

news

Lack of PSH representation at Rally in the Rotunda a result of SGA 'organizational failure'

By MARTY SANTALUCIA
COPY EDITOR
MFS5075@PSU.EDU

On Wednesday, March 18, Penn State students from every campus gathered at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg, Pa., for the annual Rally in the Rotunda. The Rally, organized by the Council of Commonwealth Student Governments (CCSG), is an annual Penn State event now in its eighth year.

The gathering is a sign of student support for increasing the state funding Penn State receives from the Pennsylvania budget.

While, according to The Daily Collegian, roughly 100 students and university leaders were present for the event, Penn State Harrisburg was not represented at the event which took place 11 miles from the campus.

During the Student Government Association meeting the next day, SGA Adviser Donna Howard asked the organization why no one was present.

One of the senators said they did not attend the event because

they felt Penn State Harrisburg was not adequately heard on a particular issue by the CCSG.

Earlier this year, the CCSG passed a proposal that, if approved by the Student Activity Fee boards, would draw off one percent of every commonwealth campus' SAF fund before the money is distributed to students and student groups for campus activities. The money would increase the CCSG budget from \$12,500 to roughly \$42,500 and be spent to increase the quality of representation commonwealth campuses receive at University Park, said George Khoury, president of CCSG.

Expenditures proposed by Khoury in an interview with The Capital Times included increased travel of CCSG central staff to commonwealth campuses and "special projects" with individual SGAs.

The proposal was presented by Khoury at a meeting of commonwealth SGA presidents and put up to a vote that same day.

The speed at which the proposal

moved was unusual, noted Khoury, but the SGA presidents were the driving force.

They were looking to secure a steady source of funding for the CCSG as its current budget comes from a contingency fund that could be facing cuts as a result of the current economic slow-down.

PSH's SGA President Antonios Avramidis was not present at this meeting due to illness.

Senator Fahim Ahmed voted "no" on the proposal during the council because he disagreed with the method of forcing campuses to pay the fee without SAF board approval for the funds.

Avramidis stated that numerous upset students had approached him upon finding out about the proposal's passage. As a result, PSH Student Court Chief Justice Oliver Eisler and Senate Leader Joe Matvia attempted to reconsider the proposal during the next council meeting; however, due to a provision in Roberts Rules of Order the reconsideration was not allowed and subsequent attempts died on the floor.

When approached for official comment Eisler responded "Get lost. We don't have time for you." and then commented to one of his colleagues "I'll bet you five bucks that shows up."

Following the meetings, rumors of Penn State Harrisburg seceding from the CCSG were reported to The Capital Times by former PSH student and CCSG central staff member Dustin Holler.

Secession from the council would have no legal impact, said Khoury.

PSH would still be subject to all actions of the council and any PSH student would be welcome to attend the meetings themselves and fill the seat left by the SGA.

Ahmed dismissed the rumor as something that was briefly mentioned by upset members of the SGA after unsuccessfully reconsidering the proposal.

"It would be foolish on multiple levels because it wouldn't accomplish anything positive so I hope it wouldn't happen. I will do my best to not allow it to happen. I don't think its going to happen," said Avramidis.

Avramidis refused to speak as a spokesman for SGA during an interview, but did confirm he was personally unable to attend the Rally in the Rotunda and the lack of representation was a result of individual senators and students choosing not to attend.

"Students that wish to attend Rally at the Rotunda that are in the area of being involved with the SGA and CCSG were not told to not attend Rally at the Rotunda. No one was told 'do not attend Rally at the Rotunda,'" said Avramidis.

As for the transportation, which is traditionally supplied by the SGA for all interested students to attend Rally in the Rotunda, Avramidis said those arrangements were the senate's responsibility and he had requested a proposal to be written to allocate the appropriate funds.

Ahmed said he had not received the information until very recently regarding Rally in the Rotunda and that the lack of representation was not a sign of protest against the CCSG, rather it was an "organizational failure" on the part of the SGA.

FUNDING: Transfer to student not against university policy

Continued from page 1

presented the senate with a single lump-sum proposal for all clubs totaling \$23,163.12 on Jan. 29, according to SGA minutes.

A debate surrounding the issue was noted in official SGA minutes. Senator Paul Fogle commented at the SGA meeting, the allocation of such large sums of money without line-by-line breakdowns could hurt the reputation of the SGA. Student Court Chief Justice Oliver Eisler disagreed, stating this was how the real world operated.

The lump sum passed with a vote of 6 to 2 with 1 abstention, according to the voting record.

In the line-item budget the SGA is required to provide Student

Activities, according to university policy, the \$2,200 item is listed as "subsidy for Spanish Club members, trip to Spain, celestial voyagers travel agency."

According to SGA financial documents, the money came from the SGA's FAA account, an account that is funded with Penn State Harrisburg's student activity fee and is used by the SGA to fund club activities and events.

Past allocations for club trips made by the SGA are traditionally divided among a number of students. The transfer of funds to a single student to attend a university trip does not violate any university policy. The proposal amounts to the single largest per-student expenditure of the Avramidis administration.

Scientists: Less ice on Great Lakes during winter

CLEVELAND (AP) — Ice cover on the Great Lakes has declined more than 30 percent since the 1970s, leaving the world's largest system of freshwater lakes open to evaporation and lower water levels, according to scientists associated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

They're concerned about how the milder winter freeze may affect the environment. But they're also trying to come to terms with a contradiction — the same climate factors that might keep lake ice from freezing might make freezing more likely if lake levels drop due to evaporation.

Scientists at the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Mich., say global climate change can be at odds with regional climate patterns. Accurately measuring ice cover across a lake system that spans 94,000 square miles in two

countries is no small task, they say.

Their studies show that although the amount of ice cover can vary substantially from year to year, the overall coverage on the world's largest system of freshwater lakes is diminishing, especially in the deepest, middle portions of Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario and Superior.

"The deeper the water, the greater the heat storage from summer, and it freezes later than the shallow areas," research Ray Assel told The Plain Dealer. "Now, increase the air temperature and the lake takes in more heat and stores it longer, to the point that many of the midlake areas are freezing over less."

Assel's records indicate that ice formation at nearshore areas has decreased less than on the deepest parts.

Evaporation from open water can cause heavy lake-effect snow

inland.

Researcher Jia Wang said ice loss can cause other problems, including the destruction of the eggs of fall-spawning fish by winter waves from an open lake, erosion of coastal areas unprotected by shore ice and less winter recreation on the lakes such as snowmobiling or ice fishing.

The Coast Guard has estimated it cost more than \$245,000 to rescue 134 fishermen from a huge ice floe off Ohio last month. The fishermen became stranded Feb. 7 when a miles-wide chunk of ice broke away in Lake Erie.

There might be one short-term advantage to decreased ice: Shipping may someday be more possible in the winter months. The locks at Sault Ste. Marie now close each year in mid-January and reopen in late March. But shipping companies might haul less cargo to pass through low-water areas.