

Minutes, USG General Body Meeting

April 22, 2020



Undergraduate
Student Government
At Michigan Tech

- I. Roll Call
 - 2 absent
 - Quorum met
- II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes
 - Motion & Second
 - Vote of Consensus
 - i. Motion passes
- III. Recognition of Visitors – Thanks for coming!
- IV. Officer Reports
 - President (*Larkin Hooker-Moericke*)
 - i. [Budget Basics Sheet](#)
 1. Funding guideline for new members & org. treasurers
 2. Will be available for reference
 - ii. More new members!
 1. Will be swearing in more new members later in meeting
 - iii. Board of Trustees Presentation
 1. Finalizing a presentation to be brought to the Board of Trustees
 2. Will discuss later in meeting
 - Vice President (*Lauren Spahn*)
 - i. Committees
 1. Email went out a few days ago
 2. Committee chairs please make sure to check & reach out to your members
 - ii. [Fall 2020 Office Hours](#)
 1. Sign up for three slots if you haven't already!
 - Treasurer (*Harley Merkaj*)
 - i. No report
 - Secretary (*Natalie Wohlgemuth*)
 - i. Attendance & Agenda
 1. Reach out to me if you know you'll be late or absent for a meeting
 - a. 3 days beforehand
 2. Thank you to everyone who's been filling out the agenda!
 - a. If you don't feel comfortable adding to the agenda yourself, let me or another member know so we can help
 - ii. [Body Membership Info. Form](#)
 1. Same form as before, still waiting on a few responses
 - a. New members fill this out too! It's required
 - iii. Open College of Science & Arts Rep. Position
 1. In addition to needing a College of Forest Resources & Env. Sciences Rep., we also have a position open for College of Science & Arts
 - iv. O-Week Planning
 1. Send me a message if you'll be around for O-Week and/or would like to help plan events for then with USG
- V. Advisor Reports
 - Beka Horsch

- i. Trivia Night
 - 1. Wednesdays at 8 PM Eastern Time
 - ii. Student Leadership Awards
 - 1. Video posted on the [web page](#)
 - iii. [Counseling Services Blog](#)
 - iv. HuskiesFit Classes offered on Zoom and open to the Public
 - 1. [Go to Facebook for more information](#)
 - Stefani Vargas Krause
 - i. No report
 - Bonnie Gorman
 - i. No report
- VI. Standing Committee Reports
 - Events (*Colin Schaefer*)
 - i. Planning to meet with committee to prepare for next semester
 - 1. Plans depend on how the school responds to COVID-19 in Fall 2020
 - Judiciary (*Sydney Dankert*)
 - i. Still in need of one more body member, let Sydney know ASAP if interested!
 - Political Affairs (*Zachary Olson*)
 - i. Funding for Voter Registration
 - 1. Political Affairs has historically set up booths to provide voter registration forms for students to fill out & bring back to be mailed out
 - a. Asking for \$150 to be set aside in Political Affairs' budget to fund this event
 - b. Will not be purchasing any materials right away but wanted to start planning early
 - ii. SGA Student Health and Academic Resource Advocacy
 - 1. Hasn't been a full week notice but since this is our last meeting we can vote on it tonight if the body wishes
 - iii. National Student Letter regarding COVID-19 Federal Tax Relief
 - 1. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScYYhzaS118vLTdLQqmILfSEEHFzbP-nL-Ag1EnV6Km5Hr3jA/viewform?usp=sf_link
 - 2. Open letter based on a response from the first federal relief payment to better address the absence of help for higher-education students
 - 3. Mentions possibility to cancel/defer student loan debt for this time period
 - 4. Hasn't been a full week notice but since this is our last meeting we can vote on it tonight if the body wishes
 - Public Relations (*Jordan Craven*)
 - i. First brainstorming/goals meeting tonight after meeting!
 - 1. Open to all body members, regardless if in P.R. or not
 - 2. If anyone is Interested/thinking about joining P.R. tonight is a good night to drop in!
 - 3. Meeting [Zoom Link](#)
 - Student Affairs (*Zofia Freiberg*)
 - i. Last week's Virtual Office Hours
 - 1. Went really well, was able to help a student with an issue
 - ii. SAC "[office hours](#)" for students 12 - 3 PM tomorrow
 - iii. [Committee meeting after general meeting](#)
 - 1. If you haven't done so already, please reach out to Zofia about joining if

