

August 29th 2023

**6:00 PM – Call for Meeting & Attendance and Quorum**

**6:05 PM – Guest Speakers/Presentations (0 min)**

1. [Presentation] None

**6:05 PM – New Business (45 minutes)**

1. [Presentation] OSR Rep for 2027 Election

Discussion for 10 minutes

Motion to add 5 minutes of discussion time, passed

Karen Zapien-Guerra has won, 31 votes in total

**6:50 PM – Old Business (40 Minutes)**

1. [Discussion + vote] Student Senate Letter Re:IDEA Office

President: Throughout this executive senate year, issues with the IDEA office. Primarily reported ia IJI team

In town hall, takeover by a faculty member which took away from student response time. To air out private grievances. Dean Sakr then asked to speak at the following senate meeting, and then the aforementioned faculty member joined without permission and derailed conversation. Was supposed to be about Dean Baker and the fight to include higher diversity in the school, devolved in a discussion as to how the IDEA office does not receive support and is fighting a racist institution

Student senate began discussion after in Discord to continue appropriate response. Have we met our breaking point to speak against the IDEA office in request of more support? ISA mini survey reported that 51.7% had a bad connotation (not responsive, etc). Also reported little help in LGBTQ+. Also does not portray enough of URiM students, both in matriculation and retention.

The Executive senate then held an emergency meeting for next steps. Decision to draft a letter to the dean's cabinet to investigate why a majority of students have struggled with this office, and how to improve.

\*Demonstrates letter via screen share\*

Highlights that this is still a draft, and does not demonstrate our final word

Opens the floor to IJI to discuss

Multiple experiences with Dr. Roy, some positive and some negative. This is why the letter has been drafted. Question regarding if the Student Senate perspective is reflective of the Student Body experience. If an

investigation is to occur, all sides must be explored. Some of the policies are concerning, and may harm the student body more than it helps.

Co-president of BMA response: Calling into question the validity of the Student Senate in their representation of the entire student body. Definition of URiM students, and that AA students make a large percentage into the URiM student. There has not been proper discussion regarding the leave of Dr. Roy, and how it would affect minority students at this institution. Black men in education are not properly represented, and that they are punished disproportionately when charged with the same grievances as other demographics. The decision is reflective of this same trend. We wish to uphold the AA faculty at this institution. What is being done, supporting the firing of a faculty, without considering the grievances of other leadership at this time. Dean Sakr recently disrespected not only a prominent AA faculty member, but also multiple other AA students. Also has reflected on a live zoom that he would support the firing of Dean Roy. Given the actions of the Student senate recently, it appears to be on behalf of Dean Sakr. Collusion is defined as two parties acting in secret

Race and discrimination issues are the job of all faculty. We should have the same critical lens for ALL deans and faculty. Dean Baker, Dean Sakr, and Dean Chadwell also all need to be examined.

Belief that these actions are not equitable or fair. These actions are done without any validity or support to defend these actions. Discussion with Dean Roy and Dr. Moncrease, who have supported these students since their arrival on campus. To fire an individual without any cause, who is in a role to serve the URiM students, would be unjust. This would be an action speaking to forget this important demographic. Why is there discrepancy regarding the URiM students on this campus? Major disagreement with this letter, and is not appropriate to support the firing of this individual.

Agreement with all colleagues. Would like to see the survey that was discussed earlier, and complain about the misrepresentation of data especially by some faculty members. Only 10% if that represented in the Class of 2027, and these individuals rely on the IDEA office. There is limited faculty that support this department, and no other individuals to help support initiatives without any outreach. This letter does not speak to the individuals that it supposedly represents.

President: This is us inviting everyone to the table. We wish to have an open discussion about this letter.

We were considered an afterthought. Why isn't LMSA here? Why not other underrepresented groups?

President: We are not supporting the firing. We are only asking for the investigation into this office.

Zoom representative: This letter has been written and discussed and proofed. As the people affected the most, inclusion earlier on in the discussion would have been preferred. This feels after the fact, and that testimonies were collected after the fact. Question: When did the issue go from between IDEA and IJI to the student body as a whole?

Response: What we had intended was that regardless of what happened, we should share all of our experiences. This letter is from the student senate, versus an individual.

Question: These issues are IJI focused. When did they become representative of the whole student body?

