

# Order of The Golden Bear

ΕΙΡΗΝΗ  
ΕΝ ΤΗ ΔΥΝΑΜΕΙ  
ΕΝ ΤΗ ΔΟΞΑ

ESTABLISHED 1900

## Usually Place, April 18th, 2023

The meeting was convened at 6:00pm

## Items for the good of the order:

Elections meeting is on Tuesday, April 25 at 6pm.

## Items for the good of the university: The Value and Efficacy of the ASUC

- What power do student electees have?
  - How effective are elected officials in following through with their platforms?
  - Student participation in voting
  - Not enough voters for Student Tech fee to be approved, despite it technically passing in 2021
  - Political Parties at Cal
  - Connection between ASUC and Administration
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- The Berkeley ASUC manages 18 million dollars, with student voters managing about 2 million.
  - In this current election cycle, there has been an increase in voting turnout, however there is no data to back up who voted in the election.
  - A fellow explains a controversy regarding ASUC resources being used for a candidate's campaign. It is currently going through the judicial system and is causing some distrust in the system.
  - A fellow mentions that the recent increase in irregular voter turnout can be attributed to the inclusion of the bus pass on the ballot.
  - As a student voter, a fellow encountered uncertainty regarding how to cast their vote, and consequently did not allocate sufficient time to peruse all candidates in order to discern their relative merits and establish a ranked preference list.
  - This year's election cycle has been characterized by a sense of exhaustion among the electorate. The large number of candidates contending for office has contributed to this state of affairs. According to a pi chart published by the Daily Californian, no candidate was able to secure a significant share of the votes, thereby prolonging the election season and intensifying the level of fatigue experienced by voters.
  - At present, the ASUC is in the process of deliberating a proposal to prohibit political parties from operating on campus. It is noteworthy that the incoming senators have not yet been inaugurated, and therefore the existing senators will be tasked with casting their votes on this issue.
  - A fellow has run twice in campus elections, once as an independent and once as a member of a political party. They have emphasized the fundamental concept of governance, highlighting that it is through training that one can develop a comprehensive understanding of what it means to govern and be governed. This includes gaining insight into how power is distributed and who

wields it. The fellow suggests that the campus leadership should reflect on how they inherited current governance systems and how they can be updated to better serve current needs. The ongoing debate about the role of political parties in campus governance is an important issue that warrants attention. The individual stresses that students, alumni, and faculty are integral to the governance system and that the elimination of political parties and changes to ranked voting could have wider implications for the egalitarian system. Numerous experiments have been conducted on campus throughout the year, prompting discussions about the role of student self-governance and the sacrifices that may need to be made in this regard. The individual concludes by noting that restoring trust in the governance system is a critical issue that requires careful consideration and ongoing dialogue.

- According to a note regarding the resolution put forth on Wednesday, the proposal to eliminate the party system includes a sunset clause that is set to expire after a period of two years. The purpose of this clause is to provide an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes implemented and determine whether further revisions are necessary.
- A fellow suggested that the ASUC has acted against its own interests by imposing limitations on its operations. For instance, campaigns are not permitted to be conducted within buildings such as libraries, cafeterias, and other campus facilities. Additionally, the use of titles are restricted to identification purposes only, while sponsorships from external companies are prohibited. The fellow argues that these measures have hindered transparency, making it difficult for students to gain a clear understanding of the ASUC's functions and operations. Limitations within the organization's bylaws have been cited as a contributing factor to this lack of transparency, further complicating efforts to learn more about the ASUC.
- Concerns have been raised about the level of understanding among officials regarding the functions of the ASUC. Some candidates have been criticized for running without a clear understanding of the roles of ASUC.
- Improving transparency and accountability within the ASUC is considered essential to promoting understanding of the organization's functions and operations. This includes efforts to provide education and training to officials, which can help to set them up for success. However, independent candidates may face difficulties navigating the bureaucracy and resources of the ASUC, which can hinder their ability to effectively participate in the organization's activities.
- A fellow feels strongly that the ASUC is intentionally designed to be a complex system to provide a learning opportunity for students to participate in governance and public service. Many former ASUC senators have gone on to work in public service. The student government is not meant to be smooth and easy, but rather provide an opportunity for students to learn about governance. The responsibility of being well-informed about the system lies with the individual, as they are making a choice to leave the decision-making to others if they are not properly informed.
- A fellow feels that The restrictions in place by the ASUC seem to hinder communication and exposure of candidates during the student body elections. They limit the distribution of critical information about candidates and hamper the ASUC and candidate's access to the student body. This could be a reason for low voter turnout. In the case of the student technology fee, despite the majority being in favor of it, the low voter turnout resulted in insufficient votes for its implementation.

