

SRSGA Formal Meeting Minutes

February 19th, 2024

Call to order - President Bloom

This meeting was called into order by President Ella Bloom at 5:02 pm on Monday, February 19th, 2024

Roll Call – VP Bell

Executive Board

- a) Ella Bloom – President
- b) Sydney Rezzetano – VP of Finance
- c) Braydon Godfrey – VP of Student & Academic Affairs
- d) Robbi Austin – VP of Outreach
- c) Hunter Bell - VP of Internal Affairs
- f) Liz Hood – VP of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging
- g) Ezeck Warren – Parliamentarian
- h) Emily Steele - Speaker of the Senate

College of Business

- a) Senator George
- b) Senator Johnston
- c) Senator Wolfe
- d) Senator Wallace

College of Education

- a) Senator Cessna
- b) Senator Gable
- c) Senator Stiles
- d) Senator Ecklund

College of Health Professions

- a) Senator Bradeis
- b) Senator Krizmanich
- c) Senator Sones
- d) Senator Steele

College of Engineering & Science

- a) Senator Schmidt
- b) Senator Snyder
- c) Senator Kuth

College of Liberal Arts

- a) Senator Czerniewski
- b) Senator Mortensen
- c) Senator Isenberg

Commuter

- a) Senator Double
- b) Senator Snyder

Residence Hall

- a) Senator Burchell
- b) Senator Carbone

Transfer

a) Senator Hale

Veteran

a) Senator Snodgrass

International

a)

Athlete

a) Senator Delcoco

First-year

a) Senator Maharg

b) Senator Pavlicko

c) Senator Sennett

d) Senator Williams

Graduate

At-Large

a) Senator Caroff

b) Senator Ogoreuc

c) Senator Fabo

d) Senator Siatkosky

Advisors

a) Patrick Beswick

b) Wendy Leitera

APSCUF Representative

a) Dr. Sararose Lynch

Excused: Senator Gable, Senator Fabo, Senator Caroff

Absent:

Guest Speakers:

Chris Cole: Discussion regarding proposed auxiliary fee increases to present to the Council of Trustees; these facilities are not funded through tuition, but instead separate fees. Campus recreation fee – 18.18% increase to \$260 per year; Student Center fees – 4.99% increase to \$21 per year; Dining fee – 5.4% increase to \$3,538 per year; Traditional Housing fee – 2.0% increase to \$3,558 per year. Currently, all these facilities are highly utilized and running at a deficit. These fee increases would allow for these facilities to remain running and allow the university to continue to update these facilities as needed.

Senator Schmidt: I have no problem with all of the fee increases except for the dining facilities. I do not think it is fair considering the cost for the other fees is so low. In my opinion, the largest grievance is the portion of size considering the cost of meal plans, locked in on options, lack of options for students with dietary restrictions, and others.

Senator Stiles: Would this increase the quality of the food at all? The food quality of Aramark has been lacking compared to API, their predecessor.

Chris Cole: Overall student satisfaction has moved from 39% to over 69% in the previous years. I believe this is done through student surveys and feedback.

Senator Burchell: Would this be increasing student wages for the student center workers?

Chris Cole: No, the student wages are established by the institution, this is a separate entity. While there is opportunity, the student center will be continuing to operate at a deficit.

Senator Siatkosky: One thing we need to consider is the affordability of SRU. Many of our students take out student loans in order to afford their education here.

Chris Cole: We consider this very carefully. This is why we are very cautious about it. Even with the proposed fee increases, we will still be one of the most affordable state universities.

Senator Ogoreuc: Is there a reason why the technology and health center fees were not included?

Chris Cole: It was not included due to the new campus facilities being constructed.

Senator Maharg: Aramark increases their prices due to consumer cost increases. Have they provided any other justification?

Chris Cole: They monitor labor costs and consumer prices. They have to adjust for cost as well as make employment more profitable.

Senator Maharg: The profit margins for the retail foods are at a much higher level than actual retail. I believe we should wait until the student life survey in order to gage proper satisfaction in before moving forward with fee increases.

Chris Cole: I would be more than happy to facilitate this.

Senator Sennett: How would you discuss to Aramark their decrease in product availability in the retail facilities like Rocky's?

Chris Cole: The decrease in Rocky's was due to trying to adjust the flow of traffic to other dining facilities. They moved the products to the sides in order to keep things efficient.

Senator Snodgrass: I would like to let people know the cost of food overall has increased a lot over the past years. This is not just an issue on campus. They used to have gluten free options in Rocky's but no longer do. Would these be brought back?

