

## Harmon Room

February 7, 2023. 12:00 PM CST



MACALESTER COLLEGE  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT

## Legislative Body Meeting Agenda

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[Land Acknowledgment](#) (We are on Indigenous land) ~ *Austin* ~ 2 minutes

**Supporting Muslim Students at Mac** ~ *Bobbie* ~ 20 minutes

Bobbie

- Not just about the exhibit
- We want this to be an open space
- Hufsa, I'll hand it over to you

Hufsa

- Incident with gallery is small part of conversation about Mac supporting students
- I think back to sit in and this ongoing struggle of minority students to find a space on this campus where they feel supported
- I want to set as a ground base is there was a lot of harm from this gallery
- No matter what people's positions are on the gallery there was harm done on both sides
- As Bobbie mentioned there's not much productive to come out of discussion of the gallery

Bobbie

- I know the issue of food has come up with Ramadan
- Talking about supporting Muslim students during Ramadan through Cafe Mac
- A lot of us have worked with dining
- Are there ways we could help?
- Kathryn is here as a guest

- Been linking students with other students and people in charge of dining
- Maybe that's a place to start a conversation
- Also want to acknowledge I am not an expert in anything

Mathilda

- This is an important conversation to have and I'd love to hear input as SSRC Chair
- Starts with conversation about people understanding religious accommodations
- What it means for food to be halal is widely misunderstood on this campus
- Last year some food had a halal label but had white vinegar in it
- Messaging about what is halal is fuzzy
- About educating higher ups in cafe mac about what is halal
- Providing those options regularly whether or not it's Ramadan
- Food should be clearly labeled and provided regularly
- Going to Ramadan, because Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset the times we eat are not when Cafe Mac is open
- We tried food from the grille but not helpful when people want a larger meal
- Whether it means Muslim students should not have to pay for the meal plan during the month of Ramadan
- Each individual may have a different idea but there needs to be an ongoing collab between CRSL and Cafe Mac

Ghaicha

- Making sure food is halal and remains halal
- I'm not in cafe mac anymore and this is one of the reasons

Joel

- Something to think about as exec board is see about making sure there is representation from CRSL on dining advisory itself
- Don't know if I'll be on exec next year but I want that on record

Ghaicha

- Doesn't pertain to just Ramadan
- We do pray five times a day and try to accommodate our schedule with that
- We need things to make it easier

Bobbie

- Ghaicha has been working on prayer spaces
- It's time for us as a group to back that and continue to conversation

Cooper

- More of a question but during Ramadan and all times

- How can other students be more supportive and talk to people outside of LB? How could people feel more included?

Hufsa

- Something we talked about in the last week is the campus' lack of religious literacy for all faith identifying people
- People are unaware of things that could potentially help or hurt members of religious communities
- If there's some sort of informing of professors or staff on what is happening to the community
- Not sure exactly how it comes to fruition
- But there needs to be education informing people when it's an important month or day so that professors and other people know it's something to be prioritized
- Knowing that some things need to be accomodated for
- I hope I answered your question

Cooper

- Very vague question so I understand
- People who are informed should talk with their social groups
- People might know very little about Ramadan
- Trying to have those conversations, all of us, with people to increase religious literacy

Bobbie

- Is there anything MCSG can do help do a better job in the future in regards to the harm that has been done?
- That's for everyone

Tristan

- This connects to conversations about students being informed before something happens
- We had a similar conversation with congress on campus where people were frustrated
- No input of students prior to that
- MCSG could work with leadership to make sure decisions, events, are not happening with all student voices being inputted into decission, especially those most impacted

Bobbie

- That's similar to what I've been thinking as well
- Should we be having something that is over-arching over all events?
- Should it be the same students or different groups that should work with events

- There are practical and logistical limitations and I recognize that you may not want the same students

Cooper

- If and when possible, letting it open.... To be what the committee is thinking about and please students let us know what you're thinking
- When you have a committee, it's a select group of people
- Trying to make sure as many people can voice their opinions as possible
- With a committee, it becomes hard because it's a large commitment especially if there not getting paid
- A lot to expect one person to represent a community on behalf of a community
- Keeping it open to as many as possible
- For the gallery, within the Muslim community, each student has a different opinion
- Let's talk about it first
- It seems like admin was unaware of what was going in the gallery before it went up
- Small campus but things get missed
- Had people been aware, we could've talked about how to make it a safe space

Bobbie

- Not a centralized space but it should be on the department to reach out to the community

Joel

- I don't want to claim this as my idea alone
- We should publicize our various outside commitments and campus appointments
- Hard to navigate the web of who is in EPAG or Provost advisory or presidents council
- Should take some burden off of people feeling it's their sole responsibility

