Student Government Meeting
Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Meeting Highlights:
- The internet resolution was discussed
- The results of the student life survey were shared
- The cultural houses were discussed
- A Yik Yak resolution will be brought up at a future meeting

Complete minutes are as follows:

Roll Call:

Absent: Robert Lyons, Teig Loge

Minutes from the last meeting stand approved.

Reports:
Student Body President Alex Severn: We had the board of trustees meeting last Friday and quite a few things came out of that. I’m on the resource committee so we deal with the budget. Dr. Wolf was asked to sit in on our committee meeting as the chair of the two budget committees. One is being put together by President Simmons and one has previously existed. Dr. Wolf and I expressed similar things to the board of trustees that I had previously expressed to Dr. Simmons. It’s a fine line that we walk between dumping money into capital projects and making sure that we keep people here on campus happy and that we keep up with the things that we need on campus. There were some major themes that came out of the general meeting. As all of you know, enrollment has been decreasing in the past few years. A lot of the talk was about what to do with this enrollment issue. Coming out of two committees, the price task force and the recruitment and retainment committee, the general theme was that we need to increase marketing. It’s everyone’s jobs to recruit and retain. That includes faculty, staff, and students. Even though you might not have a direct impact like an admission counselor, you are still a representative to the college. The contingency we have is currently budgeted for $400,000. The previous plan had half of that money going to capital projects and the other half going to the physical plant. Now, instead of doing that, the half that was supposed to be going to capital projects has been split again. $170,000 will be going into marketing. The theory is that we need to be doing better marketing. There was a study that was done that people outside of the Des Moines area really don’t know what Simpson is about. Obviously we aren’t doing a good job marketing. We need to figure out a good way to market and we need to get people to come to Simpson College. We are talking about a marginal enrollment of around 40 students. The $170,000 still needs to be passed by the resource committee. They are working on a plan in the recruitment committee that needs to be passed in the resource committee. Construction is underway on a trash compactor north of Barker which will eliminate the smelly garbage area on the south side of Pfeiffer. I don’t know when the trash compactor is going in. As you all know, the resolution we passed unanimously two weeks ago was given to President Simmons. Ethan and I met with President Simmons yesterday. I thought it was a rather productive meeting. President Simmons and ourselves would like to put together some sort of campus
council. The campus council will consist of faculty, students, and staff. The CC will be in charge of prioritizing campus needs and wants to help administration make critical decisions. The CC will have the ability to propose agenda items for the cabinet and larger community to materialize. This council will increase advocacy of all members of campus to improve buy-in, transparency, and agency in administrative decisions. President Simmons has asked us to submit some recommendations that we felt were appropriate. We are working on a structure for that. Ethan and I are pretty pleased with how this has shaken out. I think it’s a good opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to get together as a community and to link a relationship with the cabinet. Through our talks with President Simmons we thought this was the most appropriate route. Because of privacy concerns we can’t have conversations about whose jobs we want cut. This is the closest thing that is acceptable. The final thing is that Michael and Austin had a conference call with Kelly and MCG, our internet provider. Some fruitful things came out of that. We talked about the resolution with Kelly afterward.

**Manager Michael Reuter:** Nothing to report.

**Treasurer Ethan Fredrick:** We are currently at a balance of $32,253. Jessalyn and I had a good conversation with Dean Behaunek this morning about the cultural centers on campus. This includes the women’s resource center, the Carver house, and Latinos Unidos as well as some of the other theme houses on campus. We discovered that many of the issues may be communication and feedback between maintenance, residence life, and the houses themselves. We will be passing this off to Robert and his committee.

**Senior Class President Jessalyn Holdcraft:** We will be hearing one budget request tonight. I will go over the process Ethan and I are going through with the diversity houses in more detail during general discussion.

**Junior Class President Austin Jacobs:** We will talk about the meeting with Kelly in general discussion. I also have a presentation over the survey we did.

