Singapore Management University Students' Association

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**SMUSA** 

SMU STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

of Information Systems

# Meeting Minutes

# 17th SMU Students' Association (SMUSA) Council

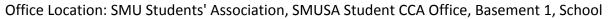
| Date         | 28 January 2021   | Time     | 1945- 2135      |  |
|--------------|---|----------|-----------------|--|
| Chaired by   | SMUSA President   | Location | SOE/SOSS SR 2-2 |  |
| Convened by  | SMUSA Honorary General Secretary (HGS)                          |          |                 |  |
| Attendees    | SMUSA President - Lim Jia En                                    |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Vice-President - Valliapan Arunachalam                    |          |                 |  |
|              | SMSUA HGS - Shaurya Jain  |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA HFS - Joanne Ng Yun Ting                                  |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Academic and Welfare Secretary - Nicolette Ang Sher Nyn   |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Communications Secretary - Nurul Azimah                   |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Corporate Relations Secretary - Lei Wan Yu                |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Events Secretary - Gayathri Ghandi                        |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA International Students' Secretary - Rhea Singhania        |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Operations Secretary - Sylvia Aw Su Wei                   |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUSA Safety and Strategic Operations Secretary - Udbhav Dalmia |          |                 |  |
|              | ASoc President - Heng Wei Shin                                  |          |                 |  |
|              | Bondue President - Yasirah Umar                                 |          |                 |  |
|              | Ellipsis President - Toh Wei Xiang                              |          |                 |  |
|              | Oikos President - Wong Rui Heung Glen                           |          |                 |  |
|              | Sosciety President - Christine Ganaban                          |          |                 |  |
|              | The Bar President - Tan Choon Hwa Lenvin                        |          |                 |  |
|              | ACF President - Remus Chan                                      |          |                 |  |
|              | SICS President - Jeslynn Loo                                    |          |                 |  |
|              | SMUX President - Macus Lim                                      |          |                 |  |
|              | SSU President - Thi Ha Thet Tin Dylan                           |          |                 |  |
|              |   |          |                 |  |
|              |   |          |                 |  |
| Absentees    |   |          |                 |  |
|              |   |          |                 |  |
|              |   |          |                 |  |
| Latecomer(s) |   |          |                 |  |
|              |   |          |                 |  |

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| 1. | <u>Introduction</u>   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
|    | The meeting started at 1945.  |             |
| 2. | Pre-presentation bonding activities   |             |
|    | The meeting commenced with the ACF president and the International Students' Secretary conducting bonding activities for the Council members. The purpose of the activities was to understand each others' values on a deeper level.  |             |
| 3. | Presentation by Safety & Strategic Operations Secretary - Udbhav  Dalmia  | All to note |
|    | The Safety & Strategic Operations Secretary kicked off his presentation by telling the council about an e-town hall session organized by the Office of Provost and SMUSA the previous friday. The special session was arranged for students affected due to travel restrictions. The session was attended by PVO, OSL, OSS, RO, DII, OCC and 6 students who were serving Stay At Home notices at the time of the meeting. The SSO Secretary shared that a total of 67 students had been affected due to travel restrictions and travel acceptance delay amid Covid-19 pandemic. This had subsequently affected the students' studies and academics as well. The majority of these were students of Indian origin and LKCSB. The session was found to be a great success as it helped the school offices better understand the sentiments of several adversity-struck students. The Secretary also specified that three SMUSA Council members attended the session - |             |

the SMUSA President, the International Students' Secretary and the Safety & Strategic Operations Secretary himself.

The Secretary also highlighted a particular success story. A student was serving an SHN notice even though she had received a positive serology test. The SHN was revoked within three hours after the session

The SSO Secretary went on to share about the Women Empowerment Survey that was to be sent out in the following few weeks. The survey is expected to be a month long to gain maximum traction, and the purpose of the same is to help understand the sensitivity of discrimination against women. The different universities will collate the results before handing them over to the relevant authorities. The survey would be effective in particular since people are reserved in talking about such issues openly, and the survey would help them share their thoughts and experiences without any inhibition.

