LSU Student Bar Association

Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2023 at 7:15 pm

Via Zoom



1. Call to Order at 7:21 pm
2. Roll Call
   1. Neyah Johnson – Executive President
   2. Lance Harvey – Executive Vice President
   3. Autumn White – Executive Secretary
   4. Andrew Hughes – Executive Treasurer
   5. Summer Whittington – Executive Director of Programming
   6. Ryan York – 3L Class President
   7. – 3L Class Vice President
   8. Mckenna Dorais – 3L Class Secretary
   9. Catherine Rutherford – 3L Class Representative
   10. Lindsey Tizzard – 3L Class Representative
   11. Alaysia Johnson – 2L Class President
   12. Mekkah Husamadeen – 2L Class Vice President
   13. Mary Burchill – 2L Class Secretary
   14. Ansley Sumner – 2L Class Representative
   15. Diamond McCray – 2L Class Representative
   16. Matthew Smith – 1L Class President
   17. Drake Brignac – 1L Class Vice President
   18. Hunter Reinhardt – § 1-1L Class Representative
   19. Eric Roshak – § 2-1L Class Representative
   20. Emmanuel Pressley – § 3-1L Class Representative
   21. Sigrid Soetaert – LLM Representative
3. Public Input
4. Funding Requests (3L President)
   1. Running Club’s Race Judicata on April 12th
      1. Annual 5K held by the Running Club. Requesting Walk Ons in the amount of $511.15. Expecting 40 people to come out.
      2. Motion by Ryan to expend up to $511.15 from the inside account to spend on Walk On’s for the Running Club's Race Judicata 5K.
         1. Seconded by Hunter.
         2. Motion passes unanimously.
5. Reading, Correction, and Adoption of the March 20, 2023 Minutes:
   1. **Motion** to adopt by Autumn.
   2. Seconded by Catherine.
   3. Motion passes unanimously, minutes are adopted.
6. Committee Reports
   1. Academics Committee – Chair & Vice-Chair: Amberlee Nix; Ann Marie Rome
      1. Mentor/Mentees of the Year:
         1. This week, Amberlee is choosing the individual who will receive this award. The goal is to award a $50 visa gift card for the mentor and a $25 visa gift card for each mentee (could range from 2-4 mentees, but Amberlee is thinking 3). The mentees get gift cards as well for actually contacting and utilizing their mentor!
   2. Athletics Committee – Chair: Coleton Guidry
      1. March Madness:
         1. Going on now! Reminder, prize for each bracket winner is a $25 Walk On’s gift card!
   3. Community and Media Committee – Co-Chairs: Emily Fields; Ellie Dore; Kerry Steen
   4. Diversity and Professionalism Committee – Chair: Renae Pierre
      1. April Focus Groups:
         1. The Diversity and Professionalism Committee is hosting round table focus groups in April. The first group will be for women and LGBTQ+ identifying students on Tuesday April 4th at 12:40 to 1:40 in room 301. The second group will be for Black students and students of color and students with disabilities on Wednesday April 5th from 3-4pm in room 303.
   5. Elections Committee – Commissioner: Evan Gaudet
      1. Spring Election Dates:
         1. March 30 – 31: Elections will take place.
         2. April 3: Announce winner of the election.
         3. April 4 – 5: Run-off election, if needed.
         4. April 10: Announce winner of the run-off election.
   6. Safety, Sensitivity & Sustainability Committee – Chair: Rubenie Stimphill
   7. Student Technology Fee Committee – Chair: Bryton Clark
7. Executive Officer Reports
   1. President
      1. Ethics Committee Impeachment Verdict
         1. Neyah states that she hopes everyone has had a chance to read the formal verdict from the Ethics Committee. Considering that she wants everyone to have a chance to read it fully and be on the same page, Neyah believes that any discussion of impeachment should be done in person. This is also because some people have voiced concerns with speaking or voicing their opinion on zoom, and she wants everyone to have the opportunity to comfortably do that.