interested

- Ways and Means (*Harley Merkaj*)
 - i. WAM & I are finishing up the remaining Reimbursement/Advance of Funds requests that are still coming in

VII. USG Liaison Reports

- Graduate Student Government
- Interfraternity Council
- Panhellenic Council (*Sydney Dankert*)
 - i. Closure meeting for remainder of semester
 - ii. Opportunities for online recruitment to help keep up numbers up in light of COVID-19
- Inter Residence Housing Council (*Ellie Sempek*)
 - i. No report
- Houghton City Council
- Parent's Fund (*Zbigniew Bell*)
 - i. Stefani was at the meeting
 - 1. Haven't had any new requests yet
- Senate (*Harley Merkaj*)
 - i. Highlights
 - 1. [Fall Break](#)
 - a. Passed
 - 2. [Low Pass](#)
 - a. Passed
 - 3. [Retaking Courses](#)
 - a. Passed
 - b. Able to retake a class more than three times if impacted by this semester
 - 4. [Pass / Fail Graduate Students](#)
 - a. Passed
 - 5. PPE Requirement
 - a. Potential PPE Requirements for next semester
 - b. Only discussed and nothing is official yet
 - ii. Other Business
 - 1. New Minor in Business of Forestry
 - 2. New Bachelor of Science Degree in Sustainable Bioproducts
 - 3. New Graduate Certificates
 - 4. New Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Diversity (*Harley Merkaj*)
 - i. No report
- Student Commission (*Larkin Hooker-Moericke*)
 - i. No report
- Friends of the Library (*Zofia Freiberg*)
 - i. No report
- JED Campus (*Jordan Craven*)
 - i. Next meeting on Wednesday, April 29th at 3:30 PM
- H-Stem (*Karina Madigan*)
 - i. No report
- HIDE Voting Booth (*Jordan Craven*)
 - i. No report

- Non-Motorized Transportation Committee (*Larkin Hooker-Moericke*)
 - i. No report
- Experience Tech Fee (*Larkin Hooker-Moericke*)
 - i. Allocations for next year
 1. 75% based on current allocations and 25% based on usage
 2. Enrollment is lower than projected numbers due to COVID-19
 - a. Will address issue as more info. comes in
- Virtual Celebration (Jack Mitchell)
 - i. Celebration in planning for graduated Seniors as the majority didn't want a make-up commencement ceremony
 1. Each senior would be given a spotlight for a picture and/or quote about their time at MTU
 2. Would be put on MTU's Commencement page on the website where the Deans would upload recorded speeches
 3. Bonnie or President Koubek would be asked to give a live speech as the page on the website goes live
 4. Would also like to see the Pep Band's presence as historically they would crash the graduation ceremonies
 - ii. May 23rd for projected launch date
 - iii. Jack: Vote of Confidence for USG's opinion
 1. Zofia: Sounds like a really nice plan but seeing as no one else on USG is graduating this semester it'd be good to reach out to old members to get their opinions as well
 - a. Jack: Has been reaching out to old constituents but would benefit from USG's backing
 2. Zack: Sets a good precedent for possible future situations where a similar situation could occur
 3. Joe: Any other options provided?
 - a. Jack: A few options were mentioned:
 - i. Hold a virtual commencement this Spring
 - ii. Postpone in-person commencement to August, December, or April
 - iii. Recorded Pep Band event to replicate what has historically happened at commencement
 - iv. Come up with something new
 - v. A poll went out, results were negative to any of the commencement ideas
 - b. Joe: In summary it's not a perfect option but it's so far the best that they have
 4. Colin: USG may not have a valid say since it doesn't directly address us as no current member is also graduating this semester
 - a. Jack: Original celebration discussion is really last-minute so he needs help
 5. Sydney: Would like to see a Vote of Confidence for Jack
 - a. Larkin: Jack is reputable
 - b. Natalie: We represent the whole undergrad. population so it does pertain to us even if not independently
 - c. Jack: Would help to have some sort of backing from USG

