Student Government Association
General Board Meeting
October 6th, 2014

Present:

Executive Board: M. Hicks (President) A. Bullard (Vice President), K. Chrzanowska (BAM), J. Ahern (Treasurer), E. Drouin (Secretary)

Advisors: C. Ambrosio, M. Delaney


Guests: S. Hartnett, M. Karstetter, M. Wysopal

Meeting called to order at 3:04PM

1. President’s Report
   a. Acceptance of Minutes from 9/29/14
      i. Motion #30(E. Pelletier, H. Brooks) Motion to accept the minutes from 9/22/14 (25-0-0). Motion Carries.
   b. Transform CSU 2020
      i. Mr. Michael Kozlowski, Director of Marketing and Public Affairs for the Board of Regents came to speak to the senate in regards to the Transform CSU 2020 Plan. M. Kozlowski distributed a PowerPoint presentation print out to the senators.
         1. Pat Banach introduced herself as the Eastern liaison for the Transform 2020 event. If you need to speak to her, she is the library director and students should refer to her.
   2. What is Transform?
      a. In 2012 the ConnSCU system (also known as the Board of Regents) was formed. It was a consolidation of seventeen universities and community colleges for the purpose of creating the State University/Higher Education system for Connecticut. It was developed to try and create an alternative and provide a starting point for students who were unsure about their future. It was also meant to be a lower priced alternative. Transform's focus has been on affordability and access. It's meant to be made possible to move from the different universities to provide options. Transform is trying to integrate the schools amongst each other across the system, including distance learning.
b. It became a list of initiatives to fulfill those goals. Once the list was formed, the creators of the initiative spoke with the stakeholders of the ConnSCU system.
   i. Stakeholders refer to the Board of Regents, students, legislators, faculty, and staff.
   ii. They conducted a survey of faculty and staff in May. The responses were aggregated in July, which created five more initiatives
      1. There are currently thirty five initiatives broken up into clusters.
      2. There were originally thirty six, however, one was completed already.

c. The goal of Transform is to benefit the students, on a financial and an experiential basis, as well as via distance and online learning. They are also trying to better equip students with workforce skills.

3. Questions
   a. E. Pelletier asked how they decided that online learning was something that students would be interested in.
      i. M. Kozlowski answered that the ConnSCU system already has an online school, Charter Oak. They know they have a strong interest in this initiative and have spoken to students who are unable to get into a classroom structure due to their nontraditional status.
         1. M. Kozlowski stressed that this initiative isn’t intended to make Eastern an online system. We want to offer the students all the options they want.
      ii. E. Pelletier asked if this would take away from in classroom course offerings.
         1. M. Kozlowski answered that no, the idea is to augment them. They want to look at what they should be adding, not taking away. There is an optimization component, which refers to maintaining unpopulated courses through online so that they can be populated.
      iii. M. Hicks asked if they think that online classrooms is improving the student experience.
         1. M. Kozlowski answered that it promotes learning. Students have to be helped in terms of study skills. All these new courses have to be implemented via an emphasis on academic advising.
   b. H. Brooks asked about how the BOR would make decisions in regards to what core courses are required of students.
i. M. Kozlowski answered that there's a little bit of a market orientation in regards to what courses are offered. The BOR looks at what do students want, what is going to be helpful in their lives, and what the outside world, referring to business and industry, want.

1. M. Kozlowski said that they looked to their stakeholders for this information. They conducted a survey of the business community, who said the most important thing was to strengthen the general education core, which is a large part of Eastern, but not community colleges. This initiative is geared more towards that.

c. M. McFall Gorman asked if they've spoken to other students on campus. The majority of students on campus have the same basic impression that this is going to ruin individuality of schools. We chose this school for a reason and we're fearful that this plan will be forcing standards on all schools that may not want those kinds of standards. Eastern already does well with a lot of initiatives, in combining these schools we're going to suffer for it.

i. M. Kozlowski answered that the Transform plan is not intended to make the schools one another nor is it intended to make four year universities a community college.

