Associated Students
Sonoma State University
SENATE MEETING
Friday, January 31st, 2014
1:00pm, Bennet Valley, Student Center

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Public Comment
IV. Business
   a) AS.66.13.14 CSSA Update (Discussion)
      i) Discussion
   b) AS.67.13.14 Discussion of Academic Success Fee (Discussion)
      i) Discussion
V. Adjournment

Posted on Tuesday, January 28th, 2014 at the AS Senate Office by ____________________________
Iman Rashed, Chair of the Senate
Associated Students
Sonoma State University

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1:00pm, Bennet Valley, Student Center

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT Iman Rashed, Mac Hart, Matt Dougherty, Anthony Gallino, Mallory Rice, Natalie Sampo, Tyler Davis, Sarah Anthony, Blanca Zamora, Annie Green, Sara Dinari, Luke Tesluk, Angie Durkee, Libby Dippel, Allison Jenks

MEMBERS ABSENT None

OTHERS PRESENT Erik Dickson, Justin Gomez, Matthew Lopez-Phillips

I. Call to Order- The meeting was called to order by Iman Rashed, Chair of the Senate at 1:00 PM.

II. Roll Call

III. Public Comment- The editor of the STAR, Katie, thanked those senators who came to their meeting. She is a senior and has enjoyed her time being the liaison between the STAR and the Senate. She expressed that the STAR’s intent is to get an opinion out to the students in an unbiased way. She does not feel that the Academic Success Fee piece was done in the wrong way, but she believes that opinion differs here with the Senate. Katie explained that there is not the time or space to always be attentive with every piece. If the Senate ever has any problems with something that is written, her door is always open. She continued that the STAR is in no way done covering the issue or elections and she hopes they can work together to serve the campus, which is the main goal. Elections Commissioner, Angie, thanked the senators for helping out this week with elections. She explained that the info sessions are done and now the mandatory meetings are coming up so remind those you know. Angie continued that if any senators are re-running, they still need to come to the mandatory meetings. Applications are due February 7th.

IV. Business

a. AS.66.13.14 CSSA Update (Discussion)
   i. Discussion Bernadette Butkiewicz came to the Senate to give an update after the last CSSA meeting. She mentioned that SSU will be hosting the CSUnity conference this year. CSSA is a part of electing the chancellor Tim White, so in turn students have a huge part in doing that as well. Butkiewicz reported that Senator Jenks received a $1,000 Greenovation fund. Fresno State has implemented online courses without any student consultation; many students were surprised and upset. Chair Rashed asked how the CSSA is involved with online course issues. Butkiewicz answered that CSSA has a meeting every month in Long Beach with the Board of Trustees dealing with such issues on various campuses or state-wide. They serve as a direct advocate for students. Fresno’s AS could not handle the online course issue without help of CSSA. They are experimenting with individual campuses to see how
such an issue would go over CSU-wide. It will affect SSU eventually. At CSU Long Beach a social justice issue has arisen and they have successfully made gender neutral restrooms. Butkiewicz adds that if there is such an issue here at SSU, CSSA can take action if need be. VP of Finance Dougherty asked how CSSA decides to take action. Butkiewicz answered that it is up to the CSU campus to bring and issue to the attention of CSSA. Executive Director Dickson added that CSSA doesn’t always deal with issues campus-by-campus. If something becomes a statewide issue, CSSA will take over. Executive VP Gallino asked if the various action items Butkiewicz mentioned in her presentation are from last week’s meeting or last semester in general. Butkiewicz clarified that they were from this January meeting. Senator Rice asked about the financial aid pre-paid debit cards being implemented at Fresno State. Rice wondered if simply opening up a debit card to get electronically dispersed instead was an issue for students or if there were fees associated with such a card. Butkiewicz answered that at SSU, electronic dispersal only works for students who have debit card already, and so it may be an issue for some to open an account. This new way will be for those students who do not have a debit card previously and do not wish to open one. Senator Zamora asked if the card was an option; Butkiewicz answered yes. She added that these cards are already happening; Fresno State went through CSSA in order to get student involvement. On another note, Butkiewicz mentions that applications for the Student Trustee to CSSA are due in March, if anyone the Senate knows is interested. There is a description on the CSSA website. In regards to CSSA’s budget, the chancellor funds over 50% and the rest comes from the Associated Students’ of all CSU’s. Each chancellor can change the decision to fund CSSA or not. Chancellor White chooses to do so, but the next chancellor can come along and decide CSSA is not a priority and take away its funding. Butkiewicz mentioned that CSSA will be implementing an individual student fee of $2 to go towards CSSA, instead of having CSU’s AS’s and the chancellor provide funding. Senator Green asked if instead of adding a $2 fee, make the funding by the chancellor mandatory. Butkiewicz countered that having mandatory funding from a person CSSA is making demands of would not be an ideal situation. Green clarifies that if the fee is in place, the chancellor will no longer fund. Butkiewicz answered that that is the plan. Students can opt out of paying the fee, but it would make CSSA an individual organization. Senator Dinari clarified the fee's intent. VP of Finance Dougherty asked if funding has ever been cut due to something asked of the chancellor by CSSA. Butkiewicz answered no; the CSSA is careful in that regard. Dickson added that essentially this fee frees up the notion and worry of arguing with yourself. CSSA hopes to go the Board of Trustees route to pass the fee, because it is faster. If they have to go the State Legislator route, they will not see the fee for a few years. Butkiewicz repeated that if the fee is implemented, CSSA will no longer need money from the chancellor or the current AS fee, making CSSA its own organization. Chair Rashed commented that the Senate needs to decide where to go from here. Executive VP Gallino thinks the Senate needs to ask more clarifying questions, review the presentation, and then discuss the fee at the next meeting. Chair Rashed asked what the Senate needs to do in order to provide feedback. Butkiewicz answered that letting students know about the fee, holding student forums, etc. would be a good idea. Senator Green suggested having an info meeting on what CSSA is before putting forward the fee information, as many students do not know what CSSA is. VP of Finance Dougherty asked why there was a rush, why didn’t the CSSA representatives want to go back to their universities and discuss with their students. Butkiewicz that there is a certain timeline and those students who were at the meeting had their university president with them and felt they were the representative voice of the students to make a decision.
b. **AS.67.13.14 Discussion of Academic Success Fee (Discussion)**

