

## SGA Senate Meeting Minutes

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- The twenty-fifth meeting of the sixteenth Senate was called to order by Ryan Richardson at 5:00 pm on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
- The minutes from the last Senate meeting were approved by unanimous consent.
- Alex Sergent motions to move outside the bylaws.
- The motion passes.
- Alex Sergent motions to move Officer Reports to the end of the meeting and to limit the Student Speaker section to 5 minutes.
- The motion passes.
- Alex Sergent motions to move back into the bylaws.
- The motion passes.
- Alex Sergent motions to move everything before Student Speakers to the end of the meeting.
- The motion passes.
- **Student Speaker – Anna McAvoy:** Apologizes for using the Pepe meme and states that it was not her intention to offend anyone.
- **Student Speaker – Will Harris:** Thanks all of the students for attending today. Notes that SGA does not stand for silencing student voices. Members of the campaign were not notified in a timely manner over the Judicial Council meeting.
- **Student Speaker – Spencer Wells:** He was previously a senator. Was one of the only Jewish senators in decades. His concern is with the meaning of the Pepe meme and has seen the hate it can spread. Notes that it is important that people apologize for the use of the symbol even if the meaning associated with it was not intentional. He does not believe the senators should be condemned. He believes there is too much focus on shifting blame and not the hate associated with the symbol.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

- **Student Speaker – Stephen Mayer:** Addresses concerns people had. He was not a part of the chalking team that drew the meme and has never seen it before this issue. Formally apologizes for the incident. He did not intend to attack the Herald.
- **Student Speaker – Jordan Brown:** She was a member of the chalking team that drew Pepe. She did not mean anything wrong when drawing it and had no idea of the white supremacist connotation.
- **Student Speaker – Cameron Edwards:** He believes rules should be enforced fairly and the student voices are not happy with the way the rules were applied. He apologizes that this has become a symbol of hate. Student voices need to be heard.
- **Student Speaker – Wood Brown:** He is disgruntled with this process. He knows Stephen well and represents his constituents well. He is worried for this organization and believes transparency needs to be increased. Backdoor politics need to end and the majority must be represented. MEA did not intend to spread a message of hate.
- **Student Speaker – Aubrey Kelly:** Speaks on political correctness. She was not aware that Pepe the frog was a symbol of anti-Semitism. She did research on the issue. Several things are registered hate symbols. Therefore, they are very contextual. The Student Government Association must be run by the students.
- **Student Speaker – Noah Moore:** Encourages students to run for election in the Fall if they want to be involved in SGA. This organization thrives on diversity.
- **Student Speaker – Lily Nellans:** Contextualizes the conversation. The anti-SGA spirit began when SGA passed the reparations resolution. There was a racist backlash against SGA because of that resolution. There has been controversy over the anti-incumbent spirit. A ticket running against incumbent policies that uses a meme to attack the people the incumbent represents, is a form of dog whistling. The EVP works for an organization called Americans for Prosperity that has negative views against minorities. The fact that he didn't understand the connotations of this meme is highly improbable. They were either aware of the connotations or negligent to the issue.
- **Student Speaker – Caroline Gavin:** She plays golf for WKU. She is good friends with Garrett and does not agree with the things said about him. She references the Herald opinion article published last night. She understands the meme has negative connotations but does not agree with the assumption that they were aware of the hateful connotations. Students voices are not represented.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

- **Student Speaker – Emily Houston:** Wrote that letter to the article and talked about what influenced her to write it. SGA has had a tense year and female members have been harassed by male members of the organization. She has been referred to as a b\*\*\*\* and does not tolerate gender-based harassment. Look at the voting records and debate to see their true opinions. There are important things going on at this campus that will affect everyone, such as the new Provost. Only she and her executive members attended that.
- **Student Speaker – Brigid Stakelum:** She is a woman in SGA and she has not been a target of gender harassment. She is a feminist and calls out bigotry when she sees it. Garrett is very open to women's issues and has supported them. She was not involved in the chalking; however, she knows MEA and Anna McAvoy had no intention of knowingly using a hate symbol.
- **Student Speaker:** It is important to know the difference between being objective and subjective. He is Jewish and Native American. He was raised taking WWII seriously. The Pepe meme taken in context did not offend him. People should be able to vote to let their voices be heard. SGA is silencing hundreds of votes for a mistake over a misconstrued meaning.
- **Student Speaker – Braden Burks:** He grew up raising cattle and showing livestock. This past year he had the opportunity to serve as an FFA officer, which is why he isn't serving here in SGA. He was there the night they chalked and he is Garrett Edmond's roommate. He has seen his passion and knows that he wants the best for the students. He is passionate about cows and this is what Garrett is passionate about.
- **Student Speaker – Mark Clark:** He has nothing against any of those who have been disqualified. This past meeting was the longest judicial council meeting they've had and the decision was not made quickly. We will be voting on legislation to increase transparency today. He is disappointed with some of the people in this room. Although it may have been a mistake, it was not harmless. Encourages respect for student speakers.
- **Student Speaker – Asha McWilliams:** Encourages being aware of leaving time to debate important legislation.
- **Student Speaker – Amanda Harder:** She frequently asks questions during debate. It is important to recognize the importance of student voice and can no longer brush off mistakes. This can serve as a great learning opportunity for senators and students.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

