

UA Meeting Minutes  
December 3, 2008  
7:00 pm  
UA Office

1. We will discuss Blue Ribbon Dining
2. Noah: We've fixed a lot of things; gotten a lot of successes. What I'd really like to see is us doing some really high level goal setting. We need to realize: who are we as the UA? What are our goals? What are the points on our list?
  - 2.1. I feel that there are a lot of things that I am working on; we have the capacity to set formal objectives for the organization as a whole. I ask that when we come back from break, we have some ideas about what we want from the UA.
  - 2.2. Example: PLUS program. Ye took the initiative and went through the UA framework to get things done. Just having an idea is not enough. We have to match an idea with people and resources. Was Immerman Instrumental?
    - a) He was instrumental in bringing in individuals. But realistically it was mostly CSL.
  - 2.3. Noah: ideas don't matter until you get traction and jump started. I felt this way. I've often been overwhelmed with too much to do and too little space in which to do it. I've dropped a lot of balls, and I know that.
  - 2.4. How do we shift Exec. In a way that let's us collaborate and prioritize more effectively?  
Talked with Liz and Ye about setting goals for Exec.
3. Liz: one of the major things Ye and I have been talking about: I listen to updates but I don't have a stake in them. My personal feeling is Exec. Would be more productive if we focused on using a single "brain trust" to use each of our skills and bring them to these issues. What the UA does for Blue Ribbon is now what the UA does in general. I don't want to specify how we should tackle all major goals during our meetings. I just think we should get more things done and use our skills more effectively.
4. Noah: I want everyone to have a strong sense about what the UA offers you. What I've seen is that we run up against brick walls. We don't know what to do or how to do it. I want to set up a process so that if you want to do more, there's an available avenue on which you can take ownership. Sometimes I have trouble delegating things. I don't want to delegate things that are easier for just me to do and not annoy you. I want to be fair to you. These are my basic ideas.
5. Vrajesh: While each person should have ownership on what they're doing, I personally can't represent what the undergraduate body wants.
6. Liz: I think we should have a purpose more clear than just improving people's lives. We need to establish broad goals so that we can all unite our ideas to create a cohesive schedule of things that we accomplish. We need to get things done and be organized in doing so. I want to get stuff done and get student support for it.
7. Paul: I feel that having a chair of dining and PR and committee is that that committee and chair have control of their sector and not have to constantly ask permission.
8. Liz: my personal take is that committees exist is because they get really in depth in one field and know exactly what's going on. What I think needs to happen, besides the base tasks, is there needs to be...the UA's motivation and goals. Exec's dealing with committees is doing things for the UA as a whole.
9. Noah: Vrajesh has wanted to really get involved with UA, and I should let him do more than just Sustainability. How can we build a framework such that it is very easy for somebody to get involved with something that interests them.
10. Athletics: If you have a concrete list of things to get done, people who are interested will express that interest by jumping in on it.

- 11.Noah: What do that actions of various other organizations mean to us. Are you looking more for UA Exec. Is doing this.
- 12.Liz: If we all work towards a single goal, we'd all focus. As an example: one area we need to make sure that in everything we do is we present student interest and opinions overall to admins. So that they get one thing from the students and can do something with it. We need to have some sort of unified front where we get student opinions on student life things, we understand that, and we transform them to actively go out and get student input.
- 13.Comment: ideally, Senate should be giving tasks, which it isn't—since freshmen are clueless freshmen and don't know much about what's going on. All I cared about as senator was EC stuff. The way Senate's structured now is that we overlap with all the student governments. For the UA to be useful, we need to figure out what all the issues are that can be brought to Senate. Solves the problem of: if student body tells us to do something, UA would be more useful. Hard thing is figuring out what students want.
- 14.Vrajesh: we need to recognize the trade-off between having a single student body voice versus each person having autonomy. If each person feels empowered to represent student body, may misrepresent.
- 15.Mike: yes but we need this; we can't rely on each other or nothing gets done. This system is designed to work itself out. Interaction with committees is going well. Directions are going well. I am sending directions and its getting done. Little more though.
- 16.Athletics: in order for UA to accomplish things, we need people to take us seriously. Most students don't respect us. We need to work on making the UA more serious. We are the student government.
- 17.Noah: Graduate Student Council has people who want to go swinging on issues. They're very united in the general direction in which they move.
- 18.Comment: What we could do is: there's no one place to go for the admins. To get a single voice.
- 19.Mike: I think we've made a lot of progress on that. Not many people can see this.
- 20.Athletics: I think getting people to take us seriously is the key to getting things done. A good way to do it is to make things more official. Events with free food organized (have people wearing UA shirts), do things very uniform, make things respectable so that people respect this. Make things much more official.
- 21.Noah: not sure if this boils down to infrastructure problem (getting things done halfhasardly right before the event)..  
Mike: I think we need to let go of things that we think we think we can do.
- 22.Mike: hiring an administrative assistant is something I really think we should do. He/she would be an adult, hired for a few hours a day.
- 23.Resp: we would make it so that any student could submit a bug report; we could use the front page on the Tech to publicize us and let us know we're here to help.
- 24.Vrajesh: What if we get a ton of replies?
- 25.Liz: we would find patterns; things that multiple say.
- 26.Noah: there's software that is a request tracker. I wa thinking about setting one of these up for the UA. I got a lot of emails asking for a student for an institute committee. We would have an organized forum so that anyone could look up the tickets and view what is really happening.
- 27.Liz: Committees are doing some fantastic things, but not a lot is coming out of it. Blue Ribbon is doing a lot of great stuff. It's hard for students to recognize this because they don't get the end result yet. It's a problem because students won't look highly upon us unless we do things that they appreciate.
- 28.Blue Ribbon can't share data.
- 29.Vrajesh: why can't we share this data?
- 30.Mike: if the data is allowed to come out, some people won't agree with the data because it

