

## MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

USG Senate Meeting

Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Meeting called to order at 7:12 pm. Meeting held in Union Basement.

### Agenda item 1.0: Attendance

The roll was called:

Senator Allen Abraham	Present
Senator Tahir Ahmad	Present
Senator Ory Baum	Present
Senator Spenser Cushing	Present
Senator Samuel Cushner	Present
Senator Ray Fan	Present
Senator Frank Fanizza	Present
Senator Christian Giraldo	Present
Senator Mahyar Kashan	Present
Senator Sidrah Khan	Present
Senator Thomas Kirnbauer	Present
Senator Yan Leyfman	Present
Senator Kirin Mahmud	Absent
Senator Shivani Rampersad	Present
Senator Masood Rustemi	Absent
Senator Najee Simmons	Present

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<sup>1</sup> Typically, minutes should only contain the essentials of a meeting. This includes the meeting time and location, a list of those who attended, as well as a record of all motions made and their outcome. Debate or even a summary of debate is usually not included. I include it here at the request of the Chair. Mistakes and omissions are likely, so Senators are encouraged to e-mail the Secretary with corrections prior to the next Senate meeting, so that the record reflects what was actually said at the meeting and so corrections can be made efficiently.

Senator Harminder Singh	RESIGNED
Senator Priya Sohi	Present
Senator Peter Stratoudakis	Present
Senator Russell Williams	Present
Senator Gary Hagan	Present <sup>2</sup>
Senator Kenneth Myers	Present <sup>2</sup>

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President Matthew Graham	Present
Executive Vice President (EVP) Deborah Machalow (Chair)	Present
Treasurer Mark	Present
Vice President of Academic Affairs Forbes	Absent
Vice President of Clubs and Organizations Jennifer Chan	Absent
Vice President of Communications David Mazza	Present
Vice President of Student Life Peter Molloy	Absent
Senior Class Representative Dexter Daniel	Absent
Junior Class Representative Emilissa Trotman	Absent
Sophomore Class Representative Neville Hall Jr.	Absent
Freshman Class Representative Rodriguez	Absent

Quorum established.

Agenda item 2.0: Announcements

The Chair announced that February reports from Senators are late (as are some November reports.)

The Chair announced that Mr. Myers and Mr. Hagan are newly appointed Senators. They have not yet had a GPA check, so they will be able to participate in debate but not vote until this is done.

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gary Hagan and Mr. Kenneth Myers are newly appointed Senators. As of the 10-March-2011 meeting, they had not yet had the required GPA check. The Chair ruled that they had full speaking privileges, but could not vote, until the required GPA check had taken place. The Chair further ruled, without objection, that their Senate seats would not be considered “filled” until the GPA check was concluded.

The Chair announced that Senator Singh has resigned.

The Chair decided to strike item 4.0 from the agenda.

The decision of the Chair was appealed by Senator Simmons.

On the appeal, the vote was 4-11-2. (Roll Call #1.) The Chair's ruling was sustained. Item 4.0 on the agenda was stricken.

Agenda item 3.0: **Approval of the Minutes from 3/03/2011**

- Motion to amend the minutes, by striking "Absent" and replacing with "Present" under item 1.0 "Attendance", next to "Senator Ray Fan."
  - Motion to amend the amendment, replacing "Absent" with "Late" under item 1.0 "Attendance," next to "Senator Ray Fan."
    - Amendment is approved without objection.
- Motion to approve the minutes.
  - The motion was approved without objection.