i. **Discussion** Chair Rashed explained that the Senate needs to get on the same page regarding the Academic Success Fee and gather questions to ask the provost to then inform the students. Senator Tesluk feels there is a disconnect between the information being given and how far along they actually are with the fee. He thinks there needs to be a breakdown of what exactly the fee will be going to and that wasn’t given. Tesluk added that at SDSU, they were able to break down the information to give to their students regarding a similar fee. Senator Green agreed that the provost answered a lot of their questions, but it was not clear cut where the money would go. He simply mentioned a lot of things. Senator Sampo commented that the provost did give a lot of answers, but he did not answer some of the important ones. Sampo added that it felt like a lot of it was fluff and that senators needed concrete information or a plan. Senator Dinari commented that the 5 other CSUs who have done such a fee decided what was needed and then created a number. She felt that our provost did the opposite; he just created a number with no plan. They should consider what the fee would be funding. Executive VP Gallino commented that they need to focus on what they do know. The provost did mention what some of this fee would go to: class availability (faculty), advising (both career and major/undeclared), and scholarship opportunities (research projects, mentorships, internships—those that are separate from a degree but add to overall education). The number he came up with was $250, assuming he looked at what was needed. Overall, it takes roughly $6000 to put on any one class. One could determine how many classes SSU would need to offer in order to provide all students with what they need to graduate and use that number to come up with a per student fee. Gallino continued that the provost wanted to talk about the fee in Academic Senate, but President Arminana felt it was premature with no concrete plan. It was determined that a white paper laying out the fee and its uses will be given to the president by February 15th, then will be discussed in Academic Senate. Senator Rice added that in the Academic Coordinating Committee, they talked about the fee for about 45 minutes. It was discovered that the president is pushing more for the scholarship aspect but the provost is pushing more for classes and advising. They want to implement the fee beginning in the fall. To do this, the fee needs to be official by April 15th. Senator Anthony added that what they know is that it will be a Class H fee and it will be maintained at $250. VP of Finance Dougherty agrees that they don’t know much besides what they were told. The provost mentioned that talk of the fee was started in November but the Senate was clearly not included. Senator Tesluk is confused as to the timeline; it seems quick. Executive VP Gallino commented that in Executive Order 1054, a referendum is the preferred way to propose a new fee but the president can waive that method in order to opt for the alternative consultation. Currently, it is too late to be a referendum to put in the spring election. There could be a special election held for the referendum alone, but this most likely means the fee will go to alternative consultation. A referendum would need to be posted 30 days publically for students, before April 15th. Senator Tesluk is concerned with the ambiguous wording in Executive Order 1054 regarding alternative consultation. Also, Tesluk adds that usually special elections have a lower turn out. Executive Director Dickson counters that on this campus, the voter turn out goes up with referendum regarding a hot topic fee. Senator Sampo thinks they should consider which is best to carry out for their university. All other schools with the fee have done so through alternative consultation. Senator Zamora is concerned with how
the provost came up with the $250 number. He mentioned it was a number he came up with randomly, which is concerning. Zamora adds that the negative aspects of the fee will affect those students with financial aid. The provost mentioned that the fee would not go forward if AS was not behind it but February 15th was decided as the day for the white paper to be presented. There is a disconnect. Zamora added that Academic Senate representative Karen Thompson asked the provost if Academic Affairs was doing all they could. Zamora mentioned she would like to hear more on that. Senator Teslik is concerned with which would be better for the campus—a referendum or alternative consultation. At SDSU, they held info sessions at all times of day in all departments in order to get the word out. Teslik thinks they need to provide as much as they can in order to get the word out about this fee. Students still feel a disconnect with AS and that needs to change with the action on this issue. Teslik asked Matthew Lopez-Phillips for his input. Matthew Lopez-Phillips commented that the president asked the provost to draft a white paper on the financial analysis of the fee and what the $250 will equate out to. He added that now is the chance for input by the Senate, before anything is decided. The provost did not feel that the Senate was violently opposed, so decided to continue outreach. Coming