- d. Sydney: Motion for a Vote of Confidence for Jack to act as a representative for USG in discussion and decision on Commencement 2020
 - i. Second
 - 1. No discussion
 - 2. 14 in support, 0 not in support, 1 abstain

- Other Liaisons

VIII. Unfinished Business

- An Open Letter to Admissions, Postgraduate Opportunities in Response to COVID-19
 - i. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kabaruxenwzicb_OPpbb-JG4YE0wRgEPp7wrHgQM_g8/editHrL-qcBx88/edit
 - ii. Zack: Entertain a motion to have USG sign onto & officially support “An Open Letter to Admissions, Postgraduate Opportunities in Response to COVID-19”
 - 1. So Moved & Second
 - a. No discussion
 - b. 12 aye, 3 nay, 2 abstain
 - i. Motion passes
- An Open Letter to Expand Telehealth Support Access Across State Lines
 - i. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yl4v3YWIEhZXu7Opbf5g0kc2ZtOaACd4t>
 - ii. Zack: Entertain a motion to sign onto and officially support “An Open Letter to Expand Telehealth Support Access Across State Lines”
 - 1. Bonnie: Due to the issue that counselors who aren’t licensed outside of Michigan are unable to continue helping now out-of-state students
 - 2. Jordan: Spoke with a student athlete counselor who said that it doesn't matter what state that a student is
 - a. Bonnie: May be a specific circumstance
 - 3. Sydney: Worthwhile subject but would like to see information of other options for support
 - a. Ex. Free support through UW Universities
 - i. Acknowledges that it may be different circumstance for other states
 - ii. These resources may be easier to access
 - b. Bonnie: Intended for students that are affected by this issue but MTU has provided other options of resources for support to students in need
 - i. Point is a bit outside the realm of the letter
 - 4. Zack: Students are paying for the services so it’d be beneficial to be able to utilize those resources
 - 5. Joe: Any other way to achieve this since it seems to depend on licensing issues?
 - a. Zack: Would go to the Federation of State Licensing Board who would have the power to address the licensing issue
 - 6. So Moved & Second
 - a. No further discussion
 - b. 14 aye, 0 nay, 3 abstain
 - i. Motion passes

IX. New Business

- Funding for Voter Registration
 - i. Political Affairs requests to allocate \$150.00 for postage and envelopes to mail student