Agenda item 4.0: ~~Judiciary Nominations~~

Agenda item 5.0: **Special Services Council Recommendations**

- Senator Abraham presented the SSC recommendation for the Anthropology Society.
  - Motion to grant recognition to the "Anthropology Society."
    - The motion was approved by 17-0-0 vote. (Roll Call #2.)
- Senator Abraham presented the SSC recommendation for the "Autism Awareness" club.
  - Senator Khan: How many "awareness" clubs do we have at this point?
    - Senator Abraham: As of right now, we have none, but the concern is regarding future applications for such clubs.
  - Senator Kashan: Are there any clubs that are general in terms of awareness of diseases, or along similar lines of something like that?
    - Senator Abraham: Looking at the list of current SSC clubs seeking funding, there is a club regarding cancer awareness.
    - Senator Giraldo: There is also "Keep a Child Alive," which is an HIV awareness club. Also, they have plans to fundraise for efforts to help distribute medicine to children in Africa.
    - Senator Abraham: With that being said, we ended up denying "Keep a Child Alive" because of their similarity to UNICEF in their mission statement.
    - Senator Ahmad: I think it is a good idea to grant recognition to this club. I do not think we should discriminate autism awareness. At the end of the day it is still something to look out for. It has its own unique niche; I do not see it blending in with anything else.

- Senator Williams: I agree with Senator Ahmad’s statement. It is a unique club that can enhance the campus and raise awareness on this issue. I believe we should grant recognition.
  - Senator Khan: It should not really matter what disease the club is focusing on, because that introduces our own biases into it. The major issue should be whether or not there exist other clubs that are already addressing this issue. We should only recognize clubs that do not duplicate services.
  - Senator Kashan: I believe that just because a club tangentially addresses the issue that a specific club is seeking recognition for, that this should not be enough to deny them recognition.
  - Senator Khan: We should never be biased regarding what issues we think are important.
- The Chair declared a recess at 7:36 pm, without objection.
- The meeting returned to order at 7:38 pm.
  - President Graham: Once you start approving one awareness club, you should not discriminate against any other awareness club. If you approve one, you should approve all.
  - Senator Leyfman: I agree with President Graham’s statement. If this club is approved, within a few weeks or months, more and more awareness clubs will start to spring up. We should perhaps create one awareness club with a block budget, which can be subdivided into smaller awareness clubs, each for a specific disease or condition. This would also be more fruitful to the campus, as it would promote greater collaboration.
  - Senator Fanizza: We could tell this club to find a club that is similar, that they could work with.
  - Senator Williams: I do not think we should shoot down a club for the specific reason that other clubs may spring up. We do not currently have awareness clubs on campus, and should not preemptively deny recognition to clubs.
  - Senator Abraham: If we approve this club, we have to approve all other awareness clubs, in order to follow “viewpoint neutrality.” We must also consider that we have a limited budget, and at one point there will not be enough money to approve all of them. I favor Senator Leyfman’s idea.
  - Senator Cushing: The only problem I would have with such an overall giant club is that a lot of groups like to be part of something that they feel a close attachment to. If we do accept Autism awareness though, we may have to accept all other awareness clubs, though this is not certain. My point is, it is a good thing to have awareness clubs.
  - Senator Ahmad: I believe Senators are overreacting. We would be limiting individuality by rejecting this club. They have a calling – Autism Awareness. I do not think that we will have a deluge of such “awareness” clubs. We should be “optimistic” about the future.

- President Graham: There is no one stopping them from doing what they would love to do – but we are talking about USG recognition at a time where we are facing many requests for a limited amount of funds. I like the idea of one organization promoted to awareness that would include all of these sub-clubs.
  - Senator Kirnbauer: We had a similar debate last meeting regarding giving approval to magazine clubs, and we ended up approving that club. Our decision last time was to grant approval, and we should do the same this time.
  - Senator Cushing: We could always merge awareness clubs in the future, if we become overwhelmed with such clubs.
  - Senator Kashan: Why would a club want to mix with another club once they have been granted recognition? How do we know how the money would be split up between the various awareness clubs? How do we know the money would be split up correctly? We would not have direct control and would not be able to ensure adequate splitting of funds.
  - Senator Fan: I think that Senator Leyfman and Senator Ahmad make good points. These clubs should be formed individually, but on the other hand, if many such clubs seek recognition, we can merge them into a larger club that includes all awareness clubs.
  - Senator Ahmad: Senator Kashan brought up a really good point. The grouping idea is actually quite terrible. What happens when you group a bunch of clubs together when each sub-club has its own priorities? There would be a strong chance for corruption, because they think that your cause is not important. Also, I do not think that we are being viewpoint neutral in our approach.
  - VP Mazza: I have a question for Senator Abraham. Did you ask them what they might spend their money on?
    - Senator Abraham: They have an event that would raise awareness of autism on campus, with the possibility of raising funds for the clubs. We told them that there would be a slim chance that they would get funds for it.
    - VP Mazza: More specifically, what would they spend the money on?
    - Senator Abraham: Food as well as bringing a speaker.
  - President Graham: The notion that we could give approval now but then take it away by merging these clubs into one club is a poor idea, given USG history. As for the precedent with magazine clubs, the Senate was not unanimous in that decision, and I believe a stance needs to be taken now, before it becomes a major issue in the future.
  - Senator Giraldo: I would say that there might be many different people on campus, with different interests and emotions. We are not going to be able to fund every possible interest. There is already an obscene amount of clubs out there. New clubs need to be more than a “food and marketing” club.
- Senator Kirnbauer moves to end debate.