         2. As far as any vote to impeach, Summer sent an email to the Ethics Committee chair, and to avoid any *ex parte* communications, Joshua sent his reply to both Summer and Neyah. The email stated that the Ethics Committee cannot address any issues until a complaint has been filed with them, so the Ethics Committee will not be getting involved until a complaint is filed regarding the SBA taking a vote on impeachment despite the verdict. Joshua stated that can either hold the vote or not, but if SBA takes a vote, the vote would still be an action that could be challenged via complaint. If a vote is not taken, Summer remains in her position.
         3. With that being said, Neyah is looking into the jurisdiction of the verdict and what effects it has on SBA. When looking at the constitution, it is unclear what the next steps are after a fact-finding investigation occurs. We were of the understanding that we take the vote regardless of what the determination of the Ethics Committee is, since that is what our constitution says. And so, we need to get clarity on what exactly that means. Neyah feels his message insinuates that a vote to move forward with impeachment, which would be contrary to their judgment, would constitute grounds for a complaint against SBA.
            1. Sigrid mentioned that if we had the vote, and then it could be subject to another complaint, that could be redundant.
      2. Constitutional Amendments
         1. Autumn asked when we would be voting on these amendments.
            1. Neyah explained that because the election is on Thursday, we would need to vote on these amendments tonight, so that they can be included on the election portal so the student body can review and vote on them. So the officers would need to come to a two-thirds vote tonight. And then after that we would add it to the voting link for students to vote on. It would have to get a above 50% in favor of the amendments for any of them to be officially adopted.
            2. Sigrid asked if we could get more time to study the new drafts of these articles and then maybe vote on these at a later date. She says she doesn’t feel like she has enough information right now to form an opinion on these amendments.
            3. Neyah asked if we should make a google doc for everyone to work in / track changes so that we can have everyone make changes on the exact wording... like would that be a good avenue so that everyone’s input is articulated? Also, is this something that everyone would be calling a vote on prior to the voting link opening on Thursday. If everyone doesn’t feel comfortable bringing this to a vote, because we have to have two-thirds of us to bring it to the student body, then this may not be something we can even do this semester.
         2. Change re: Funding Requests (submitted by Ryan)
            1. Inquiring into the possibility of having the funding requests go back to Exec. VP. A lot to juggle with 3L events and then looking over funding requests.
            2. Neyah responded to Ryan’s request that the bylaws would be addressed and adopted by the next administration, so we would not be able to change these.
         3. Change in Article IV, Section 4:
            1. Feedback from Autumn, Cat, Emmanuel and Lindsey that this would be very limiting, and we may run into positions going unfilled.
            2. Catherine, Autumn, and Lindsey voiced opposition to only past SBA officers being allowed to run for Executive positions. Lindsey said it would push people away from joining SBA who may really want to serve.
            3. Autumn asked if we could bring this one to a vote today, since there seemed to be a consensus.
            4. Drake asked if we could limit this change to only certain Executive positions, rather than all Executives positions.
            5. Alaysia brought the amendment, mostly to address the issue of if there was a completely new executive board, a brand new Treasurer would have to deal with our situation with the two accounts. With this year, the accounts are very tricky and she fears a year where the fourth floor tries to use a new board’s lack of experience in way that puts that account in jeopardy. She does agree that we don’t want to hinder people from running.
            6. Mary asked if there could be a caveat in the language like “unless no one else runs” that way if for some reason no one wants to run for Exec President or Treasurer that has been on SBA before, someone could still run and fill those positions.
            7. Autumn said that maybe we could compromise, like Drake said, and limit it only to the President and Treasurer positions then.
            8. Cat said that it still would hinder the democratic process, and in cases like Drew, he did it without prior SBA experience, so she feels like we shouldn’t limit these positions in that way.
            9. Lance stated that we should not limit positions because people will just begin to circumvent SBA as a legitimate organization.
            10. Autumn asked for a show of hands on this so we can move on from this one then. 10 people liked the message that said “like this if you are opposed to article 4, section 4 amendment.”
