Wesleyan Council on Student Affairs

**Standing Committee on Administrative Policy**

Tuesday, 2 September, 2014

Members in attendance: Mr. McCord, Mr. Fleischer, Ms. Groseclose, Ms. Green

Members not in attendance: Mr. Lherisson, Mr. Raees

Executive Summary

The Committee discussed four major matters: the previous meeting and the state of the Standing Orders, a Title IX resolution, and two business items on a new Constitution (the first a topical discussion and the second a substantive discussion on the election of a chief executive). It did not elect a vice-Chair or other officers but will do so next week.

The Committee recommended that the Standing Orders be preserved as they are now, but that it would look into restoring Sessional Order 130A/130B from last term. This might speed up the budget process.

It further passed the recommendations by Dr. Goldsberry relating to Title IX and will be placing a resolution on notice for concurrence.

It then examined the Constitution and unanimously agreed to the following: a new document is necessary, campus political parties were not to be considered, and the chief executive of the association will be elected in some manner by WCSA’s representatives.

Committee met at 12:15.

Item #1 – Standing Orders

The CHAIR (Mr. McCord) requested leave to proceed with discussion on Standing Orders and effectiveness. Leave granted.

The CHAIR requested that members submit concerns regarding the conduct of the previous meeting. The following was raised: *A. Lack of clarity regarding order of business.*

All members stated their beliefs pertaining to the matter and concluded unanimously that no restorative/amending actions were required in relation to the Standing Orders. Members expressed confidence that problems with the immediately preceding Council sitting were resultant of extenuating factors, and that all members would benefit from the previously agreed to “Orientation”, which would include a session on the basics of process.

Ms. Groseclose mentioned that the existence of Sessional Orders 130A/130B in the previous term (relating to consent to budget allocations) aided in speeding up relatively non-controversial processes and recommended that its reuse be discussed with others before a resolution would be agreed to by the Committee.

The CHAIR inquired of Ms. Groseclose if she believed that the present requirement to place motions on notice 72 hours in advance and to require one week’s time to be elapsed as a “cooling period” for legislative scrutiny was appropriate. Ms. Groseclose indicated that she would prefer more time on notice but recognized the potential difficulties therein, but that she agreed with the stages and elapsed time of Second and Third Reading in principle. However, she noted that she found the present precedent – that rules be suspended whenever an inconvenience in process occurred – to be potentially dangerous.

Question – that the committee recommend that no action be taken to amend the Standing Orders at this time – put:

The Committee divided (the Chair, Mr. McCord, presiding) –

AYES, 4

Mr. McCord

Mr. Fleischer

Ms. Groseclose

Ms. Green

NOES, 0

PRESENT, 0

NOT VOTING, 2

Mr. Lherisson

Mr. Raees

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Item #2 – Title IX Resolution

The CHAIR requested leave to proceed with discussion on Title IX resolution recommended to the Committee by the Chief Faculty Advisor (Dr. Goldsberry). Leave granted.

The CHAIR explained that a resolution was immediately sought to be read regarding approving changes to the Student Code of Conduct placing it in compliance with Title IX. The Chair noted that primary substantive changes to the policy were in relation to Title IX advisors and “counsel” being able to assist in serious misconduct hearings. Ms. Groseclose further explained the role of Title IX changes.

Question – that the committee report the resolution in the affirmative – put:

The Committee divided (the Chair, Mr. McCord, presiding) –

AYES, 4

Mr. McCord

Mr. Fleischer

Ms. Groseclose

Ms. Green

NOES, 0

PRESENT, 0

NOT VOTING, 2

Mr. Lherisson

Mr. Raees

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Ms. Green requested that the matter be forwarded to the Women’s House for potential input from their constituency. Leave granted.

Item #3 – New Constitution – Topical

The CHAIR noted that the Committee’s primary commissioning aim was to draft a new Constitution as the present document is a carry-over from the mid-1980s that had been amended an average of once per year and no longer held relevance to the organization as a whole, while noting that individual sections remained highly relevant. The Chair recommended that the Committee first examine structure as a method to frame the structure of the document with a clear aim.

The Chair then presented a myriad of options from his research:

* Larger universities tended to use a highly litigious form of student government: a full three branch system composed of an Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary. Such systems were highly complex and the Chair recommended against their consideration as a model for WCSA due to their over complexity and burdensome nature, to which the Committee agreed.
* Some other universities utilized a hybridized Executive-Legislative system where the Chief Executive was elected from the whole university and a deputy was elected from the legislative.
* Further, other universities utilized a system much akin to the current: an executive was elected and given seats in a separately-elected legislature.
* Additionally, other universities employed a “parliamentary” (Mr. Fleischer) system where a legislature was elected. The legislature then proceeded to elect a Chief Executive and other necessary offices.

