

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

This meeting was facilitated both in-person and via an online Zoom format, consistent with the Governor's Executive Order N29-20, suspending certain open meeting law restrictions.

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

2:30 p.m.

BMU 205

MEMBERS PRESENT – Taryn Burns, Duncan Young, Olivia Rosso, Michelle Borges, Michelle Davis, Megan Oliver, Jay Friedman, Mary Wallmark
MEMBERS ABSENT – None
OTHERS PRESENT – Jon Slaughter, Katie Peterson, Karen Bang (recorder), Hugh Hammond, Eliza Miller, Delaney Love, Kayla Holland

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - The Chair, Burns, called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.
- II. **MECHOOPDA LAND RECOGNITION** – The meeting was started with the reading of the Mechoopda Land Recognition Statement.
- III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Motion to approve the 9/15/21 regular meeting agenda (Rosso/Young) 5-0-0 MSC.**
- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – None
- V. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Young updated regarding the vaccine self-certification process, explaining the process for students if they haven't finalized their self-certification or vaccinations. He also provided deadlines for faculty/staff self-certification, and noted the consequences of not doing so. Young said there is currently only one reported COVID case in Housing and 12 students are in quarantine.
- VI. **PUBLIC OPINION** – Limited to items on the agenda, three minutes per speaker, five minutes for entire topic – None
- VII. **BUSINESS**

A. Consent Agenda

All items listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and are enacted by one motion without discussion. A member of the committee who desires a separate discussion of any item may pull that item from the Consent Agenda.

2021-22 Associated Students Committee/Council Appointments

Confirmation of appointment to Sustainability Affairs Council (SAC)

- Commissioner of Sustainability Affairs Appointment: Abhinav Reddy Merugu

Confirmation of appointment to Bell Memorial Union Committee (BMUC)

- Government Affairs Committee Appointment: Mujtaba Azam

Confirmation of appointment to Associated Students Businesses Committee (ASBC)

- Government Affairs Committee Appointment: Cole Cassidy

Approval of the Consent Agenda. **Motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented (Borges/Young) 5-0-0 MSC.**

- B. Action Item: Approval of the appointment of Delaney Love to the Commissioner of Community Affairs position. **Motion to approve the appointment of Delaney Love to the Commissioner of Community Affairs position, as presented (Rosso/Borges) 5-0-0 MSC.**

- C. Action Item: Approval of the appointment of Behnam Ardakanian to the College of Engineering, Computer Science and Construction Management Senator position. **Motion to approve the appointment of Behnam Ardakanian to the College of Engineering, Computer Science and Construction Management Senator position, as presented (Young/Borges) 5-0-0 MSC.**
- D. Action Item: Approval of the Revised Resolution for Establishing Time and Location for Government Affairs Committee Meetings for the Academic Year 2021-22. **Motion to approve the Revised Resolution for Establishing Time and Location for Government Affairs Committee Meetings for the Academic Year 2021-22, as presented (Borges/Davis) 5-0-0 MSC.**
- E. **Action Item: Approval of Government Affairs Committee Mission and Program Statements.** Regarding the Mission Statement, Davis said she, Borges and Rosso discussed changing the wording regarding, "...raising the level of consciousness on pertinent issues." They would like to possibly replace this section, or add something like, "...amplifying student voices on campus" to the end of the sentence. Discussion was held. Davis suggested adding, "...and amplifying student voices" to that sentence. Borges said this item isn't quite ready to be voted on today and Burns said it could be tabled if necessary. Young suggested taking more time to discuss this item before voting on revisions. Davis said regarding the Program Statement that they talked about adding some of the other values such as sustainability, social justice and equity. Also, possibly changing the word "political" to "civically engaged" or "civic engagement." It was suggested to word as, "...achieve educational, social, civic and campus goals;..." Rosso said it appears the words try to reflect the positions on GAC and suggested a word to reflect each member. Borges said the subcommittee would prepare a mock draft for presentation at the next GAC meeting. **Motion to table the vote until the next GAC meeting (Borges/Davis) 5-0-0 MSC.**
- F. **Information Item: 2022 AS Election Topics** – Burns reminded that the committee had previously discussed write-ins, GPAs, sliding vote for the President/Executive Vice President, eligibility, and summer training. Regarding the GPA rule, Davis said it seemed the committee was in consensus at the last meeting to lower the GPA to 2.0, same as the Chancellor's Office (CO). Young said the higher GPA requirement excludes people and noted there's a lifestyle adjustment due to these AS roles. Rosso expressed concern about students with already low GPAs and discussion was held regarding ways that the AS can support individuals who aren't doing as well in their classes so that they don't lose their position due to their GPA dropping. Burns noted that everyone seemed to agree with lowering the minimum GPA to match CO requirements, asking students to do check-ins, take active steps to assure everyone's grades are doing fine, set a study hour every couple of weeks and let students know being a student representative is a large commitment. Slaughter shared that although there is opportunity to support each other, you can't make them tell you their grades. Slaughter questioned that if GPA requirements are lowered, if it would begin with next year's candidates, or if it would begin the spring semester of 2022. He explained that the current students at this table have to maintain a 2.3 GPA and 9 units. Burns suggested that the intent to file minimum GPA and the GPA to hold the position be the same. Discussion was held and consensus was to lower to 2.0 for both filing and holding the position. • Write-ins were discussed next. Davis said they need to decide whether to keep allowing write-ins, or get rid of write-ins and do an appointment process after the election, or perhaps 10% of the total students who voted in the previous election need to vote for a write-in candidate in order for them to qualify. Slaughter said the intent to not allow write-ins would be for those offices that don't have a declared candidate; write-ins would only be allowed for running against someone else on the ballot. Young suggested 5% of the turnout could be enough to elect a write-in candidate, then if no one reaches the 5% threshold, then maybe if anyone gets at least five votes, they're automatically a candidate for possible appointment. He said this would allow a pool of candidates and they wouldn't have to wait until fall to appoint a student to a position. Borges said she likes the idea of having appointments made by the end of that semester so everyone would be on the same track for training. Burns said if they decide to not allow write-ins for undeclared positions, then the appointments could begin immediately after elections in April. Slaughter said we'd also know by the end of declaration the positions that don't have contests, so they'd be able to advertise the appointment process at that time. Burns said they would be able to advertise the appointment as soon as the deadline to file is finished, as well as advertising to run during the election. Slaughter explained the grade disqualification process. Young suggested keeping write-ins for all positions and Burns said we don't have to change the write-in qualifications; this item was just brought up in the past. Young said immediately after elections, they could also begin the appointment process if there is no write-in candidate, and have them appointed by the end of May. Slaughter reminded that a declared candidate will win with the highest vote number, regardless of what that number is, and that they're looking at possibly setting up a different threshold for write-ins. Discussion was held regarding potential issues and Burns said she would like to have something to vote on in two weeks if possible regarding this, unless they'd like to leave it as is. It was the consensus of the committee that they would not move forward with the percentage suggestion as it is too complicated. Borges said she is leaning towards appointments for open positions that have no one running. Davis said she is torn on whether

