

Social Concerns Committee Minutes 9-20-07

SSC members present – Rob Gersch, Dylan, Kate (4th member at class)

Others present – Eileen Chanza, Jacqueline Vigliotti, Louis Esparza, Emily Churilla, Amy Falvey (contributing writers), Andre Antonenko (Speaker, RCC, etc)

Rob calls meeting to order 10am.

Reiterates that power was given back to Eileen by Senate on Tuesday

Task at hand is how to move forward on this issue

Jackie question – wants clarification on privileges vs rights

Rob – Senate gave rights back, can now only be taken away by Senate

Eileen – disappointed that Ryan Soule is not here, and would like a conversation with him included

Was informed that she had power to publish, and power to hire writers (3)

Was under the impression that she didn't report to one man, but establish forum to GSO/graduate students

Goal was to follow constitution of GSO, and modeled work as such, and was deeply offended by Ryan's lack of regard (treated as a child)

Eileen – Felt that there was a personal attack on the one author, but not the other – also a personal attack on herself due to initial attack

States that she would have been willing to compromise (eg interview Women's center, or call piece an opinion piece), but is offended by the straight pulling of the article as opposed to offering a compromise

He only attacked the one piece, and not the other, and does not see how this isn't a 1st amendment issue

Louis – were there actually complaints about the article?

Rob – there were unsubstantiated complaints about the Mag not being up, but not content.

Rob question – do you feel that it was the subject conduct that was attacked as opposed to the site issue in the first place?

Eileen – read the initial article-pulling email from Ryan (Sept 11)

Kate – was there Exec council majority?

Rob – Yes, given the info that he had at the time

Jackie – since SCC has to figure out mission statement, then we have to figure out how complaints are handled, and how said complaints should really have power over the articles themselves.

Rob – feels that pulling articles was harsh, to say the least, and did Eileen even meet with Exec committee?

Eileen – was not aware that she had to meet with council, and says it's not a problem. She kept Ryan 'in the loop' about the website/Rich problems. She got all of the articles ready within a week (11 articles). She feels getting 11 articles was unprecedented, since most were contributing pieces, as opposed to editor writing them. Refers to Ryan's e-mail (Sept 11th) and expresses concern that he seems focused on potential administration reaction to these articles.

Rob – As VP, it's his job to be involved with the administrators, and doesn't think that the administration should play a role in the constituency <sigh>

Dylan – Any complaints to articles should come to SCC, so that decision should be unilateral

Kate – also, then those complaints can be properly documented

Eileen – Feels that she's in a hostile working environment, and under threat, and stresses that she wants to be in communication with the president – invites the president to write an article for magazine, and posts a letter on the website

Rob – The biggest problem with both sides is the lack of professionalism. It's unfortunate that the 'teaser' buzz was lost.

Eileen – she also tried to generate interest by sending emails to the departments, and also reached out to the medical students, and believes that she has been professional in everything she does.

Rob – cites GSO meeting as an example of unprofessionalism. He thinks that Eileen has excellent ideas, and wants to work with her, but is concerned that she went ahead and used harsh language at GSO meeting, and felt she borderline slandered her employer (the exec counsel).

Eileen – does not feel that she was informed that this issue was going to SCC

Rob disagrees – read the last email exchange between Eileen and Ryan (Sept 17th)

He's worried that she sidestepped the proper channels

Eileen – says she will not practice civil disobedience again, but feels that she was working under duress. Apologizes and says she wants to follow rules – "Message Understood".

Emily - Eileen met with Victor Rosado to try and find out how to go through proper channels.

Jackie – Others got to say a few words aside from just introducing themselves

Eileen – Wants clarification on hiring practices

Rob – States that Exec council is involved with hiring, and that Ryan will likely abstain himself from the initial hiring issues

Rob thanks Eileen for being ‘civil’ – it’s a backhanded compliment (Eileen says she’s usually civil)

Rob – how does Eileen see the magazine?

Eileen – Reiterates her professionalism, feels that the online mag should be a forum, including bloggers. Spends little time with family, and lots with friends, trying to reach out to students – wants to alleviate stress of being at SBU, doesn’t want this to just be her show, but a community. Feels that the time lost with this issue could have been put to outreach, and wants mag to mimic GSO ideals, but be its own entity and fun

Jackie – also wants to see multiple formats of writing, open forum, etc

Eileen wants GSO to submit articles and points of view

Kate – comments on the women’s health article as a reader. Would like to see other points of view with this article, or classify article as opinion piece, or something

Eileen – states that the piece was an essay, a personal narrative.

Kate – would have liked to see more context with the piece

Eileen – It was a personal narrative, and would like to see other points of view

Rob – not a woman, but can understand the issue of sensitive information broadcast throughout the hallways, so would like to see that this article generate good results – ie talk to women’s clinic to determine if this is a widespread problem and offered GSO support to pressure them to change training policy if this is the case.

