus.

Tyson said he is the director of diversity efforts, and he said something he feels would be to have a discussion within committees. He said he feels some are intimidated not to speak. But at the same time we should address in the whole senate that senate has accessibility issues. He said it is very uncomfortable, but he said we should not pretend nothing happened and move on. He said discussions like this make Senate better, more accessible, and more representative.

Hala thanked **Tyson** for coming.

Melissa said we should definitely talk in committees, and the Senate floor is not the place to have that. She said we should promote the use of the Senate online forum and email.

Jessica said she feels in committee meetings it isn't as intimate as she thought it would be, and she feels she is dragging out people to talk. She said it might be good to have recess during controversial legislation where people can go talk with friends.

Charles said he believes she's talking about informal discussion, whereas recess is where you can leave the room.

James Ypma said he came today as one of the quiet senators, and he said he doesn't necessarily agree that people feel intimidated. He said he thinks a lot they are frustrated that a lot of what goes on in Senate is stupid, but in this case it is a serious thing. He said he's worried that it won't be worth our time to have a large body discussion, but to have a low-key discussion. He said he missed the meeting in question.

Hala thanked all the guests for coming. She said we can just say what we want to say, and we're not here to offend anyone.

Ashley Ossmann said we could have a discussion time and she perceives a lot of personal conflicts between older senators. She said it could be a separate time outside of senate and that way it wouldn't prevent business from getting through. She said the others in the room who do not want to deal with that discussion do not have to go.

Sabrina Fields said she is the senator of MEChA, which is housed in the ECC/T, and she apologized if she made anyone feel uncomfortable because it is very personal for her, and is home for many people on campus. She apologized for not addressing the chair, but it was something the senate body needed to hear. She said not everybody sees that there is a problem. She said it is very much a race issue and not conscious. She encouraged people to come and ask people of color how they are feeling.

Sabrina said in a way she is an ethnic cultural center herself as a person, so she feels like asking how much that "costs" is very personal.

Caitlin Petrie said she is for a discussion but wasn't present at the last meeting, but she listens to the top 10 people who talk, and she finds herself feeling frustrated. She feels that we should have adult discussion without hurting people. She believes if the race or people-talking-too-much issues are not addressed now, it will come up again and be rehashed. She said she is not sure if she is for having it during Senate, and she worries about not including the people in the middle of senate. She said she knows she needs to talk herself.

Charles yielded.

Tyson proxies now for Cullen.

Tyson said it would be unwise to pretend it didn't happen. He said as **Hala** said this is a liberated zone and we're trying to be the most effective body possible.

Yutaka said this is strange, but he said he is feeling very uncomfortable. He asked **Sabrina** and **Chris Paredes** to switch seats with **James** and **Caitlin**.

Hala said that is out of order.

Yutaka said he is uncomfortable with how the seating is.

Jon said **James**, **Caitlin**, **Holly** and him are together since they're in Hall Caucus.

Yutaka said the point is people don't mingle with people besides who their friends are.

Selma said we have had discussions every week in steering about assimilation and not getting caught up in jargon. She said we should utilize the forum, committee meetings, and when those don't work we propose a discussion in actual senate meetings. She said she thinks we are going in circles regardless of the topics. She said she is not sure if we should have discussion time after a resolution, since she is not sure that's the best way to use that time. She feels often committee meetings are often not utilized. She asked why we have all these outlets that are not being utilized.

Rene said she has spoken about how the structure often limits us. She said when we have an anomaly it causes it a crisis. She said all the people who came today had time or made the time, and she said some people are not here. She a discussion will probably include a variety of values, and she said we need to have something with all the senators and not with the normal structure. She said a meeting could be set aside to talk about communication values. She said every week one group can feel uncomfortable, and this week it included a racial issue. She said if everyone stands up and speaks in a short amount, there needs to be time to process, and we need to be prepared to hear all the different values that you may support or not like.

Travis Grandy said he has seen how this organization has changed over the three years. He said the quality of discourse has gone down, and people are talking a lot more, but saying a lot less. He said he doesn't think we can fix senate through rule change or structured discussion, and the leaders in this room need to set the example. He said diversity of opinions makes this body strong, but try to be straightforward and say exactly what you are after.

Jessica said she agrees that a structured discussion would not be the most efficient, but she still supports the informal discussion, not after every discussion. She said people will notice when legislation is controversial or high-tension. She said she notices people leaving after big legislation. She said she was talking with a friend about the current legislation, and he asked where the ECC/T is, and how this will affect students socially, financially, and otherwise. And she said sadly she couldn't really tell him the answer, so she said she was really confused as well. She said she wished discussion would be more to the point.

