

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

30th Student Government Association

22nd Meeting of the Thirtieth Undergraduate Student Government Association

To be held in Zoom Meeting Room: 952 4476 3062

6:00 p.m. – November 16th, 2020

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the Minutes
- III. Public Comments
- IV. Special Orders
- V. President's Report
 - a. No Report

VI. Vice President's Report

Vice President Serven gave a short presentation on meaningful debates, nodding at the two funding requests that were heard later in Senate. She reminded everyone to ensure that they are paying attention, being mindful, and being respectful. It is important that Senate represents the voice of the student body.

Since we are wrapping up the 30th Senate, it is banquet time! Banquet is a time to celebrate this year's Senate. She had planned for it to have an in-person component, however, in lieu of the email that was sent out on Tuesday, it will be completely virtual.

Additionally, this is a reminder to be considerate of others and to follow guidelines. She understands that the situation is a bit scary. Everyone seems to know someone who knows someone that has tested positive. If people are going home for Thanksgiving, please be smart about your choices. Finally, if you go to TechFlex on the Hub, there is a new intention form if students' plans have changed.

Questions (Please note that these questions were answered by Emily Perlow, the Associate Dean of Students).

Is this survey only for those who have changed or for everyone?

Answer: We would like everyone to fill it out. We want to make sure that we have accurate information.

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I will not be on campus after thanksgiving, but I will be over winter break. Will

I still be able to work in my lab?

Answer: If you are working with a PI, they can submit a request for you to work in the lab.

Does the policy about in person events apply to table siting?

Answer: I am not sure. Look for guidance from the SAO.

Regarding the intentions survey, if someone does not fill it out a second time, will you honor their previous response?

Answer: Yes, but we would much prefer if students filled it out a second time. We want to know their departure time.

If our departure time changes what do we do?

Answer: Fill out the intentions form and email the testing coordinator. Some folks may get the “you missed your test” email, but you can respond saying that you left already.

Vice President Serven made a final point before ending her report. As an RA she shared a message from Residential Services. Common spaces will be closed, no CAs will be allowed in building, and no guests will be allowed in rooms (this includes suitemates). The last day and time students can leave before break is anytime during Thanksgiving break. You will receive an envelope and you will put your physical key in your envelope and leave it on your desk. Make sure you look at all the residential information.

VII. Secretary’s Report

Secretary Gruner-Mitchell announced the winners of the Ultrafan from the Senate activity last week.

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VIII. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Nunez announced that SGA will be donating to the Emergency Assistance Fund. These funds will be reallocated from this year's Pep Rally.

Questions

To clarify, these funds will be reallocated from Pep Rally?

Answer: Yes.

Will we vote on this reallocation in Senate?

Answer: No, we will vote on this in financial board.

IX. Parliamentarian's Report

- a. No Report

X. Cluster Reports

a. Student Services Cluster

- i. Chair Cruz-Rivera's team updated Senate on their Printing Stipend Project.

The major points are listed below:

- Students would be given \$5 per semester in Goat Bucks to help cover the cost of classes
- This would be a mandatory transfer each year
 - Would be 3.36% of SLF

Discussion

Senator Hager is in favor of this stipend. There is absolute student support for this! He believes that \$5 is a bit low but you get what you get.

Senator Bradley pointed out that this could be implemented as early as next year if we vote on this next in-person Senate.

Senator Keang asked if this will add \$5 to the student life fee?

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Answer: No, it will not increase the student life fee

Chair Puhalski asked what would happen to it if students didn't use it?

Answer: It will roll over to the next year. If students never use it, they will be given \$40 when they graduate.

Senator Shah asked if this money be given directly to students?

Answer: Yes, with Goat Bucks.

ii. Chair Puhalski's team gave an update on their club constituent project.

The main points are listed below:

- We are assigning senators to clubs to assist them and help them during the pandemic.
- A spread sheet detailing who is paired with which club will be shared via Slack

Discussion

Secretary Gruner-Mitchell asked if these will be our constituents until the end of this Senate year or if next year, we will have the same constituents.

Answer: This is something that we are looking to continue to the next Senate, so adjustments would be made as necessary.

