

# Bowdoin Student Government

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Meeting of the **Bowdoin Student Government**

*26 Mar. 2008*

- I. **Call to Order** at 8:35 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call:** Amir Abdullah has resigned.
- III. **President's Welcome:** Dustin says that many of us remember the idea of having class committees instead of class officers. Because of significant opposition, this doesn't seem like the year to be making that change. We don't have the time or the investment in this issue to argue out our opinions. If we do feel passionate, then the time is now. He indicates the bill we should look at. Good news: the gym will be open all day. Tonight will be complicated, probably long, and definitely boring. Yay for Travis. Please listen, don't talk on the sides. If we stay focused, this could go smoothly.
- IV. **Approval of the Minutes:** Dustin asks everyone to take a look at the minutes. There is a motion to approve, which is seconded. Minutes pass unanimously.
- V. **Public Comment Time:** The public would prefer to speak when the issue comes up. Alicia Martinez, Matt Yantakosol, Grant Easterbrook, Karl Nyangoni, and Houston Kraft introduce themselves.
- VI. **Old Business: Constitutional Amendments**
  - a. John introduces the first amendment, to remove the presidential eligibility requirement. This is the sexy amendment. Basically, this removes the clause that says that the president needs to have run for office.
    - Jess says that although it would be a good background, this is something that students should decide.
    - Houston wonders if they could move their amendment (#23) up, because they don't want to wait through all the other amendments.
    - Bryce wonders if we would not put any restrictions on the presidency? Dustin says that they are currently not in there, and now would be the moment to add them. Bryce feels that this is less likely to be voted for if we don't put restrictions.
    - Kata doesn't think we should put restrictions. It feels like a cop-out. Restrictions seem very arbitrary.
    - Greg likes the idea of qualifications in some regard. Maybe they should need to be upperclassmen, or maybe they should need to come to meetings.
    - Sophia wants to echo Kata's sentiment. She doesn't support this, but the spirit of passing this is to put the question out there. Putting it out with restrictions would meet negative response from the public.

- Sam K asks about what Sam D mentioned early. Sam D says that we would pose this with a statement that the BSG doesn't support the idea, but that we want the student body to have a say. Sam K wants language added about requirements.
- Bryce wonders if there is a way to have both options. Sophia wonders if it could go in the bylaws. The stipulations could be added afterwards.
- Jess thinks that putting a statement about what we think would be biased. She mentions the information sessions that people need to attend in order to run for positions—this could apply for the president.
- Nicole doesn't think that the statement would say that we disagree, it will say that we voted to offer the option to the students. Sam D says that this would be open for debate. Dustin says that our statement won't be in the ballot.
- Rutledge doesn't think that putting a warning message will change anyone's opinion in our favor. Kata agrees and thinks that if someone truly opposes the amendment, they need to consider voting what's truly in their mind. It sends a mixed message to offer the vote and say that we are opposed to it. If we would require the president to attend meetings, why wouldn't we require this of VP's?
- John thinks that right now we need to pass this, because it has dogged over us for years. We need to get it off of us and onto the student body. We can talk about our resolution afterwards if we need to.
- Dan H thinks that we should pass it as it is. Adding stipulations afterwards seems backhanded. Dustin says that he put forward the idea because when we introduce these votes, we usually agree with them. We are looking for a way to let people know that it's not the case.
- Those in favor: 23; Opposed: Greg; Amendment passes for referendum

b. The second amendment will be regarding the change of the position of Community Service Officer, which is Amendment #23. Round 1:

- Karl says that getting rid of CSO is probably a wise decision in terms of having a clear position. He feels that a position is probably not effective if one is told when signing up that no one knows what the position is for. Public Relations is a lot more useful for the class officer set.
- Alicia says that the officer from 2010 is in full agreement. She adds that they are glad to make a connection with BSG. They have all learned that the dialogue should have commenced with both parties. There is a lot more tweaking that they would like to make in terms of structuring the officer team. Hopefully a dialogue could improve.
- Alison agrees. She doesn't do anything as Community Service Representative. The nature of how the CSRC functions is foreign to BSG objectives. If they could have a role that makes more sense to the BSG, the position could be revived.
- Bryce is of the belief that the CSO should remain. If it is broken, they should fix it, not throw it out. They should define the role, which is an important one. He's not a fan of the name "Public Relations Officer". Thirdly, he thinks that they should have both officers. Fourthly, if this passes, he would put forth an amendment requires a Community Service event for the officers.