Chris Cole: Yes.

Senator Hale: Institutions do need to make money in order to continue operating. They are running at a deficit and these fee increases will help keep Slippery Rock running.

Senator George: With overflow of housing, will they be charged the same amount?

Chris Cole: No, if they are placed in a triple room due to overflow, they will be charged less than a double room.

Senator Burchell: The student center rents the facility. Does this deficit include the rentals and can these prices be increased?

Chris Cole: Yes, we rent the facility in order to garner additional funding. The deficit includes the revenue generated from renting the student center. It totals around \$60-70k per year but is very small compared to a \$4 million annual budget.

Senator Isenberg: I think most of the costs look very fair, especially when adjusting for inflation. I think for future use, we should use a different survey for Aramark. Perhaps this works for now, but implementing a different survey in the future would be great.

Chris Cole: The first year was quite rough at Aramark. We have been making great progress and are continuing to try and improve on conditions. Through dining with the directors, tours, and surveys, we have improved a lot.

Rockstar of the Week: N/A

Officer/Committee Reports:

President Bloom – I had an amazing discussion with Dr. Riley regarding the 2-Hour delay policy. There was an initial miscommunication regarding the policy, but Dr. Riley was very receptive to our suggestion of not necessarily canceling classes but taking the conditions of major highways into account regarding classes; I have a meeting coming up with Dr. Riley and VP Rezzetano regarding the turfing projects. While the meetings are administrative only at the moment, we will relay information to the senate as soon as we find out; We are working with the Pollination Organization to use the Green Fund to put more native flower species on campus in order to help the local pollinator populations; Do not forget to fill out the election packets; I would love to promote the “For the Love of Sigma” event on Wednesday which will include a bake sale. I will be selling many things there to help support the philanthropy of Tri Sigma; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

VP Godfrey – Committee meets on Mondays at 3:30 in SSC 325; Student Life Survey – early March; Campus Crawl pt. 2 to follow up with concerns addressed in the fall; Dean Meetings – please send me your reports; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

VP Rezzetano – Committee will be Wednesdays at 11 am in SSC 319; Office Hours and Contact Information listed; Finance Report – I am aware Capital Requests can be daunting due to the high price, but this is a highly needed set of equipment for WSRU. This would actually allow WSRU to use live sporting announcements and helping with classwork. This is a really great resource for them. We will be voting on whether or not we support the fee increases before it goes to the Council of Trustees, we do not actually vote on the fee increases themselves.

VP Austin – Working on promoting budgeting, SLS, and elections, make sure you are reading your SE&L and SRU Communications emails; Please let me know if anything needs posted within 48 hours; Committee meets on Wednesdays at 5 pm in SSC 324; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

VP Bell – SGA Banquet – planning the final details; SGA Pickleball tournament on Monday, March 4th from 7:30 to 9 pm in the ARC. You can sign up on GroupMe; Committee meets on Mondays at 4 pm in SSC 324; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

VP Hood – Shinekats; Meeting with members of GEISO (2/22); Meeting with Dr. Jones and Keshia – 2/26; Accessibility Informal – 3/18; SRU Service Coalition – this would be highly beneficial as an organization on campus; Remember to attend diversity events; Committee meets on Mondays at 12 pm; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

Parliamentarian Warren – Committee meets on Tuesdays at 1 pm in SSC 319; Club Constitutions and Constitutional Amendments – I will be providing points of information to help guide the process as we go; Please feel free to ask any questions throughout this process; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

Speaker Steele – Office Units are due by 5 pm on Sundays; reach out if you need anything; Office Hours and Contact Information listed.

Commission Reports: N/A

Rock of the Week: Abby Mortensen

VP Hood: This Senator is in SJC, has done fabulous work, going above and beyond to help me with anything I need.

Open Forum:

Senator Schmidt: How do we disenfranchise a club if they break Code of Conduct?

Parl. Warren: If they break Code of Conduct, they can be removed from CORE and lose their funding. They can be disenfranchised if they violate this.

Senator Czerniewski: The Academic Advising Committee is meeting on Tuesday over zoom. Please see me if you are interested.

Senator Stiles: We have Turning Point USA on our Agenda today. They are classified as an extremist organization by the Anti-Defamation League. I understand that we are non-partisan, but there is already the College Republicans and I would highly recommend joining them rather than associating yourselves with an organization that bashes the queer community, BIPOC communities, and keeps up a Professor Watch List that bashes professors. This puts our campus's safety at risk when they are put on a list like this. This can jeopardize the quality of education we are receiving.