- voter registration forms for them in the 2020-2021 academic year
- ii. Zack: Motion to allocate \$150 for postage and envelopes to be able to mail students' voter registration forms
 - 1. Zack: Amended motion to say "Motion to allocate up to \$150 for postage and envelopes to be able to mail students' voter registration forms"
 - 2. Second
 - a. Discussion
 - i. Larkin: Where is this coming from in the budget?
 - 1. Zack: Already in P.A.'s budget
 - b. 15 aye, 0 nay, 2 abstain
 - i. Motion passes
- COVID-19 Funding
 - i. GSG is allocating a portion of their personal budget to COVID-19 relief funds, would we be interested in doing the same?
 - 1. Sydney: Would we be doing anything else with this money?
 - a. Harley: As far as we can tell there is nothing else planned
 - b. Bonnie: Our money would go back into the Reserve Fund if not used
 - i. Must consider that the money can be used again by RSO's for unforeseen opportunities through Reserve Fund requests
 - 1. All remaining money from all RSO's go here too
 - ii. MTU is using three emergency fund sources for students
 - 1. Have had 108 requests so far and have granted 63, providing aroundt \$25000 to students
 - a. Money is currently mostly donations from alumni
 - 2. Jordan: Good idea to give to Husky Emergency Fund as it really helps us all as a community
 - 3. Sydney: Would feel more comfortable donating money to one of the three funds that we are using to help our students
 - 4. Harley: Misspoke earlier, our unused money rolls over to our fund for the next year instead of going to the Reserve Fund
 - a. Zack: We'll have a considerable surplus this year, this is a great opportunity to utilize it to help the community
 - ii. Zack: Motion to allocate \$4000 to the Husky Emergency Relief Fund
 - 1. Second
 - 2. No discussion
 - a. 13 aye, 0 nay, 2 abstain
 - i. Motion passes
 - iii. Jordan: How much money do we have remaining?
 - 1. Harley: Unsure of exact amount
 - iv. Jordan: Entertain a motion to allocate \$1000 to the International Students Emergency Fund
 - 1. Zofia: Does this have to happen today since this is our last meeting?
 - a. Could technically be done through an Emergency Meeting
 - 2. Larkin: Are all international students allowed to access this?
 - a. Bonnie: Summary of who's eligible for each fund
 - i. International Students Emergency Fund is open to all international students at MTU

- ii. Betty Chavis Emergency Fund was originally intended for any domestic undergraduate or masters students at MTU
 - 1. Is a grant so it doesn't need to be paid back
 - iii. Loan program through the University
 - 1. Would need to be paid back
 - iv. Husky Emergency Fund is open to all MTU students
 - 1. Is also a grant
 - v. Designating a portion to the international students can be helpful in regards to possible changes at the federal level that could negatively impact them
 - 3. Jordan : Intended to help international students as many are struggling greatly due to the travel bans
 - 4. So moved
 - a. Discussion
 - i. Zofia: Is it possible to change the amount to \$2000?
 - 1. An important cause and we could afford it
 - 2. Sydney: Would support this change if body felt comfortable with number too
 - ii. Joe: What's the average rollover that we have?
 - 1. Harley: Will try to find a document that has the answer
 - 2. How much of the undergraduate body is international?
 - a. May be smaller proportion than we currently know
 - iii. Jordan: We should look at historical spending,
 - 1. Would we be able to have an emergency meeting after this meeting?
 - a. Sydney: An emergency could be possible as it can supersede our adjournment for the summer
 - 2. Bryce: Would like to know the actual numbers before voting
 - a. Harley: Found a potential document with answers
 - i. Discussing with the advisors
 - iv. Jake: To answer Joe's question, about 2% of the undergraduate population is international
 - v. Larkin: We can do an emergency meeting the Monday following finals if the body sees a reason to
 - vi. Zack: Motion for a five-minute recess for Harley to look for the actual numbers
 - 1. Harley: The document previously found isn't up-to-date, will need to run numbers instead
 - a. Stefani: Currently running the numbers, will need a few minutes to do
 - 2. Zack: Rescind motion
 - vii. Harley: Motion for a five-minute recess