**Sophomore Class President Robert Lyons:** Erica Heidler Reported: The student advocacy committee met today to discuss may term courses. We have started filling out forms for the most promising courses and plan on proposing them to Tracy Dinesen by Fall Break.

**First Year Class President Zach Goodrich:** The student organization committee will be meeting tomorrow. Three of us attended Prexy club today. We will be discussing where to go with Prexy club in the future.

**Advisors Rich & Kristen:** We will not be meeting next week.

**Old Business:**

**Tyler Stokesbary:** I move to take from the table the internet resolution.

**Alex Severn:** Again, Michael and Austin had a phone conference with MCG and Kelly. MCG is upgrading to a 1GB connection for the city of Indianola. They currently have a 200mb/200mb connection to Simpson College and they have a 200mb/200mb connection that is shared by the rest of the subscribers in the community. They have said it’s possible that they could give us the increased connection speed for free until January 1st. This would buy us some time. Their increase to a 1GB connection will be by the end of the month. The best case scenario would be if we can get a couple months for free and have this resolution ready for January 1st such that it’s acceptable for SGA to give funds. Another best case scenario
is getting the contract rewritten so that it is not as expensive and SGA may not have to contribute anything.

Austin Jacobs: One of Michael’s questions was why we are paying so much. The representative answered it right off the bat. We have a dedicated service so we get the full 200mb that are coming to Simpson. Other people only get a share of the connection and may not always be getting the full connection speed they are paying for. Once we get back from break, we will be having calls with other internet providers to try to drive prices down and hopefully get better internet here.

Michael Reuter: Hopefully Kelly will be putting in the new 1GB router that she and the president are paying for over fall break. Hopefully when we come back from fall break we will have faster internet speeds. That will be good to see how much we are using and hopefully we will be able to see then that a 300mb connection will satisfy us. There is the potential that when it gets increased to 300mb we could be maxing that out too. There is the potential that they could give us a couple free months so we could get that figured out.

Alex Severn: Kelly seemed pretty optimistic that they would follow through in giving us a couple free months. We are continuing to work with Kelly on the resolution. I think you all know that there are some issues and some general ideas that she doesn’t know if our internet can support the increased capabilities. We will continue to work on it so that we have it and we can put it in place on January 1st if Information Technology Services needs any money from SGA.

Vote to put this on the table: Passed

Tyler Stokesbary: I move to refer this motion to a committee.

Alex Severn: It will be going to the student life committee with the addition of myself.

Vote: Passed

New Business:

SGA Budget Request: Total Requested: $3,050.00 Recommendation: $3,050.00

Jessalyn Holdcraft: I move to allocate $3,050.00 to SGA. We are moving to allocate this money for posters. For those of you who are upperclassmen, CAB used to do this. They don’t anymore so we are now suggesting printing these posters through the student advocacy committee starting with December and January.

Ruth Ann Roberts: I would like to clarify that they were not created by CAB. Student development paid for them in the past so it has never come out of the activities budget before.

Rich Ramos: CAB used to do it but it was exclusively for CAB stuff. There was talk about expanding it to other campus clubs and organizations. If we were going to expand it someone else needed to pay for it which is why it changed to student development.

Tyler Stokesbary: Ruth, since it hasn’t been here for a year, why hasn’t CAB done it yet? What do you see is wrong with having posters?

Ruth Ann Roberts: I am not in any way supportive of spending $3,050 because it is literally money going into the trash can. We are going to be printing $650 of posters a month to not even hand all of them out. We could probably go through the student organization suite and find posters from three years hanging around because we don’t use them all. Students don’t pick them all up. I don’t think $3,050 is worth our time.

Nick Yeager: Ruth, do you have a more reasonable number of posters per month?

Rich Ramos: We printed about 150 each month and had 70-80 left over.

