

Committee on Democratic Civic Engagement

Senate of the Associated Students 89th Session
Minutes for Friday, February 11, 2022 at 5:15 pm
Room 405, 4th Floor of the Joe Crowley Student Union & Zoom Meeting
Email Senator Olivia Ngo at senatorngo@asun.unr.edu for more information

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Senator Ngo called the Committee on Democratic Civic Engagement meeting to order on Friday, February 11, 2022, at 5:22 pm via Room 405, 4th Floor at the Joe Crowley Student Union and via Zoom Conference Call. Presiding Secretary, Nevaeh Wortinger.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Senators Ngo, Jojan, McNaught, Noble

Absence Unexcused: Senator Bowling

A quorum was present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the time.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- **Motion from Senator Ngo:** Motion to approve the minutes from February 4, 2022 through unanimous consent.

Seconded by: Senator McNaught and Senator Noble.

- **Question from Ngo:** Asked if there was any dissent to the motion. There was no dissent at the time.
- **Resolved:** Motion carried.

5. REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

a. **Report of the Director of Legislative Affairs, Robert Resnik**

- Senator Ngo reported on Director Resnik's behalf. His report discussed legislative affairs hosting a policy date to record student survey responses and using this information to collect testimony and data for DC trip. His report also discussed how Director Resnik met with President Brown, VP Murphy and Senator Ngo in presenting the first draft supporting a student voting seat in the Board of Regents.



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6. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. **Legislation Planning**

- **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked Senator McNaught if he had any updates regarding meeting with Director Rodriguez about the Civic Engagement Fund.
- **Answer from Senator McNaught:** Stated how he reached out to her through email and will follow up.
- Senator McNaught also discussed information regarding food insecurity and data can be pulled from a master's thesis he found when he was reviewing the Senate Bill and House Resolution, and Pack Provisions.
- **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked Senator McNaught for the House Resolution names for her notes.
- **Answer from Senator McNaught:** Stated House Resolution 5591 and Senate Bill 1569.
- Senator Jojin suggested looking into the offered government aid regarding food insecurity for college students.
- Senator Ngo stated how she met with Policy Director Lara and how he brought up two pieces. One of these pieces was the Basic Act which directed the Department of Education to provide grants to higher education institutions for basic needs assistance and determine eligible students from institutions. The second piece he mentioned was the Income Driven Student Loan Forgiveness Act which requires the Department of Education to forgive the outstanding balance for eligible students. She asked for thoughts on these pieces from the committee.

Senator McNaught left the room at 6:12 pm

- Senator Noble stated how it would be reasonable to address both pieces and not have to focus on one at a time. He then discussed a piece he found which described an initiative fund regarding the Civic Engagement Fund. He described how this piece allows for an allocation of funds. He stated how there would need to be the compliance of the Department of Legislative Affairs and working with both President Brown and the next president of the association to configure the allocation of funds.
 - **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked if there was a cap for allocated funds.
 - **Answer from Senator Noble:** Stated the just funding is allocated, there was no information about a specific cap.
- Senator Jojin stated ensuring the departments have time for this piece and reaching out to clubs that would utilize this fund.
- Senator Jojin discussed how the bill he was working on is done and is ready to be submitted. He discussed his different incorporations in the bill.

Senator McNaught returned to the room at 6:17 pm

- **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked if Senator Jojin would want to take on proposing the Income Driven Student Loan Forgiveness Act.
- **Answer from Senator Jojin:** Explained the resolution piece he has written is more universal in terms of student loan forgiveness.
- Senator Ngo stated how she believed Senator Jojin's resolution he wrote is comprehensive about what they want to present and how she was okay with letting the other piece go. She assigned the Basic Act task to Senator Noble.
 - **Question from Senator Noble:** Asked if these bills will be personal bills or committee legislation.
 - **Answer from Senator Ngo:** Explained how it was a mix of both and if he were to choose to work with the committee that they all could go on their own path.
- Senator Ngo assigned the food insecurity legislation to Senator Noble and Senator Jojin his resolution he was writing. She also stated she will work with Senator Noble on the Basic Act. She stated how she would like these pieces done by February 25, 2022.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **S.R.89 A Resolution Recommending Responses to Disruptive Speakers on Campus**