to prefer appointments or write-ins. Oliver agreed with the idea of allowing write-ins but not allowing write-in candidates for a position that doesn't have a declared candidate, noting that it should be structured. Young said he did not agree with completely getting rid of write-ins for positions that no one has applied for. He said he likes the idea of it being more accessible for anyone who is interested. Burns said it sounds like they need to maintain write-ins as they are. Davis said when elections come around, it needs to be advertised that we're allowing write-ins but note things they need to know as write-in candidates. Intent to File packets were discussed and Miller said a student can submit an intent to file packet with her, be approved to run, and ultimately choose not to. She said that until the sample ballot is out, they won't know who officially will be on the ballot. Burns wondered if they could find out how many people have filed for a position before the deadline. Miller said we don't want students to select positions to run for just based on running unopposed; we want students to run for roles that they're interested in (Wallmark joined the meeting at 3:29 p.m.). • The requirement to attend summer training was next discussed. Burns said as it stands, summer training for all members is required two weeks before classes start, with Board members having three weeks of training before classes start. She questioned what changes the committee might like to make regarding this. Davis suggested keeping summer training mandatory, but scheduling makeup training for those that can't attend, so they don't lose their position. Burns said they could change training to one week before school, and a weekend of training after classes start. Borges said if something happens that you can't get out of, you shouldn't have to drop your position and suggested keeping it mandatory unless there is a valid excuse for absence. She suggested a training during the first week after elected, and then do a training another time in August, perhaps a week before classes start. She did note; however, that training requirements are very clear in the intent to file packets. Burns said they also need to decide how elected representatives would be removed from office. After discussion, the committee agreed that removals from office regarding missed trainings need to go to the Board after trainings have occurred, to decide whether or not to remove them. Burns said next they need to come up with a list of reasonable excuses as acceptable reasons and reviewed the current acceptable reasons for missing trainings. Davis said regarding unit bearing internships, that it should be expanded for all internships. Young agreed regarding internships and also suggested a hybrid learning model for trainings. Slaughter noted that it would be challenging getting the Board together before the semester starts. Burns said these three items discussed today would be actioned at the next meeting and that AS Election Topics would stay on the agenda as an Information Item to continue discussing other items.

VIII. REPORTS: ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES – Davis said the recall election was held yesterday and Governor Newsom will stay in office. Ballot Bowl results will be officially announced on 9/27. • Rosso said she appointed Tyler Jenkins to EPPC and Academic Senate, hopeful to do more appointments soon (Friedman left at 3:41 p.m.). • Young said on Monday he emailed the student representatives about focusing on making as many appointments as possible to their committees/councils by the end of the month and will be taking them out to dinner if the goal is met. • Borges said by the next GAC meeting her committee will hopefully be filled and meetings can begin. • Oliver said she is working hard to get her positions filled, hoping by the next GAC meeting to have half, if not all appointments filled.

IX. REPORTS: STAFF – Wallmark reminded that it only takes three clicks to get to self-certification and three students will each win \$3,500 as drawn on 10/4. She said they can be certified for various reasons and still count for the drawing. She said we have only about 2,000 students who haven't yet self-certified out of approximately 15,400. There will be calling campaign as well. She said it's actually working, we're still here and we're probably going to end up with approximately 92% of people on campus vaccinated. She said their student peers are doing a great job masking, and all of its working.

X. REPORT: EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT – Burns said she sent a request to commissioners for a group meeting, and will also schedule one-on-one appointments. She said she's doing so in order to check in on how committees are going and how she can help. Burns said she is working on filling positions in all councils, committees and university committees.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS – None

XII. PUBLIC OPINION – Limited to three minutes per speaker, five minutes for entire topic – None

XIII. FOR THE GOOD OF THE GROUP – Young said great job everyone.

XII. ADJOURNMENT – The Chair, Burns, adjourned the meeting at 3:47 p.m.