Jackie – Stresses that ‘context’ does not invalidate any opinions

Louis – Thinks that the issue is the point of view – should 1st page be objective, or can the editor/writers publish whatever they want. If you want the mag to have some objectivity, then this has to be written into mission statement/bylaws

Eileen – mag is for graduate students, is nervous by the word ‘mouthpiece’, and is afraid of the violation of the 1st amendment

Dylan – Agrees that mission statement needs to be established to clarify everything

Jackie – how does clause in mission statement get passed?

Rob/Andre – 2/3 vote of GSO senate – in order to voice, you need to be a senator or talk to your senator

Rob – moves to sit by Eileen to illustrate being inclusiveness. Wants to get this figured out, and wants to reach amicable resolution

Eileen – Please encourage Ryan to attend next meeting/write a piece for the mag

Jackie – encourage others to submit pieces.

Kate – suggests sending emails to senators to encourage pieces to be written and submitted

Eileen – appreciates time, but cannot work under threat. Does not feel that this issue will be resolved until the mission statement is created, but would like to see an apology from President Soule since working conditions will be tense otherwise.

Rob – can and will protect from censoring and attack from Exec committee.

Jackie – wants to make sure that articles don't have to be approved by Ryan

Rob – exec committee will suggest articles / issues to be covered and suggest ways to present articles, but will not stand in the way of publishing any articles

Dylan – What is the next step? Form a mission statement?

Rob – Yes. -Hands out copies of mission statements from other colleges.-

Andre - After formed by SCC, should go to RCC for review to verify that it's ok in terms of rules and bylaws, then pass in GSO senate by 2/3 majority, then Editor contract will need to be modified by exec council and approved by Senate to reflect the mission statement.

Rob – Next meeting will be Wed October 3, 10am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05am

Appendix A: E-mails referred to in the minutes

1. Sept 11th Email from Ryan Soule to Eileen Chanza:

Eileen,

>

> Thank you for your e-mail. Indeed, there is much we need to go
> over.

>

> I'm going to cut to the point and be completely honest with you...I
> was shocked when I read the two articles this morning on the GradMag.
> While my philosophy is to put good people in their positions and let
> them work, and I try to stay out of it otherwise, and while I always
> afford people latitude and the benefit of the doubt, in this case I
> had to step in and have Rich remove both articles from the website.
> Not only was I myself shocked by that first article in particular
> about the women's health center, but this morning alone I received a
> number of complaints about the content overall. People were
> "surprised" by the teaser, as was I, but the full length articles
> themselves took it in a whole other direction. This was not a
> unilateral choice, by the way, as a number of people have already
> described it as offensive. And while I indeed went along with the
> teaser, it also served as a red flag as to what direction the gradmag
> might take this year.

>

> You have to realize that this is an official GSO-sponsored
> publication. Where Lila left off last year, for instance, the
> university administrators read the magazine regularly and readership
> was way up, higher than The Graduate had ever been. Some
> administrators, as a matter of fact, even had the webpage locked into
> their browsers. If such an administrator were to have read the
> article on the health center, for example, we'd have all kinds of
> problems that would undermine the integrity of the organization. In
> fact, the style in which you've chosen to write these first few
> articles itself already undermine the integrity of the organization.
> With a constituency of over 8,000 graduate students, I would say that
> constitutes irresponsible behavior. If you didn't know before, you
> now know.

>

> I also want to point out that, as an official publication, we can't
> have articles on the website that attack an aspect of the institution
> based upon a personal bias. Freedom of speech does not apply in this
> case because this is the GSO's magazine, not any one individual's.
> You can go ahead and slam the women's center all you want, but not in

> our publication.
>
> I say all of this because I hope you change course with the
> magazine. For the time being, please submit all articles to me and
> I'll give them to Richard for uploading.
>

2. Sept. 17th Email from Eileen Chanza to Ryan Soule

From:	"echanza" <echanza@ic.sunysb.edu>  View Contact Details  Add Mobile Alert
To:	"Ryan Soule" <ryansoule2000@yahoo.com>
Subject:	Re: September Issue
Date:	Mon, 17 Sep 2007 17:10:22 -0400

Ryan,

That's fine. I understand that you have requested a meeting with the Vice-president and the Social Concerns Committee to discuss the SBGradMag.

I'll see you tomorrow evening.

Sincerely,
Eileen

That's understandable. I also want to be sure it is understood in
> advance that the purpose of tomorrow's presentation is simply to
> introduce yourself, not to try to spark a debate on the matter. Our
> Constitution and standing committee bylaws require issues like this
To > first be addressed and worked out in the appropriate committee,
and > then communicated to the Senate in a formal and organized way. I
Want > to see the matter resolved too, but I hope you understand
tomorrow is > not the time, as it's going to take time for all the
details to be > fully worked through. As I said there's a time and
place for > everything. The social concerns committee has jurisdiction
legally > and will work it out in a neutral fashion, and then report
their > recommendation to the senate at the next meeting.

>

> Please let me know that you are in agreement.
