

19 October 2009

Associate Professor Alan Bloom, Ph.D.
Chairman, Diversity Concerns Committee

Subject: Definition and election procedure for the Minority Senator Seat.

Respected Sir,

We the official representatives of the students on this great campus request the assistance and advice of the committee of which you chair, the Diversity Concerns Committee. For some time now the Valparaiso University Student Senate has been, at one time or another, debated if the Senate should have a seat for minority students and who would constitute the constituency for that seat. We now feel that we must seek advice from others on campus regarding this issue and that this committee would be the proper venue based on the committee's responsibilities and charge.

Per Article VI, Section B of the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate a committee; known as the Seat Allocation Committee (SAC), reviewed and recommended changes to the seat allocation of the Student Senate for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic year. These recommendations were approved by the Student Senate through our Bylaw amendment process. In the change we expanded to constituencies the minority seat would represent which is now currently defined under Bylaw I, Section A to the Constitution of the Valparaiso University Student Senate as being "to include race, color, disability, national origin, or ancestry, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion." The elections for these seats are to be held at the beginning of the fall semester of the academic year. While preparing for the fall semester election cycle the Chair of the Election Committee came across several concerns that would jeopardize and call into question the validity of the results of the election for the minority seat. These concerns involve current codes in the Bylaws that involve the election of the Minority Senator. These Bylaws are as follows:

Bylaw XXIV, Section A, Clause 2 which states, "Candidates for the Minority Seat(s) shall be required to obtain ten percent of the signatures of the students in their district according to a list of students maintained by the Director of the Multicultural Programs."

Bylaw XXIV, Section B, Clause 3 which states, "Candidates may only obtain signatures from the individuals who are qualified to vote in that district."

Bylaw XXIV, Section I, Clause 1 which states in part, "A list of qualified voters for minority seats shall be obtained at the Office of the Director of Multicultural Programs."

With these recent events the Student Senate believes that it must address this issue more thoroughly than it has in the past and resolve the problems and concerns surrounding these seats now or risk it becoming a permanent black mark on this institution. These issues that we must

resolve are numerous but will allow the Student Senate to better serve all students on campus. These issues are as follows:

- (1) To find a way to compile a constituency list for the currently defined minority list in a way that will be kept in the utmost confidentiality and conform to all state and federal laws and statutes.
- (2) Use this list for the express and singular purpose of conducting fair, accurate, and unbiased elections for that constituency's representative on the Student Senate.
- (3) If issue one (1) and two (2) cannot be resolved rewrite the definition of the minority seat on Student Senate so that fair and consistent elections can be held for that seat.

In concluding this letter we, the Valparaiso University Student Senate, ask that the Diversity Concerns Committee examine these issues and present to the Valparaiso University Student Senate recommendations for resolution of these issues. To allow for proper consideration of the recommendations you may present and put them through the proper legislative and amendatory process, as outline in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Valparaiso University Student Senate, before the end of this academic year we request that a report of findings and recommendation be presented to the President of the Student Body, the Vice President of the Student Body, and the Valparaiso University Student Senate no later than February 19th, 2010.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Student Senate of Valparaiso University