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Meeting Minutes 08.27.97

Student Government Association BBC, Florida International University

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Florida International University

Student Government Council

BI-MONTHLY MEETING

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 1997
MINUTES**

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms. Camille Aub, Student Services Chair
Ms. Safiya Burton, Vice President
Ms. Tanisha Drummond, Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council
Ms. Mireidy Fernandez, Academic Affairs Chair
Ms. Lakisha Holmes, College of Urban & Public Affairs Representative
Ms. Nia Johnson, Lower Division Representative
Mr. Daniel Kerness, Representative-At-Large
Mr. Gakunga Kihohia, Finance Chair
Ms. Marvine Laurent, Chief of Staff
Ms. Nadia McLean, Special Events Chair
Ms. Giralda Merkman, Representative-At-Large
Mr. Arthur Papillon, Jr., President
Ms. Ellen Plissner, Advisor
Mr. Craig Rapp, School of Hospitality Management Representative
Ms. Avia Rice, Lower Division Representative
Mr. Ian Richards, Representative-At-Large
Ms. Donna-Ann Russell, School of Journalism & Mass Communication Representative
Ms. Anette Sandoval, School of Nursing Representative

ABSENT

Ms. Melanie Bent, Director of Student Lobbying
Ms. Debra Goldman, Broward Awareness Representative
Ms. Chanelle Rose, Graduate Representative
Mr. Plinio Sanchez, Student Advocate

GUESTS

Mr. Alex Salinas, BEACON Reporter

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 PM, by Ms. Safiya Burton, SGC Vice President.

Ms. Burton apologized for beginning the first meeting of the semester late, however, she did not want to begin the meeting before the President arrived. This could result in a need to change the current meeting time. Next, she introduced Alex, a reporter from the Beacon. Ms. Burton urged the Council to utilize the Beacon, as it was an excellent method for reaching the student body.

The Council was given two minutes to review the minutes from the previous meeting, Friday, August 22, 1997. Mr. Gakunga Kihohia made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Ms. Nia Johnson seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously. Lastly,

Ms. Burton reminded the Council of the upcoming luncheon with Aramark. The luncheon is scheduled to take place Friday, August 29, 1997 at 11:00 AM in the Faculty Club. Attendance is mandatory.

ADVISOR'S REPORT

WELCOME

Ms. Ellen Plissner took this opportunity to welcome all Council members to the Fall 1997 semester, especially Mr. Craig Rapp, School of Hospitality Management Representative. She praised Mr. Rapp for his participation in the Welcome Back Luau, held on Tuesday, August 26, 1997 at the Aquatic Center.

FIU 25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Ms. Plissner stated that she did not feel the North Campus had a true understanding of the tremendous effort being put into FIU's 25th Anniversary. The University had in fact hired a consultant, who would be helping with the coordination of specific celebratory events throughout the school year. Ms. Plissner said she would try her best to obtain a copy of this list of activities for the Council. The celebration would begin on Tuesday, September 16, 1997 with the Olympic Torch run (11:00 AM - 12:00 PM). Mr. Arthur Papillon, Jr. would run the first leg of the marathon, from the North Campus. Ms. Plissner interjected that the administration has decided to issue a directive, asking that all professors release students from class during this time. Ms. Plissner emphasized that there would be extensive media coverage of the entire event. In the Spring, the North Campus would also be hosting a Jazz Festival. This event would include exhibitions of jazz bands as well as a major concert. As members, Ms. Plissner reminded the Council that it is their duty to be in attendance at these events. Students cannot be expected to have pride for their University and this campus if the Council does not set the example.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE

Mr. Kihohia reminded the Council of the importance of submitting budgets--and in a timely fashion. This discussion was directed at all committees and members who expected to be spending money this semester. Mr. Kihohia discussed the possibility of a By-Laws Resolution. This would require officers of both Student Programming Council (SPC) and Student Organization Council (SOC) to post their office hours. Ms. Donna-Ann Russell asked why it was important for SPC and SOC officers to have to post their hours. Mr. Papillon, Jr. stated that these officers were holding paid positions, and as such, should post their times of availability. Ms. Plissner commented that this would be more appropriately placed in their proviso language...it could also be entered into their individual Constitutions and By-Laws.

Lastly, Mr. Kihohia mentioned that he had only received weekly report forms from two or three Council members. Additionally, not all Council members were fulfilling their office hours. This kind of behavior would result in paychecks being withheld.

STUDENT SERVICES

Ms. Camille Aub announced an upcoming Food Services Committee meeting. This committee would meet on Tuesday, September 16, 1997 at 4:00 PM. Lastly, construction for Oasis (Aramark) would begin some time within the next month.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Ms. Nadia McLean announced that those who were planning to participate in the Olympic Torch Run, would have to attend a meeting on Wednesday, September 3, 1997 at 6:00 PM in GC 305. Ms. McLean stated that she was still working closely with Panther Rage and would keep the Council posted concerning any developments.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Mr. Papillon, Jr. asked why there were so few Council members in attendance at the Ropes Course (Friday, August 22, 1997)? He stressed that several Student Government members had admitted to him that they were unclear as to what the duties and responsibilities of their position entailed. The Council could not continue to function like this..."SGC is not functioning as a body." He also mentioned that he was displeased with the current spending; there is only \$2000.00 left in the General Account, for the rest of the 1997 - 1998 academic year. He urged the Council to be clear on what they were voting upon, especially where monies are concerned.