Senator Wilde asked if we could be provided with an email template for next for reaching out to our clubs.

Answer: Yes, we can do that!

b. Internal Services Cluster

i. Chair Tocci reported on Senator packets and upcoming elections. The

main points are below:

- Senator elections are coming up! Make sure to tell your friends. Also, we need more people for table sitting.

c. Financials Cluster

XI. Faculty, Institute, and Special Committees

a. Senator Hager spoke about WSGA. He shared with Senate that he is the Vice President and Senator Rhodes is the Treasurer. He told Senate that the secretary

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was recently asked to resign because they weren't sending out minutes on time. He then shared that to be elected President of WSGA, you must have held an Exec position prior, and all the other Exec members are Seniors. So, if you would like to become President of WSGA, reach out to himself about the Secretary position.

XII. Old Business

XIII. New Business

- a. **S.11 SocComm Virtual Show:** SocComm is making a funding request for a Virtual Show. This event will occur during the Spring Semester. The purpose of this is to have a well-known person come to campus (via Zoom) and interact with students to provide a one of kind experience for WPI. This event will be a moderated Q&A that will last about an hour. This will occur during early February through a webinar which can support up to 1000 viewing devices. The total cost of the event will be about \$35,000 and they are requesting \$15,000 from SGA.

Questions

Senator Hager: I am looking at the list of people. Are you thinking of having a political speaker?

Answer: We are looking for a more internet figure because it aligns more with the views of SocComm.

Sen Hager: Brining in a professional figure might be something that WPI students enjoy, but that's just my two cents.

Senator Tocci: Do you guys have a timeline for this? If something were to go astray such as the performer to pull out last minute, how would you act?

Answer: We are intending to have this event in C term. What we have heard from our agent is that contracts for events such as this turn around pretty fast. A potential option would be pushing it back to D term.

Sen Bradley: Can you go more in depth into \$394.

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Answer: That is for advertising costs. However, that money is already in our budget; It is not additional money we are requesting.

Senator Bradley: Will they be performing, or would it be more of a speech?

Answer: We want this to be an interactive event. We sit in front of and stare at computers all day. We do not need to do it more.

VP Serven: I know that with Big Show in the past the contract had some sort of security, is it the same for this year?

Answer: If they don't show up they won't get paid. In general, we have all the same protections that were there for Big Show.

Parliamentarian Silvia: You said that some of these questions would be pre-written or pre-approved. If you were to have a performer come in who is an internet star, what will be the content of these questions be?

Answer: We are not looking for technical questions, but more personable questions. The goal of this is to have a more human conversation.

Parliamentarian Silvia: Will you allow people to submit these questions prior to or during the event or will they come mainly from SocComm.

Answer: All the questions will be coming directly from the students on campus.

Chair Sanchez: I would advise not to bring in someone political because someone from another political party may not agree with this action. When I saw something like this, my thought was someone like Pete Davidson would be awesome!

Answer: Our intention is to go with someone with entertainment value.

Chair Puhalski: In the past you had sold tickets. I assume you won't be doing this.

Answer: Nope it will be free to all WPI students

Chair Rosenthal: Would you reach out to campus and see what type of personality they would want?

Answer: Yes

Senator Hicks: Would you poll the student body for who students would want?

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Answer: We cannot share who we are seeking directly because this is against our contracts

Discussion

Sen Bradley: If they don't use the entire budget what happens to it?

Answer: It rolls back to our accounts.

Senator Wilde: Mara do we have the funds for this?

Answer:: Yes, we are in a good spot.

Chair Tocci: I am in favor of this because it will give students a chance to have an actual event. I genuinely think that something like this would be fun. I think many students would enjoy this. This is not too logistically crazy. I trust SocComm to make this event successful and fun!

Vice President Serven: Remember that we can amend down the FR with a 2/3rd vote.

Sen Buccowich: I think this is an awesome idea, but I don't know how many people would go to because it is another Zoom event.

Senator Bradley: I think this an event that many students would enjoy if they choose the right personality, and it seems like we are in a good spot to fund this!

