



STUDENT UNION ASSEMBLY

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Commissioner of Academic Affairs

Student Union Assembly Constitutional Duties and Responsibilities, as per art 3, § A:

- Establishes and maintains communication with the UCSC and systemwide Academic Senate and all undergraduate academic related programs.
- Shall inform and represent the SUA on matters of academic policy.
- Shall act as the representative to the Academic Senate on the Committee on Educational Policy.
- Shall provide for periodic polls and information surveys to assess student concerns.
- Required to hold weekly office hours at the SUA office.
- Attends weekly officer meeting(s) to ensure communication and collaboration.
- Prepares a monthly report evaluating the SUA, which provides constructive criticism, for the purposes of improvement.
- Carryout any other duties as set forth in this constitution, the bylaws, and/or assigned by the Assembly and/or Chair.

The primary responsibility of the CAA is to be the representative for undergraduates at the University of California Santa Cruz vis-à-vis academic issues. Thus, the CAA must stay in close contact with the Academic Senate, (the faculty body on campus with plenary authority over admissions, curriculum, graduation requirements and the like), be aware of its role, responsibilities and functioning, and also be informed of students' opinions and views pertaining to the aforementioned.

August has been a very full month in which a great deal of progress was made. Whereas last month was primarily focused on starting time sensitive projects, this month focused more on acquainting myself with the status quo of the Academic Senate and academics at UCSC. In other words, I spent a lot of time reading Academic Senate reports and looking into the issues they detailed. There were several committee items that

I briefed the other officers on, (and will brief the general body on), because they were/are issues that can and have had a profound impact on UCSC undergraduates. These include but are not limited to the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid's discussion of the Advanced Placement/Honors GPA boost for admissions and the Committee on Computing and Telecommunications discussion of a laptop requirement. Not only should students be aware of these very important issues, but the SUA may want to take a formal stand on them.

I have also read over the 2007 Strategic Academic Plan for UCSC. This plan details where and how the campus should grow and develop. It describes overall goals for the university and more specific goals for each of the academic divisions vis-à-vis UCSC's original purpose and mission. This plan is important for students to know about for many reasons. First, since this document describes the future goals and aspirations of the administration and faculty, students can take an active roll in shaping the university by giving their input on the plan. Second, knowing about what direction the administration and faculty would like to see UCSC head towards can help students to structure their goals and plans in a way that will help them to be better received. For example, knowing about the plans for the Social Sciences and Humanities divisions could help to better structure a proposal for Ethnic Studies. More information on UCSC academics and the Academic Senate will be forthcoming.

This month I also continued to conduct research for/on Ethnic Studies. I recently sent out a second round of surveys on Ethnic Studies to faculty who I thought may be interested. Although, responses are slow in coming and I have still only received them from a fraction of those whom I had sent them to. Depending on how many I get, I may resend the survey in case it was accidentally deleted or perceived as SPAM. On a more positive note, the few responses that I have received have been helpful. From them I have gotten an array of answers, (some more detailed than others), which will be very useful for shaping an Ethnic Studies proposal. Knowing how faculty will view this will help me to approach the issue in a more effective way, and hopefully will increase our chances of success. As always, more information will be forthcoming at a later date.

On a minor note, I am working on the creation of a set of SUA Bylaws, (along with the Chair), that the general body will hopefully approve in fall quarter. I feel that

bylaws are very necessary and important to the success of the SUA. Bylaws pertaining to the jobs and duties of the officers are especially necessary, as has become apparent from disagreements in some of our officer meetings this past month. In general, bylaws will help the body to function better, ensure the correctness of our actions and help guide our practices. There is a set of bylaws that, (because of insufficient record keeping), are invalid, but are being consulted and refined. Amongst other things, they contain job descriptions for the Chair, External Vice Chair and Organizing Director. The remaining officer positions have no bylaws pertaining to their jobs. I have asked the Internal Vice Chair and Commissioner of Diversity to brainstorm and compile a list of items that they feel should be applicable to their jobs. I will do the same for my job and from these, bylaws for our positions will be created. As the Chair has suggested, more than one version of the bylaws will most likely be submitted to the general body for review, and any other suggestions or changes. This will hopefully be presented to them early on in fall quarter.

In addition to our weekly officer meetings, the six officers had our first meeting with the Assistant Vice Chancellor Dean of Students Alma Sifuentes. The meeting was an introductory one and was informative. There was little substantive discussion of issues, but then again, this was the first meeting and it is summer time. I have not worked with AVC Dean Sifuentes before, but she seems like someone who one can work with. As per her duties, she is our contact for people like the Chancellor, (who we will hopefully be meeting with soon), and for any other administrators we as students want to get in contact with. Hopefully she will prove to be a valuable resource in the future.

This month has been an interesting one vis-à-vis officer meetings. Meetings have gotten progressively confrontational and at times disrespectful. I feel that confronting others is perfectly fine; however there is a right way and a wrong way to handle them. I also do not believe that the officers need to agree on every single issue. But again, there is a right way and a wrong way to handle disagreements. One thing has become painfully clear from our officer meetings: the group is seriously deficient in proper communication skills. People both fail to clearly articulate their positions during discussions, and fail to inform others of important information in a time sensitive manner. These problems have been visible at most of our officer meetings and show no real sign of subsiding. Although

one could argue that these problems are individual, and should be handled primarily at that level, it seems that poor communication stems from and is enhanced by the individual conflicts that exist between officers. I do not know when these issues can be resolved, nor do I know if they can be resolved. The best way, in my opinion, to handle this is for the officers to act and conduct themselves in a professional manner. We may disagree and take issue with each other on certain matters, but as long as we respect each other's opinions and act in a fair and responsible way, we should be able to do what needs to be done. I feel that the general body will also need to follow this in order for SUA as a whole to run smoothly. It will not be easy, but it is conceivable and can be accomplished if we put in the necessary time and effort.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and participate in the process. After all, we cannot complain about unfavorable outcomes when we do not bother to involve ourselves in the proceedings. If you have any further questions and or comments, do not hesitate to contact me. My email is [jatiba@ucsc.edu](mailto:jatiba@ucsc.edu).

Peace

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