The secretary also shared that The Office of Provost with SMUSA plans to hold the first Townhall session for 2021 somewhere around Week 8. As such, a student sentiment survey will be sent out in Week 5 to help collate data and get a general sensing for the flow of the session. The aim for the session is make the students feel connected with the School during uncertain times and make them feel heard. This will also help the School in making decisions for the future.

The Secretary also shared that if any cbd presidents require any understanding of student sentiments, they can let him know. The Secretary went on to share that the previous SSS was a successful one as it helped gain insights into students' sentiments, while also assisting in generating recommendations for making academics smoother.

The SMUSA President shared that the Women Empowerment Survey will be conducted in collaboration with NTUSU, NUSSU, Yale-NUS Student Government. Furthermore, she stated that CBds' assistance would be required in publicising the survey. There are plans to provide incentives for the survey. The team is hoping to get a high number of respondents - at least a thousand.

## <u>Presentation by International Students' Secretary - Rhea Singhania</u>

The International Students' Secretary (ISS) started her presentation by sharing the agenda which was to share what events and initiatives ICON had in January, and what ICON plans to do in the coming few months.

The ISS shared that the ICON AGM concluded on the 15th of January. Grabfood vouchers were given out to increase attendance numbers, however high attrition rates were observed on the day of the event. The ISS was open to any suggestions from the Council with regards to this problem.

The Integration Department of the department recently conducted 'Buddy Programme' which was targeted towards year 1 international students and exchange students. The ISS wanted to share the learnings from this event in particular because it was a physical event. The Secretary shared that the guidelines and rules out forth by OSS are very stringent and well-enforced. The ICON team ensured that the participants were split into groups of 6 and that there was no intermingling between them. Furthermore, participants were not allowed to post pictures before getting them vetted by ICON and DII. There were almost 30 participants in total.

The Secretary went on to share that their latest welfare drive commenced on the 27th of January. It was audited by OSS twice through random checks to ensure that safety procedures were being followed. Thus, it is imperative to abide by the workflow stated in the events' GPD.

The Secretary also shared that the ICON Fest was going to take place in the following week. She encouraged the Council members to take part in the same. Their plan is to have an event in the lines of the game 'Episode'.

#### <u>Presentation by ASoc President- Wei Shin</u>

The ASoc President commenced his presentation by sharing about recently concluded ASoc events. In the previous month, ASoc conducted a Hybrid mode Annual General Meeting wherein some members attended online, while some attended in-person. For the online attendees, they were put together in clusters of not more than 8 and were requested to tune-in together. ASoc had also recently concluded freshman welcome pack distribution. It was done in collaboration with the school office with regards to logistics. A professional development event - ASoc Axplore - had also concluded recently and the turnout was in high numbers. The ASoc President was keen to have the event online the following year as well to ensure a similar turnout.

ASoc is also planning to conduct a mini welfare drive the following week. The CBd had to scrap the idea of giving fresh food in accordance with the guidelines put forth by OSS. The ASoc President highlighted that a timeslot system would be used as it had proven to be successful in the past.

ASoc is also planning to host a Seniors' night on the 12th of March. The event mode is expected to be a hybrid one with only prize winners and keynote speakers attending in person. The venue will probably SMU Connexion, and incentives will be given in the form of goodie bags. An event to close-off the ongoing Alumni mentoring programme is also in the works.

The Council member also shared that recruitment for ASoc camp and ASoc night is currently ongoing.

The CBd President also shared that the plans pertaining to 'Project Moolah', a financial literacy initiative, are currently ambiguous as a plan to resume normal operations while abiding by school and MOE regulations is yet to be devised.

#### **Presentation by Bondue President- Yasirah Umar**

The Bondue President got her presentation underway by talking about her CBd's recently concluded AGM. The event was conducted in an auditorium and was also telecasted via Zoom. The only physical attendees were SMUSA Neutrals, guests of honour, and incoming and outgoing ExCos. The President highlighted that a few issues with regards to the live-stream were faced on the day of the event.

She went on to share that Bondue will continue their Know Thy Major Series. She stated that the School of Business has multiple majors, and not all students are aware of them. The initiative will help in helping such students by facilitating talks and sharing sessions from professors and students from different majors.