- Alicia says that they have been in agreement with the once-a-semester CS requirement. They don't think that it requires an officer, however. To fulfill the needs of the team, public relations deserves a position.
- Sophia would be interested to hear the propositions regarding the team. Houston responds that working with the team in terms of what they've planned, the position of CSO is not a necessary titled position. It can be delegated and should be. No one will enforce the required Community event—if should be encouraged. Rather than attempting to create difficult meetings, and email list would be helpful. They think that it would be helpful for class officers and BSG to work on a go-to book for the team. Alicia adds that it wouldn't be a fundamental change. First-year teams always experience this when first appointed. There is little contact. There are no safeguards to ensure that things are happening. That's why things fall apart.
- Rutledge says that it seems that they are just giving the CS person a job to do and are changing the name. The words they chose, however, are desensitizing and way over-professional. When he hears "Public Relations" he thinks of a 30-year-old professional wearing a suit. It's not a surprise that these names were thought of by people in positions like President and Vice-President.
- Lindsey wonders if we should tackle leadership council. Lindsey says that it fell apart because it had no purpose.
- Will says that the original amendment is completely gone. This is all we are considering tonight. We just need to talk about the CSO vs. PR officer.
- Isa is in full support of Rutledge and Bryce. Taking away the name retracts from the objectives of the school. PR is a lot for one person.
- Jess supports what Bryce said. It could be a goal for next year to improve this position. Also, Public Relations would be a responsibility of nothing more than what other officers already do. If someone is class officer, they should motivate themselves enough to figure out what they can do throughout the year.
- Dan L is heading towards tabling. The elephant in the room is that this originated as an attempt to totally restructure the class officer team. What we are talking about here doesn't need to happen here. This is a small part of one of the huge original problems. John's committee and anyone who wants to come should work this out. Motion on the floor to table.
- Sam D thinks that tabling anything now is pushing it to next year.
- Houston doesn't think that this needs to be put off any further. They have already met extensively. What they agreed on as class officers is what we are proposing tonight. Why does it need to be discussed further in the BSG when it has to do with the officer team?
- Greg is curious about what happened to the original. It was changed drastically.
- Alicia says that she has done her best to come here and be optimistic so that they can work on these further. When they read the original document, it was very offensive. It said that the officers don't speak for the classes, etc. as if they are a subordinate group to the BSG. They do things for the classes and the community. They could call it a secretary for all they care, but the position is very different from the CSO. They need a role to aid communication with the student body, the Orient, etc. This dialogue started at a retreat about restructuring the officer team.

That was not the way to go about this process. It shouldn't be ordained or one-sided. They know their own needs best.