Response: Unfortunately, this has been a bubbling frustration over the last year or year and a half for all members of the IJI committee. Especially re policies for diversity at this school. As elected leaders, they are run through the WHOLE student body to represent voices at this institution. The Student Senate has heard these responses for some time, but the events at the town hall highlighted a moment in which we needed to decide what actions might be necessary at this time. Both re policy work and admissions, which have been conducted over months. There has been a LOT of difficulty and conflict to get progress in these goals, specifically hindered by Dr. Roy. Even other AA faculty at this institution have had difficulties voicing themselves as the meetings (Diversity advisory council) have been canceled. Therefore a lot of the progress at this institution has been halted based on experiences with this office. Came to a head after the Senate meeting/town hall, which is where this idea was formed.

Question: Still concerned to see where this became from an IJI issue to a full Student Senate issue. From the senate, it becomes the voice of ALL the students. A bigger threshold to respond must be held. The actions of Dean Sakr also need to be addressed, especially as he went against Dr. Moncrease. The letter should be originating from IJI, and he is not dropping the ball based on ALL students.

Response: Thank you for bringing this up, this is why we are discussing this. If this is more appropriate from IJI, then we shall do as such

Question from zoom: Very familiar with this role of the IDEA office, as a prior member of IJI. There was an idea that was proposed to make this statement, which is not reflective of ALL senate or of ALL IJI. This is not an official statement from everyone, which is why we still need this discussion. IJI did not want to propel this into senate to serve as a full representation of the Student Senate.

Response: There has been a lot of microaggressions, and the firing of a black man for his inability to solve racism is impractical and irresponsible. When the Dean himself is speaking microaggressions, and there is no avenue to speak against him, then this is a biased system. If there is someone to address these issues, it must be those higher up. Firing a black man is not the solution to this issue or racism overall

Response: No one is asking him to solve racism, and further investigation must be performed prior to any official action. Being an AA man himself, it is important to garner his perspective. IJI is not asking him to perform this task, we have just been working in this system long enough to recognize that it can be fixed instantaneously. Therefore, we need to address even what the first step is. There are a lot of emotions, can we control how we respond to each other?

Zoom question: Hopefully my question is not inflammatory. I agree with everything my colleagues have said today. What has IJI done to reach out to Dean Roy and the IJI office to alleviate these concerns? Has BMA been reached out prior to this, especially if they are long standing concerns?

Response: These concerns have been discussed with the IDEA office and Dean Roy at length, and multiple meetings have been had with Dean Roy and Emily Otiso as to future goals. Feeling that they have not received any feedback, and been very transparent with both the Dean and the office. We have expressed that we feel IJI has shouldered a larger burden and have not received support.

Question: highlighted that BMA is one of the closest tied groups with the IDEA office. How did IJI not reach out prior?

Response: We take full responsibility for not reaching out sooner. We had a meeting with both presidents back in April. Unfortunately IJI has been in the middle of multiple squabbles and have taken a large mental toll on our members. This work has been draining, which is not an excuse as we should have reached out. Therefore we apologize for not reaching out to BMA and other associations prior to this moment/ There has been a large mental toll which has led to us not performing adequately with communication.

Zoom statement: I worked closely with Dean Roy and IJI last year with admin meetings. From what I have observed, Dean Roy does a great job working with students on an individual level. He has got your back. In more general aspects of his role, I am not saying I support his termination, he never got a true hang of managing the general issues of his office. As an instrumental part of the recruitment of diversity, there have been difficulties with these issues in this office. When it comes to supporting all students, not just AA students, better systems need to be in place. Multiple policies from IJI were swept under the rug. Many of the current issues could have been prevented with prior better management. This is not one individual fault, as the office could have been run better or received better support? However, this office is extremely important, and Dean Roy is a good person, it is just a very important decision to make sure all students are receiving this support.

Question of BMA: Dean Roy lost his mother and his Aunt in the span of several months, and this was not taken into consideration. With an office of 5, where the 2nd in command quits, how is one expected to survive in these roles?

Response: Dean Roy did communicate these losses. We respected that he did need to take a step back, and worked with other individuals in his office. This is not in regard to that time off, and that there was no concern regarding that time off.

Question of BMA: IJI has been around for 7 years, and Dean Roy has been around for only 2. So how does Dr. Smitherman's role play into this?