Jon said on Tuesday there may have been a disconnect between a visiting group and existing Senate. He said discussion really takes a long time and we could talk for hours. He said the process is always that we want details, answers, and to talk about it for a long time. He said he wasn't sure ECC/T supporters felt heard for the intentions they came with. He said after we talked about problems in Steering in the round-table format, and change takes a long time. He said by having discussions like this, we are moving in the right direction. He said the leadership needs to set the bar for discourse, and we are very capable of that. He said our concern is about those senate members not in the room today, and some have very strong opinions. He said there are some things we cannot do on our own.

Stephanie said she feels that while she understands that there are ways in which senate functions, she realizes that some people tend to cover up issues that they have with more apparent rational views on legislation. She said that is not how Senate should function. She said she does not believe that Senate should be a place for people to tear down other people and what is important to them, and she feels that we have let it gone too far, and many people got hurt. She said in regards to a disconnect between people, it did not have to be that way. She said it came to her committee and they thought it was going to go through

and be fine. She said she was shocked at how it turned into an issue not addressing what the legislation was about, and she said we need to restrict discussion to what exactly the legislation is about. She said we should have a discussion outside of Senate about how we communicate within and to UW, and it should be a place for everybody. She said it is unfortunately a room full of white faces, and we need to take steps to address that and incorporate everybody.

Tyson yielded to **Chloe**.

Chloe said the guests were constituents of senators, and to see them as guests more than others is not appropriate. She said people are forgetting that how people vote means something to the represented. She said there is misunderstanding about communication, and she thinks she is not used to have to fight for what feels for rational support. She said communities are used to supporting each other, and people were surprised that Senate did not jump to support the issue and instead requested exact details. She said in that structure there was not a place for people to say they just support the issue. She said if they never came to Senate they would keep going without hurt feelings. She said tears should never have been shed at that meeting at a resolution asking for help. She said there is something completely wrong with the process then, and there was a huge misunderstanding about what expectations were. She said many felt that was a waste of time, and she was not in support of a conversation happening yet next Tuesday, and there needs to be more discussion on their end and 10-15 minutes is not really reasonable. She said we should not come in with a lot of hot-headed emotions.

Doug said he agrees with her and senate does like the details. He said there is a disconnect. He asked we should be clear when we just want support and when we need details.

Mikhail said discussion now is great and believes we got off-topic, and this is the discussion that should be happening in Senate or committees. He said a lot of valid points were brought up, and he wants to talk about this with everyone. He asked how we should have this discussion. He said issues included racial issues and tensions, and speakers who speak often and a lot, and disregard for value of ECC/T to others, and accessibility issues and not feeling welcome, and expectations versus reality of senate and disconnect about those talking about main ideas and specific issues.

Mikhail said having a 30-minute discussion about racial issues would offend everybody and it would allow no improvement. He asked if anyone has a great idea, but he himself does not know. He said he never knew that we had this problem last year, and never felt that frustrated or upset with senate, although the debates had got personal or passionate. He said he did not expect the resolution to be controversial. He said he agreed with quality of discussion going down. He asked what was different last year, and why we are having so many issues this year, when last year we had more controversial issues.

Chris Paredes said we should never see any students as guests. He said resolutions on American Sign Language last year were very broad, and after five years that has come about. He said if we don't address this issue it will keep coming up. He said it would be nice to address it formally in committee.

Alex asked if anyone has specific ideas.

Hala said this is her fourth year in senate, and she thinks Tuesday was unique but not too unique to issues that come up every year. She said every year there is a resolution concerning people of color, GLBTQ, military, genocide, environment, and it's always controversial, and these come up every single year. She said depending on the people involved and what they choose to say, the issues that come up and the feelings that arise are different every time. She said Tuesday highlighted racial tension, not any different from the student conduct code when there were others in the room. She said Senate leaders should have this knowledge at the forefront of our minds. She said she has seen that someone will say something and people will feel personally attacked rather than listening to what they have to say. She said we take things too personally. She said for the morale of Senate should not make this about this year, and she said we should not drawing conclusions but use our individual influence for now. She said we come up with solutions in Steering and don't do it. She asked what we want to be finished for this year, and what do we want first year senators to have pride about. She said it wasn't done last year and won't be done any time very soon. She encouraged everyone to be very sensitive and very open to what people say that doesn't support what they say.

Melissa moved to table general discussion until after legislative referral. *Seconded. Objection.*

Hala said conclusions and motions can be brought up during approval of the agenda.

Mikhail said legislative referral is limited to 10 minutes and he does not see what good that will do.

Charles said legislative referrals should take no more than 2 minutes.

Discussion tabled.

