

VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Bree Richards

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2007

Madam President & Distinguished Assembly Members,

Since the last Assembly meeting, here's what I've been doing:

1. Support the U Day
2. Meetings
3. Presidential debate
4. Washington, D.C. Lobbying Trip
5. Mary A. McEvoy Award Committee
6. Other GAPSA meetings and events
7. Project: Check It!
8. Website

Support the U Day

I attended Support the U Day on March 28, and met with two of "my" representatives – Torrey Westrom, from my hometown's district, and Jim Davnie, from my current district.

Meetings*Liaison meetings*

I attended the Civil Service Committee meeting on March 29th, and the CAPA meeting on April 20th.

Student Senate meeting

I attended the Student Senate meeting on April 5. We had a discussion about the current bill in the legislature that addresses the cost of textbooks and pricing. We passed two resolutions – one was the Project: Check It! resolution, and the other was a resolution on teaching assistant preparation brought by Jeff Holtz that charges the Student Senate to work with other groups to determine what options are available for altering teaching assistant preparation requirements.

University Senate meeting

I attended the University Senate meeting on April 5. We approved some minor changes to ex officio members of University Senate committees wording, and approved a position statement to divest the University from the Sudan and avoid future financial support of the Sudanese government in any way. After this meeting, President Bruininks gave the State of the University address.

Duluth meeting

I attended the meeting for graduate and professional students in Duluth on April 17. At the meeting, we discussed their role in GAPSA and whether they wanted it to continue. Both the Medical School and Pharmacy School Councils said that they would like to be a part of GAPSA in perpetuity. No graduate students from Duluth attended the meeting.

Student Senate Consultative Committee meeting

I attended the SSCC meeting on April 19. Jerry Rinehart was unable to make the meeting so we had a very short agenda. We approved the agenda for the May 3 Student Senate meeting, which includes a rules amendment allowing coordinate campus term limits to be waived for faculty, academic professionals, civil service staff, and students if deemed necessary. It also will include a motion to approve stipends for the Chair, Vice Chair (me), and Student Affairs Committee Chair, as deemed appropriate by the Stipend Review Committee.

The other issues on the agenda include the tuition banding proposals on coordinate campuses, the Central Corridor station location issue, and election of a 2007-2008 Chair and 2007-2008 Twin Cities undergraduate Committee on Committees members.

The last SSCC meeting of the year is scheduled for May 10 from 1:00-2:45 in 300 Morrill Hall. This will be my last meeting as Vice Chair, and as such I will be bringing the updated Student Senate Handbook to that meeting for approval (really the only tangible thing the Vice Chair gets to do all year, unless the Chair is unable to fulfill his duties at any point).

Senate Consultative Committee meeting

I attended the SCC meeting on April 19. I brought forth a proposal to make attendance records of Senate meetings public. This proposal passed in the SCC and will be implemented in an as-yet-undetermined manner (likely via publication online in an area next to the official minutes). I think this is necessary not only to increase accountability (these records are currently available only by request) but also to allow people to easily find out if those that represent them are actually attending meetings.

Presidential debate

I attended the first GAPSAs presidential debate on April 5. There were about 15 people in attendance, and the debate was recorded and posted to the GAPSAs website. This debate was sponsored by ACEC.

Washington, D.C. Lobbying Trip

Along with other exec board members, I went to Washington, D.C. from April 9-April 12. We met with higher education legislative aides for 8 of the 10 legislators from the Minnesota delegation, and discussed the rising cost of tuition, student indebtedness, student loans, interest rates, etc. We made some great connections and were asked to keep an eye on education-related bills coming up in the legislature, and provide feedback to the aides.

We also met with Patrick Sherrill from the Department of Education to discuss the proposed reporting requirement changes for racial and ethnic background of applicants to public institutions. Some of the changes are positive, but one is puzzling – the proposed changes would effectively create a “one-drop rule” for applicants. It allows non-Hispanics/Latinos to identify further, but not Hispanics/Latinos. So if someone has any Hispanic/Latino heritage, then they are just Hispanic/Latino and nothing else, but if someone has no Hispanic/Latino heritage, they can identify their entire background.

As rationale for this change, Mr. Sherrill cited the 1997 Office of Management and Budget report on which the proposed requirements are based. Their report (available at whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/1997standards.html) states that it is “unclear whether and to what extent explicitly permitting multiple responses to the Hispanic origin question would affect nonresponse to the race question or hamper obtaining more detailed data on Hispanic population groups” because “the matter of multiple responses to the Hispanic ethnicity question was not raised in the early phases of the public comment process.”

This is a pretty unsatisfactory answer, as far as I am concerned. Some of the legislative aides we met with asked for updates after our meeting with the Department of Education, and I am working with them to possibly get Congressional review of these proposed changes (the public comment period ended in September) before they go into effect. The report on the proposed changes is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2006-3/080706d.pdf>

Mary A. McEvoy Award Committee

I am on the Mary A. McEvoy Award Committee, and met with the other committee members to discuss the applications. We have not made a final selection and are waiting to hear back from one of our members. The final determinations will be made by the end of today.

Other GAPSA meetings and events

I attended the exec board meeting on April 18, the Virginia Tech memorial event on April 19th, the Tony Diggs Award dinner on April 19th (where GAPSA won an award), and the GAPSA social on April 20.

Project: Check It!

Mac Fadlallah and I will be meeting with Dr. Rusty Barceló, Vice Provost for Equity and Diversity, this afternoon to discuss our resolution. Mac will be meeting with the Civil Service Committee tomorrow, April 26, at 11:10 in Walter 101. We also corresponded with President Bruininks on the issue.

The Check It! resolution is on the docket for the May 3 University Senate meeting. It was passed unanimously by the Student Senate meeting.

Website

I have been updating and maintaining the website. I have also begun training our public affairs assistant, Eli Neils, on how to update the website in hopes of shifting that job to a staff member. She is also in charge of starting the GAPSA blog.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:**Student Senate open seats**

There is *still* one open position for the School of Nursing seat. The remaining meetings for the semester will be on May 3. The Student Senate meeting is from 11:30-1:30 in Studio C, Rarig Center, and the University Senate meeting is from 2:30-5 (it will be done long before 5, I promise) in the Coffman Theatre.

If you would like to fill one of these open positions and are able to attend the meetings, let me know immediately. If none of the Assembly members can/want to go, your college councils are still responsible for filling the positions. Seriously, Nursing, you need to find someone to go to these meetings - graduate and professional students are very much in the minority.

Thank you to those who filled in for the remaining meeting for Dentistry and Pharmacy.

Thank You,

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