

THE COOPER UNION
OPEN MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Wednesday, May 14, 2014
4:00-6:00pm
The Great Hall, Cooper Union

Present:

Faculty and Library Representatives: Mike Essl (Chair), Thomas Micchelli, Stan Mintchev (Secretary), and Sohnya Sayres.

Student Representatives: Emily George, Daniel Hall, Yuta Makita, Hunter Mayton, and Andy Overton.

Ex-Officio Members: Dean Saskia Bos, and Acting Director Carol Salomon.

The meeting was called to order at 4:10pm.

MEETING BETWEEN SENATE OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATION

The Chair noted that the President's Chief of Staff (also, Secretary to the Board of Trustees) had requested a private meeting, during which he had attempted to dissuade the Senate's officers from facilitating the open meeting requested by the student representatives. During this private meeting, the President's Chief of Staff had cited concerns that the details of the incident are confidential, and hence not to be released by the administration due to FERPA regulations. In this exchange, the Chair of the Senate had noted that Senate Bylaws require a Senate meeting when such is requested by at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the membership, a requirement that was subsequently fulfilled by the student representatives.

INTRODUCTION TO "HANDSHAKE" INCIDENT; DISCUSSION

The Chair began the meeting by defining its scope. The relevant chronology of the event and subsequent communication between the student and the administration were briefly introduced for context. It was underscored that the purpose of the meeting was not to investigate the details of the incident, as various differing accounts as well as unreleased confidential information preclude this from being an appropriate goal for the Faculty-Student Senate.

Nevertheless, the Chair noted that the subsequent correspondence between the student and the administration, which included an initial expressed intent of the latter to pursue disciplinary sanctions against the former – an intent that was seemingly subsequently withdrawn – merits a discussion on the Senate floor. In

particular, such discussion was noted as relevant in light of related recent conversations pertaining to revisions to the Code of Conduct at The Cooper Union.

The student members noted that the Joint Student Council had passed a resolution in connection with the incident. They registered a complaint that their request for communication of the resolution to the Cooper Union community was denied by the Vice President for Communications.

Several members of the community shared their concerns regarding the administration's actions following the incident. Among them, some noted that the discussion herein notwithstanding, the student may wish to seek legal counsel.

SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The Senate moved to discuss and adopt four resolutions.

Motion: A motion was made to adopt the following resolution:

"Statements issued by representative bodies duly recognized by Cooper Union and elected by constituencies of the Cooper Union community shall be distributed to the entirety of the Cooper Union community through official channels without delay, interference, or censorship."

Motion passed. (9 in favor, 0 opposed)

Motion: A motion was made to adopt the following resolution:

"The Faculty-Student Senate demands that any student infraction be subject to the current Code of Conduct; any retribution against a student pursued outside of the purview of the Code of Conduct should be investigated by the Board of Trustees. A report of such investigations should be provided to the Faculty-Student Senate."

Motion passed. (9 in favor, 0 opposed)

Motion: A motion was made to adopt the following resolution:

"The Faculty-Student Senate adopts the following statement and resolution, originally adopted by the Joint Student Council on May 2, 2014:

In response to recent events, the Joint Student Council is issuing the following resolution.

Joint Student Council does not recognize the right of the administration to punish a student according to its own judgment without an official complaint and trial. Removal of privileges due to "civil disobedience" is subject to the procedures outlined by the Code of Conduct:

"Any person so suspended shall have all the rights as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Summary Suspensions must be reviewed by a Judicial Panel within seven regular business days of the suspension. Until and unless the accused is found to have violated the Standards of Conduct, his/her status as a member of the Cooper Union community shall not be altered."

Furthermore, as stated by the Code of Conduct, "The Student Judicial Committee of the Joint Student Council shall have jurisdiction of all matters involving an alleged violation of the Standards of Conduct stated above."

"

Motion passed. (9 in favor, 0 opposed)

Motion: A motion was made to adopt the following resolution:

"The Senate objects to the merging of distinct administrative positions so as to be held by a single officer, which jeopardizes that particular officer's responsibilities toward academic and student affairs. The positions in question include, but are not limited to:

Vice President for Student Affairs and Community Relations,
Dean of Athletics,
Chief Academic Officer,
Academic Dean,
Secretary to the Board of Trustees,
President's Chief of Staff,
Equal Opportunity Officer / Affirmative Action Officer,
Title 9 Officer."

Motion passed. (9 in favor, 0 opposed)

Meeting adjourned at 5:55pm