



Albany Law School  
STUDENT BAR ASSOCIATION  
**Meeting Minutes**

Date: November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Room: 200

Time: 7:30 PM

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

- a. Welcome/Introduction
- b. Roll Call for Quorum: Set at #19
  - i. -/24 Members Present
    1. Meg Tylenda
    2. Max Sevor
    3. Ashlyn Henrichs
    4. Natalie Turney
    5. Jonathan Stein
    6. Michael Wood
    7. Julia Vavrinec
    8. Jack Rainey
    9. Stephen Giorgianni
    10. Alex Hollocher
    11. Chloe Kangarlu
    12. Frank Pacella
    13. Azad Kurd
    14. Mitch Whittaker
    15. Katie Pedlow (Absent)
    16. Colin Baker
    17. Mitch Spaulding
    18. Dean Kaknis
    19. Taylor Alimari
    20. Noah Jacobs
    21. Ben Jacobs
    22. Olivia Vecchio
    23. Madeleine Jones
    24. Veronica Esteves

**II. OPEN FORUM**

- a. None Scheduled.

### III. BYLAWS BILLS

- a. Bill # 029 FPAC Bylaw Reform
  - i. The reason for this is to allow elections to be allowed when necessary, discussed some new positions added at will, how a person becomes eligible for E-Board, duties of positions, and how someone can be removed from the club.
- b. Bill #030 PAD Bylaw Reform
  - i. The reason for this change is to edit the chapter charter and to add the anti-discrimination clause required by Albany Law SBA Bylaws.
- c. Bill #031 International Law Bylaw Reform
  - i. The reason for this change is adding compliance for the Albany Law SBA bylaws. Mitch S. thanks Susanne Corrigan for her work editing these.
- d. Bill # 032 Bylaw 5 Change: Absences
  - i. The reason for this bylaw change is to update the bylaws and modernize the attendance policy. Three or more missed SBA meetings coupled with missed committee meetings could be grounds for dismissal.
- e. Bill #035 Bylaw 6 Revision Revisited
  - i. The reason for this change is regarding the ethics process; this was previously brought forth to the senate and tabled/ sent back to the committee to make the subsequent edits.

### IV. CONSTITUTIONAL BILLS

- a. Bill #033 Creation of the Safety Committee
  - i. To create a safety committee; establishing it in the constitution as well as the bylaws.
- b. Bill #034 Ethics Committee Addition
  - i. This is proposed to be added to the ethics committee; in order to fix a discrepancy between bylaws and constitution. Making 3 non-elected members of the SBA in the committee instead of just 2 to have a majority of non-senate members.

### V. ROLLING BUDGET

- a. Bill #036 Events Committee
  - i. To pay for the security for Scarristers; Events Committee to request and help pay for the additional request as the invoice came after.

### VI. RESOLUTIONS

- a. Resolution #003, Student Activity Fee
  - i. **Presented by President Max S.; Revisiting Townhall PowerPoint and Survey Feedback**
    1. Student Activity Fee is common among University/ Law Schools. Some events hosted at the school are paid for by Career Center, but student lead events are funded by the SBA.
    2. If voted to increase the fee tonight, it is not guaranteed to go up- it is just a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, who have the power to change it.

3. Inflation is a huge reason as to why to look at the increase in the Student Activity Fee.
    - a. Venue increases, general increases in cost after COVID.
  4. Had to make an 18% cut to the requested amounts for Fall 2023.
  5. Efforts to consolidate have been made, but some events cannot be.
  6. Seeking to increase the quality of events, students have wanted this, so more money to increase quality would be helpful.
  7. Student Activity Fee Survey
    - a. Survey: 129 responses received out of around 600 students on the listserv.
      - i. 37.9 percent in favor.
      - ii. 54.03 percent against.
      - iii. 8.06 percent no opinion.
    - b. The average increase noted by responses was around a 11.51% increase.
    - c. Common helpful feedback shared from the survey.
  8. There are several reasons why it makes sense as an institution to increase fee but should factor in the fiduciary duty to students and what they would like.
  9. Proposed a \$10 increase in the spring, or the fall if not feasible to send to the board.
- ii. **Comments and Questions to this Presentation**
1. **Veronica E.:** A lot more clubs are coming in; clubs are asking for more funding. Considers that people are filling it out to express that they do not want the increase, instead of filling it out whether impartial or for the increase.
  2. **Frank P.:** asks if the Board has commented on whether they will accept it if we pass the resolution.
    - a. Max S. comments that this is not a guarantee- it is just permission, if passed, for Max and Meg to do this presentation for the board.
  3. **Stephen G.:** raising the activity fee through the semester, would this factor into student loans?
    - a. Loans would adjust to this or be subtracted from the pay back if the loans cover more.
  4. **Chloe K.:** for 1Ls who didn't vote; notes that a lot were upset by it and adamant about saying no- but did not fill out survey.
  5. **Natalie T.:** For those who are not able to attend this presentation and discussion, note that her decision is based on speaking to students, non-SBA members and SBA members, faculty, directors, and others. Points out that we are seeking to reform the budget process entirely: we have given the finance committee the power to consolidate events and have more discretion in organizing the budget before presentation to the senate. The 3Ls got a large amount of feedback and notes that the concerns have been heard and are being attended to by the senate. Notes that there indeed are

