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Senate Meeting

Friday, October 4, 2024

Presiding Officer: Vice President Mauro

Minute Taker: Chief Justice Zabaleta

1. **Call to Order:** Call to Order at 1:01 pm
2. **Roll Call:** Roll Call Complete at 1:02 pm
3. **Adoption of the Agenda:** Motion by Senator Vega to Amend the Agenda to Include the Confirmation of the Chief Justice, Seconded by Senator Rodriguez

Motion by Senator Halember to Adopt the Agenda, Seconded by Senator Rodriguez

1. **Approval of Minutes from September 13/20:**

Senator Rodriguez: Before I motion to approve the minutes, I want to acknowledge that they were very well recorded. I appreciate our justices for their work on that. It was concise, and I loved the effort you all put into it

Motion by Senator Rodriguez to Approve the Minutes from September 13th, Seconded by Senator Vega  
Motion by Senator Vega to Approve the Minutes from September 20th, Seconded by Senator Halember

1. **Public Comment:**

* Juan Diaz: Motion to speak at the end of meeting, accepted by Justice Zabaleta

1. **New Business:**
   1. Senate Resolution 2024-25-05 Comment on the use of the student fees to fund Professional Development by Student Life & Campus Community

* **Presented by Senator Rodriguez and Senator Vega**
* Senator Rodriguez: I wanted to present this legislation because at the start of the year, learning about last year’s expenses, especially with the budget cuts, felt like a shock. As student government, it is our responsibility to ensure student fees are used responsibly, and I do not think they were. I hope this legislation will bring attention to the issue and allow us to collaborate with the administration to prevent it from happening again.
* Director Thomason: I just want to say that this is very well written and accurately reflects the beliefs and opinions many of us have regarding the blatant misuse of funds. It looks good, and I would be happy to accept it.
* Senator Rodriguez: Another thing I want to mention is that I know the language in this resolution is a bit harsher compared to others, but it was necessary. It is important for the Student Life department and other departments to understand that SGA is committed to the responsible stewardship of our resources. Also, just so you all know, the Director of Student Life is currently at a conference.
* Friendly amendment by Representative Craig to change “6” to “7” conferences in the legislation, accepted by Senator Rodriguez
* Representative Craig: As I understand it, one pro staff member, Director of Student Life Jarrick Brown, attended all 7 conferences, while others only attended 1 or had their expenses covered elsewhere. I am open to discussion on whether we want to mention this.
* Motion by Senator Halember to add Justice Christman, Seconded by Senator Mehta
* Motion by Senator Vega to add Representative Pham, Seconded by Senator Rodirguez
* Senator Halember: It is already stated on this page that the Director of Student Life presented it. This highlights the need for transparency, which looks good as is. I do not think we need to add anything about specific individuals.
* Senator Rodriguez: Am I allowed to make an amendment to my own document, or does it need to be done by another voting member?
* Justice Zabaleta: I would have another member make the friendly amendment
* Motion by Senator Halember to Recces, Seconded by Senator Peshimam
* At 1:16 pm
* Back at 1:19 pm
* Friendly amendment by Senator Leaser to add “Jarrick Brown, who attended all 7 conferences,” rejected by Senator Rodriguez
* Friendly amendment by Senator Leaser to amend the previous friendly amendment to remove “Jarrick Brown,” accepted by Senator Rodriguez
* Senator Pradhan: As Justice Christman mentioned during the recess, who approved the bill for them to attend the conferences? Jarrick mentioned something about the chancellor in his presentation last time, so it was her who passed it, right?
* President Brooks: You meant Associate Vice Chancellor Genia Herndon, who approved the travel for Leadership on Broadway but is accountable for Jarrick’s decisions as his supervisor. So, the person you might want to include as approving of Jarrick’s travel is Genia Herndon, not the chancellor, but the AVC of Student Affairs.
* Justice Chrisman: It is important to hold the right person accountable. We should not mention someone's name and imply they are to blame, especially since we know who the Director of Student Life is and that he attended all those conferences. It was not necessarily his fault; he could have been denied, and someone else approved of it. He should not be the one we point fingers at.
* Representative Valdez: While I appreciate that point, I think we should hold everyone accountable. It is important to emphasize that he proposed how to use the funds and sold the idea to the AVC. So yes, she approved it, but he was the one who came up with the idea.
* Senator Rodriguez: It is important to include both parties. It would be beneficial to add a friendly amendment to the final 'be it resolved' clause, stating that the SGA requests an assessment of a permanent structure that allows for input into how the budget is allocated and utilized. Additionally, we should request information and discussion among higher administration regarding personal and professional budget spending. If we frame it as a 'be it resolved' clause, it calls for action, unlike a 'whereas' clause, which merely states the obvious.