         4. Change in Article IV, Section 9, Subsection C:
            1. Sigrid voiced concern with the discretionary language regarding the Ethics Committee fact finding investigations – she is worried that not having a third-party handle internal issues would lead to a slippery slope.
            2. Autumn agreed that the discretionary language is an issue because it allows SBA to decide if the investigation occurs. She said that the fact-finding investigation itself should not be discretionary, but that we should clarify what the process is after an investigation process occurs because that is what is not clear right now. Due process would be a concern and a fact-finding investigation is a good thing as well as far as getting things on record.
            3. Emmanuel suggested that we change the language to say that the Ethics Committee’s findings inform the governing body, but still yet the governing body decides from there. He said that the Ethics Committee should serve as the due process arm rather than the final decision making, which should be left to the elected sitting voting members of the body.
            4. Summer asked what the point of the fact-finding investigation would be then if the Ethics Committee would not decide?
            5. Drake said that having it up to the Association after facts are presented on and the Ethics Committee rules could lead to adverse reactions from the student body.
            6. Lindsey stated that she agrees that we should not change the language to make impeachment within SBA’s discretion because what is the point of having the hearing and fact-finding investigation if we have the option to ignore the result. She and Lance also brought up that due process investigations are required for all organizations by Main Campus. It would be nonsensical to have an investigation, as required, and then just not use the result.
            7. Eric said we don’t really function like a traditional congress or government so it may not make sense to structure our impeachment process like the US Congress. He understands the importance of having some ability/discretion to impeach, but he feels like the Ethics Committee, as our judiciary, serves that purpose.
            8. Autumn said that the opinion we got from the Ethics Committee does not really just serve as a fact-finding investigation though because they are interpreting our constitution and telling us what our policies should be. She thinks it would be good to clarify what their role is.
            9. Matthew said that we could change the language to say that they should advise SBA rather than making the final decision.
            10. Lance brought up that other organizations’ constitutional language got thrown back because of similar issues. He says that if the deadline is Wednesday, he will put all of the other organizations’ current issues with this kind of thing in the google doc, so everyone can see examples. He also added that SBA is not just who is present at these meetings, every student is a member. And if we send this kind of amended constitutional language to a vote, it is just going to get throw back to us by Main Campus to fix. And then we would have to wait another year or until whenever we could call another student body vote on it. He thinks we should be careful in crafting this amendment because just having until Wednesday is probably not enough time to get this ready. If we are going to go down this path, considering the due process requirements of Main Campus, it is going to be pretty intensive.
            11. Neyah asked when Lance would propose constitutional amendments be done, because it is her understanding that our current constitution still has not been approved. They wanted us to add in language for things that we already got approved accommodations for. If we don’t make these proposed changes and our current constitution gets approved, would we have to wait to go through with amendments until our next leadership council is elected? Like would they have to go through a whole other approval process if we pass the changes?
            12. Lance says that if we don’t have success in getting these amendments approved by Main Campus, will be have future opportunity to get updated language approved if we tried again? He thinks this could become a back and forth issue, unless we change some other things, like how often we vote.
            13. Lindsey asked what happens if we put all this work into the amendments and then the language doesn’t get approved? She also thinks that 2-3 days is not enough time to talk through these amendments. We shouldn’t rush and add something in there, and then risk having the next administration having to deal with any problems that causes.
            14. Autumn asked if it would be best for us or the next SBA administration to draft the amendments, take it to Main Campus first, and then once we get approval from them, then take it to the student body for a vote. Any other way could be a waste of time.
            15. Neyah agreed with Autumn’s point. Lance could speak to this a bit more, but their responsiveness is a bit finicky, so as far as asking them now, she doesn’t think that asking them now would allow for them to get it back to us in time for us to include it on this semester’s ballot. She thinks that would be a fair move to make though.
            16. Lance asked Main Campus at the beginning of the year about keeping the Ethics Committee involved in all of our internal and Law Center disputes, and they allowed that. He thinks that the method Autumn just suggested is probably the most efficient use of our time, and this will more than likely be the next administration’s burden.
