Senate Meeting Minutes

Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Twenty-Second Senate - Thursday, March 30th 2023

**1. Call to Order**

* **The meeting was called to order at 5:12 PM.**

**2. Roll Call**

* **Speaker of the Senate Yulia Mishchuk took the roll call.**
* **Quorum was met.**

**3. Approval of Minutes**

* **The minutes were approved.**

**4. Guest and Student Speakers**

* **Senator Will Hemenover made a motion to move out of bylaws.**
  + **The motion was seconded.**
  + **The motion was approved.**
* **Senator Will Hemenover made a motion to move Bill 45-23-S from new business to unfinished business.** 
  + **The motion was seconded.**
  + **Senator Olivia Feck made an amendment to move Bill 46-23-S from new business to unfinished business.**
    - **Senator Ethan Huffaker made an amendment to the amendment to the previous motion to move Bill 44-23-S from new business to unfinished business.**
    - **The motion was taken as friendly.**
  + **The motion was taken as friendly.**
  + **Senator Will Hemenover gave a speech in affirmation for the motion stating that the funding for the bill is required for the Earth Day celebration. Because Earth Day would occur on the next Friday after the meeting, the bill should pass now.**
  + **The motion was approved unanimously.**
* **There was a motion to move back into bylaws.**
* **The motion was seconded.**
* **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**5. Officer Reports**

* **President Cole Bornefeld gave his report.** 
  + **Bornefeld emphasized that there are 44 candidates running for positions in the Student Government Association.**
  + **Bornefeld applauded the work of Director of Public Relations Preston Romanov in publicizing the election.**
* **Executive Vice President Garrison Reed gave his report.**
  + **Reed applauded Chief of Staff Lauren Willett for her work on the Student Government Association Banquet.**
* **Administrative Vice President Samuel Kurtz gave his report.** 
  + **Kurtz applauded all the senators who had signed up for the election.**
* **Chief of Staff Lauren Willett gave her report.** 
  + **Willett awarded superlatives to senators who were not present at the Student Government Association Banquet.**
* **Director of Public Relations Preston Romanov gave his report.** 
  + **Romanov reminded senators and candidates to not chalk the walls of facilities during election season.**
  + **Romanov reminded senators that to have the proper lighting for a group photo, the meeting would have to end near 6:30 PM if possible.**
* **Director of Information Technology Aniyah Johnson gave her report.**
  + **Johnson notified the Senate that the minutes and the budget had been updated.**
* **Director of Enrollment and Student Experience Donte’ Reed gave his report.** 
  + **Reed notified the senate that scholarships were being graded and would be completed by Wednesday, April 12.**
* **Speaker of the Senate Yulia Mishchuk gave her report.**
  + **Mishchuk reminded the Senate that there was a meeting scheduled for the next week.**
  + **Mishchuk reminded the Senate that after the last meeting, business cannot be conducted.**
  + **Mishchuk invited senators interested in the Speaker of the Senate role to discuss transitioning into the role with her.**
  + **Mishchuk reminded senators to work on the transition packets during their last committee meetings to assist the next senate in the Fall.**
* **Secretary of the Senate Ethan Huffaker gave his report.** 
  + **Huffaker commended senators for filling out their absence requests.**
  + **Huffaker reminded committee secretaries to send him the minutes from their committees.**
  + **Huffaker reminded all committees that they must have a secretary.**
* **Senator Sydney Denney made a motion to move out of bylaws.** 
  + **The motion was seconded.**
  + **The motion was approved.**
* **Senator Sydney Denney made a motion to move Resolution 4-23-S from new business to unfinished business.**
  + **Senator Huffaker made a motion to amend the previous motion to move Bill 47-23-S from new business to unfinished business.**
  + **The motion was taken as friendly.**
  + **Senator Sydney Denney gave a speech in affirmation said that she had meant to move the bill up at a prior time but had to step out of the meeting.**
  + **The bill was unanimously approved.**
* **Senator Meghan Pierce made a motion to cancel the meeting on April 15.**
  + **The motion was seconded.**
  + **Senator Meghan Pierce made a speech in affirmation, stating that all senators were “itching to be done with SGA” and that many candidates often skip the last meeting to campaign.**
  + **Senator Will Hemenover made a speech in negation, stating that he personally knew of a student who had written a resolution that would be presented next week.**
  + **Senator Rush Robinson made a speech in negation, making clear that if the meeting did not happen next week, there would be a student not in the Student Government Association who did not get to present their bill.**
  + **Senator Meghan Pierce amended the motion to hold the meeting on Zoom.**
    - **Senator Will Hemenover gave a speech in affirmation, stating that we could get through a meeting even without a Speaker in the name of making sure all business can be conducted before the end of the current Senate’s term.**
    - **Senator Meghan Pierce gave a speech in negation, stating that she would like to prioritize the accessibility of the meeting and passing legislation over concerns around the Speaker’s absence.**
    - **Senator Meghan Pierce tabled the motion.**
* **Senator Mallory Hardesty made a motion to move back into bylaws.**
  + **The motion was seconded.**
  + **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**6. Committee Reports**