Senator Siatkosky: I completely understand the remarks of Senator Stiles. I am currently not a political person, but we still have freedoms of Speech in the Constitution.

Senator Czerniewski: I sit on the Rules & Policies Committee because we believe all students have the freedom of speech because every student should have the opportunity to voice their opinion.

Senator Hale: There is a professor watch list. This organization has also bussed students to the Insurrection and has done a lot of horrible things. While this organization is bad, it does not reflect an individual chapter. This organization not only supports Christian Nationalism but also supports the burning of fossil fuels as well as other things said. However, as the student government, we should represent all the student's views. If approved, this organization will be watched quite closely.

Senator Stiles: I understand the freedom of speech argument. This is why this conversation tends to get muddy because we are a nonpolitical organization. Blank slate, this was a sound organization. However, do we want to attach our name to this like we attach ourselves to buildings on campus? This organization has over \$8 million dollars nationwide, they do not need our help. We have non-affiliated political groups on campus. This is not about personal beliefs but safety on campus for students and professors.

Senator Pavlicko: Students that I have spoken to are very scared and angry about this organization being placed on campus. As a queer person, I am personally scared for my own safety and other students' safety on campus.

Senator Schmidt: This organization does have a nasty reputation tied to this. However, having a Charter does not mean we are dealing with the National Charter. The argument can be made on both sides on the political spectrum. We are a coalition of student ideas. This group will be very monitored in order to shut them down if they break student conduct. I believe we need to protect our integrity as a student government and approve this organization.

Senator Maharg: I currently feel conflicted on this motion. I do like the idea of students having non-affiliated organizations on campus for political beliefs rather than being affiliated with a very controversial national branch.

Eric Gondella: I am the current president of College Progressives. I believe Turning Point is a liability to Colleges everywhere. The consequences of not approving a student organization could bring even more unwanted attention and focus to the university. Many universities that have rejected them have been put on campus reform watch lists. Until they have broken one of the university's policies, they should be allowed to operate it. I do not think the people who started this organization on campus are evil but instead should be able to speak. As a public university, we have the obligation to let them exist until they break a policy or prove otherwise.

Senator Double: I believe us having to roll out every preparation assuming they could break Code of Conduct just shows the type of organization we would be associating with. I believe someone should be able to express themselves however they want. This can be done through non-affiliated campuses. Even if we disenfranchise them, it still comes back to SRSGA that we

approved them. When someone comes here and stands in front of the 9/11 memorial, we cannot stop that. But we do have power to stop this hateful organization to be on our campus. This university has made leaps and bounds to promote DEIB, and this would be a step back.

Senator Sennett: While Turning Point is not a great organization, it is unfair to judge an organization that has not done anything yet. Please keep that in mind.

Senator Pavlicko: If the Senate were to not approve the motion, what could they do?

Parl. Warren: They would still be able to use our campus, but would not be able to use a CORE page or receive university funding.

Senator Isenberg: The College of Liberal Arts Senators had our meeting on Valentine's Day. We had a conversation regarding that a lot of students are unaware of having the Dean Meetings. I think College Senators should have to share information regarding Dean Meetings since At-Large Senators have to report on Commissions.

Old Business:

Motion #1: I move to take from the table the motion to amend the Constitution and Bylaws of the SRSGA as read.

First: Senator Ogoreuc

Second: Senator Williams

Motion Passes

New Business:

Motion #1: I move to approve the minutes from the February 5th, 2024 formal meeting.

First: Senator Maharg

Second: Senator George

Senator Maharg: These were sent out in a timely manner.

Motion Passes

Motion #2: I move to approve Turning Point USA at Slippery Rock University as a recognized student organization.

First: Senator Carbone

Second: Senator Snyder

Debate & Discussion:

Senator Maharg: I have concluded that I trust the research gathered by students and do not find it appropriate to support an organization that attacks a section of our student population.

Parl. Warren: As of current, Turning Point USA as our Chapter has checked all policies on Universities for Clubs. This SRSGA Constitution recognizes Freedom of Association. If not, the school and this organization can be held liable. We are not approving the parent organization at all. We are instead approving whether there should be a branch on campus. If the student organization were to follow suit, quick action would be taken to disenfranchise this club on campus. While we should approve this, we should keep a close eye on this organization.

President Bloom: Parliamentarian Warren and I do not vote on this motion. Students elected you into this position. Take into consideration what the student perspective is.

Senator Stiles: What we are talking about is keeping an open mind about allowing an organization that is close minded itself. While we are not approving this National Organization, we are approving the name. Do we want to attach our name to their name? There is already a College Republicans on Campus. We do not need this group. As an educator, I would never want to put our communities at risk.