Response: So prior IJI was not as strong or as engaged as they are now. It cannot be weighed the same. When addressing the crisis response, Dean smitherman put the onus back on IJI. Dean Roy performed similarly. This is not to say that one acted correctly and one did not, and there are a lot of unrecognized factors and unspoken things for the people being represented by the people in this room. We don't wish to ruin the relationship of IJI and BMA, and it is not appropriate.

BMA member: BMA has a clear understanding, and we do not have a miscommunication regarding the communication

Zoom response: This was just in response to IJI

BMA member: A member stated that Dean Roy needed more training prior to getting this role. Dean Roy did not get a call from Dean Smitherman for appropriate training. Was also told that Dr. Baker would mentor him, which has not happened. Therefore we should not speak on things that we don't know.

Important to highlight intent versus impact, which is important in these discussions. So while the language does not speak to him being fired, but the group it comes from holds power. Highlighting of multiple aspects in this letter, and that this language is fireable offenses:

Motion: Not to send this letter, and to rewrite in a manner that is representative of all student bodies.

Friendly amendment to see if the student senate wishes to be involved.

Motion for Student senate (as all internal senate) to have a part in this conversation, or defer this back to IJI/BMA/all other appropriate parties

The motion passes, the Student senate will not send this letter and will disengage from this conversation.

A thank you to all parties that came and engaged in this difficult discussion today.

Moving forward as senate, we should admit that we made a mistake which has created this misunderstanding. BMA is not one or multiple people. This could have been avoided, and the presentation of some diverse ideas should not be dismissed as “going against each other”. We need to have a better environment to discuss more ideas.

@ constitution committee, if there is a desire to draft a letter or motion of this severity that we engage all appropriate parties to ensure that the perspectives are highlighted?

#### Discussion of Town Hall Event:

Many avenues are being discussed. Dean Sakr then asked questions, only 20-30 students in attendance. Student asked a question regarding a post-bac scholarship, and the IDEA office was in the dark. The second question was regarding the admission of AA students, and was told that 21 students were admitted (which is false). Was told that Dean Baker would address this in the later senate meetings.

Dean Moncrease asked the question. Dean Sakr appeared to have his guard up even prior to her question. This is not appropriate, regardless of prior history. Was addressing her by her first name, and telling her to sit down. Received a letter from his office, but no video. Multiple students also reprimanded Dean Sakr for his conduct. Why is it appropriate for Dean Sakr to act to her this way?

Dr. Baker not standing up for Dr. Moncrease was disrespectful, and this was the reason that Dean Roy walked out. When he stated that “I might lose my job because of this”, Deann Sakr repsoned “if you lose your job, it would not be because of this”

This was an extremely unprofessional interaction, and also not appropriate to make students sit through. In regards to the recording, there has been discussion to have students view the recording. The office has not been able to meet with Dean Sakr. Need an appropriate environment or way to view this video.

Everyone is desiring “transparency” about the numbers and the plan, but are not being transparent about the recording.

President: We should not hold a discussion re the recording without Sara present, and we do not have all the information.

Zoom Question: Desire to echo what Ruth stated earlier, diversity may be uncomfortable as it may go against traditional thinking. It is hard, but it must happen to open us all up to multiple perspectives. A comment made about “not wanting to fire back”. I was responding against IJI’s ideas, and was not desiring to speak against any individual. We should not label responses as firing back if they are against ideas and not an individual.

President: Given the time, IJI has taken a majority of the conversation. However, this was an important conversation that needed to be had. Therefore, at this time we shall move onto class reports.

~~2. [Discussion] 2026 Townhall recording— Ideas of what to advocate for~~

~~**7:30 PM – Internal & External & Ad Hoc Committee Reports (15 min)**~~

~~1. [Discussion+ vote] Constitution Committee: New Fin Aid Internal Senate Committee amendments (15 min)~~

~~**7:45 PM – Executive Senate Reports (10 min)**~~

~~1. [Discussion] Treasurer: Update on fund request, taxes, non-profit status~~

**7:55 PM – Class Senate Reports (5 minutes)**

1. Class of 2027

- First patient project September 8 before 5pm
- Service learning hours due September 6
- Finals week is the week of September 18
- Elective applications are due September 1

2. Class of 2026

3. Class of 2025

4. Class of 2024

- **This Thursday afternoon at 4pm** we have a ERAS check in
- Reach out to any of our advisors to review CVs and personal statement drafts
- 199 days until match, 282 days until graduation
  - June 6<sup>th</sup> is the tentative date

**8:05 - Adjourn**