Ruth Ann Roberts: I’m not disagreeing that something needs to happen, and there needs to be print marketing of some kind. I think student organizations need the opportunity to use print marketing, especially with the current email policy. Maybe it’s just cutting the price in half to print fewer posters which will probably cause the price to rise, but I just think $3,000 isn’t worth it.
Conner McGinnis: Can we send this to the student advocacy committee to figure out because the money is just going to go back into our budget anyway.

Ethan Fredrick: I think we need Robert here to get more specifics.

Ruth Ann Roberts: I think we should give it to the student organization committee.

Tyler Stokesbary: Our committee never talked about this. It is just a Robert thing.

Erica Heidler: I would also agree that we designate it to the student organization committee because I think it applies more to them than to the student advocacy committee.

Jessalyn Holdcraft: Should we vote this down and have it bump back to the student organization committee?

Tyler Stokesbary: You can send it back to committee to have it discussed more. If you vote it down, you can reconsider it and bring it back and amend it later.

Ethan Fredrick: I move to refer this to the student organization committee so they can see if this is the most prudent use of the funds or if there are better alternatives.

Vote: Passed

General Discussion:

Cultural Houses

Jessalyn Holdcraft: We are going to report on what our committee has been up to with the diversity houses. We are including Latinos Unidos, the women’s resource center, and the carver cultural center. A couple Sunday’s ago, Nick Laning, Ethan, and I toured all of the houses. This all started when we started getting budget requests from those houses asking for certain items. We realized that there was a breakdown between ourselves, residence life, and these houses. They were asking not only for programmatic items but also for furniture and other items. We didn’t know where to take it so we did some investigating. The first thing we did was look through each of the houses. We took pictures of each house. This morning Ethan and I met with Dean Behaunek. We shared our concerns with what we saw in the houses. What we realized was that there needs to be more communication between residence life and some of these houses. He also pointed out that he did a walkthrough of one of the houses and submitted the problems to maintenance over a month ago and they have still not been dealt with. There is no feedback system when work orders are submitted. There is no way of knowing whether something has been taken care of unless the student reports that it was taken care of. We are going to suggest that the student advocacy committee figures out a feedback system between maintenance, residence life, and students so that everyone knows when issues are being taken care of. The finance committee will be developing a policy for theme house appropriations. I think we have a better understanding of what residence life can do and what we should be doing for these programming spaces.

Ethan Fredrick: The larger thing to add is that it is strange that each of these houses has a house manager. They are supposed to have a person in residence life to contact. These students don’t feel empowered to act when nothing happens in a month. Figuring out how to address this is my biggest concern. The advocacy committee will be tasked with this.

Alex Severn: What is Dean Behaunek doing with the things you brought up with him?

Jessalyn Holdcraft: We mentioned one of the houses and he knew of every issue and then some and had reported them. That was the house he had sent in a work order for over a month ago. That is where the whole feedback system came up. The other house had issues that he wasn’t aware of because they hadn’t been reported to him. He is going to set up a walkthrough with residence life people.

Alex Severn: We are talking about underrepresented populations for these houses. As you walk around campus you realize that Simpson is majority white. Our diversity is pitiful. We need to think about what residence life should be offering in order to create a welcoming space to these populations. Is it ok to offer the same things that we offer everyone else? Are there different things that need to be offered such that the spaces are welcoming to these populations? Also, these are discussions that aren’t
appropriate for just SGA members to be having internally as the committee is not composed of underrepresented people.

**Jessalyn Holdcraft:** Our big example is Latinos Unidos because they have made a big effort to make their house a cultural center as well. For anyone who has been there, you have seen that they have a lot of representation of a lot of cultural backgrounds. The other centers don’t have as much of a focus as Latinos Unidos. There are really two things going on here. Residence life can only do so much for these houses. We have to keep in mind that only 4-6 students are living in these houses. They can only dedicate so many funds to these houses. If they are going to do programming, they need to get the funds from SGA or some other budget. Residence life has a very limited budget and has to worry about the broader budget whereas the funding for these houses needs to come from some other budget that is dedicated to the diversity aspect of campus.