Senator Pavlicko: We are here for the students. I will be voting in a way that reflects the students that have spoken to me.

Senator Schmidt: There currently is not a republican group on campus. DEIB is a two-sided equation. There is another side. While we do not support this as people, political affiliation is regarded. Rules & Policies operates very carefully. They approve Constitutions so long as they do not violate conduct.

Senator Hale: While there has been noted opposition against the LGBTQ+ community, this was not about the students on campus but the founder. This is not our call to reject the organization because we are all biased at heart. Political views aside, we are here for the students. This club has student interest and we have to recognize that.

Senator Snodgrass: We need to remember that those who are pushing for Turning Point are students. These students pay the fees of our school. We represent those students.

VP Austin: When googling the organization, Turning Point USA focuses primarily on economic policy. It does not say anything about barring different student groups.

Senator Double: With the upmost respect, I completely disagree with Senator Schmidt. We discussed how we are here for the students and we should take all opinions into account. This campus makes many student groups feel unsafe and personally targeted. This group cannot fall under DEIB when they limit the expression of people in the LGBTQ+ community and target minorities.

Senator Siatkosky – As awful as the parent organization is, we should not limit the students alright? If we limit one organization, what will be next? As Par. Warren stated, we have checked the boxes, we have reviewed the club. Right before this meeting, I spoke to four students I know, and we have freedom of speech. My point is, we should not assume that they will isolate other communities. Keep that in mind whenever we're voting.

Senator Isenberg – I think that we as a senate are put in a position that says, what do we do now? There is a strong case to both sides. With clarification, it has already been put through rules & policies. We are held accountable as a student government. I know that Ezeck and his committee will do a great job regulating what this organization does as a new chapter here at SRU. I will be voting yes today, because we should not be turning down students. Thank you.

Senator Cessna – I just wanted to say last week, I taught a lesson on freedom of speech. Funding them does not limit their freedom of speech.

Par. Warren – First things first, all budgeting is not up for debate right now. My biggest thing, I do not legally know if we can prevent this organization from getting organized. We are holding a body guilty for a crime that it has not committed. I do not know if we can legally say no without repercussion.

Yay - 17

Nay - 8

Abstention –

Motion Passes

Motion #3: I move to approve Pi Theta Epsilon Honor’s Chapter at Slippery Rock University as a recognized student organization.

First: Senator Sennett

Second: Senator Carbone

Motion Passes

Motion #4: I move to approve NONTRA as a recognized student organization.

First: Senator Burchell

Second: Senator Bradeis

Motion Passes

Motion #5: I move to approve Musical Theatre Dance Club as a recognized student organization.

First: Senator Pavlicko

Second: Senator Mortensen

Motion Passes

Motion #6: I move to approve the Service Coalition at SRU as a recognized student organization

First: Senator Schmidt

Second: Senator Williams

Senator Schmidt: I had attended the SJC meeting when they came and talked to us. It would help us boost our volunteering and collaboration. I think this is a great thing for campus.

Motion Passes

Motion #7: I move to approve the February 19, 2024 finance report as read.

First: Senator Wolfe
Second: Senator Wallace

Senator Snyder: Going onto the capital request, the \$3,500 is not just an one year thing.
VP Rezzetano: It will not count for their budgeting in the future.

Abstention - 1

Motion Passes

Motion #8: I move to support the University's fee increase proposal for consideration by the Council of Trustees. The fee increase proposal includes the following: 18.18% Campus Recreation fee increase, 4.99% Student Center fee increase, 5.4% Dining Services fee increasing, and 2.0% Traditional Housing fee increase.

First: Senator Wallace
Second: Senator Bradeis

Nay - 2

Motion Passes

APSCUF Report:

Advisor Reports

Patrick Beswick: Good evening everybody. Friday night we are having the SpongeBob Bikini Bottom I don't know. I'm excited for that. The Japanese club is showing Spirit Away on Saturday. Consider running for an executive board position. Speak to people and have them consider running.

Wendy Leitera: I just wanted to emphasize how proud I am of you. You all did your jobs. You had a very good meeting. This motion that passed will be going to the trustees. The student trustee position opened up. The application closes on March 8th. It has been a long time since a senator has sat on the trustees. It shows another side of how the university functions. Application is on CORE.

Adjournment – I move to adjourn this meeting at 7:19 pm.

First – Senator Double

Second – VP Godfrey

Senator Double: Happy birthday Braydon. Please let me leave.

President Bloom: Technically you are booked until 7:30.

Nay – 3