- In theory, individuals should abstain from voting when there is a conflict of interest, but in practice this is not always the case.
- A fellow pointed out that the fee that students pay to support the student government at Berkeley is the lowest among all PAC12 universities.
- A fellow expressed concern that the short terms of ASUC candidates may not provide enough time to fully grasp the intricacies of the student government before they depart from campus.
- A fellow expresses that the ASUC is deemed important as it allows student leaders to interact with campus officials, and it is an integral part of Berkeley's culture.
- A fellow believes that the ASUC is an essential part of conflict management and serves as a platform for students to learn about governance. Timing and delivery of information are crucial elements of success within this organization. Students should expect to make mistakes and learn from them, given that the ASUC is primarily an educational platform. However, some students tend to be overly critical of themselves and take it too seriously. In general, learning about governance is a crucial part of the ASUC experience.
- The Graduate Student Assembly is a subsidiary of the ASUC, though it functions independently. Interactions between the two are typically limited, except during voting.
- The ASUC controls a significant amount of money, although it is not often discussed why this is the case. The speaker expressed frustration with the difficulty in finding information about who is running for office and their positions, believing it should not be so challenging.
- A fellow feels strongly that the ASUC should be focusing on students and what students want. There are times where the ASUC discussions become esoteric. It's fair to address things on the world stage, but sometimes it becomes esoteric.
- Regarding how the ASUC functions and the efficacy – the ASUC is two fold
  - The business there is a CFO, CTO, etc.
  - There is also a student government side.
    - There is a judicial branch
    - There is an election council that maintains safe and fair elections.
    - There is a senate with 20 senators
    - There is a commission system
      - Housing commission
      - Mental House commission
      - Sexual Violence Commission
      - Similar to city government – meeting the needs of students in a non-partisan way.
      - Efficacy, transparency,
- A fellow notes that the ASUC at UC Berkeley has an operating budget that is 1/8th the size of the budgets at other UC campuses. Although there are stipends available to ASUC members, they are low and insufficient. In contrast, senators at other UC campuses receive stipends that can be up to minimum wage, allowing them to work 20-30 hours per week.
- The committees in ASUC have a close working relationship with the university administrators and are not just limited to exchanging emails. The academic affairs student office plays a vital role in managing committee appointments within the university's governance. For example,

making decisions regarding Pass No Pass. These committees ensure that students are included in important conversations that shape the campus community, and their voices play a crucial role in determining the state of the campus. However, the complexity of these committees can be confusing for students, and it is crucial that they are educated about these spaces.

- A fellow observes that individuals with shorter terms in ASUC tend to reinvent the wheel rather than build upon previous efforts. They suggest that appointed positions may offer more opportunities for effective contributions to the organization.
- A fellow suggests that the University and the ASUC should collaborate towards the same objective. They mention that the agreement with the university regarding commercial activity on campus, known as CASA, used to be fully controlled by the ASUC. However, due to the ASUC going bankrupt, the commercial activity had to be given up and now runs with a joint board. The CASA agreement was scheduled to be renegotiated in 2020, but the University has not come to the table to renegotiate it.
- A fellow emphasizes the importance of knowledge and expertise in certain positions, particularly those involving laws and regulations. They argue that while accessibility is important, some positions require a certain level of expertise and should be appointed rather than elected. The fellow suggests that a mix of elected and appointed positions can better serve the needs of the community.
- A fellow encourages students to attend the ASUC senate meetings every Wednesday at 8 PM in the senate chambers. While it may seem boring, it is important for accountability and understanding how the process works. The fellow emphasizes the need for student presence in these spaces, as there are many chairs available in the chamber.
- A fellow suggests that there needs to be a better focus on institutional memory within the ASUC. This can be achieved by building it into the appointment process and requiring an annual report to assess and report on their knowledge. Additionally, ASUC student groups should file a report detailing how they are utilizing their funds, as the reallocation of these funds is of great importance. The fellow argues that a more professional approach is necessary in this regard. Finally, the fellow notes that it is important to have continuity of work even after a senator leaves.
- A fellow emphasizes the importance of stipends for ASUC students, as many of them work long hours or have part-time jobs. This allows them to put even more time and energy into their work in ASUC.

Discussion Adjourned at 7:30 PM.

The Meeting closed with Song, and notes were compiled by the Chronicler.