



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.

The month of October has been the busiest thus far and, as the others have been, was not without its share of ups and downs. Being that classes started the last week of September, October was the first full month during classes. Accordingly, it has proved to be the difficult in regards to scheduling meetings and ensuring that necessary tasks are completed.

Academic Senate committees began meeting the last week of September and thus, I have been attending Committee and Educational Policy meetings. Unfortunately, the meeting cuts through a class I have, so I can only attend the first half of the meeting. The problem is complicated by the fact that the representative appointed by the Student Committee on Committees also has a class and cannot make any of the meetings for fall quarter. I have been trying to recruit people, and hopefully once SCOC begins meeting it will be able to appoint someone so that the committee has student representation for the entire meeting. The meetings themselves are very interesting, (as CEP is arguably the most important committee on campus vis-à-vis this academic institution), and have covered issues such as honors requirements and ELWR classes. Furthermore, the committee members seem to take a real interest in the committee's work, are well informed and friendly. The Chair of the committee and the Academic Senate staff person have helped to make me feel welcomed and a part of this committee. I feel that students can greatly benefit from having representation on this committee, and I look forward to continuing to represent their needs and opinions.

I have recently "hired" my first intern for credit. While I have not yet been able to formally meet with her, I have already given her an assignment to begin working on. This assignment consists of research on pre-law societies/clubs. Her findings will be very important in helping to establish the aforementioned at UCSC. The idea to undertake this project was not my own, but rather was a useful suggestion that I feel students will greatly benefit from. It also falls inline with a larger project that involves finding ways to better connect other academic clubs on campus with faculty from their respective fields/areas of study. This larger idea is also not something that I originally planned to undertake. However, it does fit in with a central and fundamental goal that I have set out to fulfill: bridging the gap between students, faculty and administrators. For a long time now, there has been a great disconnect and lack of communication between this three groups. This, in my opinion, has been the main reason for many of the problems and conflicts on campus. Therefore, by bringing these groups together, hopefully we can all sit down, hash out our differences, and work together to solve our problems instead of against each other to win a non-winnable battle. At any rate, I think that my intern will help to greatly advance this and other important projects.

This month I have not had much time to work on some of the other projects that I had wanted to. For the first two SUA meetings, I basically filled the role of the Recording Clerk, which, turned out to be a much more challenging job than I had previously thought. In addition, I have attempted to meet new SUA representatives and check-in with them about any issues or questions they may have. The resolution presented at the first meeting, (pertaining to the “Illegal Immigrant Dodgeball Game” put on by the College Republicans at OPERS Fest), set the stage some of these interactions with representatives. As an officer and representative of students, I feel that the resolution was inherently flawed, misleading/inaccurate and incoherent. From talking with representatives, it is clear that this resolution, its evaluation by the body, and the outcome, (its’ passage), have and will greatly affect their view of SUA. This is exactly why the officers, and the body as a whole, need to be very careful about the actions we take, because they have the capacity to profoundly affect others and the perception of SUA. Our legitimacy and credibility are, in my opinion, in question. We must make every attempt to instill confidence in not only SUA members, but outside students, faculty and administrators in SUA’s ability to do its job.

As for Ethnic Studies, I have received another response from a faculty member for the survey I sent out during the summer. I think I may get more responses, but it seems that the survey has achieved its overall goal of determining faculty perspectives on this issue. Also, I had a meeting with a professor that proved to be very insightful and informative. I have adjusted my focus slightly, because of this meeting, and will begin setting up more meetings with faculty members accordingly. I hope to present some initial findings to the body soon.

I must say that I am somewhat disappointed in the SUA body thus far. I know it is a little early to be making judgments, but if the aforementioned resolution is a sign of things to come, I feel that SUA will be in serious trouble. I often reasoned that the general body of SUA has made decisions that were not in the best interest of students because of a lack of information. In SUA, often only one side of an issue is presented, and almost everyone agrees with it. How then, can one expect a reasonable decision to be made if decision makers only have half of the information? However, discussion of the resolution involved both sides of the issue and adequate support for both. Yet, the body

still made an unreasonable decision that could have grave consequences in the future. As I stated early, the circumstances of this issue have put a bad taste in the mouth of some representatives. It is a bad sign when after the second meeting of the year people lose their respect and faith in a body such as ours. In order to maintain and create our legitimacy and credibility, the officers need to be much more responsible in their actions. After all, if the officers/facilitators appear to be biased and unreasonable, then how can general body members be expected to work with and trust them? I hope that people will be more careful with their actions in the future not only for the sake of their own credibility, but for the sake of the body's. To this end, the only concrete suggestion I can offer is for all members and officers to keep an open mind and be respectful of other and differing opinions.

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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