1. Second
 - a. Discussion
 - i. Larkin: We could alternatively table the discussion instead of halting meeting
 - b. Harley: Amend motion to table the discussion instead of taking a five-minute recess
 - i. Second
 - ii. No discussion
 - iii. Motion passes
 - viii. Stefani: Before the allocation to the Husky Emergency Fund we had \$6964 left
 1. Keep in mind that we plan to host 1UP next Fall so we may need more money for that
 2. Beka: Make sure to think carefully about how much we are putting where
 3. Zack: Only feel comfortable going up to \$5000
 - b. Motion dies
- Appointment of New Members
 - i. Larkin entertains a motion to appointment Conny Yang & Bianca Schuck as Second-Year Reps and Tej Bergin as a College of Engineering Rep.
 1. So moved & Second
 - a. No Discussion
 - i. Voting to approve Larkin's appointment of Conny Yang as a Second-Year Rep.
 1. 14 aye, 0 nay, 2 abstain
 - a. Motion passes
 - ii. Voting to approve Larkin's appointment of Bianca Schuck as a Second-Year Rep.
 1. 15 aye, 0 nay, 1 abstain
 - a. Motion passes
 - iii. Voting to approve Larkin's appointment of Tej Bergin as a College of Engineering Rep.
 1. 15 aye, 0 nay, 2 abstain
 - a. Motion passes
 - ii. Swearing in New Members
 1. Conny Yang, Bianca Schuck, and Tej Bergin are sworn in
 - Mini Golf Set Repairs
 - i. Request from MUB Board to borrow our mini golf set but there are damages that need to be repaired
 1. Requesting that we help split the repair costs
 - ii. Zack: How much repairs will the parts need?
 1. Stefani: Some may need repair but are in fairly decent shape overall
 2. Zack: Motion to allocate up to \$100 for our mini golf set repairs
 - a. Stefani: May need to go up to \$150 incase of the type of repairs needed
 - b. Jordan: How were the parts damaged?

- i. Natalie: Fairly even use between us and MUB Board
 - c. Zack: Amend motion to “Motion to allocate up to \$200 for our mini golf set repairs”
 - i. Amendment rescinded
 - d. Sydney: Move to allocate up to \$100 for our mini golf set repairs
 - i. Second
 - 1. No discussion
 - 2. 17 aye, 0 nay, 2 abstain
 - a. Motion passes

X. Open Floor

- Laptop/Webcam/Microphone Requirement
 - i. Bonnie: University is addressing the many scenarios for adapting to the having to go online
 - 1. Have had similar discussions in the past but would like to have us discuss
 - ii. Harley: Would we need an actual webcam/microphone?
 - 1. Haven’t needed a separate one, have utilized one on his phone & laptop
 - iii. Jordan: Most majors already have the laptop requirement, but those that don’t may be running into issues with not having one
 - iv. Zack: Would like to see an offset to the tuition to accommodate for this potential additional cost for the students
 - v. Jake: Agree with Jordan & Zack’s statements
 - vi. Joe: The more pressing concern is over the softwares being used since many have security issues
 - vii. Zofia: MTU has been teaching online classes before this without these requirements and many classes this year benefitted from the microphone/webcam because being online was unplanned so utilizing those items was hard to avoid
 - 1. Make courses viable without these items first
 - viii. Bonnie: Would like a clarification on the software issue
 - 1. Is it Zoom specifically or others?
 - a. Joe: Zoom has been having a lot of issues lately, specifically security issues
 - ix. Natalie: Would this require students to buy extra equipment?
 - 1. Already have equipment that works
 - 2. Also unfair to require laptops if students already have a way to learn that’s working
 - 3. Second Zofia’s point of how this hasn’t been a requirement in the past
 - x. Darren: Rehash that Zoom has had a lot of security issues recently so some good alternatives are Teams and Google Hangouts
 - 1. Software issue also for turning in homework
 - a. Have been asked to scan pdfs
 - b. Given a bunch of options but want one that MTU would stand behind
 - 2. Laptop issue that any majors that already require them include specifications that generally tend to already meet the webcam/microphone requirements
 - xi. Jake: NX and Matlab run a lot slower when not on campus
- Late Fall Start
 - i. Bonnie: Tech FLEX
 - 1. Would love to open in August but need to be prepared for other options
 - a. Start remote then move to face-to-face maybe in October