Senator Pandit: They would get a mid-high tier performer, which is a good compromise and reasonable. If it is known celebrity then people will come, so I don't think whether or not people will come is a concern.

Senator Shah: I don't think many people would come. I would expect 400 people. I am not in favor of pass thing request for that reason. Even though we have the

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money, I think it may be better to refund it to students at the end of the year. I don't think that this is a responsible use of our funds. Also, it is impossible to choose a single person that would interest every student. I think that there are better ways of creating engagement that would not cost this much.

Senator Hicks: I agree with Chair Tocci and Senator Pandit. I am in favor if this. I think that it will attract a lot of students. As a CA I know that spirits at WPI are very low and broadcasting this to as many people would really help bring campus together.

Chair Puhalski: I understand people's concerns with this event being over Zoom, but this is the world we are living in. Also, when it comes to the student life fee, our job is not to try to refund as much as we can to students at the end of the year, it is to fund things for campus that everyone can attend.

Senator Parenteau: I know there is some tension around this event because we have not done something like this before. I think we should give students the opportunity to interact with someone they enjoy. I think this is the only way to spend the student life fee in a big way.

Chair Gammal: Yeah, this is a unique time, and there is no precedent for something like this. This is cheaper than big shows in the past because it is virtual. Looking at spirits on campus, giving students the opportunity to attend something like this would be a great boost!

Senator Langille: I am also in favor of this; I think that it would be exciting! I am also a CA and I see that we need a moral boost across campus. This will be more necessary as COVID continues to spread across campus.

Senator Chen: I wonder if we could make the attendance number greater by having students share a computer. Maybe we could encourage students to wear their superfans and then they would have the chance to win something! This 1000

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attendance is only being enforced by Zoom restrictions. This is an issue that could be worked around.

Chair Rosenthal: I am on the fence about this because from what I have been hearing about virtual events from rush is that people do not utilize it.

Parliamentarian Silvia: I have a point of interest. There was an event A Term that was hosted by astronomy club. Someone from NASA came to give a webinar, and the attendance was disappointing. I will say that considering that I do not even know anyone on the list of people, I do not think many people will attend. However, I do agree with Chair Puhalski's point that everything will be virtual so there is not much we can do about that.

Senator Pimentel: I know everyone is down and we need this, but I am not in favor of it being limited to 1000. If this is coming from the student life fee then every student should have the opportunity to go.

Chair Bell: I am in favor of this because I had a friend who had an opportunity to be in a Zoom call with the cast of Glee and so many people loved it! The benefit of this being a YouTube personality it that this would be like a private Twitch where we get to hang out with a cool person. 1000 people is a lot of people considering the size of WPI. I am hugely in favor of this; It would be awesome programming!

Vice President Serven: To talk about some other points that were made, I understand why you might not feel represented by this event, but each student still has the choice to attend. To Chair Rosenthal's point, the danger of virtual events is people not showing up, but this holds true for all other type of events. As an RA, tour guide, and someone who talks a lot with the student body, we should be trying something new!

Senator Levitan: Many of the arguments against this are that we do not know how the student body would react. Maybe we can hold off voting so that we can talk to *The Mission of SGA is to improve the quality of undergraduate student life at the University both academically and socially by addressing student needs and concerns, providing financial structure of WPI's student clubs and organizations, and representing the student body in a professional manner.*

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students about this and see how people would react to an event such as this, then we can vote.

Senator Pacheco: If they were able to give us a defined list then we could reach out to the student body and get some data.

Senator Ourdyl: If SocCom can get someone who can fairly represent for the student body, then we should pass the request.

Senator Hager: This sounds a lot like a big show FR. I do not think it is unrealistic to assume that we will get similar numbers to this as we do to big show, except it is 1/3 the cost. This would have a great return of investment.

Chair Tocci: After hearing Senator Buccowich's point, I thought maybe we should wait and get a survey out there, but there are two major problems with this. The first is that people do not know what they want. We can try to give people as much information as we can, but it is hard to make students listen. Also, people would not know if they want this event because we have not seen it before. Secondly, what do you think we would gain from a survey? They have little validity.