         5. Diamond asked for clarification on whether we are voting on revising the impeachment process or whether we are voting to impeach.
            1. Neyah: So right now, we are only talking about amending the constitution, so these amendments or other amendments that anyone thinks should be revised. So, we are not voting on impeachment tonight.
         6. Motion by Autumn to table this issue.
            1. Seconded by Emmanuel.
            2. Motion passes with no opposition.
      3. Transition Packets:
         1. Please make sure that your transition packets are prepared prior to the April 10th meeting. You will be sending those to the newly elected officers the morning of that meeting.
   2. Vice President
      1. General Update on the Student Organizations:
         1. This Tuesday, there will be a council meeting to discuss the state of all organizations and to receive feedback. Most organizations are heading into elections, so it is a big wrap up meeting.
      2. Space Law Club Proposal:
         1. The organization’s provisional proposal was sent out to Officers today. Please review. This organization is not technically new, so it will be restarted.
   3. Secretary
      1. Last Meeting of the Semester:
         1. Tentatively April 10th depending on how the upcoming elections go. If there is a run-off election, we may push this to Wednesday, April 12th. **Please go ahead and check your schedules for that date and email me with your availability ASAP, so that we can have that information squared away. (I’ve only gotten emails from three people so far.)**
      2. Meet the SBA Posts:
         1. I have not received bios & photos from Matthew, Drake, and I think I need an updated bio from Eric. PLEASE SEND ASAP!! Y’all will have to be squeezed into one post if I don’t get these by today.
   4. Treasurer
      1. Inside Account
      2. Outside Account
   5. Programming Director
8. Class Officer Reports
   1. 3L Class
      1. 50 Day Party:
         1. **Just a reminder**: the 50 Day Party will be March 30th at Radio Bar from 7:30 - 9:30pm. Will have $6 cocktail drink special. List of cocktails will be sent at a later date.
      2. Class Gift:
         1. Quote for bench with plaque has been sent to the 4th floor. Total is around $2,100. This is how much we would have to fundraise for. Will table the week of April 10th for fundraising for the class gift. Will be giving out wristbands this week for the Farewell Party (?).
      3. Farewell Party:
         1. May 6th confirmed for Crawfish Boil at the Ag Center 4H Mini Barn from 12:30 - 3:00 pm.
         2. Free to attend for graduating law students, $25 for anyone extra (family, friends, etc.). Fee is waived for anyone under the age of 3. Crawfish, pasta, dessert, water, soda, and beer provided.
   2. 2L Class
      1. Barrister’s Ball – March 31st, 2023
   3. 1L Class
   4. LLM
9. Old Business
   1. Barristers’ Ball Souvenir Packaging E-Vote:
      1. Motion by Ansley to expend up to $146.70 from the outside account to purchase 600 cellophane bags and 1200 sheets of tissue paper for the packaging of the shot glasses.
         1. Seconded by Mekkah.
         2. Motion passed unanimously.
   2. Barristers’ Ball Movie Night Snacks E-Vote:
      1. Motion by Alaysia to expend up to $70 from the outside account to reimburse Emmanuel for movie night snacks.
         1. Seconded by Diamond.
         2. Motion passed unanimously.
   3. Environmental Law Society Funding Request E-Vote:
      1. Law Students for Climate Accountability and LSU Environmental Law Society Present: Steven Donziger Against Big Oil
      2. Meeting to discussion how big oil companies avoid liability through the legal system and career paths for students interested in environmental law set for April 5, 2023. Guest speaker is Steven Donziger. Requesting the Jambalaya Shoppe for total amount of $148.04.
         1. Motion by Lance to expend up to $148.04 from the inside account for the Jambalaya Shoppe for the Environmental Law Society's speaker event.
            1. Seconded by Alaysia.
            2. Motion passed unanimously.
10. New Business
11. Adjournment
    1. **Motion** to adjourn by Emmanuel.
    2. Seconded by Mary.
    3. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm!