

SUNY Delhi.

Senate Meeting Minutes April 8, 2024

Present:

Genevieve Salerno, Alice Krause, Cheri Rossi, Mark Sullivan, Dan Davis, Kristy Fitch, Laurie Jones, Lindsay Walker, Robb Munro, Shannon Shoemaker, Shelly Jones, Lou Reyes, Jr., John Padovani, Kari Hauge, Simon Purdy, Dan Gashler, Michael Tweed, Beth Boyd, Lori Tremblay, Doug Holub, David Brower, Lisa Tessier, Jason Cash, Joyce Shim, Nazely Kurkjian, Cheslea Matthieu, Erin Wagner, Mary Bonderoff, Lori Ciafardoni

Proxies: Kristy F. for Leslie Barger, Cheri R. or Brigid Finn-Maguire, Shannon S. for Doug Gulotty, Shelly J. for Erin Wagner

Meeting called to order at 4:31 PM

Welcome! We hope everyone and their families are healthy and safe – please mute.

Approval of March 25, 2024 meeting minutes

Motion to approve made by Doug H, second by Shelly J.

Vote Taken: 21 yes, 0 no, minutes pass.

Updates: Eboard - Plenary this weekend. Election for College Senate Presider for tonight. Associate Presider election is next senate meeting. Secretary will also be voted on next meeting. If interested in these roles, please contact Cheri R. In May we will have general senate elections. If your term is up, Cheri R. should have contacted you to see if you are still interested.

Old Business

Budget & Planning Committee Non-Academic Senator Rep – Cheri Rossi (Operations Committee) No new nominations for senate budget seat.

Resolution on Student Classification and Degree Terminology Changes:

Alice K.: Everybody can speak twice to a motion and you have 3 minutes to speak to a motion. Anyone can participate (guests and senators), please raise your hand to participate in the discussion. You must speak in favor or against the resolution, or make a motion to amend. That is restricted to voting senators to make a motion to amend, but anyone is allowed to speak for or against.

Many of you said things last time that are relevant and would be great points for the debate. So those key issues that were brought forward would be great to hear here. The chat is here to offer information, clarifications, or links. It is not for speaking for or against the resolution. Important that everyone's viewpoints are heard. The part you will vote on tonight is the "be it resolved" clause. With that, Mike, you have the floor.

Mike Tweed (Resolutions Committee) This resolution recognizes that some of the terminology that campuses use might not be looked at the same by everyone. So to appeal to the greatest possible amount of people, we ask that the campus take a look at other options. We are not trying to propose any changes or words in particular. Just a language and culture change along with that.

Motion made by Shelly J. second by Doug H.

Shelly J.: Speak in support as a non-binary person and someone who is also a Language Professor. Attracts a greater student body.

Cheri R.: I am proxy for Brigid and am speaking on behalf of the Nursing Dept in that capacity. Speaking against this because the feedback received was almost unanimously against it. To summarize, they saw no need for it.

Erin W.: Speaking in support of this resolution, because we do not know exactly what language should be used. Approve and support the idea of creating more gender-neutral language.

Lori T.: Speaking in support and would like to note that we already have a precedent for that in the First Year Seminar we created. We changed from "Freshman Seminar" to "First Year Seminar" to use more inclusive language.

Kristy F.: I am speaking against this solution. We need to be aware of the degree-side of what a change like this could create. Industry standards use common words that people know and this has the possibility to detract from student enrollment. We have a lot of first-year students who do not have a lot of support at home, they might confuse potential employers or hinder themselves from getting a job because we would be calling things something different than what the Dept. of Ed. calls it. Not sure if this is appropriate, but I would like to make a motion to make a change to separate out the two pieces of the resolution so we can vote on each piece.

Alice K.: Yes that makes sense and I can see what you are recommending. The second "be it resolved" clause, you would strike and have in a separate resolution?

Kristy F.: Correct

Alice K.: Kristy has motioned to strike the second be it resolved. Any seconds?

Doug H.: No I have a point of order, please. The way I heard this, it sounded like she wanted two different resolutions in essence. Does that mean that she has to motion for the creation of a second resolution, or just this one be removed?

Alice K.: At this point, we do not have another resolution prepared for that second clause. It would need a different title for instance. So the best way to go about this would be as it is proposed, to strike it, and then start over with that particular clause. Second to strike the second “be it resolved”?

Cheri R.: Second.

Alice K.: You may speak to this motion now.

Mike T.: State Education Department is largely not using the words we are looking to get rid of. They use words like “undergraduate” and “graduate” so if folks want to model based upon that, they should be voting in favor. Historically, the word “master” was used a lot but language is changing so we should consider this.

Erin W.: I want to speak against this amendment because it seems to make the assumption that terms have already been decided, but we do not know what people are going to propose as language.

Cheri R.: If Dept of Ed. is using “graduate” and “undergraduate”, what terms are they using for individual degrees?

Mike T.: The degrees are not changing and we cannot change them. We are trying to use the words like “undergraduate” instead of “bachelor’s” and so forth.