1. M. McFall Gorman asked if that was the case, then why not make the plans on an individual levels.

a. M. Kozlowski answered that the plan is not to cookie cut the elements into a template to be imposed on all the institutions. The idea is to enable and maintain the schools so that they can do what they like. They have no intentions of homogenizing the universities.

ii. M. McFall Gorman asked about where the money to fund these initiatives is coming from if they don't raise tuition.

1. M. Kozlowski answered that the state currently has a large budget problem with a 1.5 billion deficit. As there hasn't been a gubernatorial election yet, we don't know the budget. In 2012, they received 125 million to bring the colleges and universities together. They're trying to use Transform to do that. That involves
the limit on the tuition increase to 2% per year.

a. They don't know what they're going to do just yet if they don't receive more money; they will confront that problem when it comes.

d. R Rivera asked why there weren't any concrete plans included on the initiatives that were presented to the senate.

i. M. Kozlowski answered that Transform was intended to be an outline for a plan. They wanted faculty, staff, and students to help draft the plan. They have people who are assigned to implementing the initiatives, but they haven't started working on road mapping them yet. There are a lot of things that haven't been started, however they are hoping to make concrete development of the academic plans in 2015. This includes ten million for more advisors.

e. E. Pelletier asked if they were planning on pilot testing the program.

i. M. Kozlowski answered that they are creating more concrete output to put in a planning document. The planning document will be sent back to stakeholders, who will send it back with their comments. They have two months to go back and refine the plan and then take it to the legislature.

ii. E. Pelletier asked what happens if 2025 happens and they're not getting the desired results.

1. M. Kozlowski explained that the legislature doesn't fund ongoing activity, they fund services and infrastructure, such as smart classrooms.

   a. M. Kozlowski went over the genius classrooms, which will cost 125 million to install those classrooms.

   b. E. Pelletier asked if there was guaranteed funding for faculty to sustain these systems

   i. M. Kozlowski answered that there are no guarantees.

f. A. Bullard asked M. Kozlowski to expand upon Smart classrooms. Everything she's heard from faculty and students has all been negative. How can professors make the appropriate connections? A large part of why students love Eastern is that they have very
distinctive classrooms. Smart classrooms also take up a significant part of the budget, so she’s very skeptical of their efficiency and worth.

i. M. Kozlowski explained that Smart classrooms are going to be rolled out between now and spring 2015. There’s going to be 12 of them that are going to be constructed and they already have the money to do that.

1. M. Kozlowski stressed that if administrations don’t want them, they don’t have to have them.

a. A. Bullard asked if institutions didn’t want implement it, would they lose less funding?

i. M. Kozlowski answered that the last thing Transform will be is punitive. No university will be penalized.

ii. M. Kozlowski said that Eastern’s opportunities will be rolled out within smart classrooms. They can be used to expand the uniqueness and the resources of our individual campus.

g. M. Hicks expressed his own concerns in regards to Smart classrooms. Research shows that hybrid classrooms lead to student isolation, lack of student/faculty interaction and ruins the experience of the classroom. It’s a concern to see 125 million be put into a system that doesn’t support Eastern as a liberal arts university and doesn’t fit into a liberal arts core.

i. M. Kozlowski responded that M. Hicks has many valid points. The BOR thinks that Smart classrooms will lead to immediate feedback. The feedback mechanism is built in so that faculty can decide if substantial portions of the class are comprehending them or not and can better aid the class.

h. H. Brooks asked about student opposition. How does the BOR take student opinion and implement it into their initiatives.