* Motion by Senator Leaser to Move into Committee of the Whole for 5 minutes, Seconded by Senator Peshimam
* At 1:25 pm
* Back at 1:30 pm
* Motion to Extend Committee of the Whole for 7 minutes by Senator Rodriguez, Seconded by Senator Leaser
* At 1:31 pm
* Back at 1:36 pm
* Friendly amendment by Representative Craig to include “NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the SGA requests that the Student Life Department employees provide a detailed explanation of the budget utilized during the previous year. Additionally, given that the these expenses were ultimately approved by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, SGA asks the AVC of Student Affairs, and the Student Life Department, to create a concrete report outlining the specific benefits and application of the knowledge gained at conferences, as well as the decision-making process for the allocation of funds for these trips, to be presented to the SGA at the end of the 2024-2025 school year and;” accepted by Senator Rodriguez
* Motion by Senator Leaser to Adopt SR 2024-2025-05, Seconded by Representative Craig
* Roll Call Vote: 16-0-0
* SR 2024-2025-05 PASSED
  1. Senate Resolution 2024-25-04 Resolution to Address Stewardship of Student Fees
* **Presented by Representative Valdez**
* Friendly amendment by Justice Zabaleta to change “personal” to “professional” and “6” to “7” in the first Whereas clause, accepted by Representative Valdez
* Friendly amendment by Representative Craig to correct "whose” in line 10, accepted by Representative Valdez
* President Brooks: I believe that in the 'now, therefore be it resolved' clause at the end, we should be intentional about lines 2 and 3, especially regarding when Student Life seeks to spend student fee money. Since all their funding comes from student fees, it might be worth suggesting that they consult student representatives on expenditures for professional development that directly impact student government and their operations. Being clear when we ask, as it affects how they can operate and serve.
* Senator Rodriguez: We could consider requesting a budget cap, suggesting that if expenditures exceed $10,000, student representatives should be consulted in the decision-making process. Instead of a situational condition, for any amount over $10,000, student input is required. This number is just a suggestion, but it aligns well with what President Brooks said.
* Motion by Senator Rodriguez to Move into Committee of the Whole for 7 minutes, Seconded by Senator Vega
* At 1:47 pm
* Back at 1:55 pm
* Motion to Extend Committee of the Whole for 15 minutes, Seconded by Senator Leaser
* At 1:55 pm
* Back at 2:10 pm
* Ex officio Hernandez: My only concern is that Student Life has an overarching budget. If CAT and the Sentry are spending money that could create a negative balance in their accounts, would that expenditure be included?
* Representative Valdez: No, this was just to address how their budgets were impacted. My understanding is that we each have our own budgets.
* Ex officio Hernandez: That might need clarification, as it sounds like we may require them to present when spending their own budget.
* Motion by Senator Vega to add Senator Anson to the Roll Call, Seconded by Senator Halember
* Representative Craig: We are trying to convey that money was taken from the three budgets, and those entities should be consulted regarding that.
* Ex officio Hernandez: That absolutely makes sense. I just want to ensure the wording clearly reflects your expectations moving forward.
* Motion by Representative Craig to Move into Committee of the Whole for 3 minutes, Seconded by Senator Rodriguez
* At 2:11 pm
* Back at 2:14 pm
* Motion by Representative Craig to Extend Committee of the Whole for 5 minutes, Seconded by Senator Rodriguez
* At 2:18 pm
* Back at 2:23 pm
* Friendly amendment by Senator Vega to add “NOW FINALLY THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, When the Student Life Department seeks to spend Student fee money in a way that negatively impacts the overall budgets of the Student Government Association, the Sentry, and the Campus Activities Team, (such as Professional Development) they will first consult student representatives of each of the affected entities through formal written communication. This approach ensures responsible stewardship of resources, addresses overall spending, and keeps the student body informed throughout the whole process,” accepted by Representative Valdez
* President Brooks: I do not know if you want to make a small change in the part mentioning student government, the Sentry, and the Campus Activities Team. You might consider adding 'and/or' in case it only affects one of the entities.
* Friendly amendment by Representative Craig to include “and/or” to the Now finally therefore be it resolved clause, accepted by Representative Valdez
* Motion to Call to Question by Senator Rodriguez, Seconded by Senator Halember
* Roll Call Vote: 17-0-0
* SR2024-2025-04 PASSED
  1. Confirmation of Chief Justice
* President Brooks nominates Justice Zabaleta
* President Brooks: Vice President Mauro and I have decided to nominate Justice Laura Zabaleta as our Chief Justice for this year after careful deliberation. Laura has served this body for two years, including last year as Chief Justice and as an excellent parliamentarian. We thank her for her service and are excited that she will be joining us in our search for the remaining judicial members.
* Vote of affirmation: 17-0-0
* Justice Zabaleta is SGA’s 2024-2025 Chief Justice.