The Council member shared that Bondue will help Bonduers hone their leadership skills through their Leadership Development Series wherein ExCo members will act as mentors for freshmen. They will also go through professional and personal development by attending workshops and organising committees for two bondue events. They will have a leadership role in one event, while a team-member role in the other. This will help them get a more holistic view of Bondue operations, while also exposing them to different learning opportunities.

The Bondue President then shared that a welfare drive will soon be conducted in collaboration with friendship week. The event will be physical while abiding by the guidelines. The mode of the event was chosen to be physical to have an opportunity to interact with Bonduers.

Bondue also plans to conduct an Alumni networking night. They initially planned for it to be a physical event, however, the mode has been changed to online due to the recent surge in community Covid-19 cases. The team is not planning to use Zoom as they do not consider it to be a very conducive platform for a networking session based on previous experiences.

Another welfare drive has been planned to take place during the finals period. The theme would be to spread good vibes, positivity and love within the bondue community.

At this juncture, the Bondue President wanted to know whether any other CBds have ever delivered their welfare drive goodies.

A few Council members shared that even though they had engaged in delivering welfare packs, they found the cost to be very high. As such, they do not find it to be very feasible and discouraged others from doing the same.

#### Presentation by Ellipsis President- Wei Xiang

The Ellipsis President kicked-off his presentation by sharing that SIS had a change in name, however, the name of the school CBd is not expected to change.

He shared that upcoming events include workshops and other initiatives to raise awareness around the school name. He also shared that IITs can assist CBds to access the updated zoom version to better organise online events.

The CBd president also shared that Ellipsis plans to conduct a Valentines Day welfare drive. Furthermore, a CNY celebration in SCIS Reunion has also been planned. It will be conducted as a live show on Twitch as well as Zoom. The Council members shared that the school has a list of approved online platforms, and Twitch might not fall under the same.

The Council member shared that multiple info-sessions, coding challenges, workshops, etc. have also been planned. These are mainly aimed towards freshmen as they were unhappy with not being able to learn as much as they would have liked in the previous semester due to online events.

## Presentation by Sosciety President- Christine Luna

The president started by sharing that Sosciety had recently conducted internship talks spanning over two days. The event saw a lot of

ultimate and penultimate year students from different industries share their experiences. The sign-ups were found to be very high, however, the attrition rate was quite high on the day of the event as well. The president wanted to seek advice from the Council on how such a scenario could be avoided.

The Council members shared some ways by which they had tried to avoid this problem like having lucky draws in every session of the event and ensuring that the events have speakers from sought after industries.

The President went on to share a bit on the upcoming Sosciety events. This included a get-together for mentors and mentees to get to know each other in their mentorship programme.

The Council member also told the Council about the creation of a new community service department. The rationale behind this was to increase awareness about important social issues in Singapore which are not well known. The department will also aim to support small businesses that had been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

# Presentation by The Bar President- Lenvin Tan

The Bar President started his segment by sharing that his CBd had two welfare events coming up. There are plans to merge the two events so as to have a single event of a much greater magnitude. The aim of the initiative is to inculcate collegiality and camaraderie between Law students, while also providing brand recognition to the sponsors.

A few initiatives had been planned for Valentines Day and Chinese New Year.

The Council member also shared that the team will shift their focus on professional development in light of Covid-19 pandemic. This is to also help partners and sponsors receive more coverage. The President also shared that their external partners found online mode events to be more effective at engaging students.

The Bar also is also working to make their own MC programme with each director being grouped with a bunch of students. They found

their associates to be very engaged and engrossed. Law camp and Law Night are other events that are currently being planned. The latter is expected to be online given that it is hard to conduct a pageant with the current restrictions.

The Council member also shared that a significant proportion of the student body had been giving feedback through the pigeon hole as well as anonymous polls on their faculty specific chat rooms.

#### Presentation by ACF President- Remus Chan

The Secretary started by sharing that the theme for ACF's upcoming welfare drive is 'Alice in Wonderland', and the initiative is limited to the first 120 sign-ups. The initiative will be conducted in three parts and are being made to accommodate non-ACF members. The time period between the 22nd and the 26th of February has been confirmed with OSS and the respective school manager.

The Council member also shared that recruitment for Arts Camp had started. Even though the situation and rules are constantly evolving, the Events Director of ACF is planning for the event to either be Hybrid or Online.