too many events; if they exist then they need to consolidate by groups and be more beneficial to students. If the school wants to continue to promote its feeling of community, however, we need to have the funds to have the events hosted by SBA- so the fee needs to be raised. Thinks this is a great step forward in enacting the Strategic Plan. Reiterates that this is not enacted on our end, has to go the board and they have to approve it. We are just providing an opinion and insight into the way the budget looks now.

6. **Stephanie K.:** wants to bring to the attention that students are also living with the aftermath of inflation. This year the school raised tuition 5%, raising the fee by \$10 is too much for some. Personally does not want another fee. The majority goes to Scarristers, Barristers, and Farewell party and does not believe those events should be funded so much. Personally does not go to those events and definitely will be peacing out at graduation and not attending the Farewell party. Asks to look at spending the money more wisely; does not think student activity fee should go towards alcohol; outlines reasons as being that many lawyers suffer from problematic drinking. Would like to point out that alcohol at events is done to fit into liability, so you must pay for security and insurance and other things. The student activity fee is through loans and people are paying for alcohol with this loan and it is not financially sound. Does not want the budget to go this way as an increase. Problematic as a whole with alcohol here, there is alcohol in the communal fridges, and it is bad for those who struggle with addiction, and it is an insurance liability as there can be under 21 students here. Even if the activity fee is raised, consider the alcohol issue moving forward.
7. **Meg T.:** At the first meeting, when this was proposed at the presentation of the Strategic Plan, she was not in favor. But after spending so much time with the finances and having been here (on SBA senate) for awhile to see the changes that have come with that- changed her mind. Understands the large funding of the SBA events exists; thought it was absurd as a 1L, but Farewell is a free event for the families graduating. In terms of Barristers, the money gets paid for by the tickets- a large amount of that money does come back to the accounts.
8. **Alex H.:** About 100 thank yous to Stephanie for attending SBA meeting. Alex is in favor of having more money for good club events, but it makes sense as to why the student body does not want it. Points to transparency issues with the budget process and with money wasted on alcohol and food that are left over- especially events that do not contribute to the student experience. Does not think that we have given reason for students to trust it will be used in the best way. Applauds steps to create transparency and ways that SBA is run- in order to get student support, we

shouldn't show numbers and statistics as to why the increase should happen, should show responsibility.

