

September 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Topic: The Evolving Student Experience

Meeting Called to Order: 6:03 PM

Items for the Good of the Order:

- A Fellow recognizes the Steward for procuring tonight's pre-meeting dinner
- A Fellow mentions that the third phrase to open up our Discussion meetings is "I press forward to the *mark*" rather than "I press forward to the *march*."
- The Alumni Secretary makes a comment about the elections meeting coming up at the end of this Fall semester. This Fellow urges other Fellows to consider people who think differently from themselves so as to avoid creating an "echo chamber."
- The Warden makes a comment about the success of the Arleigh Williams Forum

Items for the Good of the University:

- The Warden makes a remark about the football team having won last Saturday's football game.
- A Fellow mentions the Commencement ceremony.

*On the Topic of: The Evolving Student Experience*

The Warden opens the floor with anecdotes and reviews questions sent out to the Fellowship prior to the meeting.

- A Fellow speaks on the topic of the competitive nature of Haas classes and the recent elimination of the Haas curve as a result of student input. This Fellow welcomes a discussion about the history of this topic as we look toward the future.
- A Fellow reflects on their experience at Cal in the 90s. They share a personal anecdote about their experience as a parent of a high school senior and the considerations that went into deciding if Cal would be a good fit for their child.
- A Fellow quotes “you can’t be what you can’t see,” explaining that Cal may not be the right fit for everyone.
- A Fellow reflects on the admissions process from when they were a student and how anyone with straight A’s got into Cal if they wanted to. They note that this is not the case anymore.
  - Their higher academic performing second son was admitted for the second semester.
  - Some people are admitted on a more holistic basis.
- A Fellow explains how the admissions processes are being developed to be more competitive.
  - As of now, Haas is the only top ranked business program that is not direct admission.
  - California is being asked to recruit more students in-state.
  - There is a conundrum students face: certain AP classes are nearly required in order to be admitted for certain majors, yet oftentimes those classes aren’t offered at a student’s high school. There are differing opportunities depending on what zip code one grows up in.

- A Fellow builds on the idea of the status quo.
  - Challenging the status quo doesn't necessarily mean to change things, but rather to reflect and make sure we are current.
  - This fellow suggests that our institution could use its summer programs to help fill the gap we are seeing in admissions.
  - This fellow highlights that summer programs are often an excellent source of revenue.
- A Fellow shifts the conversation to transfer students.
  - They remark about community college programs and how the University could work together with them to help bridge the aforementioned gap in admissions.
  - They explain that Haas is one of the hardest programs to get into as a transfer.
- A Fellow points out that revenue-generating summer courses is not the solution. It would be charging the same people it is trying to help, all while trying to teach them in a condensed time frame (for example, learning AP Calculus in just five weeks).
  - Community college enrollment is down. The UC saw way less transfer applications this past year.
  - They explain how the transfer process is very difficult. One needs to take the exact right courses in community college in order to make it.
  - There is a resource issue with faculty that needs to be addressed.
- A Fellow reflects on their experience as a Haas transfer. They explain how the hardest parts were building community and coping with imposter syndrome. There is not a lot of time to do so in just two years.

- They reflect on their experience in the Haas Pre-Core program and how effective it was for them. They recommend allocating resources for similar programs, especially in other departments that do not have one yet.
- A Fellow speaks on the different levels at which students come into Berkeley, recounting their experience from when they were a freshman.
  - Education is called “The Great Equalizer,” but different people have different situations. This fellow contrasts a student living on campus who has a meal plan with one that lives a 25 minute walk from campus and has to cook for themselves.
- A Fellow brings up the topic of mental health appointments and how it has been great that the availability of such appointments has expanded in the last few years.
- A Fellow builds on the topic of mental health, explaining how their group therapy sessions were discontinued.
  - They point out a diversity of needs with regard to mental health services.
- A Fellow adds to their previous comments about bridging the gap in opportunities to be admitted to certain majors.
  - They clarify their previous statement, urging the University to challenge the status quo to help with the aforementioned problem.
  - They challenge the campus to challenge Sacramento about filling this gap
  - They ask rhetorically, “how much is California willing to invest into fixing this problem?”
- A Fellow shifts the conversation back to the student experience.
  - They highlight the various costs that add up for students (meals, printing pages in Moffitt, boba, housing, etc.)