February, they will have a lot more answers. Senator Teslik feels that the Senate was not violently opposed because it was the first time they were hearing of it. His other concern is the timeline. It is only a month apart from February 15th, when the white paper is coming out, and March 15th, when the students would need to be informed. Matthew Lopez-Phillips added that the students on FAC need to decide on how to proceed with the consultation. Two of those students are senators. He agreed that they need to hold information forums to get the information out there and the Senate needs to decide what those will look like. Senator Teslik agreed, but they need to provide flexibility with the times. Senator Durkee commented that the provost mentioned that the fee would not be applicable to add to students’ financial aid, but it would have to be taken out as loan, which she finds concerning. Senator Rice mentioned that every student’s financial aid is different; it depends on the amount of the Pell grant spent, etc. Rice added that the provost did say that $4.2 million would not go towards the deficit, but it would be for additional hires only. Currently, they are hiring 10 tenure-track faculty and these additional hires would be on top of that. The tenure track faculty take a year to be implemented, so at first they would only see the temporary faculty being hired. Rice added that part-time students also have to pay the fee. VP of Finance Dougherty mentioned that the fees for part-time students will go up 10% and fees for full-time students will go up 7%. Executive Director Dickson mentioned that it is hard to look at the maximums of grants and loans a student can take out and compare those to the cost of education. Many students are drawing from multiple sources. Executive VP Gallino commented that there has been a lot of concern over the timeline and financial aid and those are genuine concerns, but the Senate has an opportunity now to provide input and see where they want the fee to go. They need to think more about the fee itself and less about the implementation as of now. Senator Anthony commented that Senator Teslik asked the provost good questions. The provost mentioned that students will be consulted but so far it has mostly been faculty. Anthony added that the provost did not look at other CSUs for guidance because they are all truly unique, so she wonders what type of research they can actually do that will help. President Hart commented that he likes the transformative aspect the fee will have on the university and he agrees with the notion of deciding where it can go is the Senate’s job. He would like to see the provost try and figure out how to save money first. It would be much easier to just collect a fee but he thinks there is work to be done with the current structure. Hart wants to see the work being done there before a fee is collected. Senator Davis
wants to see how the fee would be rolled out and what the average graduation rate is as of now. He added that he thinks the provost and the president need to be on the same page. Gallino answered that 25% of students graduate in 4 years and 56% graduate in 6 years; there is not data for the "5-year plan". Senator Green wants to know where the Senate would want to see the fee go. They should decide if they are for or against the fee and if they are for it, then they need to decide where they want it to go. She thinks mapping out their plan for the provost of where they want the fee to go would be a good idea. Senator Rice urged the Senate to start a discussion on where they want the fee to go and to start gathering a list. Executive Director Dickson commented that he thinks the provost and the president are asking the Senate if this fee is completely off the table; if it’s not, then what should they focus the money on. VP of Finance Dougherty agrees that they should discuss first if the fee is necessary or if they could fix the issue with what resources they have now. They need to step back and see if what the fee will be used for is a major problem. Executive VP Gallino mentioned that in his experience, the alternative consultation process only reached about 65 to 85 students. At other schools, the same process has reached more people. Gallino agreed with Dougherty, they need to see how much of a problem this really is. He mentioned that the current department budgets are simply the salaries of the faculty; there is not much to save and it’s not hidden in the budget anywhere. By allowing the increase in head count, when we could not provide for all those students, this fee was essentially manufactured by the institution. It was there decision. Now, they are in the position where they have to figure out how to provide those classes for the increase in students, but can only reach the 13.7 unit cap. Senator Dippel reported that in area C, there are nowhere near enough seats to cover those students who petition to get the one or two units waived anyway. Dippel adds that students are often mislead by advisors, and she wonders how money would help with that. Executive Director Dickson commented that SSU has not actually done a complete alternative consultation before. It has always been on a very short timeline. President Hart commented that he would be interested in