- Rutledge thinks we need to vote tonight. He wants everyone to consider the fact that he is not against the position described on the sheet. He just disagrees with the name.
- John agrees with Rutledge that we should vote tonight. If this is put off, there will be less than a week from between running for positions and the results of the referendum.
- Nicole wants to vote for this tonight. If they want this, why not give it to them.
- Dustin asks for those in favor of tabling: Dan L, Liza; Opposed: everyone else
- Sam D moves to vote tonight. Those in favor: 2/3
- Bryce believes that there should be both positions. Maybe the two roles could be combined.
- Isa doesn't know why the class officers can't communicate with the class.
- Sophia says that the majority of the people in this room are on class officer teams. This amendment is trying to do too many things at once. We should vote on whether or not to remove the CSO and then whether or not it should be replaced.
- Alison thinks that we are failing to realize that what we are trying to define here is a role that doesn't exist or isn't clarified. We are voting on the overall idea.
- Justin clarifies the atmosphere in which this discussion started. Everyone thought that it would help clarify things. It was not an aggressive discussion. Dustin immediately said that he was going to bring these ideas to the class officer team. The whole discussion was about clarification because there is a lot of misinformation about what BSG and the officers do.
- Sam D says that insofar as this is about re-clarifying the position, the problem arises in that CSO is a bad position to begin with. It should be a broad responsibility of the team, not a single-person job.
- Dan agrees with Alison.
- Dustin is putting this back at #23 status. They will come back to this.
  - c. Amendment #2 is raised. Those in favor: unanimous.
  - d. John presents Amendment #3, about the IHC. Lindsey presents a casual amendment that is accepted by Dustin. Those in favor: unanimous.
  - e. Amendment #4 is about the number of representatives. Bryce wonders if this ensures that a reslife rep will be on BSG.
- John says that they have to try to put someone in the role, but they can't force this position. If someone wants to do it, the position will be there. Alison asked Sarah Seames but didn't hear anything. Kate says that Sarah is okay with it.
- Nicole says that the number of people they interviewed from ResLife was very high.
- Sam K says that the significance of the role is that he has information from being around ResLife. He endorses this.
- Bryce says that if no one came, to extend an invitation to ResLife. Dustin says that if he can't talk to ResLife, something is very wrong. Getting a representative is not the biggest problem. Bryce says that there is a difference between talking and having someone on the body.

- Sam K hears Bryce, but there will probably be someone here.
  - Those in favor: unanimous except for Bryce, who is opposed.
- f. The next amendment is about an athletics representative.
- Sam D says that in light of these representatives that didn't work, what makes them think that this will work? Sophia agrees and thinks that they could add something to the previous amendment about making an effort to get someone from reslife—the same could apply for athletics.
  - Ben L thinks that this opens up to so many other things, and doesn't think that it's a good idea.
  - Kyle wonders if they have talked to the Captain's Council and doesn't know if these people would have the time.
  - Sam K says that some sports aren't represented well, and it is good to reach out to a group that is not well-represented on BSG.
  - Rutledge read something about what a huge percentage of the student body is composed of varsity athletes. This is not reflected in BSG.
  - Kyle thinks we should table until we hear from the Captain's Council.
  - Ben L wouldn't be opposed if it was non-voting. He doesn't trust most athletes. He's not opposed to the voice, though.
  - Will says that they could experiment with this and fix it later. Looking around, they don't have enough representation.
  - James says that teams are cohesive and having a member here could add a large amount of support.
  - Greg wonders if we want to add an amendment about athletes in or out of season. Or maybe we should ask them.
  - Sam D wants to add that the Captain's Council must approve this amendment. Those in favor of this amendment: unanimous.
  - Those in favor of overall bill: 21; those opposed: 3
- g. John reads Amendment #6 about recalling officers. Those in favor: unanimous.
- h. Amendment #7 is in regard to Programming Chair. Sophia thinks we should stipulate that the candidate come to meetings. Unanimous approval of amendment to amendment. Those in favor: unanimous
- i. Amendment #8: Greg doesn't like this. There should be a third-party person.
- Alison doesn't agree because she thinks that the BSG should be forewarned if students don't think that something is going well. If we know about an issue, we can address it.
  - Will says that the problem is still that we control that.
  - John agrees with Greg in spirit, but doesn't think that anyone would care. We want it so that we know if there is a referendum.
  - Greg wonders if Dustin could fix a problem. Dustin responds that that is hopefully what would happen.
  - Dan L thinks that we've had these for weeks. This is not the week to debate details.

