

Committee on Public Affairs

Senate of the Associated Students 86th Session
Minutes for Tuesday, February 12th, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.
3rd Floor Joe Crowley Student Union Room 422

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Senator Alvarez called the Committee on Public Affairs meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. in Room 442 Fourth Floor of the Joe Crowley Student Union. Presiding Secretary, Dominique Hernandez.

2. ROLL CALL

Senator Alvarez, Aziz, Dobbs, Green, Westerman, and Ahmed were present.

Senator Ahmed was tardy excused.

A quorum was present

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time

4. MINUTES

a. Minutes from the Meeting on October 19, 2018

The minutes from October 19, 2018 were approved.

b. Minutes from the Meeting on November 2, 2018

The minutes from November 2, 2018 were approved.

5. REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Director Worrall said there was going to be a conservation lobby day on March 12. If the public affairs committee chose to support certain environmental bills that were through the legislature she thought they'd try to go down to the legislator on that day. The two that she found so far was Senate bill 42 that was related to changes to vehicles to make them clean vehicles by using more environmentally friendly fuel alternatives.. SV61 was another that they were working on. This would impose a tax on diesel fuel in certain cities. The others were just BDR's at the moment so she said they'd just keep track of the environmental ones. They were looking into the green new deal in congress and they were going to write up a digestive refund on that. It was just a resolution, not a bill or piece of legislation so it didn't have any value in that way but it was pushing for 100% renewable energy by 2020. February 25 was the UNR lobby day and she sent out a sign up form if any of the Senators wanted to sign up. If anyone else wanted to sign up there was still spaces. They'd like to fill those spaces.

Senator Aziz asked if Director Worrall could have the environmental bills in that week's policy brief.

Posted at the ASUN Offices in the Joe Crowley Student Union, Frandsen Humanities Building, the Pennington Student Achievement Center, Mathewson- IGT Knowledge Center, and online at www.nevadaasun.com.

If you would like a copy of any of the agenda items listed, please contact Senator Alvarez at senatoralvarez@asun.unr.edu.



Director Worrall said yes.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

There is no old business to be discussed.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **S. Res. 86- A Resolution in Support of Expanding the Silver State Opportunity Grant to Increase Higher Education Affordability**

Senator Ahmed entered the room at 5:04 p.m.

Senator Alvarez sought a motion to favorably recommend Senate Resolution 86 a Resolution in Support of Expanding the Silver State Opportunity Grant to Increase Higher Education Affordability.

Senator Green moved to favorably recommend Senate Resolution 86 a Resolution in Support of Expanding the Silver State Opportunity Grant to Increase Higher Education Affordability.

Senator Ahmed seconded.

Senator Alvarez said before they discussed they would be introduced to the bill by the authors, Senator Ahmed and Senator Aziz.

Senator Aziz said the Nevada Legislature formed a committee to investigate ways to make higher education more affordable. One of the things they investigated was to expand the Silver State opportunity grant which was available for students in community colleges and state colleges in Nevada. Students had to take 30 credits over the course of the year rather than having students take 15 credits over fall and 15 credits over spring. They did this to ease up on students because that was a limitation that not all students could meet.

Senator Green said he was in support of this bill because there was a lot of students who couldn't enroll in 15 credits a semester. He thought spreading it out would be a lot more effective.

Senator Dobbs said she agreed. She thought if their goal was to be able to complete school in four years there was no reason to not be able to break that up.

Senator Westerman asked if it was per calendar year or per academic year.

Senator Aziz said he thought it was for the academic year but he also thought it could vary per college. The SSOG didn't apply to UNR or UNLV but it applied to schools like CSN and TMCC. Each college had their own plan but he thought as long as students completed 30 credits within the year that was all that mattered. He didn't know if the bill they were drafting in the legislature was changing that but he didn't include the 30 credits so it would be available to all students in Nevada rather than just UNR students.

Senator Ahmed said it kind of went in conjunction with the next resolution on the table because currently the SSOG wasn't actually at UNR. They were supporting it regardless because it applied to all Nevada students. The next resolution was in support of expanding a program similar to the SSOG to UNR. It was also going into the support of that program as well.

Senator Alvarez asked if they were only doing this in support of other institutions.

Senator Ahmed said yes. It was currently set up so that the SSOG wasn't given to UNR students but the resolution was just for all Nevada students. The next resolution was in support of expanding SSOG to create programs similar to the SSOG to UNR. Then it would tie into UNR students specifically.

Senator Dobbs asked if there was a reason why they didn't specify the year. She asked if it was because it varied based on each college's calendar.

Senator Aziz said it was simply because it hadn't been drafted as a bill yet. It would be supporting something that didn't exist so leaving it vague was easier than saying something like they only support this during calendar years.

Director Worrall entered the room at 5:10 p.m.

Senator Alvarez asked Senator Aziz if he had read the new bill.

Senator Aziz said he didn't know there was one.

Senator Alvarez said to keep in mind that there would be questions regarding profit transition over into a new bill.

