

The Official Agenda of the Undergraduate Student Government General Minutes

On This Day, October 24, 2016

Room 308 Bowen-Thompson Student Union at 7:30 pm

- I. Call to Order (7:30pm)
- II. Roll Call
- III. Swearing in of New Officers
- IV. Open Forum

- a. Sarah Waters, Director of Residence Life

Some overview and updates in Residence Life will be mostly what I will be talking about this evening. This fall we have the majority of the new incoming class living here on campus. This has been up to 97% capacity at the start of this semester. The total number of on-campus students is currently at 6,223 residents. The bulk of our income comes from the room rates. This is our only source of income. There are a variety of expenses we have to meet, especially the \$8 million dollars we have to pay in debt fees and \$3 million dollars in utility fees with another \$3.6 million in custodial/maintenance fees. So there is a lot of money going out, so we have to compensate with the money coming in.

We have to keep our occupancy as high as possible. This has been a challenge from year to year as the number of incoming students has fluctuated quite a bit and it can almost be hard to predict who all finally comes to live on campus. With the opening of the new Greek Houses, we have an increased number of beds to fill and have to compensate to fill all of the empty beds they left in the resident halls where they stayed before. To help us, we closed a few hallways, especially in Harshman, to keep the occupancy level relatively high.

Another focus our office has is the retention rate from year to year. This past fall, we retained an 11.8% increase in students from the previous year. A factor of this being the increased number of commuter students with this incoming class.

Priorities for this year include: academic partnerships and charting a unified strategy for engagement and retention, opening the Greek Housing units and develop the Greek Housing community, create a long term strategic plan and work on starting the process of shutting down Harshman Hall.

With Harshman Hall permanently closing in May of 2017, we have to compensate for the loss of 600 beds. To work with it we may have the option to add maybe an off-campus apartment complex to raise our level of beds available to students. Priority for on-campus housing will be shifted toward first and second year students. Maybe even forcing students who have met the residency requirement of two years to seek other options of housing within the community. Ways to work with this include the off-campus housing fair.

Chair Burkholder: With the change in bed space, how will the rates be affected?

Sarah: The rates will only rise about 2%. We will not hike our on-campus rate that much, though, neighboring off-campus housing might raise their rates when we close most of the bed-space.

Senator Smith: Will there be a potential new residence hall with the closing of Harshman?

Sarah: Yes, though, with the rate of construction on campus currently, we may have to wait until 2020 or even 2022 to see any finalized pieces. We want to evaluate what housing options students would benefit from the most, this includes either suites, traditional dorms, apartment style or even houses.

Senator Pamer:

Sarah: If you have to have the members to fill your spaces in the Greek Houses. Don't switch any Greek business tactics. So please, meet your housing requirement.

Director Cubberly: Will there be a renovation of air conditioning to the residents halls that don't have it?

Sarah: We have to do a return on investment to evaluate the possible cost. We have to evaluate the current economic status and review the condition of the halls for the final cost. I would like to see it happen, but it is certainly expensive. Once we have the evaluations finalized we will once again consider whether or not to pursue the option of adding air conditioning.

Senator Davis, Bryce: How will Res Life work with upper class students find off campus housing?

Sarah: We will do what we can but we are open to ideas.

Has Res Life been open to add free-standing AC units into their rooms?

We will have to evaluate our electrical load capacity and the safety issues associated with the AC units. Free-standing units need ventilation and a lot of the non-AC buildings are not made to necessitate the ventilation.

Has Res Life considered to transfer the single use restrooms where one person can use it at a time into an inclusive use bathroom where they can be used by either gender?

We have shifted a lot of those in the system, but if we missed a few spaces you can certainly send me the location and we can work with changing them.

Senator McMillen: Is there going to be a pay increase with overnight desk workers?

We have to evaluate a few pay models to even see if we have the budget to add a pay increase for overnight workers. Though, we are certainly exercising the idea.

Senator Green: Is there transparency in the price of fees associated with damage costs?

Sarah: We have to cover the cost of the repair. A lot of times it is the labor cost. We don't look to make money on repairs. What the student pay is the bill for us to repair their damage.

Senator Goolsby: When you make changes for who gets housing, are first and second years going to get the priority on applications?

Sarah: Yes, the students who are first years and those transferring in will be considered the second years with the next upcoming year. With the exercised idea of apartments we need to maintain groupings of three to four students.

Senator Sakairoun: With all of the talk of reduced bed-space, will the university still be able to make emergency moves for roommates that need to be separated?

Sarah: We have to be able to make emergency moves, especially with conduct policies. We have some wiggle room, but not a lot. Medical accommodations are another factor that can make it quite the opportunity to solve.

Senator Shakespeare: Will the university be concerned about the retainment rates with the loss of bedspace? Especially with upper classman being as to live off campus

Sarah: We are certainly not taking this lightly, especially if we force students to seek leaseings where they might be full.

Senator Snyder: How will they accommodate those who are granted the scholarships to live on campus?

Sarah: We would like to have space for you but that is more of a financial aid question.

President Dortch: What do you need from USG to efficiently reach students about the changing of housing coming up?

Sarah: First step would be for them to access our website or even send emails directly to our office. We haven't seen things coming at times and we really want to be proactive but are open to be reactive.

Chief Katz: Is the university seeking public-private partnerships to fund the new options of building resident halls?

Sarah: We have a public partnerships on campus such as Centennial and Falcons Heights. We financed them because it was expensive to finance buildings in 2009 and 2010. The university opened up a separate foundation to facilitate the partnership and runs on university funds run out of our office. We took the route on our books as it comes back to the university. It isn't in our interest, but it depends on the amount of beds and space the building. In the end, it comes back to Ohio construction laws.

Director Cubberly: Is the quality of the greek housing a concern with residence life?

Sarah: No, the foundation and structure of the new houses is quite innovative. As long as we respect the facilities and use the commercial grade products available and work to repair any damages as soon as possible.

V. Lobby Time

Michael Caniglia – Aruna 5K

I am from CRU to organize a 5K here on campus next weekend. You can choose on a Saturday morning to make a difference to help break the bonds of human trafficking. Many of the victims are nine to thirteen-year-old girls. It is taken up by the nonprofit

sector to raise money and services to help save these victims from the brothels. On November 5th, we will be holding our fifth annual Aruna 5K. We encourage all organizations to create teams and sign up to run. The fee is \$20 per person and can be paid at the Aruna website.

VI. Old Business

VII. New Business

a. S.R. 2016/2017 – 03

Senator Davis, B:

Today I bring to you the resolution to create a diversity statement for USG. We lack a diversity statement and as an organization who represents all students throughout the university, we need to have a firm foundation to show how we take a stance in supporting diversity and inclusion.

VIII. Executive Branch Reports

a. President – Amanda Dortch

adortch@bgsu.edu

Last week we hosted the debate party and we were asked again to host for the final election night. We really promote engagement for the world around us.

A renewable energy assessment was done for this campus, and I will let you know the results of this assessment.

Thank you for all of you who attended the Town Hall Meeting. As you know Monica Mull is leaving for a position in Columbus. Michael Campbell will be the new Chief of Police within the next couple days.

John Ellinger had a meeting with Ritchie and I about a new mobile app which will have literally everything. We will be demo-ing the app on November 4th and we would like you all to participate in the new demo. We would certainly love the feedback.

I really appreciate your engagement with Sarah Waters today. These issues and concerns affect all of you directly as they are going to be limiting the number of beds available with the new construction plans.

b. Vice President – Richie Racette

rracett@bgsu.edu

With the Town Hall meeting we had a turnout of about 50 people. We would like to exercise the idea of having another one later in the semester.

A theme of issues will have to be considered and we are certainly open to proposals for the next Town Hall meeting.

Talked with Provost Rodgers about the APMs. This is not a time for USG members to advise the students, it is more of a time to introduce yourself to gain their concern and bring it here to GA to address their issues on getting advising.

Another thing that was brought up is how to address the issue with the rock and how to facilitate the discussion about diversity. We are looking beyond just sending out emails and one option is to have professors to facilitate discussions during class. It is a touchy issue and kinks to work out.

c. Cabinet Reports

IX. Procedures and Appeals Reports

X. Treasurer's Report

XI. Speaker's Report

a. Speaker of the Senate – Nadia Oehler noehler@bgsu.edu

I will be out of town for the next few incoming weeks so reaching me may be difficult. Though, please, keep me updated to what all you are working on. We should be working to get out of the discussion phase and start the action phase to start making progress on your ideas.

If you don't have a proxy, you need to go find a proxy.

XII. Committee Reports

a. Academic Affairs – Hannah Barnes hanbarn@bgsu.edu

We have in the works to possibly reorganize the College of Arts and Sciences and other ideas, please if you are interested, see me and we will work on getting the ball rolling on these ideas.

b. Internal Affairs – Nathan Burkholder nburkho@bgsu.edu

Lunch with USG will be this Thursday. If you are working any shifts, please get with me for more details. If you put up a project on the whiteboard, please follow up with your plans to work on the projects. It would be a great utilization of office hour time.

Apparel closes this Wednesday and will take two weeks to get the products.

Be looking for an email from me if you have not signed up for an office hour.
Next, I will need everyone to send me their biography to add into the new website we are implementing

- c. Student Affairs – Rachel Renou rrenou@bgsu.edu

If everyone could be courteous and quickly make their way out of this room after the meeting is over to help eliminate the distractions for the Student Affairs meetings it would be greatly appreciated.

We are working on restructuring the three internal groups of Student Affairs into tasks groups to help work on projects efficiently.

XIII. Senator Reports

Senator Tansey: BGSU is about to enter into a partnership with Rent College Pads to help work with students in finding off-campus housing.

Senator Davis: NIOT had a ceremony was last week and a hot topic was about the blue lights. In the past, the lights have not been beneficial and are working on finding ways to be more applicable to access to security to students on campus.

Senator Hunter: It was hard for a lot of students to access the counselling center and I am going to meet with the center to find better ways for students to gain access to the center and if anyone would like to help me it would be greatly appreciated.

Senator Smith: Are you looking to expand their hours?

Senator Hunter: Yes, that is one of the things I would like to work on. If you could reach out to your constituents about what times would be preferable to them.

President Dortch: I am really happy you are working on that as the Ex-Efficio would also like to address this topic. So I am really happy you are engaged in this topic.

Senator Smith: I am working on implementing a Transfer Advising program for transfer students that SOAR does not focus on as they mostly work with incoming first year students. I am looking into what the transfer students would like to see and reach out to other universities to see how they are approaching the situation as well.

XIV. Advisor's Remarks

- a. Dean Jodi Webb jwebb@bgsu.edu

XV. Closing Remarks

Senator Tansey: It was quite a delight to see all of your happy smiling faces. Please, go and join the new Facebook page to help reach out to our students.

Director Fort: Also follow the twitter and Instagram page as well.

Director Traylor-Gilmer: I am in an organization that would like to fund two runners for the Aruna 5K on November 5th.

Senator Davis, B: In BA 1003 at 7:30pm the NCAAP will be hosting a Self-Care Event with all of the stressful events coming up with exams and of course, clowns.

XVI. Adjournment (9:06pm)