1. **General Business from the Floor:**

* Juan Diaz: I am going to be honest—I am straightforward, and from today's meeting, it seems like you are discussing a broad topic. As the Student Government Association, you are students, but given the significance of this issue, you might want to consider involving the whole school. It feels like the discussion here is one-sided, but there may be other students affected by this who could have differing opinions. Some may not think it is that serious, while others might feel it is a big deal. Regarding the conferences, it seems like Jarrick is under scrutiny because he was recently hired. He may be attending these conferences to improve his performance for you. While I understand the concern about finances, remember that $37K is a lot, but this is a large university with many students. I have seen faculty dedicated to supporting students, and I imagine Jarrick, like most of you, wants to attend conferences to better serve the university. I encourage you to trust your mentors and the decisions being made. Your bosses in Student Life hired you for a reason, so I trust that they are making informed choices about budgets and decisions. From my experience here, the events on campus are heavily student-focused, and those in leadership are here to guide you. Just something to think about—I am not taking a specific side, but I believe you should use this opportunity to express your voice.
* Senator Pradhan: I just came up with an idea: as students, we have rubrics for distributing funds for events. Why not create similar rubrics for how student money is spent on conferences? This could ensure transparency between the committee and the student body, showing where our funds are going. This way, we would not have to single out individuals; instead, we could have a clear system in place for future spending, even when we are no longer here.
* Representative Valdez: One of the key issues being addressed is the culture of fear and retaliation on campus, as raised in previous faculty assembly meetings. This includes concerns about psychological safety in meetings and classrooms. There was also a proposal from the Board of Regents to label certain words as racist, which raised worries about academic freedom and freedom of speech. Although this proposal has been tabled for now, it may resurface. Additionally, FACAB provided updates on increasing faculty involvement in the master plan, as there have been concerns about faculty engagement. They noted that while the IPG group has been inactive, efforts are being made to keep it involved. We are also pursuing an ABOD vote related to the Auraria campus legislation. Concerns were expressed about not feeling welcome in executive sessions, especially regarding safety updates from the Police Department. Another topic discussed was the ball field project, which aims to build housing for MSU and Auraria, with a design kickoff this month. Faculty members are concerned about changes from initial plans. On the accessibility front, legislation has passed mandating that courses and websites be accessible, prompting discussions on how to implement this effectively. Budget updates indicate a positive outlook for the year, but there are worries that normal raises for faculty may not occur. A significant portion of the meeting focused on the Graduate School, particularly after its dissolution, leading to issues with funding allocation. A proposal to consolidate funding for individual graduate programs has been paused, and a committee is being formed to address these challenges. Lastly, four academic transformation working groups were proposed to audit administrative positions and their impact on the offices they oversee, especially in light of the chancellor and BScS searches.
* Senator Anson: Another important point raised during the Faculty Assembly was regarding services for individuals with disabilities. There is a representative in the assembly who focuses on this area. It was mentioned that approximately 30% of people on campus are believed to have some form of disability, but many do not utilize Disability Resource Services (DRS). Furthermore, around 90% of these disabilities are considered hidden, which can include psychosocial conditions or other issues not easily visible, like those requiring wheelchairs or crutches. The Faculty Assembly is working to raise awareness about these services and ensure that students with disabilities receive the proper support they need.
* Representative Valdez: Another area they are focusing on is mental health.
* Point of information by Senator Gothwal: Can I make a motion to edit the agenda now because the resolution number is incorrect?
* Vice President Mauro: Unfortunately, we are not able to make that change but thank you for bringing that to our attention.