He called for comments from the Council, pertaining to what they felt they were accomplishing. As no one responded, the President reiterated the importance of having a dialog now, "we do not need to start the year like this." Mr. Papillon, Jr. stated that Council members should be working on their platforms..."what is it that you need to be doing for your constituents?" Ms. Burton interjected that she did not understand why certain Council members were lacking. She stressed the need for the Council to work together. She suggested that if there were any individuals who would not to be able to uphold their commitments, this was the time to voice their concerns...or resign, if necessary.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Lakisha Holmes expressed her disappointment with the input she received from the Council members, on the SGC Handbook. She stated that there were members who agreed to participate in the compilation of this project, who did not follow through with their commitment. Ms. Anette Sandoval stated that she was hearing several complaints about a need for more help from Council members. She suggested leaving a note in the mailboxes of those who you were seeking assistance from. Ms. Holmes responded that if it was something of priority, those members would make the effort. She cited the importance of calling to inform the Council if you cannot attend previously scheduled meetings/events. Ms. Holmes mentioned that the Ropes Course did not begin until 10:00 AM (it was scheduled to begin at 8:30 AM), because Council members did not show up on time -- or at all. Ms. Aub stated that initially, assignments to various committee were given

out, why weren't these assignments being adhered to? Mr. Rapp stated that he felt there was a lack of focus. One person could not do all the work of a committee. He told Ms. Holmes that if she felt she was not receiving feedback from her committee, perhaps she should have taken the initiative to call those individuals (as opposed to waiting to hear from them). Ms. Holmes did not agree.

The President ended the discussion. He informed the Council that there would be 25-30 minute breakout sessions (i.e., Representatives-At-Large would meet together). During this session, he expected the members to map out their objectives and goals. He reiterated that this needed to be addressed in order for the Council to succeed. He concluded by saying that we must all help out. We must all work together...if you cannot work out your minor differences, then you should leave.

STUDENT COMPLAINT

Ms. Burton introduced Mr. Ignacious John, a graduate student of Public Administration. Mr. John began by saying that he has been at FIU 3 years, he has attended several other universities, and he has a problem with the current status of the North Campus:

- Mosquitoes
- Insufficient computer labs
- Periodical section in the library was consistently not kept current
- No longer mailing grade reports to the homes of the students
- Lengthy waiting period for receipt of transcript (5 to 10 days)
- Overcrowding; lack of class space

He suggested getting a list of student complaints at the beginning of the school year, and sending this (in an official memorandum) to the President of the University.

Ms. Plissner stated that while it was important to identify problems, some issues that were presented by Mr. John are part of a "bigger problem". She also suggested that these were issues that the Director of Student Lobbying could address. She explained that some of these complaints were brought about by FTE (Full-time Equivalency). It could be that the University was not receiving the necessary funds.

Ms. Holmes introduced herself as the CUPA Representative. She informed Mr. John that she had spoken with the Associate Dean of CUPA, who had informed her that 85% of the students did not have a problem with calling to find out their grades. However, she spoke of CUPA's intention to establish a mailing list of specific students who needed official documentation of their grades for whatever reason (i.e., tuition reimbursement). These specific graduates would be reinstated, and have their grades mailed to their homes.

Mr. Papillon, Jr. stated that the University was also in the process of expanding classrooms; a subject he was dealing with on Thursday. Ms. Donna-Ann Russell also mentioned that the Communications Committee was working on several of the issues

raised by Mr. John. Following a brief continuation of this discussion, Mr. Papillon, Jr. thanked Mr. John for coming to the meeting. He also invited Mr. John to apply for the position of Graduate Representative.

B R E A K O U T S E S S I O N . . .

When the Council returned from their breakout sessions, Mr. Papillon, Jr. announced that he would like to hear what was discussed in each group.

Mr. Rapp stated that his group discussed how they could better assess students' needs. He also mentioned that they would like to see more involvement from the various schools and colleges. The President asked what he needed from the Executive Board. Mr. Rapp suggested more time devoted to assessing the needs of the different schools and colleges. Mr. Papillon, Jr. asked if it would help to have cabinet meetings as well as executive cabinet meetings. Mr. Rapp responded that this would also be effective.

Mr. Ian Richards said that his group would be holding meetings Wednesdays at 5:00 PM. Mr. Daniel Kerness was working on a Field Day for the 25th Anniversary; Ms. Giralda Merkman was working on International students' fees and Mr. Richards was working on establishing the SGC Web Page. Mr. Papillon, Jr. reminded all Council members to follow protocol; all documents are to be approved by the Executive Board, and then by administration, before it leaves FIU.

Ms. Johnson said that her group had set up times to visit the Freshman Experience courses and Bay Vista Hall Council meetings, to discuss Student Government. They would also be holding meetings on Mondays from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Ms. Johnson added that she felt there was a tremendous problem with communication among the Council members. She attributed this to individuals not following through and mentioned that she felt friendships might also be getting in the way of our effectiveness.

There was a brief discussion on the discrepancies found in the Finance Committee, concerning the hours of the Council members, as well as File For Funds procedures.

Mr. Papillon, Jr. asked that he would like to bring the meeting to a close, as there were Council members who needed to leave for class.

In closing he mentioned that any meetings held by Council members needed to be documented. These meetings must also be open to the public. He stressed the importance of this, as this was a present topic of concern for the Board of Regents.

Lastly he informed the Council that the University would be enforcing a "No Tolerance Attendance" Policy. This gave professors the opportunity to ask those students coming to class late to leave. This policy has always be in effect, however it has not previously

be enforced. Ms. Sandoval asked if there was any course of action the students could take if professors were consistently late to class. Mr. Papillon, Jr. stated that the student could bring this problem to the attention of the Council or their representative. The important thing was to document every incident.

Ms. Avia Rice announced an upcoming seminar on the management of multiple projects. This conference would be held locally on September 27 and 28.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tanisha N. Drummond

Tanisha N. Drummond, Clerk of Council
Student Government Council, North Campus

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