

Union Council Minutes Summer 2018

July 17, 2018

Beefeaters Room, Memorial Union

Present: Zaakir Abdul-Wahid, Brennan Bahr (by phone), Yogev Ben-Yitschak, Farhat Bhuiyan, Mills Botham, George Cutlip, Susan Dibbell, Dan Grabois, Mark Guthier, Heidi Lang, Fernanda Martinez, Liz Preston, Erin Roberge, Chris Verhaeghe, Argyle Wade

Guests: Adan Abu-Hakmeh, Shauna Breneman, Lori DeMeuse, Doug Erickson, Miguel Guevara, Charlie Hoslet

Call to Order

Mills Botham called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Introductions

Zaakir Abdul-Wahid, an ASM representative has been newly appointed.

Approval of Agenda and 6/28 Meeting Minutes

Liz Preston motioned and Chris Verhaeghe seconded approval of the 7/17 agenda and 6/28/meeting minutes.

Open Forum

No open forum topics were brought forth.

Re-Cap of Last Week's Open Forums

Mills Botham reported that two successful open forums on the naming issue were held on 7/11 and 7/12/18. Transcripts and videos are in the Box folder. Results from the online forum are posted in the Box folder as well.

Listening Session Regarding Hate and Bias Complaint

Adan Abu-Hakmeh spoke about why she filed the hate and bias complaint. She stated that the complaint (which was signed by more than 300 people) was filed as a result of public outcry by a lot of people, for many of whom this was the first time they heard of a campus affiliation with the KKK. Also, some students were emotionally distraught that this was still an issue after it was discussed previously. She stated that many students feel unwelcome here and that the entire point of the hate and bias complaint was to say that by keeping the names of these two individuals on programming spaces it implies that someone's financial contribution matters more than students' mental well-being, academics, future, and legacy here. She feels this is an act of violence against a lot of students. Dan Grabois asked Ms. Abu-Hakmeh to expand on her statement that many students don't feel welcome here. She stated that even as an employee here for a number of years she has felt unwelcome. She encouraged Union Council members to read the comments included in the recently completed Inclusivity Study. Argyle Wade asked Ms. Abu-Hakmeh if she read the research material about and editorials written by Porter Butts, which to which she responded yes but, there was not sufficient proof that Porter wasn't a racist. She added that current student's voices should take precedence over what was done in the past. Discussion took place on whether the information that was provided on Porter's history with the KKK was enough of a gray area to question whether he joined the organization and was active in changing the name.

Former WUD Director's Feedback (attachment)

Mills Botham stated that he solicited feedback on the naming issue from last year's Directors. He received feedback from last year's Union officers Iffat Bhuiyan, Nicholas Munce and Courtney Medick. A copy of their recommendation is available with the meeting materials on Union Council's webpage.

Proposed Addition to Yale Criteria

Farhat Bhuyian presented her recommended amendment to the Yale Criteria for Named Spaces which addressed that different types of spaces should be treated differently. Discussion took place on Farhat's intent in adding the amendment and whether the amendment was necessary. Following the discussion Farhat made a motion to change the wording of her amendment as follows:

“The spaces we interact with influence how we act and how we feel (both consciously and unconsciously). It is important to acknowledge that individuals can experience different spaces (and even the same spaces) differently. A programming space needs to be versatile as the room is used for different types of events and different audiences. It should be a welcoming space where individuals are excited to enter, connect with their community, and enjoy their time there.

Spaces (including how they are named) have the power to influence the perception of self, belongingness, a user's mental health and their intellectual safety.

Regardless of the room's intent, the quality of a space is determined, in part, by the user's intuitive acceptance of it.

Questions to consider:

Who was this room built for and how has that demographic group changed?

How is it currently being used?

Are the room's original intent and its current use compatible?

Are the room's aesthetic, nomenclature and set-up/furnishings welcoming and inclusive?

This amendment will be attached to page 8 of the Yale Criteria.”

Liz Preston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion took place on whether the amended Yale Criteria should be used as a guideline or a rigid principle. Mark Guthier made a motion to use the amended Yale Criteria as a guideline for continued discussion on the named spaces issue. Dan Grabois seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Open Discussion Topics:

Mills pointed out that the August 6 meeting is the last scheduled meeting and we should consider the following questions to move forward.

- 1. Are we ready to apply the facts to the criteria?**
- 2. In, what more information/time/resources do we need?**
- 3. If so, how do we begin the deliberation process?**

Mark Guthier reported that he had lunch with the Randall's yesterday, July 16 as a follow up to the open forums. They were quite moved by what they heard at the forums and are very open to sitting down with some members of Council between now and next meeting to see if we can find a way to create a way to recognize Porter that doesn't involve a programming space.

Liz Preston moved and Dan Grabois seconded that Mills Botham appoint a diverse subcommittee of Union Council, including students, to meet with the Randalls to develop an option(s) for recognizing the professional legacies of Butts and March (that would be in lieu of the currently named spaces). The option(s) should be in line with what was proposed by the Union officers. The option(s) will be presented to Council on August 6, 2018.

Mark Guthier stressed that this action isn't a decision, but rather an endorsement of an approach to moving forward.

Mills asked those interested in serving on the sub-committee email him by midnight tonight.

Adjourn

Liz Preston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05. Mark Guthier seconded the motion.