The ACF President also shared the concerns with regards to the feasibility of Summer Camps as well as postponement of events due to OSS vetting procedures.

#### Presentation by SICS President- Jeslynn Loo

The President of SICS commenced her segment by sharing that SICS had similar dates in mind as ACF for their SICS week. They are also planning to increase their recruitment dates.

The President highlighted that the purpose of the initiative was increasing awareness of recruitment dates of CSP projects as well as publicity of individual clubs' upcoming events. There are plans to give out prizes worth up to like 200 dollars as well as 200 exclusive SICS goodie bags.

The Council member went on to share a few challenges faced by the CBd till date. This included clubs not being aware of the rules and regulations shared by OSS. SICS took initiative to inform all their clubs of the same to prevent them from getting banned. Furthermore, they were also concerned about the hierarchy between SICS and OSL, and proposed for OSL to consult SICS before making final decisions for their clubs.

#### **Presentation by SMUX President- Macus Lim**

The SMUX President started the event by sharing his experience from their recently concluded ExCo Retreat. The event was not organised in the previous year due to Covid-19 pandemic. The CBd President went on to share that the 50 man event took place with strict adherence to safe-distancing measures. The participants were split into groups of 8, and colour coding was used to denote different groups and to prevent intermingling. The offices found the event to be a huge success. He went on to talk about the recently organised SMUX AGM which took place in a hybrid setting.

The Council member shared that their next event is the CBd welfare. He shared that his team is currently devising plans to organise the event with the new events guidelines in mind. Initially, the SMUX team wanted to have a booth because of prominent positioning. But, that plan has now been scrapped as a result of the new directives.

The CBd President suggested that information flow from certain offices can be improved to facilitate better improvisation and adaption of working plans by MC / individual teams. He also shared his concern with regards to the Asset Endorsement Meeting. He highlighted that during the AEM, the operations team goes through the list and then approves it, however, the money is not allocated down. As such there was concern about whether it was useful to have the AEM before the BEM. The respective secretaries decided to follow up on this concern after the meeting.

## Presentation by SSU President- Thi Ha Thet Tin

The SSU President got his segment underway by sharing about SSU's events from last semester onwards. He elaborated on SSU's welfare

drive in November. The event was attended by around 900 members who received shoe bags. The SSU President also shared that the CBd had a strategic retreat in December to set goals for their tenure. Following this, he touched on the SSU AGM. During the meeting, the CBd MC made plans to work closely with clubs during the coming year, and create sports clusters to facilitate initiatives. The CBd will make great efforts to tighten bonds with the clubs. There are also on-going discussions with C4SR and other clubs on how community service opportunities can be provided to students given that there are no OCSP.

The SSU President then shared that sports camp was scheduled to take place between the 20th and 30th of June. An overwhelming number of sign-ups have been observed. Plans for other events like Waikiki, Sports Appreciation Camp, etc. are also being cemented. SSU is also considering having initiatives related to professional development and corporate development through a collaboration with the Office of Alumni Relations.

The CBd President shared that he is concerned about succession and feels that there is a shortage of candidates. Furthermore, he stated that there is a need for initiatives that will entice people to take up leadership roles in CBds and SMUSA.

#### **Presentation by Oikos President- Glen Wong**

The Oikos President kicked off his presentation by talking about the Oikos AGM. During the event, the team decided to make significant efforts going forward to enhance the image of the CBd. The Council member also shared that Oikos had planned an initiation resembling SACLIP as many frieshies were unaware of Oikos. The aim of the initiative is to instill teamwork within the team, and make them prove that they really want to work for the betterment of Oikos members.

There are also plans to conduct 'New Dawn' and resume writing workshops. The former is a Chinese New Year celebration which was formerly exclusive to Chinese students. However, the Oikos MC will make efforts to make the event inclusive of other social groups. Any thoughts of discontinuing New Dawn were also dismissed as it is a signature event of Oikos. The event will be marketed in the lines of

being a CSP. The CBd also recently conducted an event wherein SOE students were requested to come to the venue that were to be given out to old age homes.

