

HIRAM COLLEGE STUDENT SENATE
September 29th, 2020 Minutes.

Call to Order

There were 5 Executive Board members, our Advisor, and 21 Senators present for the evening. Those Senators were: Andrzejewski, Bentkowski, Bolton, Conroy, Diaz de Padilla, Elliott, George, Gunther, Hart, Henry, Jeffrey, Johns, Keuroghlian-Eaton, Le-Quay, Linville, Nardo, Redfern, Saunders, Slutz, Thornton, & Toich.

Guests for the evening were: Kearan Barnett, Zach Fox, Henry Schwendler, and Elijah Skaggs.

Presidential Announcements

President Robb thanked those Senators who attended the first of Senate's Diversity Lecture Series with Dr. Jason Johnson. The lecture was very insightful and provided students with great ideas and resources to take with them afterwards.

Senators were also reminded to send introductory emails to their constituency groups in the next week.

Advisor Announcements

Advisor Okuma opened the floor for any questions regarding the most recent Presidential email regarding the new plan for the fall 3 week.

Students are able to leave their belongings in their rooms during the remote 3 week period and winter break. A question was asked what would happen if we were not able to return to campus in the spring, the same procedures would be followed for students to retrieve their belongings that were set in place last March. Mass testing of students will take place again in early January just as it did during our return to campus this fall.

There was an email sent out by Residential Education last week with sign up's attached if students have extenuating circumstances and need to stay on campus during this extended break.

Executive Board

President Robb introduced Kearan Barrett as a potential appointee for the position as Senator of the Quad. Kearan is a first year psychology major. She hopes to uphold equal representation for students and make beneficial change on campus, while furthering her own skills as a leader.

Discussion followed to approve Kearan Barrett for the Senator of the Quad position.

VOTE: 20-0-0. Approved!

President Robb proceeded by swearing Kearan in as a Senator.

The new student representatives for College Governance Committees were announced. Those being Destiny Smith and Dion Thornton serving on Diversity Committee, Alexander

Andrzejewski and Jake Kollman serving on Academic Planning Committee, and James Elliott on the Library Committee.

Old Business

Discussion began about the Sustainable Development Proposal that was presented to Senate last week. *President Robb* shared that the committee has already begun to have discussions across campus with different departments, including the Dining Hall. The Committee has also received in-depth feedback from faculty and staff. While not every aspect of the proposal may be feasible at this time, it is still important to share them for future discussions.

Questions were raised about the loans mentioned in the proposal and how these would be obtained. These loans are actually a part of a Green Revolving Fund that a Sustainability Coordinator on campus is able to grant to clubs and members of campus who hope to improve sustainability.

The notion of bringing campus to the same 90% ecological sustainability as other surrounding college grounds was mentioned. Measurements for this include biodiversity, vegetative cover, and other undetermined tests to measure this.

Two strategies for reducing food waste included instating a pay-by-plate program and reducing plate sizes. These are two separate options that do not need to be instituted together, but rather are both feasible options to reduce waste. Another strategy to combat food waste is to create a platform for sharing unused food from the dining hall and campus sponsored events. This would allow students to option to pick up this excess food to try and ensure it does not go to waste. After a discussion with AVI's campus director it was actually found that food waste in the dining hall is not as large of an issue as was thought, meaning the food waste concern is more focused on campus events.

Proposed institutional changes that could happen include creating a Sustainability Committee until a full time Sustainability Coordinator can be hired. This would hopefully be a College Governance Committee formed by faculty, staff, and students to make decisions for the college. This committee would then begin to formulate Sustainable Development Plans for the College. There is no specific timeline for when these plans should be created, but the Senate Sustainability Committee will continue to assess their goals semesterly.

The portion of the proposal for plastic reduction on campus hopes to limit the recycling system on campus to only metal, glass, and paper, or to create a dual stream system. A dual stream system is a method to sort recycling waste where each material is collected separately from one another. Plastic recycling on campus currently has too high of a contamination rate to actually be recycled and goes straight to landfills instead. The idea is to limit plastic waste and lower the contamination rate to increase recycling revenue. When plastic is included in recycling bins, items like glass and metal are not recycled at all, which could be extremely beneficial for the environment. To get the student body on board with this, systemic changes will have to take place. Things like the sustainable development checklist and more environmental education will need to be implemented.

In our discussions with Rudy Braydich, ABM Regional Manager, last year, he seemed to think that the College produces waste at a higher level than other colleges of our size. By examining other colleges methods, it will be relatively easy to eliminate plastic and food waste on campus. Through compost initiatives and the elimination of single use plastics, we can drastically decrease our environmental footprint.

A portion of the ideas in this proposal have already been instituted through funding for a compost program and instituting reusable containers in the dining hall as well. The larger issue with continuing to instate change on campus is conducting research and finding data to work with. A majority of sustainability research done on campus is currently out of date and needs to be updated before the goals of this proposal can be evaluated accurately.

A carbon tax for students who travel to study abroad, clubs, or sports teams traveling long distances for events was mentioned in the proposal. The idea is that this tax would be paid by the organization. The tax is not large, but the idea is to encourage students to consider a more sustainable method of travel when heading off campus.

A vote was held to pass the Sustainable Development Proposal through Senate.

VOTE: 19-0-0. Approved!

The proposal will now be presented to the Board of Trustee's in President Robb's Semesterly update, along with being released to the entirety of the student body.

New Business

President Robb asked for comments or takeaways from the first of the Diversity Lectures.

Overall, Dr. Johnson's honesty about his experiences with discrimination both on and off campus were appreciated. He showed that it is still important to remember that as a community we can still do better. Students also seemed to enjoy Dr. Johnson's consistent calls to action and the methods he shared to take steps within your community to combat current issues.

VP Smith shared an update on the first Diversity Committee meeting of the year. The committee hopes to create a concrete procedure for students to follow to be able to hold others accountable for their actions on campus. There was also review of different ideas regarding structural changes that can take place after an anti-racism teaching circle that took place.

Senators Mention

If anyone is not registered to vote SAAC is hosting a voter registration event in the Coleman Center on Wednesday, September 30th. The deadline to register to vote is October 5th.

Students are encouraged to get a flu shot this year, they are available in the health center by appointment.

President Robb Adjourned the Meeting at 8:47.
