November 30, 2017

Under My duties as Vice President of Internal Affairs of the Student Union Assembly and Article III Section A Subsection 2(j) of the SUA Constitution, I present my November 2017 monthly report and evaluation to the Assembly. I will outline all of my events, logistical planning, activities and constructive criticism with areas of improvement in hopes of providing a detailed account in the month’s report.

**Completed and Ongoing Projects:**

**Commencement Campaign:**

* The Commencement Working Group continued to meet this month to discuss strategies for sustainable commencement funding. We explored the idea of using the Quarry Amphitheater for some of the smaller commencement ceremonies. I also advocated purchasing a stage (or negotiating a multi-year ‘rent-freeze’ on the costs of renting a stage) in order to reduce costs. Several members of the administration said these ideas were not plausible (apparently, there is no room for us to store a purchased stage and it’s hard enough for UCSC to find a stage rental company even when paying exorbitant rental rates as it is), but I find these answers unacceptable, and will continue pushing for the campus to look into more cost-efficient staging options, considering that this is one of the highest costs of campus commencement ceremonies.
* I got verbal commitment from AVC Sue Matthews that Conference Services will not ask SFAC to partially fund commencement this year. This is significant because it marks the first time in several years that SFAC has not been asked for funding, and is also a positive response to the Council on Student Fees’ (CSF) Commencement Resolution (passed in October 2017) that states degree-conferring commencement exercises are parts of the core academic program, and are thus inappropriate for student fee funding. This resolution was sent out early this month.
* Jessica Xu, Ashley John, and I continued working on our report for ethically and sustainably funding commencement ceremonies, which we plan to release later this month. This report builds off of the CSF resolution and proposes a compromise for funding degree-conferring commencement exercises and non-degree-conferring graduation celebrations. We also met with Interim Dean of Students and SFAC Advisor Lucy Rojas to discuss the logistics of negotiating such an agreement.

**TAPS Campaign:**

* TAPS Director Larry Pageler came to an SUA meeting early this month to discuss the upcoming transit referendum planned for the 2018 ballot. During his presentation, Larry revealed that administration prioritized running the Athletics referendum over TAPS’ referendum during the 2017 Campus Elections, which is why TAPS is in as much debt as it currently is. In light of this revelation, I formed a subcommittee to lobby campus administration to forgive TAPS’s budget deficit, similar to how it partially forgave athletics’ deficit in previous years. We aim to get campus administration to forgive TAPS’ deficit in order to reduce TAPS’s proposed student fee increase and/or cuts to bus service.
* This committee met to discuss advocacy strategies for the upcoming meeting of the Advisory Committee on Campus Transportation and Parking (ACCTP), which is where we will make our case.
* While I was sadly unable to attend the ACCTP meeting due to an in-class midterm, my intern, Adam Selcov, attended and made our case. Unfortunately, we were unable to reach an agreement with administration during this meeting, but plan to reconvene and continue making our case in the coming weeks.

**METRO Board:**

* I drafted a charge letter that was sent to Larry Pageler (TAPS), Sarah Latham (Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services, and who also oversees TAPS), Lucy Rojas (Interim Dean of Students), and SCOC to formally outline the responsibilities and duties of the Student Director.
* I drafted and sent out a campus-wide email to encourage students to apply for this position. I also created a timeline for SCOC to review applications. Applications were due the week after Thanksgiving Break, when SCOC selected three finalist candidates. We will interview these finalists and select the Student Director at our final meeting of the quarter in December.

**Community Rentals Peer Advisor Program:**

* Katherine Le (SUA Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion), Rick Gubash (Disability Resource Center Director), and Sue Matthews (Associate Vice Chancellor of Housing), and I met to discuss how we could better support DRC affiliates with housing-related accommodations. Katherine, Rick, and I were originally advocating for affiliates with housing accomodations to have permanent on-campus housing guarantees, but unfortunately we were told that this isn’t currently possible due to severity of the campus housing crisis and the fact that these students would just be displacing other students (such as EOP students or first years) who would benefit from living on-campus.
* While we hope this conversation will be revisited after the Student Housing West and/or Kresge projects are completed, we decided that our immediate focus should be on helping these students find off-campus housing. To this end, I suggested creating a Community Rentals peer advisor program, which would be comprised of students who are affiliated with the DRC (and other populations, such as the Ethnic Resource Centers, STARS, and EOP) and have successfully found off-campus housing. These students would work through the Community Rentals Office as paid peer advisors to provide guidance to students about finding off-campus housing.
* I have since taken this project on as my own, and hope to implement a trial version of the program by Spring 2018.