The President also shared that his team is currently seeking sponsorship for their welfare drive. He also highlighted the reason for Oikos not having a sponsor; the school has two tracks namely Quantitative Finance and Real Estate. The former was found to garner a lot of attention from corporates, whereas the same is not true for the latter. However, the Council member was happy to announce that corporate giants like Bloomberg and Shopee had recently shown interest in sponsoring SOE events.

## Presentation by Events Secretary - Gayathri Ghandi

The Secretary began her session by informing the council that Freshmen Experience day had been cancelled. This was done because of the absence of statistics to prove the success of the event. The Secretary also informed that students can still sign up for camps through online links for the cbd and school camps. Students no longer have to physically come down to school to sign up for camps. This is to manage the influx of students and avoiding intermingling would be tough.

The Secretary also shared that the dates of the various camps/events will only be confirmed by mid march. She also shared that the dates, number of runs, and format for Freshmen Orientation have not been confirmed yet. The formation of FO Organising Committee is also pending. Events directors have been informed to let the secretary know about the mode of any planned events (online, hybrid or physical) as well as the rough mechanics in case they are physical.

The Secretary also shared that given the uncertain circumstances, Council members must be flexible to shift their events to a fully online format.

The Secretary also went on to address a few of the Council members' concerns pertaining to the organisation of events. These included the delay in deconfliction affecting planning processes, delay in finalising FO format and dates, facilitator recruitment being affected due to any

event cancellations etc. The Secretary shared that after having extensive discussions with OSL, the aforementioned concerns still do not have a concrete answer, and there is a possibility of physical events being cancelled. The Secretary also shared that as per C4SR's information, the format of the three local CSPs has been changed such that the local camps and finale will no longer take place

# <u>Presentation by SMUSA President and SMUSA Vice-President - Lim</u> <u>Jia En and Valliapan Arunachalam</u>

The President commenced the segment by sharing that Community Chest and certain community service initiatives had approached SMUSA recently. Firstly, they were seeking SMUSA's assistance in promoting the Heartstrings Walk 2021 to the SMU Undergraduate population. The event aims to raise funds for community service initiatives. Formerly, it used to be a physical walk along the Marina Bay Sands area, however, it will be conducted in a semi-virtual fashion as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. The President also shared the poster of the initiative with the Council.

The community service organisations were also keen to know whether SMUSA will be able to assist them in their fundraising efforts directly. However, they were not given a favourable answer as the process is very complicated, and would involve multiple school offices.

The President wanted to gauge whether the CBd Presidents would be keen to help promote the Heartstrings Walk 2021 and other similar initiatives to their student pools. She also shared that the Presidents may refrain from stepping up if the initiative does not fall under the goal(s) of the CBd. A concern was raised with regards to the CBds merely acting as an intermediary in the process and not receiving any tangible benefits. Another concern highlighted that the initiative resembles the SMOO Challenge which had not received a strong reception in the past. Furthermore, this initiative might dilute the focus on the SMOO Challenge. In addition to that, SICS is also planning to have a similar initiative of their own and as such, they might want to focus on that instead. The Council also enquired whether there was any timeline or targets to keep in view. However, there were none. The Council also shared that while supporting charity is good, many school CBd members may not be interested in the initiative. As such,

the school CBds marketing the initiative might not be effective. At the same time, some CBds were keen on the idea, and vouched to assist in promoting the event. The Sosciety President shared that the initiative is coherent with their community service department, and they are already thinking of fundraising initiatives. Hence, they will be keen on promoting the Heartstrings Walk. At this juncture, another concern was raised on the message sent out to the students if some CBds promoted the event while others did not.

The President went on to shared a few updates from OSS. She shared that she, alongwith the Communications Secretary, had been having active conversations with multiple school offices. She also stated that the two had a meeting with OSS to address the questions that multiple Council members had. The President shared the email that was sent out by the OSS to all Clubs' safety ICs for the Council's perusal.

The President invited the Communications Secretary to share a few updates from the meeting. The Communications Secretary shared the following rules with regards to photo-taking:

For any group pictures, people must at least a metre apart if they are clicking a picture without masks. On the contrary, there is no need for 1 metre spacing if the picture is being clicked with masks on. Pictures may only be clicked for a maximum of eight people at a time in either scenarios. These guidelines set out by OSS must be followed unless the photo-session is being conducted by professional photographers or in a studio, in which case their guidelines must be followed.