- The motion to end debate was approved, by a vote of 15-0-2. (Roll Call #3.)
  - Motion to grant recognition to the “Autism Awareness” club.
    - Motion fails by a vote of 8-9-0. (Roll Call #4.)
- Senator Abraham presented the SSC Recommendation on “Good News Corp.”
  - Senator Abraham read the club’s purpose statement.
  - Senator Rampersad: Can you differentiate this club and “Alternative Spring Break Outreach?”
    - Senator Abraham: Should USG use activity fee funds to fund students moving off-campus for ten months, to do charitable activities?
  - Senator Kashan: What would the club need money for?
    - Senator Abraham: Essentially, right now, the club would like to get funding for food and marketing, to raise interest in the club. The club may ask for funding in the future with regards to their off-campus missions.
  - Senator Leyfman: Have they picked any locations and costs as to where they would be going?
    - Senator Abraham: They have not as of yet, it would depend on need.
  - Senator Khan: Would the students no longer be students when they leave?
    - Senator Abraham: I am not sure. It is a ten month period, but I believe that USG activity fee funds should not be spent.
  - Senator Ahmad: I do not believe the club would serve the campus community and very few students would be able to participate in it.
- Senator Cushing moved to postpone the recognition of “Good News Corp.” indefinitely.
  - Motion by Senator Kirnbauer to end debate.
    - Motion to end debate passes by a vote of 14-3-0. (Roll Call #5.)
  - On the motion to postpone indefinitely:
    - Motion fails 0-17-0. (Roll Call #6.)
- Senator Ahmad moved to grant recognition to “Good News Corp.”
  - Motion fails 0-16-0. (Roll Call #7.)
- Senator Giraldo presented the “Investment Club” SSC Recommendation.
  - Senator Giraldo read the mission statement of the “Investment Club.”
  - Senator Baum: I feel that having this club on campus would promote and stir business investment for the campus. Would software used be kept by USG to be reused by future generations of the club?
    - This matter was brought up in SSC discussion, but we are not sure.
    - Senator Stratoudakis: We suggested that any funding granted would be used to purchase software that is housed in their advisor’s office, and it would not be taken by any club members, so it could be used future generations of club members.
    - Senator Ahmad: There might be a software licensing issue. Who will take care of the CDs afterwards? There also appears to be a problem in Article III (Membership) in the club’s constitution.



- I am also running again for PPT. I believe that I would be a good PPT because I am very dedicated and passionate. I took care of the Fall Revision process and did it in an organized way.
- The Chair ruled that the new Senators do not count as “filled seats.” There are currently 19 filled seats. Ten votes would be required to approve a PPT. It cannot be done by secret ballot.
- With no further debate, the vote for the PPT took place. (Roll Call #10).
  - Votes for Senator Abraham: 9.
  - Votes for Senator Kirnbauer: 5.
  - Abstentions: 3.
  - Votes needed for election: 10.
    - Outcome: Deadlock.
  - Senator Ahmad: Because we have two new Senators, I believe for the interests of fairness, we should wait until next week, when they will have an opportunity to vote for PPT.
- Motion by Senator Ahmad to postpone the PPT election until next week.
  - Motion approved by a vote of 12-3-2. (Roll Call #11.)