Senator Green asked for the name of the new bill.

Senator Alvarez said it was Senate Bill 146.

Senator Alvarez asked Director Worrall if there had been any changes from the bill draft to the bill.

Director Worrall said it didn't mean anything it was just the process to assign a number.

Senator Aziz moved to amend Senate Resolution 86 a Resolution in Support of Expanding the Silver State Opportunity Grant to Increase Higher Education Affordability line item 4 to read "from low income families in 2012 (postsecondary education opportunity, September 2013) ," through unanimous consent.

The motion carried.

The resolution passed.

b. S. Res. 86- A Resolution in Support of Creating a State-Funded Grant Program for University Students

Senator Alvarez sought a motion to favorably recommend Senate Resolution 86 a Resolution in Support of Creating a State-Funded Grant Program for University Students.

Senator Aziz moved to favorably recommend Senate Resolution 86 a Resolution in Support of Creating a State-Funded Grant Program for University Students.

Senator Ahmed seconded.

Senator Alvarez said before they discussed they would be introduced to the bill by the authors, Senator Ahmed and Senator Aziz.

Senator Aziz said if they looked at the first page of the resolution it was the same as the last resolution they had just looked at. This was because it was the second investigation by the committee for making higher education more affordable. So, using the same background information applied. The difference was the result clauses, “the associate students of the University of Nevada support the creation of a state funded grant program for university students.”

Senator Ahmed said it didn’t specify where the money would come from because it was out of their reach.

Senator Green asked what the Senate bill number was.

Senator Alvarez said it was Senate Bill 145.

Senator Aziz moved to amend Senate Resolution 86 a Resolution in Support of Creating a State-Funded Grant Program for University Students page 2 line item 11 to read, “from low income families in 2012 (postsecondary education opportunity, September 2013) ,” through unanimous consent.

The amendment carried.

Senator Dobbs asked how this proposal differed from the millennium scholarship and other existing scholarships.

Senator Ahmed said the millennium scholarship was given due to meeting the high school eligibility and credit requirements but this resolution wanted to establish another grant. One similar to SSOG.

Senator Dobbs asked if this would be need based rather than the millennium which was merit based.

Senator Ahmed said yes.

Senator Dobbs asked if there was any current state scholarships that were need based.

Senator Ahmed said he didn't think so.

Senator Alvarez asked if Senator Aziz and Senator Ahmed could clarify the necessity for this and how it would impact students.

Senator Aziz said this resolution, in regards to the battle born opportunity grant, would apply to the University of Nevada students because their need based students would have a portion of their tuition covered. It would be personal to students as in each student would be given a different amount. Similar to the SSOG, it would be based on how much students were paying and their need. It would make their lives easier because more of their tuition would be paid.

Senator Green said he was in support of this bill. If they looked at the Nevada State Legislature website they could get an idea about what the Senate bill was about. He was in support of this but they should have the information ready for Senate on Wednesday.

Resolution carried.

c. New Project Proposals

Senator Alvarez said she received some information from President Jackson regarding the several different projects that she wanted the committee to take on. President Jackson said, "Gabbie Ortiz Flores sent me a message about this and I think it would be a great idea. What do you think about issuing a resolution as a way to celebrate the 150th anniversary of when Nevada ratified the 15th amendment? I believe Nevada was the first state to ratify on March 1st 1969 but the ratification was completed in 1970 when the majority of states had ratified but I thought it might be nice to highlight Nevada's ratification of the amendment in 1969. I will probably be reaching out to the Governor, President Johnson, the Mayor, other Senators, and any other parties that might be interested in doing this. If you're not interested I could always write something through my office."

Senator Alvarez said she believed that would be a wonderful resolution and she would be working on that during the upcoming week. Hopefully, she'd have that on the agenda for next week. She asked if there were any Senators that wanted to take that task on with her.

Senator Aziz asked Senator Alvarez to explain what the resolution would be in support of.

Senator Alvarez said it was just going to be highlighting the 150th celebration of Nevada ratifying the amendment.

Director Worrall left the room at 5:24 p.m.

Senator Alvarez said the next item of business for the projects was Victor Liba from the nation council of juvenile from the family court judges. On April 4th from 11-1:00 p.m. in honor of child abuse awareness month, they were hoping to host an event for students, faculty, and staff to create displays to show their support. They were hoping they could help sponsor the event and have it held somewhere in the quad. She asked if anyone was interested in helping here meet those people.

Senator Dobbs asked what the dates were.