i. M. Kozlowski responded that one of the purposes of these meetings was so students would write down feedback and send it to them so it could be implemented into the plan.
4. E. Drouin inquired about the cross campus-registration initiatives. She asked if it was in regards to seamless transfer and how the different requirements at each institution would play out in the transfer.
   a. M. Kozłowski answered that at some point there will be a curriculum that equates the different offerings at institutions so that they can be recognized. This initiative mainly reflects the ideal of transferring to a Connecticut State University from a community college.
   b. E. Drouin followed up with a question about the emphasis on graduate student recruitment when Eastern only has two graduate programs.
      i. M. Kozłowski answered that they are looking to provide more learning opportunities for professionals and be more successful in implementing those opportunities via graduate research
         1. E. Drouin asked why there was an emphasis on graduate research and yet nothing on undergraduate research
            a. M. Kozłowski said he’d received that feedback from a variety of stakeholders and it’s something they’re considering putting into the plan.
            i. E. Drouin advocated for that initiative, as she has had undergraduate research opportunities and thinks that it makes her a more competitive candidate in the work force and for graduate schools.

5. N. Vigorita asked if there is a way to opt out of certain initiatives of the Transform Plan
   i. M. Kozłowski answered that the objective of the plan is to improve and create a better student experience. The administration is going to be able to say no to certain things if they don’t feel as though it is best. They cannot opt out of everything, however.

6. C. Gosselin asked how they are planning to implement a curriculum between all 17 ConnSCU systems when all institutions are different. Will they be instituting standards or assessment?
   i. M. Kozłowski answered no, every campus is not going to have to use the same curriculum. What’s going to happen is where there are
courses that are the ‘same’ at each institution, those courses need to be transferrable. The idea is to make sure similar courses are being offered at all institutions and those credits able to move back and forth.

1. C. Gosselin posed a follow up question: Will teachers have the same standards? As it’s the departments and the teachers that actually teach these courses; they’re going to be completely different
   a. M. Kozlowski responded that part of the uniqueness of all these institutions is the faculty. Courses should be taught in a similar enough way and they do not want to take away from that. The person in charge of that initiative understands that issue.

b. M. Ehrnfelt asked if there is a resource for students who aren’t in SGA to have access to the information. Is there something that will go more in depth to initiatives?
   i. M. Kozlowski gave a link to the Board of Regents Website (http://www.ct.edu/regents). You’ll also see the list of executive sponsors; any initiatives you’re interested in, email them

c. J. Ahern inquired about the timeline of the project. He asked M. Kozlowski if they will return to speak to us with Dr. Grey when they have more details on the concrete aspects of the plan.
   i. Yes, they will come to speak to us when they have a concrete plan, which will be sometime in January and March.

   ii. M. Kozlowski stressed that the point of these meetings was that they want to get as many students to the legislature to impress upon the legislature how important education is.

   iii. M. Hicks commended the senate on a good job with all of their questions. For those of you who don’t know, the Board of Regents has the Faculty Advisory Committee (Mrs. Banach) and the Student Advisory Committee (J. Ahern). Interested senators are free to come with J. Ahern to the SAC Meetings.

   c. Caribbean Student Union
      i. Senators received the Caribbean Student Union’s Constitution in regards to their name changes

      ii. **Motion #31 (J. Reid, A. Nadeau)** Motion to accept the Constitution Revisions of the West Indian Society, now the Caribbean Student Union (19-0-0). **Motion Carries.**

         1. Discussion:
a. H. Brooks inquired if changing the name to the Caribbean Student Union would exclude some cultures.

i. M. Hicks said that it was his impression that it would not, because the old name was derogatory in a sense. They consulted with other groups and learned that Caribbean is a more appropriate term.

d. One on One’s

i. As tradition, the President hosts one on one meetings with each senator or delegate, touch base individually with everyone and answer all questions

ii. For next week have your broad availability and any time chunks possible. Bring a physical schedule to meeting next week, 9am-7PM
   1. The meetings will be no more than 20 minutes and are super informal
   2. E. Drouin asked if E-Board members would be included.
      a. M. Hicks answered that yes, E-Board is included

e. Empty Seat

i. M. Hicks announced that senator R. Perry has decided to leave his seat in the senate for personal reasons. There is a process behind filling the seat. Any delegates who make it directly known to E-Board that they are interested in filling the position of senator, they must do that and attend three consecutive meeting starting in this meeting. If there’s more than one qualified candidate, we’ll have an internal election within the senate body.
   1. A. Nadeau asked if the people will be there when we vote on their election.
      a. M. Hicks answered that is not the case. The delegates will make a case for themselves, we would then likely move to closed session.