seeing the number of accepted undeclared majors going down and wonders if that would be helped by pre-advising. Hart adds that overlapping in advising is an issue and he wants to look more at what the scholarship aspect entails. Senator Dinari doesn’t think they have enough information to make an opinion, without the thoughts of the students. They cannot make an educated decision for 9,000 students when they have the bare minimum of information. Student Government Coordinator Gomez commented that this is the opportunity to give input. Both the referendum and alternative consultation methods have flaws. He thinks there would be a good turn out with the referendum, but at the same time they are not known for their turn out. The alternative consultation method would hold those accountable on this Senate to be a big part of the process. Getting the voice of the students depends on how visible you make yourself. Gomez added that this is a very complex issue, but how students react depends on this group and how they work to get the information out there. Senator Rice thinks that if the money will actually be going to issues that are crucial to students, she would be in favor. If they are putting such a fee on students, it needs to go to the appropriate things- like bottleneck classes and advising. Senator Tesluk asked Gallino to clarify his earlier statement regarding the unit cap issue. Executive VP Gallino answered that the current enrollment target of SSU is not high enough to accommodate its students; they are limited by that target set by the chancellor’s office. Senator Tesluk wondered if there is a chance of getting that enrollment target increased. Gallino answered that it is hard to say; anything is possible. Typically, they are given room every year to grow but it is hard to say. Matthew Lopez-Phillips wondered if it would be possible to hold the head count
steady and just teach more classes. Senator Green questions the fact that our tuition should go towards these types of things already; she wonders if it is not enough and if that fact should be relayed to students. The treasurer of SSU commented that student fees are the only way to go to fight the current deficit, which is why the fee was presented. They need to get the additional funding from somewhere, if not from tuition. He added that lot of this kind of information will come out in the official white paper. The Senate needs to pass along what they want to see in white paper and provide input on the alternative consultation process. Tuition hasn’t risen in 3 years and it most likely will not rise within the next couple either. Katie, editor of the STAR clarified this, and commented that they were given as much information regarding the fee as the Senate was. She asked if anyone has looked at CSUs that have rejected the fee and also how the new funding would come into play. Senator Tesluk responded that he could give information regarding the schools that rejected the fee. He added that breaking down the fee is a critical part of an alternative consultation. Student Government Coordinator Gomez commented that alternative consultation requires the provost to explain why this would work better than fixing current problems. In response to Senator Tesluk, Gomez said that the white paper will provide the information that students need regarding the breakdown, but the Senate can decide where that money should go. He added that the provost has asked the Senate, through his ambiguity, to shape the fee how they see fit. Senator Sampo is leaning towards alternative consultation because that is what was done everywhere else. If they want the fee to go to adding classes and more advising then they should put that information forth. Senator Tesluk clarified the purpose of the white paper. Executive Director Dickson responded that will present the fee and what it will be used for. He added that the question of whether or not they want the fee is still out there and if they do then what do they want on it. The Senate should address how they want to discuss the fee with students or if they are even willing to discuss the fee in general. Senator Rice asked Dickson what the correct process would be in giving the administration their input. Dickson responded that he thinks the provost is asking them if they even want the fee and if students are willing to pay more money to get more classes. If not, then the provost wants to know what they want to use it for. Dickson added that they haven’t been given anything to vote on, so how they want to put across their input is up to them. Executive VP Gallino commented that in reality this is a hard decision and it impacts a lot of students. If they don’t have enough information regarding the fee then they need to say no, but it feels like they have been given sufficient information to make the decision. Gallino added that the CSU is still the cheapest education a person can get and end up with a degree. He doesn’t agree with the fee because they should be paying for these things anyway through tuition but the reality is that they need this fee in the current condition. He thinks it would be helpful to students. What will help the students graduate? Or does their need extend past academics into diversity or campus life? It is up to them to decide.