- **Student Speaker – Alex Sergent:** Encourages respect for all students and disagrees with Mark Clark stating that he also respects all students because he did not respect Dallas McKinney when he was speaking at another senate meeting. Discourages pointing fingers and fighting in Senate meetings.
- **Student Speaker – Ashlyn Evans:** She is a woman and is also part of the LGBT community and no one on the MEA ticket has every looked down upon her. She has regularly attended Senate meetings and is disgusted by the hateful words used both inside and outside these chambers. Only some senators care about the students.
- **Student Speaker – Savannah H.:** She has been attending SGA meetings regularly. She was introduced to SGA by senator Matthew Barr. She was interested in running for a position but is no longer interested because of the toxic environment inside and outside these chambers. The article posted yesterday was appalling and the accusations made against Garrett Edmonds are false. She wants to be approached by and involved in conversations with more senators.
- **Student Speaker – Isaac Keller:** He is a student and member of the Judicial Council. Notes the lack of diversity in Senate and does not believe ignorance is an excuse for the actions they took. Garrett said the symbol was no big deal and could be washed off. Racism should never be accepted. Students here now are not necessarily the average students but those who support the disqualified candidates. Acknowledges the importance of doing morally correct things.
- **Student Speaker – Garrett Edmonds:** He is extremely sorry for those he has offended and the voices that have been silenced. He asks senators to consider their true purpose in SGA. People are made out to be someone they are not because of the way they vote. He apologizes again for the symbol drawn and acknowledges his negligence and the negligence of the chalk team. He encourages any student who wishes to speak to him to do so.
- **Student Speaker – Jalen Shay:** He is interested in SGA and was eager to educate himself on the issues. He knows Garrett well and knows he is not the type of person he is being made out to be. He is extremely passionate about politics and is transparent about both side of the issues. He is not racist. The article written about him is extremely false. One person's ignorance does not define them.
- **Student Speaker – Andy:** Context does matter. The people who drew the symbol were not aware of its hateful meaning.
- **Student Speaker – Olivia Simpson:** Reads from the Herald article and notes the decisions of the Judicial Council. The Council believed Mr. Edmonds disregarded

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

the election codes and the SGA constitution to promote the safety of students. The Judicial Council acted to the best of their ability. Asks students here today to be present for other issues that were discussed earlier this year.

- **Student Speaker – Jacob McAndrews:** He is an Associate Justice on the Judicial Council. He provides context to their deliberation last night. An official request was made to the Judicial Council to review a potential violation to the election codes. They are taking the considerations seriously and attempting to devote adequate time to them. They did not realize how big of a deal the issue with the MAE campaign and Anna McAvoy would be. They called members of the campaign but did not talk to all three members. The Judicial Council did not make this decision based on character attacks. They deal in the objective not the subjective. He was a dissenting voter on the issue. They were presented that a member of the campaign was informed of the memes connotation and elected not to take it down.
- **Student Speaker – Spencer Wells:** Judaism is not a race, it is an ethnicity, religion, and culture. The issue of Judaism is intersectional. He is an ethnic Jew and is an atheist. Anti-Semitism and racism affect groups differently. He, as a journalist, does not want to condemn anyone without evidence. The Judicial Council is ruling on very difficult issues so he asks you respect them and let them do their job.
- **Student Speaker – Luke Edmunds:** Reads First Corinthians Chapter 13. Stresses the importance of love. Reads Ephesians.
- **Judicial Council Report – Annalicia Carlson:** She serves as the Chief Justice of the Judicial Council. Thanks everyone for attending tonight. The official statement on the issue in question is given.
- Brigid Stakelum motions to move out of the bylaws.
- The motion passes.
- Garrett Edmonds motions to move Bill 25-18-S to the top of the docket.
- The motion passes.
- Lucas Knight motions to move back into the bylaws.
- The motion passes.
- Lucas Knight motions to limit debate to 2 minutes.
- The motion passes.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

- **Bill 25-18-S**
- Noah Moore makes a friendly amendment changing the spelling to Edmonds.
- Bill 25-18-S passes.
- **Bill 22-18-S**
- Will Harris makes a friendly amendment to allow senators to explain their vote.
- The amendment is not friendly.
- Amanda Harder makes a friendly amendment to add “post voting records of senators to the SGA website in a timely manner”
- The amendment is accepted as friendly.
- Harper Anderson motions to move into debate.
- Bill 22-18-S passes.
- Dallas McKinney motions to hold a special meeting of SGA tonight at midnight.
- The motion fails.
- Lucas Knight motions to table all remaining legislation.
- The motion passes.
- **Announcement – Andi Dahmer:** Their final meeting of the year will be next Tuesday. We must move in a timely manner next week.
- **Announcement – Kara Lowry:** The election results party will be tonight at 11:30 in DSU 2081.
- **Announcement – Ryan Richardson:** It is easy to talk about voices being restricted but we don't usually have anyone here to use their voice. He enjoys seeing students present and encourages increased student attendance at SGA meetings. We have invited students to forums that they frequently do not show up. We need more frequent student attendance. Bring your voices here, we want to hear them.
- The meeting is adjourned at 7:05 pm.