* **Legislative Operations Committee Chair Elizabeth DeLozier gave her report.** 
  + **DeLozier reminded senators of three pieces of legislation that will be in new business in the next meeting.**
  + **DeLozier explained the bills currently in unfinished business.**
  + **DeLozier notified the Senate that the Legislative Operations Committee has two more meetings, including their end of the year party, which will be held on the 24th.**
* **Outreach and Student Engagement Committee Chair Matthew Gadd gave his report.**
  + **Gadd reminded the Senate of a red bull tabling event on Thursday from 10 AM to 2 PM.**
  + **Gadd notified the Senate of a possible service project that the committee was considering.**
* **Campus Improvements and Sustainability Committee Chair Will Hemenover gave his report.** 
  + **Hemenover notified the Senate of the Earth Day celebration on Friday in Centennial Mall and his committee’s plans to table there.**
  + **Hemenover stated further information about the plans for the pollinator garden will be released through e-mail soon.**
* **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Chair Juan Tomas gave his report.**
  + **Tomas reported that he and his committee had discussed the committee transition packet.**
* **Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee Chair Olivia Feck gave her report.**
  + **Feck notified senators about the Mental Health Awareness bill that was in unfinished business.**
* **Community Relations Committee Chair Sydney Denney gave her report.**
  + **Denney notified the senate that the committee would be meeting to finalize their student resource newsletter and discuss their committee transition packet.**

