August 18, 2020 – Special Joint Session

Zoom Meeting

Start Time: 5:00 pm

Facilitator: Jasmine Patin, Vice President of the Student Government Association

I. Call to order
   a. 5:04 PM

II. Roll call
   a. Quorum has been met in the Senate

III. Officer reports
   a. President Trey Wilson
      i. Mission Statement: Strive to Ensure inclusivity, representation, and awareness, through transparent and responsive leadership that best reflects the interests of the student body
      ii. SGA Goals
          1. Increase Campus Sustainability
             a. Encourage students to practice good sustainability habits
          2. Promote Awareness
1. Help students stay aware of critical info within Lamar and surrounding communities

2. Foster Inclusivity and Equality
   a. Aim to eliminate student disparities

3. Strengthen Community Connections
   a. Build/sustain relationships with students, faculty, staff, administration, community leaders, and parents

4. Create a Sustainable SGA
   a. Make SGA processes more consistent to improve the functionality/sustainability of SGA each year

b. Vice President Jasmine Patin
   i. African-American student concerns
      1. Feelings of being underserved
      2. Experiences of discrimination both on and off-campus which affect student performances

   ii. Resources for African Americans on campus
      1. Office of Global Diversity and Inclusion
      2. Social Justice based organizations such as Black Student Association, Black Influencers Association, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
      3. Men of Excellence

   iii. Latinx Concerns
1. Lack of representation
2. Lack of resources for first-generation students
3. Improvements would like to be seen in the preparation of Hispanic Heritage Month and in the number of courses provided that discuss Latinx history/societal contributions

iv. Resources for Latinx
   1. UNIDAD Scholars
   2. Global Office of Diversity and Inclusion
   3. Men of Excellence
   4. Student-led organizations such as La Union Estudiantes

v. International Students Concerns
   1. How COVID-19 will impact their schooling
   2. Lack of Representation

vi. Resources for International Students
   1. Office of International Education and Service
   2. Office of Global Diversity and Inclusion
   3. SGA plans on ensuring international students have increased representation

c. Sec.-Treasurer Taliah Belcher
   i. Current Projects
      1. Taliah - LU Shuttle Bus Route Change, Campus Sustainability
      2. Jasmine - Mentorship Program
3. Caleb & Mykayla - Greek Bricks
4. Alexia - Parking
5. Kaylee - Organization Recognition at Sporting Events or Through Social Media
6. Caroline - Fish Tanks in the Residence Halls
7. Leo - Allowing the Opposite Sex to Stay the Night in the Residence Halls
8. Tyler - Student T-shirt Design Competition, Campus Beautification Project

ii. Interested in being apart of SGA?

1. Open positions: PR Person, Associate Justice, and Committees
2. Look out for updates/events on the SGA Website, social media, and follow SGA on LU Hub
3. Email lamarsga@lamar.edu for more information

IV. Open Forum

a. Student Concerns

i. Would like more representation

1. Media representation for black students
2. Representation displayed in the professors

ii. Would like better housing conditions for students living in dorms

1. The dorms are also breeding grounds for COVID-19
iii. Would like better transparency of how the university handles racism and black student issues

iv. LUPD

1. Displays unfair treatment to black organizations and black males specifically
   a. Ex: Black organizations are overcharged for police officers

2. Seen overenforcement or over-policing of students
   a. Gives Lamar a bad image

v. Mirabeau head in the quad is a representation of racism

1. Mirabeau wasn’t a morally ethical man (was a slave owner)

vi. Need to put money into the parking lot

1. Easily floods which causes potholes and uneven pavement

vii. Need more events for international students/holidays

viii. Counselors need to be more available

1. Need more information counseling department (ex: hang posters/flyers)

2. Counselors need more diversity
   a. Mostly white females

ix. Lamar should not do, or force students to do, business with a company that has been openly racist (ex: Cotton Cargo)
x. African-American women not allowed to represent their culture through their hairstyles

1. Have been comments about how some black styles are not professional and that straight hair is preferred

xi. Student-led organizations are doing more work than the university

1. It’s overwhelming to have all these responsibilities put on black orgs/leaders

   a. Some orgs are stretched thin

xii. Minorities need to uplift each other

1. Need to help increase participation during black sponsored events (spread the word about events)

2. Need to uplift and support each other

   a. Shouldn’t put all responsibilities on one group

3. Some feel it’s the job of the administration to get students to attend events

b. Student Suggestions

   i. A budget should be put in place for minority organizations

      1. Organizations need to be better informed by the university about the resources available to them (ex: funds available to orgs)

   ii. Pictures around Lamar should display more diversity

   iii. Would like a safe space
1. To allow students to more frequently express themselves without retaliation

iv. Lamar should incorporate rules that will hold all students, faculty, staff, and administration accountable for racial injustices