f. Relay for Life

i. K. Chrzanowska is spearheading getting an SGA team together for the Relay for Life. It is on Saturday, October 18th. It's a charitable event to support the American Cancer Society. Students make a donation and go around the track. It will be $10 per person and then students go out on their own to gain sponsors. It starts at 11 AM on the 18th. We'll gather names for the team next week.

g. Conference

i. M. Hicks wished E. Drouin, K. Chrzanowska, M. McFall Gorman, and C. Gosselin good luck this weekend on their trip to the National Leadership Conference on Student Government
   1. They will complete an initiative based upon something we learn from the conference
   ii. M. Hicks told senators to look forward to conferences in SGA! All senators get to apply.

2. Vice President’s Report

a. Committee Updates

i. Issues
   1. Everyone in the committee has something to work on the committee. Their retreat is Friday and shall incorporate fun things and professional development things.
ii. Public Relations
   1. PR has made an Instagram. Follow it! M. Hicks stressed that if something SGA-related is on social media, senators should share it.

iii. Internal
   1. Internal will be working on Constitution revisions this week; they will report back to general board in regards to what they find
   2. They are also working on how they'll get students to know about the suite. Someone has suggested a movie night to be more visible.

iv. Budget and Management
   1. Nothing to report.

3. Treasurer’s Report:
   a. Accounts Update
      i. J. Ahern gave an accounts update. There is currently $1,451 in General Board and $4,228 in E-Board.
      1. Cops Open Rec is next as far as big spending goes. Due to the amount in the accounts, our donation will be less than last year.

4. Secretary’s Report:
   a. Office Hours
      i. E. Drouin made sure that everyone has coordinated their office hours with their mentor/mentee
         1. Due to the recent vacancy in SGA, G. Canzio does not currently have a mentor. He will likely be matched up with the new senator.
   b. President’s Breakfast
      i. E. Drouin passed out a sheet for senators to sign up to be attending the President’s Breakfast

5. Advisor’s Report:
   a. Nothing to report.

6. Open Floor:
   a. M. Hicks stressed that there has to be good turnout at the Majors/Minors Fair. Everyone should share everything on social media!
      i. N. Vigorita suggested that we should promote more in underclassmen dorms.
         1. M. Hicks said that next week quarter sheets will be distributed. All exploratory and transfers students have been contacted about it. Peer mentors have been instructed to talk about it.
   b. A. Nadeau looked into blog websites (buildyourownblog.net) as an alternative for yearbook. Instead of making people pay for the book, maybe we could implement a fee so students can see everything that’s been posted for the year.
      i. M. Hicks said that he will make sure that is communicated to yearbook.
ii. J. Ahern stressed that no matter how many suggestions or alternatives we make to yearbook, it’s not our call. We only determine funding. It’s not at that point yet.

iii. M. Hicks explained that executive board has contacted yearbook. After their contract ends this year, we’ve let them known that we will not be funding another contract. That would be a constitution revision, but we want to figure out an option first. We don’t want to stop funding the yearbook.

c. M. Ehrnfelt announced a LinkedIn Workshop with the English Department on Wednesday, October 8th from 3-4 in Webb Hall 307.

d. A. Bullard announced her Wings and Politics Event for Eastern Conservatives/Libertarians on Thursday at 6PM.

7. Dates to Remember:
   a. President’s Breakfast: Wednesday, October 8th 7:00 am, President’s Dining Room, Hurley Hall
   b. Majors/Minors Fair: Wednesday, October 15th: 1:00-4:00pm BTR

8. Motion #32 (A. Bullard, S. Froehlich) Motion to accept the Constitution Revisions of the West Indian Society, now the Caribbean Student Union (18-0-0). Motion Carries.

Meeting adjourned at 4:46PM