- Sophia would propose that people should announce why they are introducing referendum. John says that this would be in the formal language.
- James thinks that if there is a form, it should be as available as possible. If people care about the issue, this is another way for BSG to interact with the community with little effort.
- Kyle says that if we are worried about making it accessible, maybe we should have it online and require a signature.
- Sam D says that someone could care about an issue and not come to BSG meetings, as we have seen. Coming to us gives us a chance to address the issues.
- Alison says that the follow-up question seems natural. We have had these amendments and to hear opposition now is frustrating.
- Those in favor: 22; opposed: 3

j. Number 23, Round 2:

- Grant says that we came off on the wrong front. He doesn't think that BSG is aggressive. We aren't on the same page for what we want this position to do. A Public Relations officer could do a blurb in the Orient every week and things like that.
- Justin moves to change the name of the team to Class Council and to change all the positions.
- Sam K says that this is not the correct forum to revamp the officer teams. This is a large issue that shouldn't be solved this evening by the BSG.
- Lindsey says that there is consensus that CSO is not something we want, so why can't we just put this in for now.
- Greg wonders if Justin's job is not to be a liaison. This is correct. The Foster plan is important. He helped design it.
- Kyle says that we need something written down to debate. Handling this tonight would be completely wrong.
- Grant says that they came prepared to propose their side. They didn't present because they were told this discussion wouldn't happen tonight.
- Alicia says that both sides are in agreement that this needs time. All they want for upcoming elections is this one change. Restructuring can come later with a better dialogue.
- Will says that we came up with this plan, they sympathize with the officer's concerns, etc. They can campaign to the student body if they don't agree with the changes to the team. This amendment is a waste of time because there is a big issue. Let's leave it to the student body.
- Justin says that since we started talking about this, we lost sight of what the original change was meant to do. The goal of this was to provide clarity about what these roles are. The change in name is just a change in name.
- Liza agrees with the officers that they haven't had a chance to have their voice in this argument. Everyone started yelling, and this isn't the proper forum to address this. Let's vote on this sheet and hold everything for later.

- Ben L says that 2008 has not had the drama that the underclassmen have had. The CSO is a dormant position, but they have always just balanced it out. The structure doesn't mean that the bodies can't function.
- Alison thinks there is something to be said about giving students the opportunity to respond to a change. It's harder to accept change when it's about something that you're a part of. If the students don't accept the change, they'll vote against it.
- Bryce thinks that it would be crazy to pass the original amendment. It got rid of the VP and the other officers (yeah, someone mentions—it changes the names). While we didn't mean to be aggressive, what he read did come across as aggressive.
- Grant says that since this began, they spent hours forming a defense and a response. It's not fair to not involve them.
- Alicia respects the opinion that they are biased. They are prepared, though, and doesn't think it's fair to not involve them twice-over.
- Dustin says that the intent of the BSG (when there were 8 class officers in the room) was to be fair.
- Kyle says that there is not enough support to pass this now. He agrees with the Foster Plan but thinks it would be unfair to spring it tonight.
- Kyle amends to split this into a vote for the position change and a vote for the Foster Plan. Voting on split: 10; opposed: 12
- Motion to stay for 15 minutes: seeing 2/3
- John reads about the Foster plan. Dan L wants the officers to have a chance to present their piece. Then we just vote, vote, vote. Sam D wonders if they can get through the rest of the amendments at once. This course of action is taken.
  - k. Amendment #9: Unanimous except Bryce, who is opposed
  - l. Amendments #10-18 are unanimously approved
  - m. Amendment #19: Sophia and Bryce don't like it. This would be the third new committee tonight and is part of John's committee already. Those in favor: 18; Opposed: 6; motion fails
  - n. Amendments #20-22 meet unanimous approval.
  - o. Amendment #23, Round 3:
- Grant is disappointed. They sat here and have their own points to make. Sam K moves to table the Foster plan. The vote is very confused at this point and is discarded.
- Alicia thinks that there is necessary input that will be lost if they decide to send this out tonight.
- Carly wonders if this would come up later this year if it clears up next week. It could come up with the later elections.
- Tabling tonight: 11; Opposed: 11; abstain: Jess. Dustin votes to split the tie in favor of tabling.
- Greg says that the classes vote for the representatives that they want.

## VII. Adjournment at 10:09 p.m.