1. **Reports:**
   1. President: Mitchell and I have been working on an exciting project this week that I will be presenting to you all next week. We are hoping to create a working group to move forward on this project this semester. We were supposed to attend the Digital Accessibility Symposium in Boulder, but that did not work out. Instead, I have focused on the Chancellor search committee and reviewing applicants. I am under NDA, so I cannot share specifics, but I am doing my best to represent the student voice in that space. I also want to thank Juan for coming to provide public comment at our meeting. I appreciated the sympathetic tone you brought, highlighting the student perspective within the Senate. It helps remind us that our staff is doing everything they can to support us because, at the end of the day, they are here to serve students just like the rest of us. Thank you for those sentiments.
   2. Civic Engagement: It has been a semi-busy week! First, I want to thank everyone who attended the Lynx Day of Service. The event went well, and it was great to see so many people come together to help our community. I passed out an attendance sheet during the event, which I gave to Justice Zabaleta to count the misses for those who did not attend. Jalissa and I had a meeting on Wednesday with Ellie, the coordinator for Milo's Market. I sent out several emails on Monday to arrange this, and I am excited that she will be tabling with us for the Nourish Now event happening on the 15th and 16th. We are also starting to plan for the Nourish Now event in spring, which we hope will be bigger. I reached out to Tony Rush, the Operations Division manager responsible for the reflection space evaluation. He seems nice and will join us in our civics meeting next week, which I am looking forward to for some insights on the evaluation process. Thanks to our amazing Vice Chair Jalissa, we have finalized the spreadsheet for Nourish Now. During our meeting with Ellie, she also connected us with AHA (Auraria Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week) in November, and we are hoping to collaborate with them. The survey Mike is working on should be available soon on MyLynx, and we might kick off a tabling initiative as well. Overall, it has been a busy week for civics, and I am happy with the progress we are making. Before I yield my time back to the chair, I want to give a special shoutout to my Vice Chair Jalissa for her extra hard work this week. We would not have made such progress without her, and I am grateful to have her on the team.
   3. College Council: This week, College Council has been focusing on amending our bylaws. We are also planning to table sometime this month and are discussing what kind of services we want to offer students at the table, and what food to order.
   4. Finance & Funding: We did not approve many requests this week due to miscommunication and missing information in some of them. We tabled four requests for additional information, this week was quieter with only six new requests compared to 12 or 14 in previous weeks. We did approve the University of Colorado Dental Association for about $28.46 and the conference request from the Student Affiliates in School Psychology, which we are excited to fund. Additionally, we made some edits to the finance and funding guidelines to improve communication for student organizations, making it easier for them to edit and withdraw requests. These updated guidelines are available in the finance and funding committee folder for anyone to review.
   5. Judicial: This week, the Judicial Committee did not have much activity as I have been focused on the Chancellor search committee. I updated individual attendance records for the whole body and took minutes for the finance and funding meeting last week. The committee is exploring ways to take minutes for all committees and support the entire body.
   6. Public Relations: This week, I met with President Brooks and Vice President Mauro to brainstorm merchandise ideas for future tabling events, like stickers and beanies. If anyone has suggestions, I would love to hear them! We found it challenging to come up with creative ideas beyond the usual shirts. Senator Vega also sent me the civics graphic for 'Nourish Now,' so we can start promoting it as it is happening in two weeks. Ex Officio Dew requested that I design a student government organizational chart.
   7. SACAB: Some of you may have seen the Commutrics app shared in the group chat. It is an initiative by a CU professor to track student commuting. As of this morning, CU has 78 students enrolled, MSU has 24, and CD has none since it just started Monday. You can earn up to $30 a month by filling it out, which helps offset the cost of the RTD pass, especially if you use RTD, as it earns the most points. Please sign up and share it with classmates. The Auraria Health Center received a grant to provide menstrual products in the Tivoli, which currently lack accessibility. They are looking for student representatives to sit on a committee for about half an hour every couple of weeks to discuss placement and fund utilization. If interested, please reach out to me or Anna Rose by October 18th. We also had a presentation from Deborah, head of marketing for Auraria, about the public safety building. They are planning town halls soon and collecting student interviews to gauge safety concerns. If anyone is interested in participating or spreading the word, it would be appreciated. Additionally, we are gathering information on how many students are using or trying to use EBT, with hopes to implement EBT vending machines or get the bookstore to accept EBT to increase accessibility on campus. Zach from Auraria, who handles finances, is tentatively set to present next week about the RTD pass contract. I will confirm his attendance and send out an announcement when I have more details. Meetings are from 10 to 11 in the Senate chambers if anyone wants to join.