9. **Chloe K:** echoes point about Stephanie, \$10 doesn't seem like a lot, but it is a lot for some people.
10. **Lexa ?:** Agrees with Stephanie on the students feel the SBA is spending money on things we do not need. Acknowledges Barristers as being a good memory, but notes family alcohol addictions and notes classmates discussing alcohol issues as if it is not a thing. Notes people take alcohol from the communal fridge and into the library.
11. **Michael W.:** the main point; would like to center around the fiduciary duty that is imposed on the senate- information gathered by classmates is more persuasive to him than the anonymous poll by the school. Overwhelmingly, people are against the raising of the fee- agrees on the basis that their opinion is no greater than his. Will advocate as representative, not acting against their best interest. Cannot and will not support any raise in the fee- despite agreeing with the raising of the fee on a personal level.
12. **Meg T.:** there was a really big concern over the transparency- would like to address. Cannot speak as to how records were kept in the past, but there is a giant spreadsheet with allocations, spendings, and other pertinent information regarding financial information. Would like to give the information to the student body at the end so that it can be seen by all students. Students should know where the money is going, and has been working hard to make that happen.
13. **Jonathan S.:** Appreciates all who came out tonight; a larger reason why we cared about putting the survey together was to get feedback and to get an understanding of where students come from. As a second year on the board, he has seen maybe 5-10 new clubs form; they have great missions and wonderful purposes- but with that is a growing need for funds. Cannot speak to everyone's costs, but 2L senate has worked hard to look at past years to manage expenses and for the basis as to the spending styles. While there have been a lot of great points, especially alcohol on campus, putting this points aside- there are more students and more clubs by far than there was before. Requests that people think of the long-term health of student organizations and their funding. There is a lot of food left over, while it is great to have a lot for people, but maybe we lower expectations on money spent on food for events. SBA is essentially a board of directors- shareholders as students; we need to respect the different cultures of certain events. Maybe \$5 is a better option than \$10?
14. **Veronica E.:** If we do not raise the Student Activity Fee; what are alternative options? Concerned about what will happen if it is not

raised. Barristers and Farewell Party grounded in tradition and are hosted by most law schools-

- a. **Meg T.:** Meg and Max did calculations today before meeting; without the increase we would have (not including the larger events) for student orgs 24k-28k, with increase there would be 32k-36k. It changes each semester based on enrollment, so there is no set amount as it could change.
15. **Veronica E.:** very important things we need to address and think of too, like the alcohol, but increasing the fee should be considered too. Can SBA do something about the alcohol or is that out of our hands? SBA does keep the alcohol locked up in a locker, so it is not SBA alcohol from Scarristers/Barristers.
  - a. **Dean Taranto:** this is a really bad thing, and this is a violation of student policy; also it is a basis for a disciplinary action. Should not be in the fridge- it should be locked up somewhere. Will look into this.
16. **Taylor A.:** appreciates the candor; notes that a lot is being spoken about, but not relevant to the \$10 increase question now. So many events have food, if you are struggling with food- these events have a lot of leftovers and the Legal Eats kitchen just opened as well. Going to events is what this is about- if people went to events more it would make it worthwhile.
17. **Ben J.:** hearing a lot of talk about too much food and too little attendance- but the leftover food is an opportunity for students who were busy or in the library to then go get food/ take some home. The food is not being thrown away; but an opportunity to share.
18. **Meg T.:** Addresses back to Veronica about money to student groups funded this last budget round- loosely around 23k.
19. **Max S.:** would like to make a quick point emphasizing that when the semester began, the strategic plan noted the raising of the student activity fee and holding the SBA accountable. Not always spent in the best way, but should separate the issue of spending versus the increasing of the fee in order to restore buying power. Would like to raise fiduciary point, and have this taken into consideration; this is a really hard decision. Thinks it is fair to say that those who are angry filled out the survey more. Doing what is in the best interest of classmates may be different and difficult, but it is something to consider.
20. **Jonathan S.:** wanted to add; to give a hypothetical scenario to Max's point on spending and why raising it has value- to alcohol and spending on events. Say that the Scarristers event would not be done, looks around 16-18k, and was a little more due to buying a speaker (which has been used by 4 separate events, including Diwali today). If you got rid of it, it doesn't make much of a dent in the amount being asked by student orgs. A large part of what we do is support students who have interests and hobbies, and that we

provide the opportunity- whether it is playing a board game or a networking event. Maybe if it is raised, maybe a policy is enacted that a specific amount is allocated for certain things like bolstering events that other orgs do. SBA is conscious of what these events (barristers/scarristers) cost and works hard to mitigate costs- he personally stresses about these events and works to accommodate and take into account what all the students need. Maybe some funding should go to students in need- adding to the food pantry funds while still providing programming for students on campus. The best thing students can do is to go to their e boards and student orgs and go to the clubs that they care about and have the larger voice that is needed for systematic change. Hard to do that when we only get a certain amount of requests- encourages students to think of creative ways that an increase in student activity fee could better students' lives. Could help out everyone in some way without altering peoples lives?