VII. Legislative Referrals

Stephanie moved to send R-13-19 to Campus Affairs. *Jon seconded. Without objection.*

Mikhail asked if campus affairs had anything.

Stephanie said no.

Charles moved send R-13-20 to General Affairs. *Seconded. Objection.*

Charles said they dealt with the textbook legislation last year. He said he was curious where else that should go.

Stephanie said General Affairs has legislation currently.

James summarized the legislation.

Jono said Academic Affairs currently has the Senate Order, so Off Campus would fit really well since the Bookstore is off campus.

Selma said it's not really applicable to off campus, and their remaining legislation will not take long.

Melissa moved to close debate. *Seconded. Without objection.*

Jessica moved to send to Academic Affairs. *Seconded. Objection.*

Jessica said one of her senators is already interested in textbook pricing, and it would otherwise really fit in her committee.

Selma said she is objecting because we voted that it not go to General because they have legislation, but Academic has legislation as well.

Sent to academic.

Division.

Hala called it dilatory. She said anyone can call her out of order.

Jon said we saw here was a microcosm of what happens in Senate.

Rene said this is the culture of Senate, and it is a strange culture. She said we need to discuss values and behaviors and norms.

VIII. General Discussion continued

Jono said the term guests is actually the most respectful term, they are not visitors, but they are guests that we value. He said he feels it's a very respectful term. He said a lot of the disconnect on Tuesday was the expectation that we would support this, but there was some language that he did not feel comfortable supporting.

Sabrina said there was a large number colored people there as opposed to other days in senate. She said that calling them something, whether guests or visitors or whatever, as people from the outside. She asked if senate is the voice of the students, why people coming in don't feel why they are part of the culture. She said we need to have these uncomfortable discussions, and something is getting done in talking about it even if nothing concrete is coming out.

Charles said one problem is that we are very well-aware that racism happens, but that may not be our biggest problem. He said he agrees that the term guest can be turned into a term of exclusion as people who are not part of what we are doing. He said how we solve that problem is a bigger issue. He said the purpose of senators is to limit the number of people who can vote, instead of any group coming in as a bloc and voting as they would like. He said the purpose is to be the forum for all students, though we should not allow everyone voting and motioning ability. He said senate is an advisory body.

Jessica said she was here with last year, and she believes she did not feel there was any racial tension until last Tuesday. She said guests is not a term of exclusion, but acknowledging that others are dedicating their time to coming.

Yutaka said he is concerned others will react negatively to this, but he heard that white senator felt very offended. He said he was glad **Chloe** and **Sabrina** were eloquent in expressing themselves. He said the senator felt like s/he was being branded a racist for asking a technical question. He said the senator's intention about figuring out what was going on was felt to not be received. He said he feels changes of language diluted it and made it less powerful as a statement. He said it was questionable whether the questioners, intentionally or unintentionally, were being racially influenced or just asking questions. He said the racism issue is showing up not just on Tuesday, but also in the vote of confidence showed some extent of ethnic lines in who voted which way.

Rene said the constituent senators a while ago would say who they are and introduce everyone to welcome members of their constituencies coming in. She said that was removed because it was taking too long, though it may have been a form of courtesy. She said Steering can look into how they make people feel when they enter. She said the last time that was mentioned was when we acknowledged Fox news as a courtesy gesture.

Chloe asked if guests was used a respectful term on Tuesday. She said it was not, and the term as used then did not convey celebration or acceptance of incomers. She said when a lot of ethnic people come into Senate, it paints a racial picture over any legislation no matter the topic. She said she does not know if there are racists in senate, but she believes people have certain expectations about what people would say. She said in 2004 6-7 members of the Black Student Union came to senate and they had a video camera to play back what was going on in their meeting, and she said the Daily put an article in the paper that senators were afraid that their quotes would be taken out of context by the black

student union. She said there is a perception that other groups coming in have ulterior motives. She said nobody anything to be passed that they are not comfortable with and they expected that, but she was not sure what people felt about what possible evil use could be from. She said no-one was asked to help or contribute money. She said vaguer resolutions had gone through with less scrutiny.

Erin said she was disappointed at about how Tuesday went. She said she proposed the first amendment and contrary to weaken it she was hoping to strengthen it. She was concerned about the fact that the sponsor was not there. She said Cullen apologized for that in the Board meeting, and he cannot be here right now. She felt that some clarification from Cullen and Sam would have helped today, though she said she knew that Sam and Cullen could not be there. She said the process and history could be clarified. She said she doesn't feel Senate knows about what the ECC/T and IC are, and they need to become more about their constituencies, and they are open to everyone, which is not in the resolution. She said the resolution should be reconsidered. She said some senators don't want to see Senate as an activist group, and consultation with students was lacking. She said she wants to make sure they are talking with students in that process. She said there should be reconsideration and amendments, and we need to help senators understand more of its history. She said right now we are not allies to our constituencies.