- **Motion from Senator Ngo:** Motion to pass the gavel to Senator McNaught.
- Senator McNaught accepted this motion.
- Senator McNaught sought the motion to favorably recommend S.R.89 A Resolution Recommending Responses to Disruptive Speakers on Campus to the Senate of the Associated Students.
- Senator Ngo moved to favorably recommend S.R.89 A Resolution Recommending Responses to Disruptive Speakers on Campus.
- **Seconded by:** Senator Jojin.
- Senator Ngo spoke on behalf of Senate Speaker Schein's legislation resolution which outlined a list of recommendations for the different proactive efforts that should be provided to students. His report discussed other ideas he has and for anyone to reach out to him with questions and concerns.
- Senator Jojin discussed his concerns regarding the resolution and explained the messaging in the resolution is not needed from ASUN. He discussed how he believed the clause is sending the wrong message with a reactive approach and that it pushes students voices aside. Explained how before it is passed it should be amended and

outlined his specific concerns regarding sections 1 through 4 saying it seemed impractical. Senator Jojin mentioned how administration handing out ‘move along’ messaging should be amended out. He explained how there should be a resolution supporting students in condemning views that are found offensive. He also discussed how administration should explain the campus’ free speech policy to students. Senator Jojin explained how the wording of the legislation was too harsh against students.

- Senator Noble discussed how he believed this piece to provide proactive and positive steps the university could take to comfort students. He discussed how he agreed with the counseling services and service dog recommendations but that the legislation itself does not focus on the issue, which was that the universities response was not adequate. He explained how the ‘move along’ messaging idea does not have to be disregarded if the intent is to not keep students from disengaging but to protect the well-being of students. He discussed how the most noble absence from this legislation is any mention of time, place and manner restrictions that the university can place upon free speech. He explained how other universities have a democracy clause where students are designated a place to display their free speech. He continued to read a passage on public nuisance.
- **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked if the university should re-examine their policies or make this information known to students in terms of the time, place and manner policies.
- **Answer from Senator Noble:** Answered how he believed both are warranted steps but recommended reviewing the legislation. He discussed that this resolution focuses on a reactive approach, and that there can be a way to made sure students’ rights aren’t being impeded on coming from class.
- Senator Ngo agreed with Senator Jojin and Senator McNaught and discussed how line 9 should be struck out where it stated students should not engage and should rather be written for the students who choose not to engage. She also mentioned expanding on the line below and having it read for administration to explain their free speech policy to support students if they choose to engage for reasons such as advocating their identities or displaying allyship. She explained how this would show as an administration that it is acknowledged what is hurting students. She also commented on the democracy clause Senator Noble mentioned and explained how there is a tentative Pack Plaza plan where is imagined to be in front of the Fitzgerald Student Services building to act as a democracy plaza for students. She mentioned how it can be added into the legislation to have a permanent place for students to display free speech.
- Senator McNaught discussed how the bull should not address moderating free speech because that is more so for legal services. He agreed with the previous recommendations for the ‘Whereas’ clauses.
- Senator Noble agreed with Senator McNaught in terms of limitations of their body and that nuisance laws can present a slippery slope. He explained however that it is the priority to represent the students, and that if there is a provision that cannot be followed through, then it can be ignored. He discussed how he believed it is their duty to report on this issue on behalf of their constituents and that they are student representatives and not representatives of legal services.

