Tuesday March 02, 2010

SGA Senate Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order 7:01 pm

II. Roll Call
   a. Missing/Tardy: 16
   b. Absent Senators: Sophie Westacott, Zanetta King, Monique Blake, Tejal Mankad, Jaclyn Majewski, Ambily Kallivayalil, Augusta Rodgers, Evgenia Routkskaia, Shama Rahman, Mohini Banerjee, Sabrina Camboulives, Hyonwon Bae, Rachel Smith, Sarah Romano
   c. Quorum met

III. Guest Speaker: Laura Rauscher, Director of Disability Services
   a. There are 52 million people with disabilities in the United States
   b. Disability is not just an individual’s problem, it affects families and communities
   c. Disability can be very broadly defined
   d. The law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and ensures equal access to people with disabilities is called The Americans With Disabilities Act, which was passed in 1990
      i. The definition of disability under this law is “a substantial mental or physical condition that some way limits a major life activity”
      ii. The prohibition of discrimination extends to prohibition of discrimination on basis of perceived disability and the person’s previous record
   e. Students with disabilities have a right to be at Smith College and it is their right to have physical and educational access
   f. Disability Services serves the needs of students with:
      i. Physical disabilities
      ii. Learning disabilities
      iii. Chronic illnesses
      iv. Psychological impairments
   g. Concerns about physical access at Smith
      i. Housing accessibility
         1. Many houses are accessible, but not all
         2. In area of housing, we need to advocate for elevators to be put in to increase accessibility.
         3. As renovations occur, hopefully accessibility will increase
      ii. Athletic complex accessibility
      iii. JMG stage accessibility
      iv. Walkways need improvement
         1. Impair mobility of all people on campus
         2. Ideally asphalt will be laid in the spring
      v. Door accessibility
         1. More power doors would be helpful
            a. Bass Hall
            b. Art Museum
h. It is easy to understand many solutions in accessibility for those with physical disabilities, but it is also important to consider solutions for those with other types of disabilities (for example, learning disabilities)

i. We should all work for more sensitivity and more support for each other as different learners

j. Question and Answer session

   i. Q: Broken elevator in Seelye: who is addressing the issue?
      1. A: College is having many issues with the elevator because they can’t reproduce it; at some point they may need to replace it.

   ii. Q: What are the basic criteria to call a building “handicapped-accessible”?
       1. A: Certain houses are listed as accessible even though they are not; some have a few features but are not all completely accessible. Wilson House, Haven House, and Conway House are examples.

   iii. Q: Many dining options are ruled out for those with physical disabilities because of accessibility issues.
       1. A. Van is provided by Disability Services until 7 pm specifically to address this issue.

   iv. Q: What is the proper nomenclature for those with disabilities? Is there a movement to call those with disabilities “differently abled”?
      1. A: “Disabled” came from within the community. It was a political decision, much the same way as the word “queer” came about. The term “disabled” still has important meaning in terms of identity. The phrase “people with disabilities” is an important phrase to some because it affirms the humanity of these people, but is deemed unnecessary by others.

   v. Q: Sidewalk accessibility is an issue. In whose jurisdiction are sidewalks that are on Prospect and Elm Streets?
      1. A: There has been a collaboration with the city, state, and college in order to address accessibility on the lengths of these streets.

   vi. Q: For deaf and hearing-impaired students, are there visual fire alarms on campus?
       1. A: For the recently constructed buildings, visual fire alarms are required for those buildings to be up to code. For those students with hearing impairment, visual fire alarms are installed in their rooms.

   vii. Q: Snow impairs mobility a lot, and Facilities Management often can’t clean stairways and ramps in time. What’s the solution?
       1. A: Call Physical Plant and let them know if something impairs mobility. Call and complain at any time, even if you aren’t personally affected by accessibility issues. Offer a helping hand to those you know will have accessibility issues, bring them notes from class, and let their professor know.

k. Contact Laura Rauscher if you have further questions or concerns.

IV. Prospective Charters

   a. Smith Freethinkers’ Alliance
i. Purpose: To provide a forum for atheist, agnostic, and other interested students at Smith College, and to promote greater awareness and understanding of issues surrounding nonreligious viewpoints in the Smith community.

b. Smith College Cycling Team
   i. Purpose: To encourage women to begin road cycling or mountain bike riding, to further interest in intercollegiate cycling competitions and events, and to promote greater awareness and understanding of the sport of bike riding in the Smith community.

c. Smith College Law Society
   i. Purpose: To provide Smith College undergraduates with an opportunity to learn about the field of law and career options it provides, and to promote greater awareness and understanding of opportunities within the field of law in the Smith community.

V. Election Guidelines
   a. Can be found on SGA website in near future
   b. Discusses:
      i. Campaign guidelines
      ii. Campaign finances
      iii. Running mates
      iv. Write-in candidates
      v. Runoff elections
      vi. Honor Code and Responsibility
      vii. Failure to Comply
      viii. Proxies
      ix. Strike System

VI. Adjournment 9:10 pm