Shaherazade

- Even for faculty, staff, and departments this is also a very difficult thing to accommodate
- It's hard to decide what communities do I need to reach out to
- It's hard to do things
- We struggle a bit with engagement... we have people but enough
- I want to acknowledge that it's also difficult to navigate spaces that aren't built around conflict

Bobbie

- Knowing who to reach out to is about knowing which identities might be affected

Mathilda

- We need transparency through the process
- Sharing our ideas that are working and being open to hearing different spheres of communication I think is important
- We might be aware of how long a conversation took to get to a point, but other people may not see that process

Tristan

- There could be a benefit to having a list of affinity groups, best person to reach out to in DML, CRSL
- Having a list that you can run through
- Having contact info available
- There's an important recognition, that's only so helpful if people don't know who is going to be harmed

Austin

- We're going to need to wrap this up

Bobbie

- When there's an ask of the admin, MCSG has voted to sign on to the petition
- This seems like more of a sign of solidarity
- Do we want to vote?
- Do you think that would be helpful, would it show support?

Hufsa

- I struggle with that
- Potentially? Potentially not?

Shaherazade

- As a muslim student who is not active in MSA, I think maybe if we had a petition with an ask
- There are some people not as active who don't know what's happening until a few days after

Bobbie

- Does anyone have strong feelings either way?
- Would it support those who have been harmed?

Austin

- If we're going to vote, we need to discuss the petition itself

Mathilda

- Question about sustainable long term solutions
- We should be putting our efforts behind religious literacy
- I recognize my positionality in saying that we shouldn't focus on the past

Bobbie

- I just wanted to recognize there was a petition and in previous years MCSG has signed on bc there was an ask of the admin or something
- There's not quite agreement on whether that would be useful
- I am going to suggest that we focus on the future
- I will focus on the future
- Kathryn and I have this on our agenda
- Lots of spaces where this will be followed up on

Mathilda

- We are always happy to have students come to us

Joel

- As MCSG person on educational policy who sets calendar
- Something we worked on was effective relationship between religious holidays and the calendar
- EPAG is likely to continue talking about more specific asks
- I am happy to be a resource

Hufsa

- One last thing
- As far as the role of MCSG, in the past there's a lot of energy right off the bat
- Sometimes it moves off to the side
- If the student body and those representing it maintain the pressure, that would be very much appreciated

Bobbie

- Absolutely
- And I promise you we will
- It's not easy, it is difficult
- It's really important to have these conversations
- I'm thankful for all the work you've done and you coming to our meeting

Austin

- We are taking a break

**MCSG Structure** ~ *Bobbie & Mathilda* ~ 30 minutes

Mathilda

- Overview of conversation from the retreat
- We did SWOT analysis of MCSG
  - Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, etc
- How we project those onto our environment
- We use our resources and have strong faces and people willing to commit time

- Open to a lot of change and opportunities
- A lot of things are changing with the strategic plan
- We're looking to shift the way we think about organizations
- We've been looking towards weaknesses and things we could better do to improve the way we function
- We can have a more smooth operation and be better representatives in the way we signed up for
- Weaknesses = issues with delegation of work
- It's hard work being on MCSG
- A lot of work falls onto a few people which leads to burnout
- All of us are only here for 4 years, it's easy for things to get lost in the void
- We're looking at some of the ideas of what to do to fix and address
- Short term and long term
- Some of you already saw this presentation

Bobbie

- Thanks Mathilda
- Thanks to those who came to the retreat but only half of student gov't was there
- If any iteration of this goes forward, it would be a long procedural journey
- A few of us have been discussing this and think it's really necessary
- We've been discussing at higher level of student gov't of past presidents burning out
- I'm tired but not to say I'm quitting
- There's a lot on the President as there should be with the title but there are ways to distribute responsibility better
- We have pretty poor engagement within student government
- There's only really one elected position and one paid position to deal with community engagement
- \*shows slide of organizing structure currently\*
- This is the structure
- There's a lot of reporting to one person
- Next slide please
- Here's one idea of how it could go with two big changes: splitting VP from Chair of SSRC
  - There's a lot VP and SSRC do, but they are limited bc of having to run a whole committee and be VP
  - Splitting that into two roles
  - Would also allow president to focus on the external
  - What I've seen in the past and what I'm trying to do is figure out how to draw a line

