

VETOED

SGA President vetoes Econ Trip food fund

Society of Undergraduate Economists plan trip despite being refused \$10,000

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Contributing writer

A Behrend club was left wanting last Wednesday when they were turned down for over \$10,000 worth of funding for an annual trip. The Society of Undergraduate Economists (SUE), which run the annual Econ Trip, had all food funding for the trip first rejected outright by the Student Government Association (SGA), then vetoed by its President, Stephen Burger.

The annual trip is partially funded by SGA. However, this year's proposal from the organization elicited a "no" vote from the SGA Budget Committee.

"The Budget Committee's opinion was that the proposal was very

weak and didn't provide enough detail," Burger said. "The Budget Committee makes recommendations on proposals which then come to the SGA for final approval. The senate approved the budget recommended by the Budget Committee which included no funding for the Econ Trip."

SUE then appealed the Budget Committee's decision, making a better proposal and more clarified example of how the trip would help business students. However, it was a request for over \$10,000 worth of food that hit a wrong note with the senate.

Aaron Morelli, a Senator elected last spring, felt that the \$10,000 was unreasonable, but that compromise could be reached.

"After discussion," he said, "I

decided it would be best to amend the funding to a lesser amount so we could get the Senate's vote."

Morelli's initial amendment, which reduced food costs to \$8000, was rejected. After further discussion, he was then able to pass an amendment of \$3200 for food costs. This amendment narrowly passed through the Senate, with only a margin of a few votes.

However, Burger then used his presidential powers veto the amendment, the first time in recent history that an SGA president has done so.

"Based upon the lengthy discussion and the budget committee guidelines I felt that it was inappropriate to pass this budget amendment, and I exercised my right to veto," said Burger. "At that point I informed the senate that they have

the right to revoke if they choose and that it would take a 2/3 majority vote to overrule my amendment."

The senate decided not to discuss the matter any further and President Burger's veto stood. Morelli said that despite the veto overruling his amendment, he understands its reasoning.

"Although I was originally against the veto, after the meeting I realized that the rules are put in place for a reason," Morelli said. "I feel that the decision was just and students wanting to go on SUE's trip should be able to pay for their own food."

Mike Lytle, a member of SUE, represented his club's interests at the SGA meeting. He spoke in favor of the trip and its funding.

"My only issue is that after it got vetoed, they could overturn the veto

with a two-thirds vote," Lytle said. "But, everyone had already been in the meeting for an hour, and I did SGA my sophomore year, and after an hour basically everyone is checked out."

SUE was funded for hotel costs as well as entertainment costs for a Second City improv comedy show in the city. They were also given money from the Student Activity Fee (SAF) for the trip, and the trip will continue as planned; it'll just draw from students' pockets for food money.

"A lot of students aren't too worried about it. But, there are other students, like myself, that aren't too financially stable," said Lytle.

"I really don't like the fact that the veto was used, but on behalf of SUE, we greatly appreciate the money we did get," he said.

USA China Photographic-question has answers



Chinese and American students' photographs have been hung in the top floor of Reed, each with questions regarding foreign culture.

Andy Iams/Beacon

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Many questions were posed by Behrend students in regards to students overseas, specifically China. These questions, along with others, are part of the USA & China Photo-Question Exchange Project.

The idea of having college students from both the USA

and China exchange questions through photos originated from Jing Liu, a transfer student from the Guangdong University in Guangzhou, China.

"Some people in China and Taiwan write down questions and answers for each other and take photos of them," said Ling, when asked how she came up with the idea. "Then, I thought, 'Why don't

we have one for American and Chinese people?'

The goal in that case was to strengthen friendships and understanding between the two countries. Andy Herrera, the Director of Educational Equity and Diversity Programs, explained how foreign relationships do not just help give us a better understanding of foreign culture, but also helps bring awareness

to exchange students here at Behrend.

"There is a large number of international students here at Behrend especially Chinese students," Herrera said.

"These students sometimes feel it is difficult to interact with Behrend students. Hopefully, this will help students understand one another's diverse cultures and life-styles."

If any are interested in learning more about the project and the lives of college students in China, all you have to do is visit the project's website (Photoquestion@yahoo.com) or its Facebook page and post a question, which is then reviewed for appropriateness. The answers are then answered by Chinese students who also participate in the project.

"So far, participation is lower than expected," said Herrera. "But we have some different ideas that will provide students incentives and easier access."

If you're interested in learning the lives of other college students from across the world, all you need to start is just one question.