Student Government Report: (September 17, 2020)

Dear College Council,

Since the beginning of June, the new Student Government has been consistently working with the administration and faculty through college committees and subcommittees to facilitate remote learning for the Fall and a potential campus reopening. I am grateful I had the opportunity to be on some of these committees and sincerely appreciate the college’s approach in securing a safe and careful reopening. I am sure this choice was ultimately the best given what we are seeing now in other colleges.

Student Government has appointed all of its commissioners and most committee representatives and scheduled its meeting dates for the semester. However, we only have fifteen senators, which means we are stretched thin—like everyone else—and forced to take on more roles than we usually would have if we had a larger Student Government.

We will have campus-wide elections soon and are currently accepting nominations. We have four Freshman Seats, Four Sophomore Seats, One Senior Seat, and One Graduate Seat open. I ask that faculty share this with students, given the difficulty in communicating and advertising this opportunity to students.

 Furthermore, Student Government is working with the administration and VP Borrero towards a compromise regarding the Transportation Fee. Since the administration can no longer pay for their portion of the fee, they asked us to reconsider the expenses and potentially cut aspects of the service out. Our Student Government recommends that we suspend the transportation fee for the time being and reorganize closer to the end of the semester. I have not yet met with the administration so we cannot comment further on what their stance on the matter is.

Student Government is also working with the University Student Senate and the CUNY Council of Presidents to ensure CUNY schools and CSI do not use intrusive software in curbing potential academic dishonesty, even in good faith, as it could result in a direct violation of student’s privacy. The program we a particularly apprehensive about is the McGraw Hill Publishing’s Proctario service. CUNY students already have over 25,000 signatures on a petition against using this software.

CUNY has stated that professors should not be locking browsers or utilizing software to monitor computers, but some CUNYs have not been compliant. Moreover, Baruch’s Provost already announced that he has chosen not to support remote proctoring at this time, as well. We request that CSI also communicate their stance on the matter with faculty and students to quell the apprehension and confusion. Our Student Government ardently believes a reasonable program is necessary but must not be too intrusive to CSI students.

Finally, the Student Government is considering creating its own website to increase student accessibility, advertise events and initiatives, and better communicate with the student body. Other CUNY Student Governments have a website already, so this is not unprecedented. Nevertheless, we are only at the beginning stages and may not implement it until later in the year.

Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions, please ask.

Sincerely,

Maxwell Velikodny

Student Government President