Erin said some have expressed concerns that the resolution might be failed if reconsidered, but it would not be failed. She said there needs to be a level of interaction that there isn't now. She said she was glad that members of SAB were there. She said she sees that as a huge accomplishment that SAB is part of the process. She said we can argue about who's fault it is that we didn't have enough understanding, but we need the opportunity to do so. She said she would like senate to be part of the process of starting movements, and we can have senators send letters to the administration. She asked what we can do to help and be allies. She said she doesn't want us to be so passive, but look for ways to assist and see through legislation. She said last year when she submitted resolutions she was asked what would change and what the point was. She said the Senate needs a plan of action. She encouraged education, and maybe that means we have Senate at the ECC/T or have Senate somewhere else. She said she worried what will happen to Senate if we cannot support our students.

Jon Solomon thanked **Chloe**, and he said he didn't appreciate that he felt perceived as a white face although he is 100% Filipino, because regardless of race he felt he was adding to the discomfort. He said this is all part of clearing the air. He thanked Erin for speaking, and said a lot of those issues need to be brought up. He said one issue most important is education about the issues. He said he recognized that the ECC/T and IC are open to everybody, however, he has heard of incidents. He said this would be not the appropriate time to discuss this.

Jono said last year he remembered MEChA coming with a resolution against a bill in the House of Representatives, and there was heavy debate and passionate discussion and

people said what they thought. He said he didn't feel uncomfortable walking away from that debate. He said if we pass something this year, someone in a few years can take something and use "any and all" as something no-one intended. He said he did not want Senate to be ineffectual and have its words taken for unintended purposes, like to support proposals that may not be in the best interest of the university as a whole.

Doug said we passed the two hour mark. He thanked everyone for their discussion. He proposed tabling discussion until next week.

Tyson thanked everyone for the discussion. He said he thinks people felt uncomfortable after last meeting because of a system that has been building up after hundreds of years, and those uncomfortable feelings are those that people of color feel every day. He said no-one accused anyone of being racists, and maybe people were putting the label on themselves. He appreciated Erin's desire for being allies and support. He said not all support may be appreciated by those in question. He said to feel free to contact him.

Sabrina said last year everybody knew the issues since they were on TV and everybody talked about them, but last Tuesday's issues we all felt ugly about because it wasn't something publicized or spoken about.

Alex moved to close discussion. *Yutaka seconded. Mikhail objected.*

Hala thanked visitors.

General discussion closed.

IX. Approval of Agenda for 02-27-2007.

Stephanie asked about time limits.

Hala said that time has been coming up every week, and said that sounds like what Senate wants. She said that's in the best interests of what Senate seems to want. She said the floor.

Jono moved to adjust all time limits to 15 minutes on legislation. *Seconded. Objection.*

Jono said it's currently 2 hours of legislation, and having less time would be less intimidating. He said first readings can be handled within 15 minutes.

Mikhail said there is not necessarily expectation that we will get to the end of it. He said setting any time limit means that Senate cannot take as long as it needs. He said he doesn't like the idea the every piece receives the same amount of time. He said artificially cutting down to 15 minutes is too little for the 2nd readings.

Stephanie entertained a motion to amend the motion to keep Old business at 20 minutes.

Yutaka moved. *Secoded. Without objection.*

Jono said he thinks there is no reason to have more than 15 minutes for 1st readings.

Alex moved to close debate. *Secoded. Mikhail objected.*

Motion passes.

Mikhail moved to remove all time limits on orders of the day. *Without second.*

Yutaka moved to limit GPSS to 3 minutes, since they don't need that much time. He said he would not be able to be there next week, also. *Secoded. Objection.*

Mikhail said he would like time limits constant.

Doug said he agrees with **Mikhail**.

Hala said it can be discussed every week as needed.

Alex moved to close debate. *Secoded. Without objection.*

Motion fails.

Mikhail asked how much time we have left.

Hala said we have gone over, and entertained a motion to approve.

Jon moved to approve the agenda as amended. *Stephanie* *secoded. Without objection.*

X. Approval of Minutes

Rene said in response to general discussion not to worry about others too much, but worry about dealing with your own feelings first, and that way we'll do a better job next week.

Mikhail moved to approve three sets of minutes, while one other is being looked at. *Secoded. Without objection.*

Yutaka moved to approve the remaining minutes. *Secoded. Without objection.*

XI. Adjournment

Adjourned at 6:02 PM.