#### Agenda item 7.0: Open Agenda

- Senator Fanizza announced that there will be a presentation by Blackman’s in the Wang Center at 2:00 pm on Wednesday.
  - This will be an opportunity to see if the company has kept their promises in terms of their handling of the dining services.
- Senator Leyfman promoted the USG Lecture series. This Monday at 12:50 pm in the SAC Auditorium, Professor Barry S. Coller, an extremely distinguished speaker, will present a lecture. It would be nice to show respect for him by having massive attendance at this lecture series. Professor Coller kept his commitment to undergraduates, instead of speaking at the medical school. I highly encourage students to attend, to show support for all the good he has done.
  - Senator Ahmad: This is one of the pioneers of Stony Brook. You don’t need to be a science person to enjoy this fascinating lecture. Please attend and spread the word.
  - Senator Baum: Do we need to get tickets?
    - Senator Leyfman: No. The event is free to all students and staff. Feel free to attend. I feel that for the benefit of Stony Brook’s present and future, it is important to attend.
- President Graham: I hope everyone has taken the survey. Tell everyone to take the survey regarding tuition fees. This is our way of polling the undergraduates and finding out how they feel. Invite your friends through the facebook group.
  - We also have two new Senators. Please try to be as welcoming as possible.
  - Blackman presentation: It is really important to go out there, in USG apparel, to show that we are engaged.
- Senator Ahmad: Are there any vacancies in any USG agencies?

- President Graham: There are nine more seats for the USG Elections Board. You can nominate ANYONE. Please spread the word. Hopefully we will have a record turnout for USG elections this year.
- Senator Myers: What was the facebook group you mentioned?
  - President Graham: This is regarding the tuition survey.
- Senator Ahmad: Can we nominate students for the USG Senate?
  - President Graham: I have a pile of resumes and cover letters, and would welcome recommendations by Senators.
- Senior Class Rep Daniels: Senior portraits will be taking place March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 1st. Professional attire is recommended. No fee for sitting in, only for ordering pictures.
  - There are further developments for the Senior Bowl.
  - If you wish to volunteer for the Senior Committee, please contact me.
  - Senior BBQ will be held May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Saturday after the Senior Bowl.
  - Senator Kashan: Tickets for the Bowl?
    - Mr. Daniels: Prices and logistics are still to be determined, but are still a few weeks off.
- Ms. Aarthi Sheeth? (NYPIRG):
  - NYPIRG will hold a workshop regarding “Small Claims Court.” We had ten students trained by a NYPIRG attorney, who are taking calls from the campus community and the local area, to help facilitate the process for citizens interested in small claims court action. They cannot give legal advice, but simply facilitate the process.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

	Roll Call #1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11
Abraham	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	Abstain
Ahmad	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Abstain	Y
Baum	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	Y
Cushing	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	N
Cushman	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abstain	Y
Fan	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	N
Fanizza	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Absent	Y	Y	Abraham	Y
Giraldo	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Kirnbauer	N
Kashan	N	Y	Abstain	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	Y
Khan	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Kirnbauer	Y
Kirnbauer	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abstain	Abstain
Leyfman	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	Y
Mahmud	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Rampersad	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	Y
Rustemi	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Simmons	Y	Y	Abstain	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Kirnbauer	Y
Singh	RESIGNED	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Stratoudakis	Abstain	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Kirnbauer	Y
Sohi	Abstain	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Kirnbauer	Y
Williams	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Abraham	Y
Total:	4-11-2	17-0-0	15-0-2	8-9-0	14-3-0	0-17-0	0-16-0	17-0-0	17-0-0	9-5-3	12-3-2
Decision:	Fails	Passes	Passes	Fails	Passes	Fails	Fails	Passes	Passes	Deadlock	Passes

Y = Yes; N = No; A = Abstain; Ab = Absent

Total is in Y-N-A format.

Roll Call votes for 10-Mar-2011 USG Senate Meeting