

Senate Executive Committee Meeting (11/16/2021)

Attendees: Bets McNie (Vice Chair), Matthew Fairbanks (Secretary), Leah Wyzkowski (Student Representative), Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Christine Isakson, Wil Tsai, Margot Hanson, Frank Yip, and Provost Lori Schroeder

- Captain Sam Pecota Presenting on Black Water Incident on Cruise 2
 - Captain asked if anyone was unaware of the basic set of events, and it was indicated that attendees were aware, but details would be appreciated.
 - Toilets became clogged, overflowed, and the overflow carried over to the bathrooms at the classroom level.
 - Adjunct instructors who were still on the ship that night tried to clean up most of the liquid.
 - The spill went through a hatch, into the gym, and into storage where spare PFDs are kept among other equipment.
 - Captain - Won't sugar-coat it. Lots of mistakes made. Took too long. Communication was poor. Nothing really went right with the situation. Ended with the Ship Ops class pulling out the sewage-soaked PFDs for disposal. No proper protective gear given to these students, which is against the ship's procedures. These were poor decisions by the people who were in charge at the time and place.
 - Pinisetty – we agree that many mistakes were made. Was anyone reprimanded or disciplined for this?
 - Captain – he expressed his dismay to the Chief Mate and Chief Engineer at the situation. Chief Mate apparently had 4 messages go unanswered to Facilities to get professional janitors for clean-up. Communications to the Captain were that it was being handled but taking too long. The regular procurement process was followed when it's clear that a more emergent method should have been used.
 - The Captain noted that the TSGB is 31 years old. Toilet back-ups, and the like happen somewhat regularly unfortunately. Chief Engineer felt that it wasn't unusual, and felt that it was handled in a way that was consistent with past practice. It is apparently not unusual for cadets to help, though typically with proper training and PPE.
 - Pinisetty – without these PPE/training measures there is a significant risk of sewage borne disease. Did the students get tested at Student Health for diseases that can result from this? Captain – not to my knowledge.
 - Tsai – what corrective measures are being taken after this incident? Can we get those documented and communicated to marine staff and faculty? And can this be expedited? Also, just because this has been done in the past, it doesn't mean we can't improve things for the future.
 - Captain – certainly. Haven't talked to everyone involved (noted Second Mate who was in charge of the Ship Ops class), but there is a Title IX complaint. He [the Captain] isn't looking to hide anything, but felt it wasn't appropriate to speak to the details in a General Senate meeting. They've had a safety council meeting and the ship's regulations will be rewritten to improve the guidance for these situations.
 - Captain – there could have been negligence, but no nefarious intent. Noted that he takes responsibility for not being more involved and leaving the matter to his second-in-commands.

- Yip – I'm not familiar with cruise operations. How would this have been dealt with if at sea? What priority would it have had?
- Captain – that's a good question. There are lots more people available at sea to handle it. Every other cruise he's been on has had something like this. No janitorial services out there, so students and staff would have been on it. He noted that this happened at a time when there was very little supervision on the ship.
- Yip noted that this incident took months to clean up. It seems there's a vacuum of leadership if such a serious incident took that long to handle properly.
- The Captain pushed back on this, saying that they were dealing with it, but that once the emergency situation was taken care of the latter portions were deemed non-emergency and that's the reason for the lag in the timeline. Noted that a failure was the classrooms were not cleaned up prior to class, though this was corrected immediately when reported.
- More discussion of this: Yip wondered whether it was an issue of personnel or urgency? Captain noted that there are 60 staff and 300 students on cruise, so things could be handled very quickly. Less so on land, but it also was the judgement of the Chief Engineer that the emergency issues had been resolved, and so the issue was allowed to exist for longer than was advisable.
- Hanson – asked about the class in which this happened. Captain described the class where senior students supervise junior ones, and the senior ones are supervised by faculty and ship officers. Noted that typical activities are chipping and painting, that sort of thing. Captain noted that typically there's some analysis of the risk factors involved in the tasks and the students are equipped appropriately. Noted the Ship Ops class does have an important learning component, which is learning the maintenance tasks inherent to ships.
- Quote from Captain during this discussion – 'students used as laborers to make sure the ship gets maintained.'
- Hanson noted it's a little alarming that this is a common occurrence, but generally not within the Ship Ops class. Seems like there should be guard rails for what tasks are appropriate for the class. Captain said that typically the Chief Mate, officers, and instructors collaborate on setting that scope. Noted again that the contaminated life jackets were the focus of cleaning. Professional staff would have been the actual cleaners of the space.
- Hanson noted the main thing from our perspective is how this is going to be handled in the future. Captain promised that it would be handled differently. He asserted that he's not one to not learn from experiences. Hanson pressed on this – what procedures, etc will change?
- Captain noted that he personally would be more involved and noted that he wasn't there on the ship every day and has many other responsibilities on campus during the semester. He said that the ship's SMS has procedures that are meant to be followed (but weren't in this case). Said that you can try to write very specific procedures, but those often won't be useful, and can't be effectively developed. Hanson – so the existing procedures will remain in place to handle these incidents? Captain responded - not exactly, he would be re-visiting the portion that deals with these situations as part of an annual review of the SMS.
- Wyzykowski pointed out that for something that they felt they had plenty of time for, why wasn't the SMS followed? That seems like a big problem.