Representative Craig: We have not made much progress on getting a vote on ABOD yet, but we do have a meeting scheduled in the next few weeks with Skip, who serves as the legal advisor to the Auraria Board of Directors. The faculty version of SACAB is also on board with this, which is exciting. This meeting will be a good first step forward.

* 1. SSRC: We are drafting a letter for John Rogers's presentation that we attended on September 13th. Our next SRRC presentation is scheduled for November 1st, featuring a Q&A session with Margaret Wood at 2:00 PM, followed by an in-person presentation from Pamela Tony. I have also started reviewing the RFI to identify adjustments for next year.
  2. Advisor: I want to extend a huge thank you for all your help during Lynx Day of Service. Our friend, the CEO and founder of Project Helping, was incredibly impressed with your work, especially from Civics. He could not believe you were there at 8:00 AM working at the table and handling your own projects. I am so proud of all of you. I also wanted to provide a quick leadership update: the Women and Gender Equity Summit is coming up, so please RSVP asap.
  3. Ex Officio: First, I want to give a couple of shout-outs. Senator Lorden stepped up this week by taking an important meeting with AHEC leadership, even though it was not in their job description. Another kudos goes to Senator Anson, who has an exciting proposal that I cannot wait to see brought to the body soon. Your creativity and dedication to public service are appreciated. On a different note, does Finance and Funding have a vice chair? Great, thank you! I just want to ensure we are all compliant. I know the Finance and Funding Committee has been busy with unfinished business, and I want to acknowledge your hard work. It is okay if not everything gets crossed off the list each week—your dedication to keeping business flowing is commendable. Also, if you are registered as a member of Auraria campus, you will not have to pay for vehicle registration, just make sure to register your license plate. Remember, you have every right to take up space and speak in this body, so do not apologize for sharing your thoughts. I will be out of the office from October 16th to 24th, but next week I will present a budget breakdown, including our salaries, finance, and operating budget, so we can discuss spending our resources effectively. If you need access to Tivoli 301, please call access control. We also have three iPads available for student government use, so feel free to ask about them.

1. **Adjourn:** Motion by Senator Vega to Adjourn, Seconded by Representative Valdez
2. Vote of Affirmation: 17-0-0
3. At 3:10 pm