Alice K.: Any other discussion on the motion to amend?

Vote taken: 9 yes; 12 no. Resolution stands.

Robb M.: Have a question for Michael. When we talk about “first year”, “second”, “third”, “sophomore”, “junior”, “senior”, this number of credits. Are we looking at number of years on campus or number of credits earned or is this to be determined?

Michael T.: Other campuses tried to tie it to year. There have been hybrid schemes. But the resolution committee cannot make any recommendations about what inclusive language can be used.

Robb M.: I said I didn’t know how it related over at Athletics, but we have gotten rid of “freshman” because of the connotations of that. None of the athletics websites are reflective of the credit-earned scheme.

Michael T.: Can’t speak to those other campuses. This doesn’t take away free speech. No one could uphold those policies as far as free speech. We can try to come up with something that works for everyone and try to implement it.

Genevieve S.: First, I’d like to thank Mike for all the work he has done as the presenter of this resolution. When it comes to topics like this, it can be very prickly and he has done a good job,

so thank you! I am speaking against this resolution for the following reasons. The word “human” means “from or of the earth” and contains the word “man”. “Human” encompasses both males and females. “Woman” means “man with a womb. The root “man” also appears in the word “humane”. These words are up to interpretation. Saying the word “freshman” only applies to males is subject to interpretation and I would argue, exposes the biases of the people who only hear “male” then they hear “man”.

Were any trans people interviewed or their advice sought on the creation of this resolution? If not, it stands to reason this resolution was created by people who think they know what other people, who are not themselves, would want. This is concerning.

Constituents who came forward all said the same thing: a resolution like this would not present an opportunity for unification, but a chance for people to become more afraid to discuss topics and explore truths with each other and with people of differing ideologies because they are too busy trying to figure out which words to use or not use. I do not think this resolution will bring people together. I think it will tear people apart. Thank you.

Lori C.: Point of clarification. Does anyone know if we were to change this to “first year”, “third year” and so on, what happens if students have multiple years on this campus? When we change language there are things we might not be able to think of that this affects. As a member of the LGBT+ community, and for many of the same reasons G spoke of I am against this resolution. I strongly advocate for the students of diverse populations because we need to know if this change will actually have a positive effect on the people we care the most about.

Erin W.: Speaking in support of the resolution. Coming to this as a person who identifies as she/her. Not only for the queer community, but it is also a larger more inclusive understanding. Even using “man” as the neutral was problematic to me. The status quo is not neutral. An androcentric patriarchal culture says that “man” is neutral.

Lisa T.: Speaking in favor of this resolution. I understand and am listening to the comments. I would argue that any piece of language or word is interpretive. I do not find “man” to be inclusive. We are not articulating specifically what words or terms will be used for replacement. That is for a committee or group so we can include diverse viewpoints. The resolution is meant to point out that some of these terms or words are not inclusive to people and what can be done to provide a more inclusive environment for people.

Alice K.: Any other discussion?

Simon P.: Would like to mention I had overwhelming support from my area for this.

Vote taken: 10 yes; 12 no. Resolution does not pass.

G: Please wait for me to clear the feedback as it ensures I have counted all the votes.

Alice: Thank you for this discussion.

Bylaws Proposal: Voting Procedure – Cheri Rossi (Bylaws Committee) cleans up the voting mechanisms and means outlined. Clarification about voting not being anonymous.

Motion to approve Doug H., second by Robb M.

Discussion?

Erin W.: Clarify that we are making the language more accurate to represent what we want to have happen here.

Cheri R.: To more accurately represent what is happening and to dissolve any grey area that may have occurred, such as what happens when people abstain. It is meant to reflect what already exists.

Erin W.: Just wanted to clarify that language does matter.

Vote taken: 22 yes 0 no.

New Business

Senate Presider Election – Cheri Rossi (Operations Committee) One nominee for presider. Doug Holub is willing to serve for the next two years. If anyone is interested you can self-nominate from the floor at this time.

Alice K.: Raise your hand if you would like to nominate from the floor at this time. Doug, you have the floor.

Doug H.: As you all know I am the Chair of the Budget and Planning Committee. I have had experience with running that committee. I am the President of the Delhi Rotary Club so I have additional experience. In my sixth year here. I would vote for Alice but she is not allowed due to the bylaws. My impetus is to continue the direction the predecessors have established as presidors to continue the openness, dialogue, and inclusion. Numerous relationships with administration. I feel I can honestly discuss issues and address concerns in a fairly and generally noncontroversial manner.

Vote taken: Unanimous vote. Doug H. is the new presider.

Alice K. On behalf of the denate, thank you for putting your name in there. You will be an excellent Presider.

Cheri R.: Going forward, the Associate Presider will be a staff member because the Presider is from the faculty side. We like to have both kinds of staff represented on the E-board. At this point, I will be taking nominations for the next Associate Presider, which is a two-year term. We will also be voting for a new Secretary.

Announcements -- none

Adjourn at 5:24 PM