The Senate took a break from 3:43 PM to 3:50 PM.

Executive Director Dickson asked the Senate if they think they should the fee and to consider if it is worth it to students. Senator Sampo commented that at this point the fee is inevitable and now they should be out talking to students. There won’t be enough time if they don’t start now. Senator Zamora countered that she thinks they still have the power of saying no if they want or need to. Senator Green agrees with Zamora, which is why the provost proposed it to them first. Senator Dippel commented that they a have timeline now; by February 15th they should have more answers to give to students. Senator Green added that it seems that a lot of people
are not against the fee if it goes towards the right things. She comments that at first it sounds bad because it is more money students have to pay, but once they explain what the fee is for students may get on board. Chair Rashed commented that they need to consider why they can’t have these things with what they pay now. Senator Dinari added that it is hard to compare SSU to other schools because they have the GMC and other things. She wonders where the money is going if not towards education. Executive Director Dickson responded that not all campus based fees go towards academics, but they go to services instead. It is hard because SSU still needs what the big schools need but they have less people paying so they are not collecting as much money. Senator Green commented that the majority of fees students pay goes towards what they are listed for and they cannot take the money away. Chair Rashed wants the Senate to look at their priorities and see what they are actually paying the most for. Senator Rice thinks they are at the point where they can just let things keep going as they are or they can make a change that works towards fixing it. She wants to talk about what they want to see the fee go towards. Senator Davis thinks it is hard to have an opinion for or against because is the fee itself so vague. Senator Sampo commented that when she first talks to someone they immediately panic but then they become for the fee once they realize what it would be going to. Senator Zamora doesn’t feel that the fee is necessary, but thinks the university needs to look at what the students pay already. She also thinks this fee will limit students financially. Senator Jenks agreed that they need to look at what students pay already and see what can be helped with what they have already. VP of Finance Dougherty wonders if that will solve the problem because there should already be money in those areas. If a fee is implemented then they need to see what bottle neck courses will be fixed and which area C courses will be added. However, he thinks that putting higher expenses on students is not worthwhile. Dougherty added that this is not the time for a fee. Instead, they need to talk to students to figure out why a certain semester was hard for them and what they could have been doing differently. He is uneasy moving forward. Chair Rashed expressed her support of having an outline of what they want out of the fee to bring next week to meeting. President Hart agrees; there should be a point person. Executive VP Gallino also agrees with the outline idea and that they should do something similar to the student engagement recommendation. Student Government Coordinator Gomez clarified that February 15th is when the white paper will be out and April 15th is when the campus decision will be official to present to the chancellor. Executive Director Dickson added that it has to do with the bills that are sent out when students register. Gomez commented that the Senate needs to frame the discussion for next Friday with the outline of what they want to see. Senator Green is confused if they are for or against the fee. She feels that the question has not been answered. Dickson agrees that there needs to be a discussion on where everyone is regarding the fee. Chair Rashed feels that everyone is scattered right now and that it may not be good idea. Executive VP Gallino suggested that each senator can put their opinion of yes or no on the outline for next week. He thinks the homework for next week is to go out and talk with students and get general opinions. Senator Sampo wants to schedule meetings with students in order to get their opinion to put on the outline. Senator Anthony mentioned that she has talked to her constituents and there is a mistrust that the fee will actually go to where they need it to go. Senator Rice made sure that everyone feels comfortable going out and talking to students with the correct information. She thinks it is important to be on the same page with information and if anyone is not comfortable doing so then they don’t need to talk with students about it. Dickson added that he is not sure that there is such a thing as a conditional Class II fee (whether only undergraduates have to pay), so they should hold back on
the information that only undergraduates will pay the fee. A graduate student having to pay the fee has not been ruled out. Executive VP Gallino added that the money will mostly be focused towards undergraduates not graduates. Senator Durkee clarified that the fee is mandatory. Student Government Coordinator Gomez added that the article in the STAR is out there already and they have the same information that the Senate was given. He urged the senators to be cautious about what they are saying. They need to listen to their constituents. Gomez added that they need to be careful not to spin information, but instead guide students towards a productive direction.

V. Adjournment- The meeting was adjourned by Iman Rashed, Chair of the Senate, at 4:20 PM.

Approved by the Associated Students Senate on 2/16/21.

Iman Rashed, Chair of the Senate