**Smith Renaissance Society Housing Project:**

* I’ve also been working with the Smith Renaissance Society, which provides support to students with unstable family situations, to implement some version of a year-round housing guarantee for students who are can’t or don’t want to leave town over the Winter Break campus closure. Currently, Smith students who live on campus are forced to leave along with everyone else during this time, which often means the end up living in cars/hotels or are forced to return to unstable family situations during this time.
* Smith and I have a meeting scheduled with Sue Matthews and Kevin Tresham (of the Housing Office) next month to discuss our proposal to devote a dorm floor or set of apartments to Smith affiliates who intend to stay on campus year round.

**Committee Work:**

* I liaised between the CAPS Student Advisory Board and SUA to provide student feedback about CAPS’s proposals to implement the following changes that would affect UCSC students: 1.) place a student fee increase referendum on the ballot for the 2018 Campus Elections, 2.) move some of the CAPS staff to a trailer near Porter until the Health Center is expanded in coming years, and 3.) discontinue the “specialist” positions, which focused specifically on particular demographics of students (ex: LGBTQ+, African/Black/Caribbean, Undocumented students) due to difficulty recruiting qualified candidates to fill these positions.
  + Several other officers and I have expressed our disappointment with CAPS for proposing these changes. The way I see it, implementing the latter two proposals will worsen students’ experiences with CAPS. It is vital that mental health be prioritized on our campus, *especially* for the most vulnerable student populations, and abolishing the specialist positions and moving CAPS staff from the Student Health Center to a trailer would do the opposite. Moreover, we feel that asking for a student fee increase would only be appropriate if it would significantly improve CAPS services, which seems unlikely considering the other proposed changes. While I relayed this information back to CAPS, as it stands, the other officers and I are unsure of how we would like to further pursue this subject -- however, I think it’s important that we do so in some capacity.
* I attended a meeting of the Event Coordination Committee (ECC) as the interim student representative. We talked about scheduling commencement ceremonies for Spring 2018, and I advocated for implementing some of the changes I outlined in my report on sustainable commencement funding, including reducing police presence, buying a stage, and moving some of the smaller ceremonies to the Quarry Amphitheater to reduce costs.

**SUA Vision Committee:**

* My fabulous intern Lily Green approached me about reforming the SUA Vision Committee under my office. The Vision Committee was originally formed in Spring 2017 under the Office of the President to address how SUA could better serve students, but has not yet been reformed for the 2017-18 year.
* Lily and I reached out to SUA President Max Jimenez and 2016-17 Vision Committee co-chairs Jane Loughboro and Jeff Stoll to discuss how to reinstate it. We decided that the committee will be reformed as a collaborative effort between the Office of the President and the Office of Internal Affairs. Lily will work with Ashley, one of Max’s interns, to lead it and coordinate projects, including creating a comprehensive survey
* Lily and I met one-on-one several times to discuss the goals and logistics of conducting this survey, which is currently planned for Winter Quarter.

**SCOC Retreat, C4, and SCOC Sister College Event:**

* SCOC’s biannual leadership retreat took place the week after Thanksgiving at Mobu Sushi. This was a great opportunity for everyone to bond outside of our normal meetings, especially right before our other two back-to-back events at the end of the quarter.
* We also continued planning the first quarterly Cross-Committee Communication Caucus (C4), which is a public event where committee representatives enjoy a catered dinner and report back on what their committee worked on during the quarter. SCOC’s CVC, Desi Ascensio is working on the logistics of the event, while I have had my hands full answering representatives’ questions about getting paid at the end of the quarter (there have been ***a lot***). Fall Quarter C4 is happening on Friday, December 1 from 6-8pm in the Cervantes and Velasquez Conference Room, and is open to the public.
* SCOC’s first Sister College event, the Porter-Kresge event, will be happening on Saturday, December 2 from 6-8pm in the Porter Dining Hall. It will be a family dinner, where folks can come and get a free catered meal before finals. Our Kresge Representative, Brandon, managed to get a catering company to give us a great deal on food, and we anticipate being able to feed up to 400 people with our $800 budget. Unfortunately, this company is not yet in the vendor system, so we are currently scrambling to make sure we will be able to hire and pay them by the date of the event.
  + We are also having conversations about how to prioritize outreach about SCOC during this event. Outreach is the entire purpose of Sister College events; however, some people feel that this has been forsaken during events in recent years. Subsequently, I want to make sure that these events effectively prioritize outreach this year.

**Out-of-State Experience Survey:**

* I met with AVC of Enrollment Management Services Michelle Whittingham about creating an out-of-state experience survey. This is important because I’ve realized that out-of-state students lack a central sense of community, and might have needs that remain unmet, especially with the significant financial barriers to attending UCs that many face, as they pay nonresident tuition.
* AVC Whittingham connected me with UCSC’s Institutional Research Department about creating such a survey. I have been talking with Institutional Research via email, and we all plan to meet next quarter to further discuss this idea.