- A Fellow expresses feelings of discouragement with the conversations of allocating funding and these “insurmountable” challenges.
  - They explain how we’re making progress, raising more and more with fundraising campaigns, but it doesn’t feel like we’re making any progress.
  - Change takes a long time.
  - They remark that there isn’t a lack of dedication. The staff at this University stay here not out of a desire to become “independently wealthy.”
- A Fellow speaks on the notion of change.
  - There are risks associated with change.
  - Alumni and current students need to reckon with how we view change. Once we get a consensus on what the change needs to look like, then we work toward it.
- A Fellow ties together a few previous comments regarding gathering a diverse group of students and strengthening paths from junior colleges.
  - As an example of the types of students we want to be able to cater to, this Fellow provides an anecdote about a former gang member and prisoner who turned their life around and ultimately made it to Cal.
  - This Fellow brings up the Build Back Better Act that was supposed to provide free community college education.
  - They urge students and families to vote.
- A Fellow continues the conversation about voting.
  - The Student Technology Fee failed to be ratified as a result of low voter turnout, despite high popularity.

- Students should be encouraged to vote and take more action with regard to voting and holding public servants responsible.
- A Fellow offers hope to the room, suggesting that one way to break down the “siloed” feeling of departments at the University is simply to get together the leaders within each.
  - This Fellow remarks about how this institution can be a masterpiece and work in progress at the same time.
  - They mention the success they’ve had in securing full ride scholarships for refugees, explaining how although it is only for a small number of people, we ought to celebrate what we’ve accomplished and the fact that we are the only public university doing so.
- A Fellow remarks about how we all should be proud of our personal pathways to where we are now.
  - They suggest replacing some of the 15-year-old ads we show at football games with ads that lift up community colleges and show the pathways that lead to “Berkeley greatness.”
- A Fellow reminds us that there are positives that fit into this discussion as well.
- A Fellow remarks that Cal is an environment filled with growth, enrichment, and opportunity.
- A Fellow recounts how an undocumented friend of theirs was able to take advantage of the Fall Program for Freshmen and thrive in it.
  - Although these programs are sometimes bashed, they really do help people.
- A Fellow reflects on how they were able to launch their own startup while at Berkeley, and remarks that they would not have been able to do that elsewhere.

- A Fellow makes a comment about SAT prep resources and how they are ubiquitous in their hometown.
- A Fellow poses the question of what are some things that are going well that should be continued to be invested in?
- A Fellow underscores the previous Fellow's rhetorical question. They pose this question to seniors, as the students who have had the longest time on campus.
- A Fellow comments about finding community, reflecting on their experience joining a student organization as a freshman, then going through Covid, coming back as a junior, and now their experience as a senior. They make a remark about still feeling like a freshman sometimes.
- A Fellow expresses a feeling of close-mindedness throughout periods of change, wanting things to go back to how they used to be.
- A Fellow appreciates an initiative that Cal Athletics did with the Cal Student Store to give out tickets to the football game.
  - They also appreciate how Golden Bear Cafe and Brown's cafe are now accepting meal swipes. Before, they would skip meals since they couldn't use their meal swipes on campus.
- A Fellow asks whose idea it was to give out tickets to football games, remarking that we have the seats, then joking that we could invite half the student body if we wanted to.
- A Fellow remarks about how nice it is when our stadium is fuller.
- A Fellow ponders the question of what is the "cornerstone experience" for students today. They wonder what experiences people have that keep them coming back to events like football games and Commencement.

- A Fellow explains how negative experiences at Cal can lead to negative responses to solicitations for donations.
- A Fellow adds onto the previous Fellow's remarks about experiences at Cal that lead to different responses to solicitations for donations.
  - They note that people often feel that although their experience was great, they paid a lot of money for it and that the University didn't give them anything beyond that.
- The Warden starts to wrap up the discussion with a reminder about next week's topic: safety on campus.
- A Fellow urges others to listen to the Chancellor's speech on the development of the campus and how many times the words "rats" and "roaches" come up.
- A Fellow brings up the topic of DE&I with regard to student organizations.
  - Their student organization's funding was threatened to be taken away by the Engineering Student Council if they did not admit more females.
  - They explain how it is a challenge for their organization to recruit more female members when the College of Engineering itself is predominantly males.
  - They urge the University to provide more help to students with issues like this.

Discussion adjourned at 7:30 PM.

The meeting closed with song, and notes were compiled by the Acting Chronicler.