

**Princeton USG Senate  
Meeting 9  
December 5, 2021  
8:00PM**



**Undergraduate  
Student  
Government**

### **Introduction**

- 1. Question and Answer Session (15 minutes)**
- 2. President's Report (5 minutes)**

General updates:

- Advocacy around new COVID restrictions
  - Immediately corresponded with Dean Dolan, VP Calhoun, and AVP Izzo to clarify terms like “student groups” and “gatherings,” and to ask that testing kits be available upon arrival
  - Coordinated with ODUS and OVPCl around potential policy changes in the advance of the updated announcement
  - Met with VP Calhoun to ensure the return of the heads-up practice between USG and administrators
  - Advocated for undergrads-only booster clinics
  - Corresponded with Austin Davis and Dean Dolan around ODOC’s memo to the faculty regarding final exams and student mental health
  - USG Winter elections
  - New Davis IC announcement
    - Corresponding with ODOC on potential solutions so that students do not have to choose between their academic trajectory and spending time with their families
  - Over winter break:
    - USG Annual Report
    - Lawnparties Review Committee Report
    - Referendum position paper (if the referendum passes)
    - Transition work

### **New Business**

- 1. Committee Reports (5-10 minutes/committee)**

**Social Committee: William Gu**

- Lawnparties MMXXI
  - Began planning in July 2021 upon approval of the event within COVID-19 guidelines
  - Worked with ICC and faculty to set preliminary Lawnparties date

- Food trucks/activities/headliner artist/merch giveaway were finalized in September
- The post-Lawnparties survey received a high response rate
- Continued series of outdoor movie screenings
- Princeton vs Yale game and bonfire
- Dean's Date celebration
  - Working with ODUS to determine feasibility of a Dean's Date event within University guidelines
  - Merch giveaway has been confirmed; 1,000 stadium scarves will be distributed on the day of the celebration.

### **Campus and Community Affairs Committee and Internal Resources Task Force: Lehman Montgomery**

#### Campus and Community Affairs Committee:

- Focus during fall semester:
  - Maintaining a high and stubborn level of commitment
  - Creating layers of connection between students and community
  - Institutionalizing new community building events for students
- Timeline:
  - August: met with community partners
  - Sept: managed an application process
  - Oct: launched the USG Fall Fellows program, conducted review of PUVAC 2021
  - Nov: Community Dining pilot program launched
  - Dec: conducting survey of USG Fall Fellows participants, working with Judy Jarvis on "Short Term Action Projects"
- Programs and initiatives:
  - Tigers in Town
  - Community Dining Pilot Program (partners)
  - USG Fall Fellows program
  - Wintersession short term action projects
    - This initiative is being workshopped with Judy Jarvis and will function similarly to the semester-internship program but on a shorter time table.
  - Future work will look to expand on the scope and coverage of CCA programs by expanding access to the entire student body (e.g. campus accessible speaker series)
- Takeaways from USG Fall Fellows survey
  - Feedback was exceedingly positive. There is strong interest in expanding the size of the program.
  - Some criticisms included difficulties managing an internship during the semester and the limited diversity of speakers and partner organizations

#### Internal resources committee

- Task force work streams
  - Institutional memory
  - Mentorship program
  - Capital improvements
  - Performance management

#### Questions from the Senate:

- Is USG going to do a service project?
  - USG discussed working with organizations that deal with food insecurity, but there was no availability in spaces that could accommodate a group as large as USG.