Senator Buccowich: My biggest hesitation is that I think that people will out the survey SocComm sends out and then when the day comes people will forget about it. Also. I wonder if they could stream this over another streaming service such as YouTube so that spots are not taken away from people.

Chair Puhalski: From seeing Big Show two years ago, they did a crazy good job advertising the event. I think they could do the same thing here.

Parliamentarian Siliva: Going back to the idea to wait, last year when we had the big vote on big show, we decided to table it. People's opinions on the event had drastically changed. I am in favor of tabling the vote.

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Chair Rosenthal: There are always problems with survey, but I think it is good if we try to get a sense of campus so that we could make a more informed decision.

Senator Rossetti: Could we add a stipulation?

Answer: If we table it then have SocComm come back with additional information.

Senator Gushi: I would like to make a motion to table this vote.

Discussion

Vice President Serven: Does this mean that we would continue this on December 1st?

Answer: Yes.

Senator Parenteau: I am in favor of this because we need to best represent the student body when we vote.

Senator Shah: I want to hear more input from students, so I would be happy if we could table it.

Senator Rossetti: We should look to use our weekly email and Instagram to gain information.

Senator Bradley: Even if it is a webinar you can lock it with YouTube streaming to limit it to certain people.

Chair Gammal: I am against tabling this because we have all the information that we need to act.

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Senator Hager: I disagree with Chair Gammal's point. I think that enough people have voted in support of tabling that they do not feel comfortable voting on this without more input from the student body.

Outcome: Motion Passes

- b. **S.12 VOX Sound Console:** VOX needs a new sound console, the control system for all sounds during the show. Their shows have a large actor involvement, and sometimes their console crashes during the show. With a new console, they will be able to bring higher quality entertainment to the WPI community. Ideally, they would like a top of the line console that is primarily for theatre usage. Here are the options and their costs: \$50,329.00 (standard option for theatre usage) and \$41,038.00 (not meant for theatre).

Questions

Senator Bradley: How many people tend to attend your shows?

Answer: Last year's total was about 2300.

Senator Shah: How long do these things usually last?

Answer: It is usually about 5 years before needing to do maintenance. Then maintenance will need to continue this for up to 15 years.

Parliamentarian Silvia: Have you looked at rental prices?

Answer: Yes, but the price of renting it for the time we need it is close to the price of owning one.

Senator Wilde: How many people worked on your last show?

Answer: About 70 to 100 people.

Senator Shah: How much would maintenance cost?

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Answer: This cost is based on what breaks and how it breaks. It could be anywhere between \$10 - \$5000.

Senator Shah: Is it possible for your guys to buy used equipment?

Answer: Yes, this is possible. However, if you do not know how it was treated prior then we do not know how much it would cost long-term.

Senator Shah: Is it possible for other groups to use your equipment?

Answer: Yes, we are open to sharing this equipment. We would teach the WPI community how to use it. We would make a contract for when other groups would like to use it.

Senator Shah: Could L&L use this?

Answer: We have not spoken to them to know if something that they would be interested in using.

Senator Bradley: To repeat what you said the equivalent for renting this equipment for a week is \$10,000.

Answer: Yes

Chair Tocci: Do you guys know the resale value for old equipment to help to offset the cost in the future?

Answer: Yes, there is a market for it. For example, public schools looking to teach using this equipment. However, this is hard to predict right now due to the constantly changing entertainment industry. These consoles have been selling strong for a while though.

Senator Shah: How long has VOX existed?

Answer: 15 years

Senator Shah: I wanted to make sure that VOX will continue as an organization through the next 20 years, the lifespan of this console.

Response: One reason we want to purchase this item is because there is an increase in shows, increase of interest, etc.

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Senator Wilde: Do you know what percentage of those who attended are WPI students?

Answer: A very rough estimate would be 70% at our A term show and the other shows are 80%.

Vice President Serven: Do 2500 come for each show or over the year?

Answer: We have had about 2300 ticket sales in a year.

