

UConnPIRG Core Meeting Minutes 18-13  
Monday November 27, 2017, 7 PM  
SU 325

Voting Members: Casey Lambert (Chapter Chair), Walter Dodson (Vice Chair), Alex Pawlak (Treasurer), Emily O'Hara (Secretary), Ian Beattie, Casey Saxton, Justin Kaiser, Matt Talley, Sam Donahue, Michael Katz, Andrew Frosti, Nate Aroian, Kyleigh Hillerud, Chad Schroeder, Tori Zane, Kelly Flanagan, Kharl Reynado, Matthew Byanyima, Aaron Golab, Isabel Umland, Dylan DeMoura, Vincent Cajigas, Antonio Cajigas, Ian Beattie, Noah O'Connor, Matthew Byanyima

Non-voting Members: Dayna Robinson

Guests: Arielle Mizrahi (Campus Organizer), Sasha Richardson (Advisor)

Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM by Chair Casey Lambert

- I. Introductions
- II. Campaign Updates
  - a. Stop Styrofoam—Justin Kaiser
    - i. 875 petitions from the semester (75 are photo petitions). Goal: 1200.
  - b. 100% Renewable Energy—Chad Schroeder
    - i. Cancelling all tables for the rest of the semester to do databasing
  - c. Democracy—Arya
    - i. Two tables this week
  - d. Save the Bees—Emily
    - i. Had at least 40 people attend the Pollinator Protection Panel
    - ii. Spring is being coordinated by Sam Donahue. Trifold goal: More service learning projects, trying to get Mansfield designated as a Bee City, and trying to set up a community garden with bee boxes on campus
  - e. H&H—Casey
    - i. Week before break = Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week had events every day. Had a panel of local members of the homeless shelter No Freeze.
    - ii. Next semester: Try to establish the groundwork to make Tiny Houses in CT for the homeless to create low cost housing.
  - f. Textbooks—Kharl Reynado
    - i. Trying to have a report done by Friday
- III. Campaign Proposal Discussion
  - a. Preparing for the state board meeting happening this Sunday (December 3<sup>rd</sup>).
  - b. Generally, run 6 campaigns, can run as many as wanted.
  - c. Campaigns proposed: ABX, Save the Bees, 100% Renewable Energy, Zero Waste, H&H, Democracy, New Voters Project, Textbooks
  - d. New Voters Project and Textbooks—Kharl Reynado
    - i. Running voting and textbooks projects. Working with the library and maintaining a strong relationship (Open Source Access Month in March)
    - ii. NVP is being run differently: Usually it's just registering students to vote. Next semester it's focused on institutionalizing voter registration at UConn. Trying to get students into NSOLV to track registration process and get UConn into a system where we're looking at other schools' results

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for voter registration. Trying to get voter registration in all departments/orientation/move-in day

- e. Zero Waste—Justin Kaiser
  - i. Will be a continuation of Styrofoam. Instead of challenging a specific type of waste, it will target waste reduction in general. Encompasses 3 main aspects of waste reduction (material, food, energy). Aiming to work with SWAC (Solid Waste Advisory Committee) on getting plastic bags banned in Mansfield. Also planning on working with dining halls to reduce waste.
- f. Hunger and Homelessness—Casey Saxton
  - i. Brought to attention by one of the directors of the No Freeze Shelter: one of the biggest problems for homeless is housing. Trying to do a huge project with No Freeze to set the groundwork for building a Tiny House community in CT. Growing trend in the nation. 10x10 houses with insulation (no electricity/plumbing). Enough room for a bed, table, a compostable toilet, and storage. In a communal neighborhood to house water/shower. Investing a lot of time in research, design, planning, and coalition building. Hoping to have a prototype designed and being built by Spring of 2019.
- g. Save the Bees—Sam Donahue
  - i. A lot of this semester's work was focused on banning neonicotinoids. This coming semester's plan is centralized on broader issues that impact bees (mites, insects). The campaign is focused on education/awareness, which includes implementing service-learning projects and establishing sustainable gardens at elementary schools. Will also be encouraging Mansfield to be designated as a Bee City USA to coalition build and work as a team with Mansfield residents. The final goal is working on a sustainable community garden somewhere on campus with bee boxes
- h. Democracy—Matt Byanyima
  - i. Next semester is focused on building on the work of this semester. Trying to implement a ranked choice voting system in USG elections to successfully change USG by-laws. In the long term: working with the state to implement a ranked choice voting system
- i. ABX—Tori Zane
  - i. National campaign being brought to UConn. Public health problem that has a lot to do with factory farms (farmers give animals routine medical antibiotics). We have a strong agricultural school so there would be opportunity to make a difference here. Next semester the national focus is pushing McDonald's to pledge with all of their meat. Education/awareness event. New London county has a lot of animals so this would be relevant for the state to work with legislators
- j. 100% Renewable Energy—Chad Schroder
  - i. Trying to get UConn to be more sustainable. Building image/visibility. Reaching out to different students to look at ways to implement sustainability initiatives on campus. Meeting with administration to build relations, also developing a rally