The Chair noted that the Committee has approximately six weeks to frame the Constitution and submit it for Council approbation.

Mr. Fleischer and Ms. Groseclose noted that expanded meeting times were possible and could be placed on consideration if needed.

Mr. Fleischer inquired about campus political parties. The Chair noted that, in his research, campus political parties were entirely untenable, noting several case studies:

* Florida State University, current – the Torch Party has held an 80% legislative majority and executive monopoly for the duration of their public record.
* Ohio Wesleyan University, 1970s – OWU formerly used the Party List method of election, which resulted in the Greek Party, the SUBA Party, and the Wesleyan Party. The Greek Party also had a supermajority of seats, earning two-thirds for all available partisan election periods.
* Commonwealth universities, including University of Melbourne and others, found that the imposition of parties resulted in mainstream political parties forming shadow parties inside their governments, resulting in a system that deeply fractured communities and resulted in the Voluntary Student Unionism fights of the 1990s.

Ms. Groseclose voiced her serious concern to the imposition of parties, and noted that students who wished to join a political party had plenty of other outlets in which to do so. The matter was thereupon dropped.

Item #4 – New Constitution – Formation of Chief Executive

The CHAIR, following an un-moderated general discussion of constitutional organization, inquired about the election of the governmental chief executive.

Ms. Groseclose proposed – *that the student body elect its legislature, who shall elect from their membership a President* – to be agreed to in principle. She stated her belief that students electing WCSA members, who would in turn elect a President, would eliminate the Donkey vote and popularity contests found in WCSA Presidential elections. She stated that since the student body had an opportunity to elect their student representatives that the people would have had the ability to select their government, given that elected representatives carry more significant weight than any one office. She also noted that this would increase the responsibility of representatives in picking an appropriate person for the job. She further stated that, due to the incumbency of WCSA, as well as the familiarity between members, that the representatives would be better-equipped to make an informed decision. She also noted the general apathy of the Student Body toward elections (low turnouts and abysmal debate attendance).

Ms. Fleischer proposed – *that the words ‘from their membership’ be omitted* as an amendment to the previous question. He stated that the ability to “draft” talent from the student body would provide the best range of choice, much like the position of Majority Speaker in state and federal houses. Furthermore, this would enable the whole student body to be involved in the executive appointment process by transference.

The CHAIR noted for members the pros and cons of the original question:

PROS – Would offset student body apathy; would eliminate donkey votes and popularity contests due to name recognition/affiliation stacking; would eliminate tension due to position switches often found in the submission process; would eliminate election fall-off/atrophy due to multiple rounds; would give more responsibility to general representatives; would reduce student body factionalism; would enable people more familiar with the candidates to make a more informed decision; would encourage more people to run for representative positions as they then carry power

CONS – Would remove direct control over the executive election from the Student Body; would remove from the student body the ability to directly select its desired leader; previous points could cause greater apathy/resentment sentiments from the student body; might increase lack of clarity in WCSA operations to outsiders

There were no other members wishing to make points on the matter. The Chair thanked members for a well-thought, respectful debate.

Question – that the amendment be agreed to (Mr. Fleischer) – put:

The Committee divided (the Chair, Mr. McCord, presiding) –

AYES, 4

Mr. McCord

Mr. Fleischer

Ms. Groseclose

Ms. Green

NOES, 0

PRESENT, 0

NOT VOTING, 2

Mr. Lherisson

Mr. Raees

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Question – that the constitutional principle be agreed to as amended (Ms. Groseclose) – put:

The Committee divided (the Chair, Mr. McCord, presiding) –

AYES, 4

Mr. McCord

Mr. Fleischer

Ms. Groseclose

Ms. Green

NOES, 0

PRESENT, 0

NOT VOTING, 2

Mr. Lherisson

Mr. Raees

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

Ms. Groseclose inquired if budget allocations not considered at the previous meeting would be placed on the Calendar for the next Council sitting. The Chair responded in the affirmative.

The CHAIR saw no further business and reminded members that the following topics should be considered for the next sitting:

Division or unity of the Executive, elections of members, types of seats, quotas for class/gender, resolution of executive positions under proposed system for Winter Retreat purposes, meeting times for this committee, organization of Executive and Legislative, and any other business pertinent to the committee.

Committee adjourned at 13:00.