- b. Issue of social distancing and class sizes
 - c. Reassure that they are planning for as much as they can for as many of the uncertainties that there are
 - 2. Zofia: MTU FLEX issue with course offerings
 - a. Summer offerings are only offered to incoming students
 - i. Frustrating how the cost is so drastic for an admitted/unregistered student from a registered student
 - ii. Bonnie: providing help to incoming students with an opportunity to be comfortable with MTU since many are especially unsure about college at this time
 - b. Have the desire to decrease academic load in the fall but it's hard to accomplish with a plateaued tuition
 - i. Would like to see a reevaluation of ramifications for plateaued tuitions for next Fall
 - ii. Bonnie: Too late for next Fall
 - 1. There seems to be a cycle between paying by credit hour and a plateaued tuition throughout the years
 - 2. Need a lot of analysis to properly address and there isn't enough time to do so
- Board of Trustees Presentation
 - i. Look at individually & email Larkin with any changes that want to be seen
- National Student Letter regarding COVID-19 Federal Tax Relief
 - i. Zack: Would like to discuss the possibility of a majority vote today even without the full week of consideration
 - 1. Sydney: We must vote to bring the item to the table then have another vote to actually vote on the letter
 - ii. Zack: Motion to vote on the "National Student Letter regarding COVID-19 Federal Tax Relief"
 - 1. Second
 - a. No discussion
 - b. 17 aye, 1 nay, 1 abstain
 - i. Motion passes
 - iii. Zack: Entertain a Motion to sign onto & support the "National Student Letter regarding COVID-19 Federal Tax Relief"
 - 1. Jordan: If we do sign this, where will it go?
 - a. Zack: Was forwarded to us from another university that's forming a list of all universities that back it for that list to them be brought to legislation
 - b. Jordan: Good candidate to bring to SCHEF?
 - i. Zack: Would be a good idea to bring it to them but would need to officially support it to do so
 - 2. Sydney: Concerned about what we're representing by signing onto this letter
 - a. There is an option to sign onto this individually
 - b. The letter is very political so we may not be representing our constituents appropriately by voting on it without hearing from them first
 - c. Jordan: Can put out an unofficial poll on social media to ask the student body about their feelings towards the letter?

- i. Unfortunately the responses may not be restricted to only the appropriate audience's thoughts
 - d. Zack: The letter is political in nature but we were voted into our positions to represent the student body to the best of our ability
 - e. Larkin: We're entering a nonpartisan gray area
 - i. We have another option where individuals from USG can sign the letter and we can distribute it through our social media to spread the word
 - ii. Sydney: This is the best option as it will allow the students to make the choice on their own
 - iii. Zack: Posting to social media would be a happy medium
- 3. Joe: The letter was forwarded to us from another school, what'd they do?
 - a. May be in our best interest to follow a similar path
 - b. Zack: From Colorado College but the email doesn't mention what their student government chose to do
 - c. Joe: Since their action is unknown it'd be better to leave the choice up to the individual
- 4. Jordan: Can post to social media with warning that USG is remaining unbiased to the issue
 - a. Zack: Motion to allow P.R. to post this letter to social media as how they see fit
 - i. Jordan: Request that P.A. provide a caption to be included
 - 1. Bryce: The original email had a caption that we can base it off of as well
 - ii. Jordan: For future reference, does P.R. need the body's approval before making any post?
 - 1. Sydney: Only required if the post is in regards to an item that the body discussed but an update about USG itself, like how most of our other posts are, don't require the body's permission first
 - iii. Second
 - 1. No further discussion
 - 2. 17 aye, 0 nay, 2 abstain
 - a. Motion passes

XI. Closed Session

XII. Announcements/"Remarks for the Good"

- Zack: P.A. is currently the smallest committee, need a third member to help out
 - i. Let him know ASAP if interested in joining
- Jordan: Extremely proud of everything that we've accomplished this year, especially these past few weeks!
- Sydney: Meteor shower is happening tonight, go take a look!
- Stefani: Thank you so much for everything that everyone has accomplished so far and welcome new members!
- Bonnie: Thank you for the \$4000 to the Husky Emergency Fund!
 - i. Love the willingness the students at MTU have to help others, it means a lot!

XIII. Adjournment

- Motion & Second
- Vote by Consensus

i. Motion passes

Respectfully Submitted,
Natalie Wohlgemuth
Secretary of the Undergraduate Student Government