1. Should include consequences for violation of rules

v. Lamar should implement a system that will review restrictions put on organizations after 2 years

vi. Lamar should create a campus-wide policy stating that they will stand against prejudices of any kind

1. Could be similar to an attendance verification form in that everyone is required to do it

2. Will make things clear and hold everyone to the same standard

3. Could be similar to a Title IX Training but for diversity

vii. Lamar should be proactive and further address COVID-19 issue, especially in the dorms

viii. Should create a program at orientation for black students (and for all races)

1. Would help connect black students with each other

2. Would be very impactful for freshman

ix. Program/orientation for black students (and all races students)

1. will connect with other blacks

2. will be impactful to freshman
x. LUPD

1. Possible additional training
2. Need to continue to diversify staff

xi. Lamar should have more school-sponsored events that...

1. Correctly and properly highlight black history
2. Recognize black students/faculty
3. Help the surrounding community
   a. Currently student orgs do more for the community than the university does
   b. Our community mirrors our school and shows we don’t care

xii. Lamar should work harder to limit the transmission of COVID-19

1. Can do more to emphasize the importance of wearing masks
2. Need a system that holds students responsible if they chose to not wear a mask and that holds faculty responsible if they chose to not enforce wearing masks
3. Week of Welcome events need to be outdoors and be more conscious of COVID-19 guidelines

V. Administration/Advisor Comments

a. General responses
   i. Lamar has cut ties with Cotton Cargo
   ii. A Title IX Training has been discussed and should be in the works
iii. Students can report injustices on the Lamar website and to Faculty members

b. LUPD Response

i. LUPD works hard to maintain a diverse staff
   
   1. Demographics: 47% Caucasian, 48% African-American, 5% Hispanic

ii. Police assigned to student events based on...
   
   1. A 1:100 ratio
      
      a. For every 100 attendees there has to be 1 officer present
   
   2. Historic record attendance
   
   3. Critical Risk Factors
      
      a. Factors were created by both students and staff
      
      b. Made to ensure safety of campus events
      
      c. Help in determining the number of police needed

iii. Pricing for events
   
   1. Not based on race, gender, etc.
   
   2. Can be alleviated if there is no alcohol, if there is less than 100 people, and if there is money involved

c. Dr. Nichols

   i. Agrees there is not a diverse faculty population but Lamar has been working on it
ii. Would love an African-American Engineer to apply for the “Grow Your Own” scholarship

1. Provides financial assistance for a student to complete their Doctorate

d. Dr. Bello-Ogunu

i. Lamar university understands and is committed to preparing, advising, assisting, and guiding students throughout college and cares about inclusivity, diversity, and representing all students

ii. Ways Lamar has increased diversity on campus

1. Diversity and Inclusion office has grown over the past 4 years

   a. Faculty representation has also diversified

2. A review committee has been created to take a look at what can be improved to help better retention rates in colored students

3. New programs and building additions (ex: computer labs) have been implemented

iii. Have to work together for the advancement of the university

1. Responsibility of faculty, staff, and admin to give opportunities to students but it is also the responsibility of students to help

iv. Goals

1. For students to become activists
2. For the office of Diversity and Inclusion to collaborate with other departments

3. To update university/students about what the office of Diversity and Inclusion is doing

4. To expand programs

5. Successful implementation of “Train the Trainer”

VI. Questions

a. Student Questions

i. Could historic reports not be the source of how many police officers are used because the

   1. 1:100 ratio applied to every event

ii. What would be in place of the Mirabeau head?

iii. What is SGA working on to give international students more representation?

   1. Working to become more aware and educated on issues concerning them

   2. Before the school started, SGA had looked into giving them priority registration

   3. Currently looking at everything case-by-case

iv. Where is the timeline of Black History that was supposed to be in the Set at the beginning of this school year?
1. It’s important for others to educate themselves about African-American culture

v. The Mirabeau head issue is an ongoing concern. How do we get our voices heard? What can we do?

1. Best way to advocate is to get it taken down
   a. He doesn’t represent the culture of Lamar

2. Use SGA to voice concerns as they are the bridge between students and administration

b. Administration Questions
   i. What exactly is a Safe Space?

   1. Need more detail
      a. It is a space to not only be heard but also allows for actions to follow
      b. Dr. Mena and Jasmine will be meeting to further discuss this

   ii. How can we make the curriculum more inclusive?

VII. Announcements

a. Regular Joint sessions will be on the 2nd Monday of each month
   i. The topic of the next Joint session is COVID-19 and will be September 14

b. SGA House meetings
   i. An email with information for SGA org reps will be sent out soon
c. Contact SGA at lamarsga@gmail.com if you have any more concerns

VIII. Adjournment

a. Adjourned at 7:30 PM