#### **Academics Committee: Austin Davis**

- Initiatives:
  - COVID-19 virtual access point for students unable to attend in-person classes
  - Mixed concentrations/minors feedback collection
  - Fall student health survey
  - Advocacy around final exams
  - Midterm grades referendum
  - Academic expo
- Minors focus groups:
  - Discussions with approximately 30 students
  - Minors were a more pragmatic option
  - Emphasized depth, flexibility, and simplicity
  - Primarily concerned about the difference between minor and certificate
  - Next steps: final plan and implementation
- Student health survey
  - n=207
  - 90% reported being ill this semester
  - Concerns around academic support and resources
  - Biggest issue: awareness of accommodations and existing practices
  - Creating a final report with a best practices guide
- Items of interest
  - January 18-19th: Virtual Certificate Expo
  - Mid-January: final report on student health and academics
  - March/April: Declaration Open Houses

#### **Sustainability Committee: Mayu Takeuchi**

- Objectives:
  - Amplifying student voices: Divestment/Dissociation Focus groups, fossil fuel funding for student research
  - Working with University administrators: Evidn collaboration, giveaway guidelines, waste/recycling
  - Coordinating University-wide communications and programming
- The dialogue surrounding Dissociation involves the CPUC Resources Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Board charged the University with creating criteria for divestment. The University created a committee of faculty and administrators but did not include student voices despite the work of student activists. Over the course of the fall semester, the Sustainability committee advocated for student representation in divestment discussions. The faculty and administrative committees allowed for written input from students. The committee garnered support from administrators to incorporate student voices as recommendations for divestment are developed.

## **2. RCDB Report: Reade Ben (10 minutes)**

The report encompasses seven critical topics: record high quantities of disciplinary probation (DP), vague social construct, unequal sentencing, misleading information about DP, flaws in the RCDB adjudication process, use of private investigators, and the continuation of harsh and inequitable policing during the 202 fall semester.

- Disciplinary probation results in disclosure of the DP to people both inside and outside of the Princeton community and increased risk of more severe punishment.
- The spring 2021 semester yielded quadruple the number of normal DP infractions during a semester.
- 80% of Social Contract violations warranted DP (369/432)
  - By comparison, in every year since 2016, a majority of students who committed theft only received Dean's Warnings.
- The report also investigates the impact of DP on first generation and low income students.
- The standard duration of DP for missing COVID tests have decreased since last spring, but this is inequitable for students who received their DP when sentencing was especially harsh.
- Despite affirmations that DP does not prevent students from achieving their goals, one of the students interviewed for the report reported being penalized for their DP during the grad school application process.
- The report found flaws in the RCDB adjudication and interview process:
  - The fall semester of 2020 received two lines of communication from Deans of Student Life and Deans of the College.
  - Little sympathy for extenuating circumstances

- Deans of Student Life were expected to assume the role of judge, jury, and confidant. Confiding in administration members who determine disciplinary outcomes creates a false sense of security.
- Long wait times for outcome decisions
- No clear timeline for vacating campus
- Students were initially charged with Disorderly Conduct for social contract violations, but the charge was later changed to Health and Safety concerns. The shift from categorizing social contract violations from Disorderly Conduct to Health and Safety was not transparent.
- Invasive and coercive lines of questioning from private investigators
- Encouraged self-incrimination
- Fishing for other potential violations
- One student reported having to speak to a private investigator 7 times over the course of one semester.
- These flaws have been continued during the fall 2021 semester:
  - Discrepancies in punishments for violations of the same nature
  - Size of groups in determining punishment
  - Mistakes in RCDB outcome letters
- Recommendations:
  - Acquit testing violations; reconsider other penalties
  - Collect data on tangible damages and compensate
  - Least common denominator punishment
  - Provide support for RCDB process
  - Reconsider anonymous reporting for non-separable offenses (does not apply to Title IX)

#### Questions/comments from the Senate:

- Since disciplinary probation is a vague term that can encompass many different offenses, how are all COVID-related offenses being charged under the umbrella term of DP? Are there measures being taken to clarify the nature of COVID-related DP for people reviewing students' records?
- How is the University addressing the issue of DP affecting grad school application processes?
- It would be helpful to clarify the structure of the report and who was interviewed. The quantitative aspects of the report could be moved to the beginning.
- This report can be framed as an entrance into this ongoing discussion.
- What are the next steps for USG?
  - The recommendations are helpful for USG to consider how to communicate with the administration. However, existing Honor Code processes make this issue more complex than simply recommending solutions to the administration.

- The RCDB process for the COVID semester was determined by the University without input from students, which is different from Honor Code processes that have been long established.