- **Question from Senator McNaught:** Asked what the point of recommending something with the anticipation that it will fall through.
- **Answer from Senator Noble:** Clarified that it is not pointless, but it expresses but the students want and implores for admin to take the students into consideration. Since the resolutions are non-binding, he described it rather encourages administration.
- Senator McNaught explained how he did not believe this was the proper place to discuss public nuisance laws and how it seemed unconstitutional to “tip-toe” around free speech. He explained how some speech will make people uncomfortable and that the effort should be focused on providing services to help students feel supported. He explained how this can interfere with the first amendment.
- Senator Jojin discussed how he did believe this provision should be included because it should represent the students and not be focused on whether each line is constitutional. He explained that this resolution should be strongly worded so it encourages administration to take more of a stance. He stated how this would represent the student’s views more accurately. He explained that if the free speech is an issue, then the legal counsel can change it accordingly.
- **Question from Senator McNaught:** Asked what the proposed amendment and language would be requested.
- **Answer from Senator Noble:** Stated he was not officially making this motion at the time, but recommended on Page 2, Line Item 21 between recommendations and the semi-colon to also say “... and we urge the university to reconsider their policy on time, place and manner restrictions pertinent to guests on campus” or language to that effect. Explained it is not performative but rather a representation of students.
- Senator Ngo discussed how she did not believe it would be a bad idea to note this idea on paper and specifying what is desired in terms of the time, place and manner restrictions. She stated how these restrictions could be discussed in this piece but regarding the public nuisance laws, she explained she did not believe it was this committees place and rather for a higher up to discuss.
- **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked Director Rodriguez what path that ASUN can keep advocating so that way the piece does not get shut down right away.
- **Answer from Director Rodriguez:** Explained that this piece would go to every legal body, and that the recommendation can be sent out, but all the bodies would have to agree or at least be given the opportunity to speak as well to what is being recommended. She stated that there is not one thing someone can do, it is a unison task.
- **Question from Senator Ngo:** Asked Director Rodriguez that if the university were to denounce hate speech and a student were to try and sue the university in that sense, how could there be a prevention of pushback from the university.

- **Answer from Director Rodriguez:** Explained it is a lose-lose situation on behalf of the President's office and that it is recommended to send a message out to students regarding offense.
- Senator McNaught stated how he agrees with the recommendation of putting this in the piece because students would like to hear responses from administration and that it is more pragmatic to be representing the students' voices in that aspect.
- Senator Noble specified he was not officially making a motion but suggested language that can be included on page two, two additional bullet points after Line Item 13. He suggested that for the first bullet point, all the previous things mentioned be recommended but also that the President creates a statement to be sent out to all faculty, students and staff reaffirming our own values as an institution in the light of such event. He stated that for the second bullet point, it should read that the university and administration should reconsider their policy on the time, place and manner restrictions and allowing people to reply to such a manner in public. Senator Noble then welcomed any changes or clarifications regarding these ideas before officially making a motion.
- Senator Jojin stated possibly adding a new line under Line Item 13 stating that the President's office should release a statement regarding any such instance that take place, condemning any hateful views and supporting students by taking actions to follow up. He recommended the possibility of combining statements. Senator Jojin also stated how he would like to add another line item below saying UNR police should monitor the event to ensure safety and to make sure time, place and manner restrictions are followed to make sure students are not discouraged. He also suggested changing the working on Line 9 regarding the "move along" messaging and how administration should hand out free speech cards rather than "move along" cards. He lastly stated how he would like to amend Line Item 11 ensuring workshops are offered after the fact for students.
- Senator Ngo discussed combing the clause about police and service animals because they correlate.
- Senator Noble stated there can be a denouncement of speech from the President and university, that it just cannot be restricted.
- Senator Ngo read another suggestion on behalf of Speaker Schein stating that QR codes with a link to the student expression website can be distributed around the Joe Crowley Student Union. Senator Ngo also stated how Speaker Schein also wanted to add the Student Union Director, Dr. James Cox.
- Senator McNaught agreed with this idea and explained that it provides a more readily available resource to students which correlated to the purpose of protecting students and creating support for those hurt by free speech on campus.
- Senator Noble also suggested following through with all the people Director Rodriguez mentioned to make reasonable time, place and manner changes.

- Director Rodriguez explained there should be a revision of the UAM policy and suggestions need to be made based on the codes.
- Senator Ngo mentioned how this revision should be done outside of the meeting and suggested tabling it until Speaker Schein can deliver on it.
- Senator Jojin, Senator McNaught, and Senator Noble agreed with tabling this piece.
- **Motion from Senator Jojin:** Moved to table S.R89 A Resolution Recommending Responses to Disruptive Speakers on Campus until February 18, 2022.
- **Seconded by Senator Ngo**
- **Vote:** 4 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstained.
- **Motion from Senator McNaught:** Motion to pass the gavel to Senator Ngo.
- Senator Ngo accepted this motion.

8. **COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. No comment

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Director Rodriguez discussed the first amendment and the different rights associated. She discussed how she believed what they are being asked to do is support the first amendment. She also suggested this body to write a Whereas clause about themselves.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Senator Ngo adjourned the meeting at 6:28 pm via Room 405, 4th Floor of the Joe Crowley Student Union and via Zoom Conference Call.