Senator Alvarez said the event was on April 4th from 11-1:00 p.m. The committee would be taking that on as a co-sponsor for the event through ASUN.

d. Parking Services Update

Senator Alvarez said in their last Oversight meeting, they had a discussion with parking service where they wanted to implement a fee for students to decrease the deficit they were currently in. Currently, they were in a deficit of \$600,000. They wanted to solve that by providing two different opportunities. They wanted to decrease operating costs to \$250,000 per year with one loop around the university, 30 minutes per loop, with service hours from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m five days a week, with two busses on loop with an increase in wait time to 15 minutes, and they would only have fall and spring semester service only. The second plan they wanted to do was to have extended services, increase operating costs by \$353,000, they wanted to do two routes with a full campus loop, with an express campus loop servicing the east side of campus and apartments, a 19 minute loop time, 13 minute loop on express, extended operating hours from Monday and Thursday, 3 buses total, and having a wait time of 9.5 minutes, 9 stops on main line and 6 stops on express. They just wanted to expand pack transit even more than they currently had. They wanted to implement a fee on students annually for \$8 a semester.

Senator Dobbs asked if that was going to be something people opted into and paid the \$16 or if it was coming out of student fees.

Senator Alvarez said it would come out of student fees. They came to Oversight in order to have the Senators write a resolution but the committee chairs had formerly expressed that they weren't in agreement upon it. Senator Hughes argued that it was a dichotomy of this or that when there could be other options. Her personal concern was the \$8 semester fee that would help them come out of a deficit that they put themselves in. She didn't think it was financially smart to place that on their students.

Senator Green said he didn't think it was fair to keep putting fees on students for the deficit they created. They could explore other options but he had needed more information. He asked Senator Alvarez to send the information to the committee but from what it sounded like he wouldn't be in support.

Senator Alvarez said they didn't have any numbers about how many students actually used pack transit or how many students lived in the apartments around the university so that was also a point of concern for the committee on Oversight.

Senator Aziz said parking services already raised the price of parking passes this past school year by about 20%. So he had to pay \$75 dollars more. He personally wasn't in support of writing a resolution to help them out. They had already raised their prices enough and he thought they could figure it out.

Senator Westerman said she agreed with Senator Aziz. She lived off campus in the apartments last year and she used the bus system every day. Since she had left there they had actually expanded the bus system and she thought it was fine when she had used it so she didn't find a need to expand to bus system anymore and she didn't think the students did either.

Senator Green asked Dr. Beattie if pack transit was different from the shuttle rides campus escort provided.

Dr. Beattie said parking services ran the shuttles that went around in a circle and campus escort ran all the vans and the shuttle service that went to the grocery stores over the weekend.

Senator Green asked if there was one bus line.

Senator Alvarez said there as two shuttle services. There was an express loop and then there was a main loop. The main loop went around the campus and express loop went up to the student housing apartments.

Senator Dobbs said pack transit hours and campus escort hours perfectly lined up so that they weren't operating at the same time.

Senator Alvarez said she'd be taking that feedback back to Oversight to let Speaker Martinez know that they would not be in support.

Senator Green said he would personally look into writing a resolution in opposition to the increase if they kept looking into that route. He just didn't think it was fair.

Dr. Beattie said it was definitely an option. The graduate student associate wasn't in support of it either. In his experience, if GSA and ASUN were not in support of a fee increase neither are the regents. But they could write a legislation in opposition to it as well.

Senator Alvarez said she was told GSA were in support.

Dr. Beattie said things must have changed since he was last told about it because it had been 3-4 weeks. It was very rare that GSA had passed a fee.

Senator Alvarez said parking services came in to Oversight and wanted them to write a resolution in support of it.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Senator Dobbs said a few weeks ago they had talked about doing outreach as a committee but they didn't clarify what they wanted that to look like. So, she spoke to Gabby last week to talk about it. She gave her contacts to a group that was already doing Gear Up which was college prep outreach. She thought they should discuss what they wanted their outreach to look like before they started contacting schools. She mentioned when they did outreach to schools in Washoe County it was mainly about voter registration. She didn't have many contacts for the rural schools but she mentioned that Gear Up may. Before she talked to them she wanted to see where they wanted to go with outreach.

Senator Alvarez said she thought they should relate their outreach back to ASUN because that was one of their duties. She wanted to tie ASUN into university life while also trying to keep it in the realm of public affairs and legislative affairs overall.

Senator Dobbs asked if they'd be looking at high school government classes.

Senator Alvarez said yes.

Senator Dobbs asked if there would be any K-8 interest there for them.

Senator Alvarez said no. She thought going through student government and all the opportunities it provided would be important.

Senator Aziz said he thought it was important to differentiate their outreach and university recruitment because the university already did their recruitment on their own and each college had ways to go to rural schools and schools in different states to try and get students to come here. He thought their focus should be ASUN and leadership opportunities it could provide. As well as outreaching as a student government not as a university.

Dr. Beattie said today they had a great example of the letter of the law versus the spirit of the law. He didn't know what was going to happen in Senate and he didn't have any say but when they wrote the SSOG, the idea of making people take 15 credits was so that they would graduate on time. Then, the letter of the law was imposing on the spirit of the law. Rewriting it so that 30 credits in a year works was addressing it so the spirit of the law didn't collide with the letter of the law. Like when people wrote policies to fix policies. Who cared who took the credits as long as they got out in a timely fashion.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.