represents everyone.

31. Vrajesh: if you hide things like dining, there's a lack of transparency.
32. Mike: this committee's already been going for two years.
33. Liz: there are students on this committee. The administration is not going to ask us to poll every student and have us take a stance on dining.
34. Dining: We're looking at the data and listening to you.
35. Noah: by the time I get done with meetings, I can't face what happened at the Task Force...it's a lot of things. I'm not really sure what happened.
36. Keone: minutes should not be a transcript.
37. Noah: I think traveling exec. Is relevant so that what we discuss is public.
38. Keone: We want to move on and talk about issues.
39. Comment: I want to make a bill that says we want to make a massive campaign so that all students can forward their grievances.
40. Liz: We can do things without Senate. This is not something.
41. Noah: quick once around and touch on something.
42. Mike: changes I plan to make
  - 42.1. Changes as to committees. Will cut a few. (Resource Development; others) We should cut the fat and rebuild. Makes me feel bad that they're not doing anything. I talked to GSC about Chief of Staff. In same sphere as UAP and VP. Position that has more generic responsibilities like doing things. This has to be implemented correctly. Noah and I have a ton of things to do right now. If we had another person to share things with, we'd have a lot more time to fix things internally.
  - 42.2. Dorm Comm has lost power; bad for everything. We need to have UA and Dorm Comm work together without clashing.
  - 42.3. Noah: dorm security goes through Dorm Comm and not UA.
  - 42.4. Mike: Need to improve relationship with Dorm Comm.
  - 42.5. Comment: hopefully Senate will propose bills with teeth.
  - 42.6. Keone: admin. Idea has great merit. Good way of establishing more institutional memory. I would push for full time assistant that can go to meetings with Mike and Noah. It's taken an entire term for us to have this discussion. Even if we can sort out our things (Noah: push our history so that it can be referred to in later years). Going to Task Force and other meetings, it's hard to remember everything.
43. SCEP: dealing with violation and report on GIRs.
44. Jason: MIT's cutting budget. Exec. Meeting corporation will approve budget cap; determine funding priorities. Going to have a number of students on committees regarding financial matters; look out for that.
45. CSL: I think we need to focus on improving Senate. Committees getting stuff done. Committees should continue to get stuff done.
46. Vrajesh: web update hasn't been done.
47. Riley: Treasurer—Finboard allocations last week; good. LEF Arcade allocations happening this coming weekend. Talking to students about what's going on in the UA: use the Tech. Have one Exec. Member or something write about what we're doing. If we're concerned about keeping a unified front, we have each article approved before its implemented. If it's there, we have our job done.
48. Athletics: establish regulations required by UA (senators included). To get students backing us, we need to accomplish something significant this year. So that people can look back at this one thing and be amazed at the accomplishments of the UA.
49. Keone: first: I disagree on adding more committees. I think we've been talking a lot about how Senate sucks. I don't see it. I see they're new, but I don't understand exact criticisms.

- 50.Noah: It is a rebuilding year; we cut meeting times, and we're coming around. Now it's a question of really giving it purpose.
- 51.Paul: I'm trying to make NomComm thing shiny I want your suggestions.
- 52.Mike: I think it was good meeting. Good luck with finals.