Discussion

Vice President Serven: I have a point of interest. Someone from LNL, who wanted to remain anonymous, shared the following with me:

“VOX states that the console they rent from LNL doesn't work for their theatre productions. There is some truth to this, but it is debatable. Currently, VOX goes all-in on the tech production, and it is true that the existing console may not be fully suited for this. However, while the theatre work is quite good for a college, it is not Broadway and does not need Broadway-level gear. An equivalent sound system can be run just as well with a simpler setup and gear that VOX can cheaply rent from LNL or elsewhere (because the sound console they rent from LNL is quite good and not the weakest link). The issue of whether VOX "needs" it or not can be debated, but my main problem is that it financially makes no sense at all. VOX does 2 big shows where they might benefit from the console and 1 smaller show each year. Buying the \$50k system for it to not be used for 49-50 weeks in a year is quite silly. To rent the same gear, there is a company called Audio Spectrum near Boston that will rent the entire system with console and related gear (more things than they want to buy) for \$1900 per week. This was from the first page of Google and one phone call, where I spoke with a representative. I expect that you can get it cheaper if you shop around and negotiate. But we will just go with that \$1900 and the 2 big shows, which would mean that it would take MORE THAN 13 YEARS for it to become cheaper to have bought it than rent it every time. At a better (lower) rental rate, I think it would be closer to 20 years. The industry for production equipment moves so quickly that in 13 years, it would be outdated. The numbers themselves in the presentation

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seem reasonable for what they want to get, but what they want to get is not reasonable. These are just my personal thoughts on this because this amount of money being spent like that does not sit too well with me. Full disclaimer that I am not speaking on behalf of VOX nor LNL, this FR is not related to LNL in any way, and that LNL or I do not have anything to gain from whether this does or does not pass.”

Senator Wilde: I am not in favor. I do not think the amount of people who attend their show justifies this.

Senator Bradley: I agree with Micah. I am not in favor of this.

Senator Buccowich: The entire system could be outdated in less than 20 years. I am not in favor of this.

President Candy: We do not have the expertise to determine what the rental costs would be.

Secretary Gruner-Mitchell: We cannot base our decision off one outside, anonymous source. I understand the concern that their numbers do not justify this purchase, but if this console will last 20 years, there numbers would be 2300 x 20 years. That is about 46,000 people.

Senator Pandit: We need more information about renting.

Senator Shah: I agree with Senator Pandit. I do not see any harm in tabling it so we can do more research and have further discussion at our next in-person Senate.

Chair Rosenthal: I disagree. We are discussing if this is something, we are interested in funding.

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Outcome: Request Denied

XIV. Questions, Comments and Ideas

- a. Chair Gammal gave Senator Raneri a shout out for giving out the shirts.
- b. Senator Shah said that he believes that there was an issue with second FR. We would have had more conversation if it was not for the outside source. Also, he asked what we should do if we do not have the expertise on a subject that we are voting on. President Candy said that we do our best to represent the student body with our limited expertise.

XV. Announcements

- a. There is a Paint Night this Friday!
- b. First Generation Student Association is having a game night soon!
- c. Parliamentarian Siliva thanked everyone for the meaningful discussions today.

XVI. Advisor's Remarks

- a. No Remarks

XVII. President's Remarks

President Candy echoed Parliamentarian Silvia's comments on the great discussions today in Senate. He encouraged everyone to reach out to their constituents and get their thoughts regarding the Soccomm funding request. Treasurer Nunez will reach out to Soccomm to ask the questions that Senate had today. President Candy announced that Senate will be paper minutes next week and Cabinet will have an opportunity to submit their project updates for the paper minutes later this week. He also reminded everyone that the Thanksgiving Intent form has reopened and encouraged everyone to fill it out. He also asked everyone to stay safe, make smart decisions, and follow the updated COVID guidelines from President Leshin's email. If anyone has any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out. Additionally, regarding the Instagram comments we have received in the past week, President Candy wanted to reiterate that we are here to listen to students' voices and are taking steps to encourage civil discourse and respectful debate in our community. The SAO is also reaching out to have these conversations with concerned students. Finally, he thanked everyone for sticking through and remaining attentive for our longest Senate meeting of the year!

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XVIII. Adjournment

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