21. **Stephanie K.:** how money is being spent is a part of the question- not mutually exclusive. Should change funding model before raising fee- not every event here is welcoming to all people. Cannot eat the food that is at the events; part of difficulties. All the money is being spent on that food.
22. **Olivia V.:** Agrees with point on food security; cannot assume everyone can eat this food. Ability to go to campus to get food and to drive around for food does not exist for some; \$10 is not feasible right now and will be voting no.
23. **Jonathan S.:** question to anyone, taking into account food allergies too and understanding that there are a variety of students needs; should increase be lower like 5%/ more feasible as increase? Or is a longer gestation period needed to enact this?
24. **Frank P.:** not opposed to the idea of the increase in the budget, is opposed to the methodology of the current policy. Spoken coming out of budget season- how things were hit and cut without reason sometimes and a lot of programming from affinity groups was cut. Seems that more money would be put into a broken process that favors some clubs over others. The budget process is confidential and cannot be discussed freely- does not see how we can in good faith put money in the process as more people are becoming personal and critical of SBA funding with financial hardships. Difficult to justify an increase when it is an opaque process. Until we can say this much is set aside for affinity groups, this much for another group then no. The form we are taking is not good- despite being in favor of an increase previously, will now be voting in the negative and against it.
25. **Lexa ?.:** not opposed to raising the budget; thinks that her class would like to see more networking events with firms and use it for

those purposes. Like Jonathan noted, to have students with scarcity issues to have more security and more opportunities.

26. **Ashlyn H.:** would like to speak on dietary restrictions- it can be difficult to know or assume people's restrictions and encourages people to reach out. Personally, has dietary issues and informs those in charge of the events she will be attending. If you feel uncomfortable doing so, reach out to her and she will inform them on your behalf. Everyone should be able to eat and joy food at these events.
27. **Alex H.:** reiterates point that while they would like an increase in the fee, people have to see and trust the SBA process first.
28. **Meg T.:** Wants to address Frank P.'s point for disproportionate slashes in the budget- We did just revise the budget for spring to allow for more equitable distribution and to encourage more networking and similar events. In order to take advantage of the change in budget process, thinks the increase would help.
29. **Dean K.:** notes a lot people have been opposed to the increase, but also that every student organization consistently asks for more funding and we should keep this in mind. In the next budget process especially, we should keep that in mind.

**MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL 10PM, SECONDED, 12-9-0, PASSES**

**VII. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. PHILANTHROPY COMMITTEE- *Veteran's Food Drive is coming up- donation box in the foyer (Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>).*
- b. FINANCE COMMITTEE- *We have set Spring Budget process and with the Finance Committee. More info on individual report.*
- c. DIVERSITY COMMITTEE- *they have started an initiative in suggestions and complaints to the diversity committee- a QR code to be posted around the school.*
- d. ETHICS COMMITTEE- *nothing to report.*
- e. EVENTS COMMITTEE- *met last week and discussed the finalization for a Friendsgiving- discussing whether or not there were students who could host others. Grilled Cheese event will be happening in Dec. from 12-2pm.*
- f. ELECTION COMMITTEE- *nothing to report.*
- g. BY-LAWS COMMITTEE- *had the last meeting a week ago today and passed bills to vote on today. Thanks committee and the work they did this semester.*
- h. TRANSITION COMMITTEE – *nothing to report.*
- i. ALUMNI COMMITTEE- *spoke to Geoff and Megan and had a great convo with them; determined not bi-weekly, but to meet with Geoff to get a more involved role next semester and working to meet regularly to meet with the alumni office to support causes.*



**VIII. SENATE REPORTS**

a. EXECUTIVE BOARD

- i. President Max Sevor – *Presentation of Student Activity Fee Recommendation (see notes under resolution #003 above); attorney would like to meet SBA/alumni involvement. Also informs student leaders to fill out end of semester form to stay in compliance.*
- ii. Vice President Noah Jacobs – *nothing to report.*
- iii. Treasurer Meg Tylenda – *19k has been spent, large senate budget meeting for student leaders will be on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> 2024.*
- iv. Secretary Ashlyn Henrichs – *nothing to report.*