- President will still be doing normal things but division is what happens inside and outside the LB
- One iteration proposes the executive VP
- The person who is currently VP would take on internal working of student government: organizing LB meetings, etc
- Would also oversee officers and liaisons
- A few of us have been discussing this and have seen that the officers could do more than they do
- Officers are very loose positions that take on independent projects and a lot of have done amazing things but they don't have a focal go to person to support them
- You're always welcome to come to me, but also we've got a lot going on
- The other big change is a new committee entirely called communications and engagement
  - In charge of engaging internally and how MCSG engages with the community
  - It's got a lot of the tabling
  - There's other things like engaging with campus committees
  - A lot around filing and voting turnout
  - Rather than students being blindsided by EPC
  - A lot of events going into PB which is TBD
- PB is a part of MCSG, they focus on student events that benefit the student body and don't focus a lot on MCSG
  - Programming for student gov't itself is left to one or two people
  - They would be able to organize things from Kagins to also engage people in town halls and promote candidate's debates
- Those are the two big changes
- What happens with PB is almost a totally separate conversation
- It is loosely tied and mostly through the chair
- What happens with PB, we want PB to decide
- We will meet with them at some point soon
- Keeping that in mind
- That is one version
- In another version, this came from the retreat I think from Eric
- Maybe what are currently officers should go under the SSRC
- They are kind of our values as a college
- We have sustainability, community engagement, and DEIJ
- If these are what our values are we should have connections across campus
- These are some suggestions that came up from retreat



- Maybe we need liaisons across campus
- None of this is set
- This is a brainstorming session
- Suggestions of key places we should be working with
- With this new model which you can love it or hate it
- It gives us a pretty clear leader for initiatives
- If we have something centering athletics, there's one person to function as the athletics liaisons
- In this suggestion the SSRC is made up of liaisons to different student affairs departments and at large members

#### Mathilda

- Idea came from SSRC being very broad committee
- Anything that doesn't fall under the other committees
- Since that is such a broad range of categories, it's hard to focus
- My perspective is that it would be beneficial to give people power in their positions to work on specific issues
- Helping with broadness of SSRC to do more things

#### Bobbie

- The names are not all solidified or the changes
- Immediate responses have been to the names
- Right now we need to define the roles then the names
- I understand we don't have that much time
- We don't want to use all of our LB meetings doing this
- There are full agendas from now until May so this has to be outside work
- If you don't have an opinion, you don't need to be involved in this process but we want everyone to have the opportunity
- Going to send out some times to see when most people are free
- Might be one, two, three sessions to come up with this
- I'm hoping in the next 2-3 meetings we will have a plan
- Ideally before elections so that we're not electing people who wouldn't have a title
- Next Steps: I will reach out about when to reach out
- There will be at least two where you can give your input
- If we as student government agree, it has to pass  $\frac{2}{3}$  of legislative body
- First step is we can ask the student body and get 15% of approval or instead  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the LB in favor of it
- What it goes through that, it then goes to student body
- We'd have to get the majority of those who vote to approve it
- Good thing because we don't have a lot of voters
- Step 3 is we have to get it approved by the board of trustees

- They meet in October, February, and May
- Feb is too soon
- Hoping to present to the board in May
- If we can get this passed by student body, we can run elections on the new model
- If this passes in May or October we will then have to adapt positions so perhaps CEO becomes the VP or Chair of Communications
- We would have to match old positions with new positions
- Anyone have questions?

Shaherazade

- Does BOT need to approve it in that order?

Bobbie

- The main issue is we only have three opportunities to present it to them and I think it does need to be in that order

Shaherazade

- There's also Rebecca Gentry the BOT liaison
- I wonder if there's anything that could be passed along through her

Bobbie

- One of the updates I will be giving for the community is that these ideas are in the works

Austin

- Any more questions?
- More info on this shortly

### **Committee Updates ~ *Committee Members* ~ 2 minutes**

Joel

- Talking about how our academic buildings can be better
- Asked for lots more student centered places where students can freely occupy them

Eric

- SOC is looking to moving some of the organizations that are supposed to check in this year to next year bc this year there are 36 and next year there are 8
- Trying to identify "stronger" orgs to work with for this year
- Process of check ins is happening

Mathilda

- Last week SSRC discussed revamping the website and the community chest
- Set a goal around food, access, and inclusion
  - Meal swipe transfers, halal and other food labeling
- Yesterday I had a meeting with BIPOCA, SAAC, and athlete groups

- We talked about identity specific weight lifting groups led by a student athlete who would lead people interested being trained by students
- Having conversations about what that might look like
- That idea will go out on social media soon

**Announcements** ~ 4 minutes

Bobbie

- Cool event called rethinking time at Mac
- Everything from scheduling classes to when semesters begin and end
- Join them in CC 206 on Thursday between 6:30-8
- Come and go as your schedule allows
- If you have ideas please go

Austin

- Any other announcements?
- We can officially adjourn