- Captain repeated that he doesn't deny that mistakes were made. He will forward the updated SMS to us when complete.
- Captain departed.
- AS Support Resolution
 - Pinisetty – the resolution should be distributed, but he doesn't currently have all the student leadership emails.
 - Question: who is Stas Allen's replacement? Answer: Craig Johnson, who Wyzykowski noted is "awesome". He was the XO prior to his promotion.
- Stand-Down or Teach-In Day Discussion
 - In another meeting, Associate Provost Benton objected to the 'stand-down' terminology. Yip – perhaps day of reflection? Pinisetty – I like that language. Hanson said that Xiong King and the DEI folks are considering something of the sort.
 - Pinisetty spoke to Kazek about the idea of the day as it relates to STCW and sea time requirements. Kazek said that we might be better off just doing it and then mentioning it in the next Coast Guard audit. Kazek noted that waiting for approval that might not come in a timely manner isn't a good idea if we want to get it done.
 - Pinisetty – an email to Chairs might be a good idea so they can speak with their faculty about it.
 - Wyzykowski – regarding the concerns about licensing and this event: when we missed two weeks of school for the fire, I don't recall any repercussions, so this day should be handle-able.
 - Pinisetty noted that this could affect students who have already missed a couple classes, though these would probably not be large in number.
 - Isakson noted the asymmetry in specific weekdays in the spring semester and suggested Monday/Wednesday scheduling to take advantage of this.
 - McNie – I think this day needs to be done properly. We need experts. We need a way to handle large numbers of people moving from venue to venue. If we don't do this right, it will be worse than not doing it at all.
 - Pinisetty – I'm of a similar opinion.
 - Provost Schroeder – it would be great to have a productive day this semester, but she agrees there's an issue in making sure it's high quality. Kathleen [VP of Cadet Affairs] is also worried about doing it properly and finding a good external person on short notice.
 - Hanson noted that students she has spoken to haven't found the presentations at formation, etc. useful or helpful. In fact, they found them condescending and not addressing the real issues.
 - Some discussion of an external facilitator. Budget will be found. There's already efforts to find someone appropriate.
 - Wyzykowski – perhaps we need a subcommittee to completely focus on this. She thinks this semester for the teach-in is important. People will forget/move on/think it's not being taken seriously/etc. She pointed to Safequest and Safe Zone as organizations that have expertise on these issues.
 - Yip – expertise is critical. Shares concerns about making sure we do it right. Talked with King after an emergency DEI meeting. Feels that students do not feel comfortable to talk about these issues. Yip lamented that this is the case. How can we come up with a mechanism where students feel comfortable talking openly?

- Pinisetty brought the discussion to a close in order to stay on schedule, but indicated the discussion will continue in future meetings.
- Upcoming General Senate Meeting
 - Julie Simons will be on the agenda to present on issues related to grooming standards on campus.
 - Question: Kathryn Marocchino would like to speak on instructional flexibility? Pinisetty and McNie think so. Hanson noted that she spoke to Kathryn and wondered whether her time could be conjoined with the discussion of the President's responses to our recent resolutions on this issue. Pinisetty noted that he did send out a form for input on the President's responses but said we would put in some time on the agenda.
 - Pinisetty shared the feedback that came in on the resolutions ready for a second reading.
 - Hanson expanded on her own feedback to those resolutions. She suggested that the gender equity ad hoc committee could potentially become a standing committee on diversity, inclusion, etc. So, broader in scope, but with these issues as part of its purview.
 - Pinisetty asked that Yip and Dewey present their resolution (MariTimes-Up) for a second reading and incorporate the feedback received.
 - Some discussion of the feedback. Pinisetty and Yip spoke in support of the establishment of a standing committee similar to Hanson's suggestion.
 - Second resolution (authored by Burback and Isakson) discussed as well as the feedback to the first reading of that resolution.
 - There was some feedback from a faculty member which was reprehensible. Various comments from attendees of this meeting calling it out. Tsai noted this illustrates that we faculty also have problems in our ranks on these issues, which is important.
 - The faculty member's name was removed from the feedback. It was suggested that some of the content be highlighted a 'teachable moment' in the General Senate meeting.
 - Isakson and Burback will be given all the feedback, which was relatively extensive, but they won't be obligated to discuss it line by line in the Senate meeting.
 - Fairbanks advocated for minutes review in the General Senate meeting. We're now behind by three meetings of minutes, and this is an important part of being transparent as a Faculty Senate.
 - Tsai asked some logistical questions about resolution feedback and distribution. Also asked whether we could delay ASCSU report to December due to the packed November agenda. It was agreed that the ASCSU report could wait until December.
 - Tsai – if we're doing this teach-in, we need an event planner. It needs to be a dedicated expert. He noted the struggles during Orientation on these logistical challenges. Pinisetty noted that COVID procedures will limit the maximum size of indoor venues, which is another complication.
 - Some more discussion of the new Corps Commander and the method of Corps officer selection. Corps Commander apparently is selected by Commandant and VP of Cadet Affairs and *then the Commander selects their own officers*. That procedure is apparently being reconsidered in light of recent events.

- Current student leaders include:
 - Rebecca Masliah - ASCMA President
 - Craig Johnson - Acting Corps Commander
 - Andrew Oca - Student Housing Director
 - Emily Silva - Athletics President

- Last items: ARC reviews will go out to faculty soon. Please make sure faculty are aware of them and participate. Also, Julianne Tolson (CIO) is retiring and there will be a search for her replacement.

- Meeting Adjourned