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- k. Lead campaign suggestion will be put forward by the core
    - i. Discussion—10 minutes
      - 1. Pro: Plenty of materials/momentum gathered, might be an awkward switch
      - 2. Zero Waste suggested. Can get green initiatives on campus that 100% Renewable is not in a position to do this summer. It could also use the resources because 100% is focusing on research
      - 3. Recruitment should be emphasized by the lead campaign, which is why shifting from 100% should be difficult, but Zero Waste has a lot of potential
      - 4. Another big part of the lead campaign is how it affects the other chapters in the state, which are doing well with 100% right now. Whatever campaign is lead is the one that those chapters have to run, which is why it's unwise to stop their progress. The rally is also an interchapter project that extends across the state, and is being run by 100%
        - a. Schools also have flexibility to run the campaigns they want, even if they disagree with the lead campaign
        - b. Makes it easier for a 100% goal
      - 5. ABX can also be the lead campaign, it recruits well and is good for visibility
      - 6. Hunger and Homeless also needs a significant amount of resources
        - a. Save the Bees and H&H also have a lot of potential
        - b. H&H would be good for rebranding
      - 7. Democracy can make change on the UConn campus, but it also needs more support
    - ii. Open board call tomorrow at 9 PM that everyone is invited to get on
- IV. State Board Elections
- a. State Board: Executive board and state board representatives. Drives the state organization of ConnPIRG. Decides budget of the organization, works on the 1, 3, and 5-year plan, helps drive the priorities of the nonprofit. Can also create different committees.
  - b. Nominees: Noah O'Connor, Chad Schroeder, Faizaan Siddiqui, Isabel Umland, Aaron Golab, Casey Saxton
  - c. How will you maintain effectiveness and cohesion within a statewide organization, where you might find differing opinions and priorities?
    - i. Noah: Maintain communication to allow all thoughts and opinions to be heard, avoid being tyrannical. The democracy campaign will help produce unity as well.
    - ii. Chad: Need to have statewide events like the rally where all chapters in the state can produce a product that everyone is proud of. Communication needs to be increased to have a free debate.
    - iii. Faizaan: We have to make sure we establish an environment where no one is concerned about expression. There should be pros/cons for big

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- decisions/events. Other PIRG chapters should be included in planning events at individual campuses. Weekly Skype calls would help as well.
- iv. Aaron: It's important to create an environment where the chapters/campuses feel as though they have the ability to speak their minds on ideas, ask questions, and find solutions instead of going with what the first people share. It's also important to recognize the majority that the UConn campus has to be careful and mindful with decisions. Regular calls will help that are not related to major decisions.
  - v. Isabel: Agree with the statements that have been said. Communication is key because we are a public interest group. We need the diversity of opinions to represent people accurately. We should listen to each other more, working together more on the state level.
  - vi. Casey: Agree with what has been said except it's not just communication that's important, it's how communication is conducted. Tension should be diffused to understand what is being said. Frequency of communication is also important.
- d. If you could pick one thing about the organization within your capacity that you would change, what would you change?
- i. Noah: Improve transparency/communication across the chapters. Give outreach to different perspectives and ideologies
  - ii. Chad: Group cohesion, working with each other on other campaigns
  - iii. Faizaan: Change frequency and capacity we engage with other chapters. They're PIRG as well, and we can take advantage of numbers and resources. We do well independently, but we can benefit from regular interaction with the other chapters in the state.
  - iv. Isabel: We should promote all campaigns. Something that would help with cohesion is running tables in tandem so that people could learn about multiple campaigns at once (will help with recruitment)
  - v. Casey: We should have a weekly phone call between the campaigns across the state as well as Massachusetts. Helps with group cohesion among campaigns, as well as pooling resources/problems/solutions. Intercampaign cooperation should also be promoted.
  - vi. Aaron: What we should focus on is emphasizing information sharing between campaigns across campuses
- e. The core votes for Casey Saxton and Chad Schroeder to be representatives on the ConnPIRG State Board
- f. By a margin of one vote, the lead campaign recommended is Zero Waste.
- V. By-Law Amendment—Walter Dodson
- a. Emily is stepping down as Secretary, so the Executive Board will be holding a special election one week from her resignation (which is today). The whole point of the democracy campaign is to emphasize ranked choice voting, and it seems hypocritical to not practice what the organization preaches, so Walter proposes to amend the bylaws for the upcoming election and all future elections. The proposal was sent to the core meeting a week prior to this meeting. The following amendment will be made in the second point of the election procedure:

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- i. “The voting system that will govern officer elections shall be an optional ranked choice voting majority system. All members shall cast a vote listing their choices for the position in the order in which they prefer. If no candidate has reached 50% +1 of the voting members, then an instant run-off shall occur. The presiding officer shall remove the candidate receiving the smallest number of votes and give their vote to the next preferred candidate. This will continue until a candidate receives 50% +1 of voting members.”
  - b. The following strikethrough was added as well:
    - i. ~~“The candidate receiving a plurality of the votes shall be considered the winner. In the event that more than two candidates run for a position, there will be an election containing all candidates and, in the event that one candidate does not receive the majority of votes, there will be a runoff election”~~
  - c. Noah O’Connor motions to approve this amendment.
    - i. Nate Aroian seconds the motion
    - ii. Passes unanimously
- VI. Emily resigns from her position as UConnPIRG Secretary

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM by Chair Casey Lambert

Minutes submitted by Emily O’Hara