



Student Union Assembly (SUA), Office of Academic Affairs

1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064
 Student Union Assembly 2nd floor, c/o Soar

August 2015

Dear President Foster,

As detailed in the Constitution of the Student Union Assembly (Article III, Section A, Subsection 5), my duties as Vice President of Academic Affairs include the submittal of a monthly report and self-assessment to the Assembly. In it, I describe my activities for the pay period, as well as planning for the future, and areas in need of improvement.

Activities and related planning for the pay period of August 1st – August 31st.

Project/Task	Timeline	Deadline
Officer Meetings	07/01/15-now	In progress
Reviewed SAS constitution	07/28/15-08/04/15	Completed
Second round of editing bylaws	07/28/15-08/04/15	Completed
Reviewed SUA bylaws with Julie	08/04/15	Completed
Brainstorm intern positions and duties	08/10/15-now	In Progress
Brainstorm goals of Office	08/10/15-now	In Progress
Participating in UCSC's delegation at UCSA Congress	08/13/15-08/16/15	Completed
Meeting between the Officer Core and the Dean of Students	08/18/15	Completed
Contacting various Academic Personnel on campus for meetings to discuss plans for year	08/19/15-now	In Progress
Create intern binders	08/19/15-now	In Progress
Creating Binders for SAS	08/19/15-now	In Progress

Completed:

- Officer meetings somewhat fell off this month, due to many people being gone for various reasons (UCSA, trips, etc.). We had exactly one Officer meeting, which was somewhat disappointing; this meant that it was more difficult to coordinate with the other Officers, and also it made the office much less productive, meaning that more of the really important work was left for much later (like trainings).



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- The Officer core had a very productive meeting with the Dean of Students, Alma Sifuentes, where we discussed our plans for the year, and possible collaboration between the SUA and the DOS later in the year. This was actually very valuable for me, partially because Alma was able to put me in contact with people on campus that shared very similar goals for academics. I plan on meeting with Alma again before the year starts to get more information about the different points she talked about (such as a retention study of African American students and their progress through the lower division Math I and Math II classes).
- I did a lot of internal office work in the month of August, firstly going over my own constitutional duties, which included the Student Academic Senate (whose constitution is found in the SUA's bylaws, for anyone that is interested in it). The Student Academic Senate was a main priority of mine for this month, because I saw that it was a great opportunity and method to work on many of my goals throughout the year, through committee work. As mentioned above, I first re-read the constitution of SAS, looking at what it exactly did, and why it failed in the past (it was around for only one year, partially because of the infrequent meetings in the past). Next, I simply started to try and bring the committee back, through brainstorming how to redirect the committee's energies in a more productive (and sustainable) focus. This month is best characterized with my trying to best understand Student Academic Senate and what it could do; I left much of the logistical planning for the next month.
- I also did a lot of groundwork for SAS, both to ensure it would actually happen this year, but also to try and get its name out. I contacted the Chair of Academic Senate Don Brenneis, trying to get his support for the revival of the committee, and to introduce it as a resource for the Academic Senate; it could be a very good method of trying to disseminate information about Academic Senate to students. I created promotional materials to present to different facets of student government on campus, to educate them about SAS, and encourage people to be a part of it (and remind people of the larger commitment it is then in previous years).
- This month was also a focus on how my office would function throughout the year, with much of my effort centered on the logistics and operations of my office for the next year, and the goals of the office for the next year. When looking at logistics, I focused on my interns, coming up with rough ideas of what I wanted the interns to do, and the different intern positions in my office. I knew that I wanted a Chief of Staff, but I didn't know exactly what I wanted them to accomplish for the year, aside from managing the office and the rest of my staff. I came up with brief ideas of what I wanted the different interns to accomplish, their focuses for the year (such as the CLASS Survey, etc.), and wrote up a version of their "agreement" with me, which started my creation of their intern binders.



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Review and Reflection:

- The Officer meetings, in my opinion, are essential to the functioning of the SUA, and I was very disappointed that they happened so sporadically this quarter. This means that the Officers did not attempt to work together on common things (those things being the set-up of the Assembly for next year, which I hope is dealt with very soon). These meetings should be mandatory for pay, and should happen weekly, because without them, the SUA is probably not functioning correctly (or serious talks about planning are not happening). For the future, I would recommend that the Officer core take these summer meetings much more seriously, and set a meeting date as soon as they take office.
- The Officer meeting with the Dean of Students was actually really refreshing, due to the fact that I gleaned more information about the other officers' plans for the year. Alma provided some really good information to every Officer, and really communicated her desire to make sure that the Officers are supported by the Dean of Students in trying to make some positive change on campus. One idea for the future would be to have the Officers meet beforehand to share in full detail their plans for the year, which would allow for some cooperation in planning during summer.
- To reflect back on all the office work I did during the month of August, I have to say that I think I got a lot of stuff done, even though much of it was rethinking my office. I did a lot of paperwork, creating documents for the SAS (such as presentations, informational handouts for the SAS, etc.), and started the process of creating intern and binders for the students who sit on SAS (which is still an ongoing process). A fair portion of the work that was done was thinking about my office, how it has functioned in the past, and how I want it to function, making adjustments to try and make my vision a reality. I wanted to make sure that the committee and my office in general is not just reactionary, but is proactive in its search to solve student problems when it comes to academics, the heart of our institution. For future reference, I would recommend that the next VPAA starts their month of June with these types of conversations and thoughts, so they could take the subsequent months of August and September to identify how they are going to accomplish their tasks.
- The overall month of August was a productive one for my office, with a lot of good discussions about academics and my plans for the year taking place, not just with students, but with faculty and administration.

This monthly report is submitted to the Student Union Assembly as part of my constitutional requirements as Vice President of Academic Affairs. I would like to stress that I take this work very seriously; if any member of SUA, student government at UCSC, or undergraduate student body would like to talk about my actions and role as an



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SUA Officer, I will gladly make time to meet, inside or outside of my office hours
(email: suavpa@ucsc.edu).

Respectfully,

Seamus Howard
Vice President of Academic Affairs
Student Union Assembly, UCSC