b. SENATE REPORTS

- i. Third Year President Natalie Turney- 3L-, *Andrea Irizarry has sent out cap and gown **must be completed by Nov 21<sup>st</sup>**. Any further info needed, go to Albany.edu/commencement. Working diligently re: class gift and hoping to finalize soon. Contract to be circulated over winter break potentially requiring a GroupMe vote outside of meetings.*
- ii. Second Year President Jonathan Stein – *thanks everyone for how flexible they've been. The DJ contract has been submitted.*
- iii. First Year President Frank Pacella – *stay hydrated and have good posture.*
- iv. ABA Senator Mitchell Spaulding – *nothing to report.*
- v. ACBA Senator Colin Baker – *BALSA and Bell Collective reached out to ABA for attorneys and judges in the area for the event; encourages students to go events. A couple of non-CLE events, register online on the ABA website/ check them out on the website.*
- vi. Diversity Senator Azad Kurd – *nothing to report.*
- vii. NYSBA Senator Mitchell Whittaker – *nothing to report.*
- viii. Spring Start Senator Olivia Vecchio – *nothing to report.*

c. FACULTY REPORTS

- i. Dean Taranto – *just to say that the Office of Student Affairs has been incredibly busy, but nothing to report to the students at this time. With final exams coming up, please note the door is always open for any support or discussion with students.*

**MOTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION, SECONDED, 17-2-0, PASSES**

**IX. \*EXECUTIVE SESSION\***

a. **BYLAWS BILLS**

- i. Bill # 029 FPAC Bylaw Reform
  1. Motion: to approve the bill
  2. Status: seconded, 17-1-0 **PASSES**
  3. Reasoning: seems like a straightforward change

- ii. Bill #030 PAD Bylaw Reform
  - 1. Motion: to approve the bill
  - 2. Status: seconded, 18-0-0 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: -
- iii. Bill #031 International Law Bylaw Reform
  - 1. Motion: motion to approve
  - 2. Status: seconded, 19-0-0 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: -
- iv. Bill # 032 Bylaw 5 Change: Absences
  - 1. Motion: motion to approve
  - 2. Status: seconded, 16-1-0 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: seems to be a great revision
- v. Bill #035 Bylaw 6 Revision Revisited
  - 1. Motion: motion to approve
  - 2. Status: seconded, 18-0-2 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: consent has been added to the language. This is a better version.

b. **CONSTITUTIONAL BILLS**

- i. *As a note, 10% of the student body must vote on this in the affirmative.*
- ii. Bill #033 Creation of the Safety Committee
  - 1. Motion: to approve
  - 2. Status: seconded, 18-0-0 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: -
- iii. Bill #034 Ethics Committee Addition
  - 1. Motion: to approve
  - 2. Status: seconded, 18-1-0 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: -

c. **ROLLING BUDGET**

- i. Bill #036 Events Committee
  - 1. Motion: to approve
  - 2. Status: seconded, 14-1-0 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: amendment to say this is not the events committee's additional funding request.

**MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING UNTIL 10:15, SECONDED, 15-5-0, PASSES**

d. **RESOLUTIONS**

- i. Resolution #003, Student Activity Fee
  - 1. Motion: to approve (to send a letter and present to the board)
  - 2. Status: seconded, 12-9-1 **PASSES**
  - 3. Reasoning: in light of the great discussion, maybe some language should be added to say AT MOST \$10, with any increase in between being good (reiterated fact). Might be valuable to ask that this recommendation be considered for the fall and not as soon as

the spring semester. Noted that those who are not happy about the student activity fee are more likely to fill out the survey than those who are not. People who complain- it is important to remind them to run for SBA; most people run uncontested and get in without being “elected”. Discussion of fiduciary duty and choices on spending and on the betterment of the whole. This is just a recommendation, the board could choose to shut it down. The board could increase whether or not the SBA sends in a resolution. Motion to amend presented that the purpose of the student activity fee to include language stating: A portion, currently undetermined, of the student activity fee, will be prioritized on the basis of providing for events or programming supporting students in both or either financial need or dietary need. An undetermined as of yet, amount of funds from the raised student activity fee will be purposed with supporting student organization’s goals to be inclusive and supportive of need based students whether those needs be financial or dietary in nature.

**4. Max and Meg to present to board of trustees on this due the passage of Resolution #003.**

**MOTION TO MOVE OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION, SECONDED, 18-0-1, PASSES**

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Please check the SBA website.
- b. Contact Veronice Esteves re: Title IX coordination and getting information out.

**XI. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. None.

**XII. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- a. The next SBA meeting is scheduled for November 29, 2023, at 7:30 PM in Room 200.

**XIII. ADJOURNEMENT; MOTION TO ADJOURN, SECONDED, 19-0-0, PASSES**