**Ethan Fredrick:** The way we have approached it has been varied which is why I think it is good that a new committee will get a fresh look at it. I think the Carver center has appropriate references. I would be interested to see what decorations you think the women’s resource center should have to designate it as a women’s resource center. The conversation with Dean Behaunek distressed me because the college has these houses in the same budget as theme houses even though they may be classified differently. That was very frustrating to know that these houses are being treated as themes instead of safe havens because we are admitting that we have a problem with the acceptance of diversity on campus. I don’t think we should settle with the explanation that residence life has limited means so we are going to demand more of the students. I think a lot of the categorizing has nothing to do with students. I don’t think the college is prioritizing things that need to be prioritized.

**Alex Severn:** There is a letter that I was asked to sign and support. The letter basically has to do with Latino and Latina recruitment, retention, and support on campus. As you all know we need to increase our enrollment by maybe 40 students. There has been a lot of statistical support such that Latino and Latina populations around Des Moines are increasing. A lot of people feel that we aren’t tapping that resource or being amenable to that area. They asked me to support the resolution knowing that we didn’t have time to have a vote. I signed it as the student body president but made sure that the author knew that I wasn’t signing on behalf of SGA. I added something to the resolution. If we are going to try to bring more diverse populations on campus, we need to make sure we are having the correct conversations so that we can support these populations and their needs. This is exactly what Ethan is talking about.

**Ethan Fredrick:** The rational by which residence life seems to be making these decisions is by sheer numbers. This makes sense. If you have a building with 100 students living in it, you fix their bathrooms before you fix the bathrooms in the house with four people living in it. However, I think that because these houses are designed specifically to deal with the issue of underrepresented minority students, saying that there aren’t that many of them doesn’t seem like an excuse to give them lower quality housing. It seems paradoxically cruel. I think it is very important that with this resolution, if we are going to call them cultural centers, we need to treat them like that, not like some other residence hall.

**Jessalyn Holdcraft:** There needs to be less focus on residence life being the ones taking care of everything. I think the college as a whole is where we need to be focusing, less so on residence life. Let’s be honest. The four or five students living in each of these houses don’t have a problem with residence life. The houses are the houses they have. The cultural center aspect of it is either going to come from us or the college. It isn’t something residence life can just funnel in. The college isn’t giving residence life enough money. I think we both realized that after our meeting today.

**Alex Severn:** The college needs to prioritize giving support to these underrepresented populations on campus. Furthermore, there need to be discussions that include those people and give those people advocacy. Just like Ethan is saying, we can’t treat a group of four people differently than a group 100 people. We need to give them advocacy on this campus. Nothing is more inappropriate than to have a
meeting of white males deciding what to do with a certain population. Are there any questions about that letter? I don’t think they wanted an answer. I think they just wanted some support from people on campus. I was acting as a member of the student body signing this although I would like to think that you would all support this resolution as well.

The 2014 Student Life Survey

Austin Jacobs: We sent out this survey 2-3 weeks ago but our committee has been busy with the internet stuff. We had 410 people take it which is fantastic. That’s a little over 30% of the college. Seniors were kind of down in numbers but all the other grades were good. We had at least three people from every place you could live on campus.

-The first question we asked was “How is the wireless internet in you building?” Only 1% said excellent. 16% said good, 20% said not good and 18% said terrible. I think it will be interesting to see how those numbers change after Fall Break with the increased bandwidth. It might be good to do another survey with just this question after the improvements.

-The next question was “How fast are your download speeds for streaming video?” 11% said very slow but the majority said it was average. Again, it will be interesting to see how these numbers change with the internet improvements.

-The next question was “Do you believe that Simpson should invest in a physical mascot?” This failed with 45% “Yes” and 55% “No.” This isn’t really the outcome we were expecting. We were thinking it would be 90-10 or something more dramatic. We got a decent amount of serious feedback on the mascot. We will be putting together information to present to SGA on this.