**7. Faculty Senate Reports**

* **No reports.**

**8. Special Orders:**

* **Senator Juan Tomas was elected Senator of the Month.**

**9. Unfinished Business:**

* **Bill 44-23-S: Bill to Amend the Constitution of the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University**
  + **Speaker of the Senate Yulia Mishchuk presented the bill. The bill consolidates the Community Relations Committee and the Outreach and Student Experience Committee.**
  + **Time was allotted for non-debatable technical questions.**
  + **Time was allotted for debate.**
    - **Senator Megan Farmer gave a speech in affirmation, stating that committees often have low membership and that this bill will aid in increasing membership.**
    - **Speaker of the Senate Yulia Mishchuk gave a speech in affirmation, again emphasizing the lack of membership in committees, especially in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee.**
  + **The bill was approved unanimously.**
* **Bill 45-23-S: Funding for Terrariums**
  + **Senator Will Hemenover presented the bill. The bill funds the creation of small terrariums which will be used for an Earth Day tabling event in Centennial Mall.**
  + **A time was allotted for non-debatable technical questions.**
  + **A time was allotted for debate.**
    - **Senator Maiah Cisco gave a speech in affirmation, stating that this bill is an important outreach opportunity for the Student Government Association to show that it is committed to sustainability.**
    - **Senator Ethan Huffaker gave a speech in affirmation, stating that the thought and effort put into the bill was obvious and that the bill responsibly allocated money from the remaining budget.**
  + **The Bill was approved unanimously.**
* **Resolution 4-23-S: Resolution to Support Changing Graduation Honors Requirements**
  + **Senator Sydney Denney and Matthew Raseta presented the resolution. The resolution supports a change in University policy to make transfer students be judged by their overall GPA and not just their WKU GPA in consideration for honors.**
  + **A time was allotted for non-debatable technical questions.**
    - **Senator Ethan Huffaker asked a question clarifying which GPA was used for honors consideration.**
      * **Matthew Raseta clarified that it was the WKU overall GPA that mattered for the purposes of honors consideration.**
    - **Senator Mallory Hardesty asked a question about whether the authors planned to combine the two GPA requirements.** 
      * **Senator Sydney Denney clarified that the current GPA requirements required transfer students to meet two GPA requirements. They are seeking to change that.**
    - **Senator DeLozier asked a question to clarify the meaning of graduation honors.**
      * **The authors clarified the meaning of graduation honors.**
    - **Senator Maksim Zaephel asked a question as to whether this bill would put traditional students at a disadvantage.** 
      * **The question was called out of order.**
      * **Matthew Raseta clarified that the bill was not unfair because WKU had already equated classes from other universities if they gave transfer credit for them.**
    - **Senator Ethan Huffaker asked a question as to whether Harvard University’s classes are generally harder than WKU’s classes.**
      * **The authors agreed that Harvard University’s classes were generally more difficult.**
    - **Senator Ethan Huffaker asked a question as to whether the scope of the problem included students who had taken classes at a local community college.**
      * **The authors clarified that the problem they are describing does apply to those students.**
  + **A time was allotted for debate.**
    - **Senator Callison Padgett gave a speech in affirmation, stating that it is not fair for transfer credits to not count as honors based on her personal experience as a transfer student.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon gave a speech in affirmation, stating that this bill will support international students as well as transfer students.**
    - **Matthew Raseta gave a speech in affirmation, stating that the transfer students that this bill serves often come from disadvantaged backgrounds and that their accomplishments should be celebrated.**
  + **The resolution was approved unanimously.**
* **Bill 46-23-S: Funding for Mental Health Awareness Week in April 2023.**
  + **The members of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee presented the bill. The bill details five days of activities meant to destress students during finals week.**
  + **A time was allotted for non-debatable technical questions.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon asked a question concerning the ability for senators to table during each day of the week.**
      * **The authors clarified that information would be sent out.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon asked a question concerning whether the bill would count for office hours.**
      * **The authors stated that the bill would have to be amended or office hours would have to be canceled.**
    - **Senator Matthew Gadd made a motion to cancel April office hours.**
      * **The motion was seconded.**
      * **A time was allotted for debate.**
        + **Senator Matthew Gadd gave a speech in affirmation, saying that the senators term of office was ending soon.**
      * **The motion was approved unanimously.**
    - **Senator Meghan Pierce asked if the committee had collaborated with any other student organization in planning the week.**
      * **The authors clarified that they had collaborated with several other student organizations.**
  + **A time was allotted for debate.**
    - **Senator Meghan Pierce gave a speech in affirmation, noting that Mental Health Awareness Week has become a staple at WKU and that the event is even larger than SGA, incorporating contributions from other student organizations as well.**
  + **The bill was unanimously approved.**
* **Bill 47-23-S: A Bill to Amend the Student Government Association Constitution**
  + **Senator Ethan Huffaker presented the bill. The bill moves the transfer/nontraditional and First-Generation senator elections to the Fall election rather than the Spring election.**
  + **Senator Ethan Huffaker made an amendment to the bill, fixing grammatical errors.**
  + **A time was allotted for non-debatable technical questions.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon asked a question as to how the author was so sure that more transfer students come in the Fall.**
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker clarified that the national and local statistics showed this.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon asked a question as to whether a transfer student always stayed a transfer student.**
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker clarified that a transfer student always stays a transfer student and that the bill was attempting to give first-year transfer students an ability to run during their first year on campus.**
    - **Senator Juan Tomas asked a question as to how this would affect students who transfer to WKU in the Spring after attending military bootcamp.**
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker clarified that this would give them two opportunities in both the Spring and the Fall to join the Senate by election.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon asked whether the election of a transfer senator in the Fall was conditional upon the seat not being filled in the Spring election.**
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker clarified that the bill would move the transfer senator seat election to the Fall rather than the Spring with no conditionals involved.**
    - **Senator Sydney Denney asked a question as to if it would be unfair for transfer senators to miss out on part of their Student Government Association.** 
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker agreed that the bill would make the transfer senator miss out on some of their experience but emphasized that most important business occurs after the full senate has been assembled. He also noted that the same argument applies to all other senators elected in the Fall.**
    - **Senator Sydney Denney asked a question as to whether the bill puts transfer students at a disadvantage as it concerns the selection of committee heads.**
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker stated that the bill would not put transfer students at a disadvantage if they were already an experienced member from a preceding year.**
    - **Senator Matthew Gadd asked a question about whether the bill had precedent from other SGA constitutions.** 
      * **Senator Ethan Huffaker clarified that other constitutions have completely different norms and therefore nothing could be gained from them.**
  + **A time was allotted for debate.**
    - **Senator Elizabeth DeLozier made a motion to limit debate to two speeches per side.**
      * **The motion was seconded.**
      * **The motion was unanimously approved.**
    - **Senator Salvador Leon gave a speech in negation to the bill, stating that he believed that without a specific number of transfer students in the Fall, the authors could not justify moving the election of the transfer senator to the fall.**
    - **Senator Neel Patel gave a speech in affirmation to the bill, stating that the Gatton senator had also missed out on the same parts of the Senate’s business. Patel also stated that the bills contents were in congruence with the Constitution’s treatment of other senator seats elected in the Fall.**
    - **Senator Juan Tomas gave a speech in negation to the bill, stating that the bill unfairly affects students transferring from military bootcamp in the Spring.**
    - **Senator Elizabeth DeLozier gave a speech in affirmation to the bill, emphasizing that anyone can run in the Spring elections.**
  + **The bill failed by a 16-13 vote.**

**10. New Business:**

**11. Announcements:**

* **Senator Annalise Finch made a motion to adjourn.**
* **The motion was seconded.**

**12. Adjournment:**

* **The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.**