



Richmond College Student Government Association

2020-2021

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, September 15, 2020

“To create and ensure the highest quality of life for Richmond College.”

I. Roll Call

II. Visitors

A. Tracy Cassalia: TITLE IX PRESENTATION

1. Recently, new regulations have gone through a rulemaking process from the white house, giving them the force of law.

2. The goal of the Title IX office currently is to gather student input regarding the changes to Title IX.

3. Approximately one week ago, the body reached out asking for clarification on certain regulations currently existing.

4. AREAS UP FOR DEBATE: We currently use the lowest evidentiary standard, which is preponderance of the evidence. We now have the choice to raise that standard to Clear and Convincing (which is the standard for student conduct council hearings), and Beyond a Reasonable Doubt.

5. DISCUSSION:

a) VP Greven: As a strong supporter of the clear and convincing standard of evidence, VP Greven finds it very concerning if very serious cases are treated with a lower evidentiary safeguard than student conduct council hearings. In addition, it's much easier to reach the clear and convincing standard than many would believe

b) Senator Modi: What happens if a complaint has been filed in regards to a single person over a longer period of time? Does the accumulation of reports count as evidence?

(1) When Reports come in, the office would meet with the complainant, offer their options and the possibility of filing an official complaint or begin a criminal prosecution. There is no set structure of what happens next, as it all depends on the student. Separate complaints against the same student are investigated separately.

c) Senator Manley: What kind of feedback have you received from SASAV and other groups?

(1) Many students want to maintain the standard of preponderance of the evidence in order to allow for complainants to receive more support. Both the Complainant and the respondent, however, are meant to be given support, and Mrs. Cassalia's office is dedicated to providing due process. Most schools that UR has come into contact with are maintaining preponderance of evidence, at least for the time being.

d) Senator Villagomez: Is the standard of preponderance purely for University discipline or criminal law?

(1) Those are separate processes, and the only one that we have control over is the University's procedure. Title IX is FERPA protected, so case information is not released to family members and employers.

e) VP Patel: Is there a reason why the staff and student hearing boards differ in size? Why can't the mediation process result in suspension or expulsion?

(1) The student hearing board has always had three, while the faculty decided to create a board of five members. Neither group requires unanimity in decision making, only majority rule. As for the mediation process resulting in expulsion/suspension, that decision is not reached until a hearing board is held to discuss that possibility.

f) President Polcari: Some of these policies may prevent victims from coming forward. Is this a concern for the Title IX Office? How can we encourage reporting?

(1) This is a strong concern for the Title IX Office, and is why the University established an alternative method of conflict resolution. A report to the Title IX Office does not equate to investigation, but it can provide resources and support to victims. As for how we can help, we can spread the word about the importance of reporting.

g) Senator Manley: Senator Manley maintains that the preponderance of evidence should be kept as UR's standard of evidence.

h) VP Patel: Are there resources that Title IX could share with the meeting? VP Patel is also concerned with the fact that mediation cannot result in suspension or expulsion.

(1) There are resources a-plenty! Also, the system is continuously evolving following the changed mandate, so things are unclear.

i) VP Lawrence: VP Lawrence believes that mediation is a positive force, the standard of preponderance of evidence should be maintained, and that the Student Council ought to have five members.

(1) In extremely egregious cases, Tracy Cassalia may be able to step back and prevent a mediation. Mediation can be broken off in medias res if it is going poorly.

j) Senator Villagomez: How can the Title IX Office address those who are unable to face their violators?

(1) It would fall to the mediator to create an environment where respondents and complainants feel safe.

k) VP Greven: In response to Senator Manley and VP Lawrence, our legal system was never meant to "protect complainants at all costs." The consequences inherent to a sexual assault case can be so destructive that

higher standards are a necessity. We should not have the lowest standard possible.

l) Senator Villagomez: Title IX Offenses are FERPA protected, so it really isn't that destructive.

m) Senator Manley: For cases of sexual assault where the respondent is not a UR student, how can the Title IX Office assist?

(1) The University can assist with getting students back to the states, providing resources, and other such methods of support.

n) Senator Greven agrees that UR students ought to be held responsible by the Title IX Office.

B. REUSABLE BAG PROGRAM (Senator Manley)

1. COVID-19 has created a huge uptick in waste on campus, and in order to combat this, dining services will be providing all students with a reusable bag.

2. Replacement bags will be available for \$1.

3. Three options will be available: Plastic available, plastic available for a fee, and no plastic available. Currently, the option most popular with the UR Green Club and Student Governments is to have plastic bags available with a small added fee.

4. DISCUSSION

a) VP Lawrence: "I am vehemently against plastic bags," and he is also adamant that the body has a responsibility to support this initiative.

b) VP Patel: Plastic bags should not be offered.

c) Chairman Engstrom: A surcharge may not be enough to deter students from using plastic bags.

d) VP Spear: The surcharge will not be enough, and VP Spear would prefer no plastic bags being offered.

e) Senator Villagomez: Could this operate like the green takeout trays of old, where students can take a reusable bag and bring it back when necessary?

f) Senator Coyle: We ought to keep the plastic bags sans the surcharge, as he enjoys reusing the plastic bags. Also, as temperatures

decrease, more people will be eating indoors, and consequently using plates.

g) Senator Modi: Students should have to pay a surcharge with real money, rather than dining dollars.

h) VP Patel: In direct contradiction to Senator Coyle, VP Patel believes that students will take their food back to their rooms rather than eating in.

i) Senator Henderson: Why would we have bags to carry food around such a small campus? Are we so privileged that we demand bags?

j) VP Poluri: To second Senator Henderson, if you enjoy using plastic bags, go buy some plastic bags. There is no point in making sure that everyone has plastic bags.

k) Senator Barnett: There is a place for plastic bags! If a student is in a rush, and buys more than they can carry, then they must use plastic bags.

l) Senator Geraghty: In other countries, plastic bags aren't even available.

m) VP Lawrence: We stan Joe Coyle, and don't stan plastic bags.

III. **President's Report**

A. Sign up for the equity summit, as time is running short!

B. Latinx Heritage month has recently begun, and there will be multiple events celebrating the occasion.

C. Start thinking of ideas regarding how we as a body can get involved in the upcoming election. Some options are advertising polling locations, contacting organizations such as "We the People," or putting together our own event.

IV. **Vice Presidents' Reports**

A. Admin.

1. Elections are coming up; any questions should be directed to VP Lawrence

B. Academics

1. Faculty Senate wants to have a stronger relationship with students, and VP Greven has spoken with Professor Williamson about several issues that have been pushed by the student body.

V. **Class Chair Reports**

VI. **Dean's Report**

VII. **Announcements**

A. **STUDENT CONCERN FORM (Jared Levine)**

1. Senator Levine has been working with VP Patel and Chair Hu of WCGA on a simple poster urging students to share their concerns!

VIII. **Open Floor**

IX. **Closed Meeting**

A. Next week, there will be a presentation on the social life task force.

B. DJ P.'S GREATEST HITS: Chicago Song by David Sanborn

X. **Adjournment**