-The next question we asked was “Should we invest in a shuttle service to Des Moines?” This one was really close with 49% “Yes” and 51% “No.”

-We asked “What days are you likely to go to Des Moines?” Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are the top days. Afternoons and evenings are also higher. I know Rich has done some research in the past to see how much this will cost. We will be asking SGA for a decision on that.

-The next question we asked is “How important is TV programming to you?” 46% said somewhat important, very important was 14%, and 14% of students don’t watch television. That last figure was a lot higher than I thought it would be.

-The follow-up question was “How much television do you watch?” 65% of students watch less than five hours a week while 3% of students watch more than 16 hours per week.

-The next question was “Do you have Netflix or Hulu?” It was 78% “Yes” to 22% “No.” This is reflected in the graphs that Kelly showed us with large amounts of our bandwidth going to these services.

-The next question was “How does Kent meet your expectations?” Almost half of students gave it a four out of five.

-The next question asked what Kent was lacking. Most students would like to see more entertainment stations or an open campus channel.

-25% of student never use the on campus computer labs.

-Most of our students know where the IT helpdesk is.

We can break down any of this data by grade.

Alex Severn: Last year a certain individual gave us a quote for the mascot of around $4,000. It could be more or less but I’m guessing this number is a little low.

Austin Jacobs: If I remember, it was a pretty simple design.

Alex Severn: It was $4,089.95.

Austin Jacobs: Over the next two weeks or so our committee will be sifting through the costs. Are there any questions?

Jessalyn Holdcraft: I think we have symbols for Simpson College but I don’t think they are very well represented. From my admissions standpoint, I don’t think there is really something identifiable. As you
search through other institutions, you find things that represent them. We are a storm cloud and we like squirrels and maple leaves. That is Simpson College but it is not well translated to other media. We don’t have that great symbolism other than that we are red and gold. I was also in the board of trustees meeting on the recruitment and retention committee. A lot of what they talked about was increasing recruitment and retention. We don’t have that visual brand. We have “Simpson Success Stories” that everyone on campus knows about. I think that could be due to the fact that we don’t have a definite symbol.

Austin Jacobs: I figured seniors wouldn’t care as much as First Years on the mascot, but all the grades voted about the same.

Olivia Anderson: Would the money to purchase a mascot come from SGA?

Alex Severn: Yes.

Cody Isabel: What is all included in this?

Alex Severn: It is for the whole suit.

Savannah Calaway: Would we pay for apparel within the SGA budget? If we got a new mascot there would probably be new apparel to go along with it.

Alex Severn: I don’t think that’s something we would do.

Election Dates

Erica Heidler: Sarah Beadle asked if there are any regulations as to when the elections occur.

Jessalyn Holdcraft: There is an election code in our bylaws. It says the term length.

Tyler Stokesbary: It just has to be before the last meeting.

Jessalyn Holdcraft: There are also rules for special elections. If someone were to resign or be removed, we would have to hold an election within two weeks.

Ethan Fredrick: We just have to do this before Thanksgiving break.

Erica Heidler: I think she just wanted it a little more advertised.

Yik Yak Resolution

Tyler Stokesbary: I have a Yik Yak resolution all written up. I plan on presenting it at the next meeting.

Alex Severn: I emailed the student body president at Creighton. They denounced Yik Yak on their campus. They had a campaign and sent out a letter. I got some advice from their student body president. I think I will talk with the advocacy committee about how we can do something similar.

Teig Loge: Do we know if their letter was successful?

Ruth Ann Roberts: I don’t really care if it works or not but I think it is just important to say we support this. There are members of our community who have been attacked because of their sexual orientation.

Alex Severn: Their student body president said it seems to be losing popularity on campus.

Announcements:

- 78 Simpson Students voted on campus on Wednesday, October 22
- Wednesday, October 22nd, 10pm: Hump Day Ha’s Comedian Jen Kober