The Council shared that a few CBds had received contrasting messages from their school offices. The Communications Secretary urged the Council members to include disclaimers in any posts to show that safe-distancing guidelines were adhered to. While posting old pictures, the CBds must let viewers know that the pictures were clicked prior to Covid-19 Pandemic.

The President acknowledged that there might be information asymmetry amongst school offices, and the best way for disseminating information will be decided going forward.

The Council shared that a significant proportion of the student population is in disagreement with OSS's rules. For instance, many toilets have only 1 functional basin while the others have been sealed for the purpose of safe-distancing. However, this proves to have a recoil effect as it encourages clustering around the operational wash-basins and severe lag times. The Council members shared that the onus is on them to convey such inconsistencies to OSS and other relevant parties. The Council members also shared that such stringent, and in some cases unnecessary, rules have made it hard for them to organise summer events. This has also negatively affected the Organising Committee members of various events.

After hearing these concerns, the President reassured the council that OSS is open to receiving feedback, and hasn't received a lot of inputs till now.

The Council asked whether the new rules sent out by OSS apply only prospectively, or retrospectively as well? The Vice-President responded that if the photoshoots have already been conducted, the pictures may be put up along with a disclaimer. The Council also brought a concern with OSS forming strict rules for the purpose of image protection and not prevention of the spread of Covid-19. Certain inconsistencies of OSS rules with regards to rules laid out by the government were also identified by a few Council members.

The CBd Presidents also wished to know the relationship between SMUSA and OSS - whether SMUSA simply acted as conveyors or information for them, or whether they worked alongside SMUSA for such matters. They also stressed that not putting forth the students' sentiments in front of OSS will put the Council in a bad light, and it is imperative that the Council acts as a filter for OSS's decisions. The lack of transparency on the part of the school offices in such decision making processes was also identified, and the CBd Presidents felt that the CBds should have a greater say in such matters, if the school offices are truly concerned about the interest of the students. A point with regards to OSS taking an autocratic approach was also brought

up. The CBds enquired whether it would be possible for them to meet OSS in an informal setting. This was because they felt that meeting in a big group in a formal setting acts as a forum rather than a constructive conversation. As such, an informal meeting would facilitate a more lucid flow of information between either parties, and will also help OSS in gathering useful and candid feedback. The various presidents also wished for OSS to be informed that there was variance in the rules conveyed to different CBds, and this could result in a lapse of proper knowledge transfer. Furthermore, a few Council members felt that OSS's actions have been hypocritical to some extent. For instance, eating food in classes and events has been banned, however students till eat together at Koufu. Furthermore, rules for events are extremely stringent while classes with a much higher participation level are being conducted with less rules, and professors are unable to enforce even those. As such, they felt that OSS must standardize their rules if they are concerned with safety. The Communications Secretary showed the Council how classes follow all safe-distancing rules by having limited seats and proper spacing in between them. She had learnt this in her previous meeting with the school office. The SMUSA President assured the Council members that their inputs and suggestions will be shared with OSS. She also assured the Council that they are seeking approval for the break time in between classes to be longer, so that students with consecutive classes can find time to eat.

The President also shared that OSS is working with an SCIS professor to create a website that can help students to get a live view of the human traffic in different school buildings. This initiative is being carried out with utmost urgency. She also shared that due to limited library capacity, more avenues will be created for students to study. Numerous Seminar Rooms will be released for students during the study week. At the same time, the booking of credits of students have been reduced to prevent the booking of SRs for non-important purposes. Furthermore, she stressed that the last time such an initiative had taken place, multiple issues had arisen as a result of the concentrated timeline. As such, the Council members must start working on this initiative at their earliest. She also shared that if any Security personnel behave in an irrationally rude fashion, their name may be reported to OSS.

The Academic and Welfare Secretary enquired whether the CBd Presidents would prefer to book the Seminar Rooms on their own, or whether a centralised system wherein SMUSA A&W Department acts as the conduit and distributes the SRs to CBds would be preferred. The stakeholders decided to continue this discussion after the meeting.

The Vice-President ended the meeting by sharing the details of the upcoming SMUSA Council photoshoot as well as the SAC retreat.

**4.** The meeting ended at 2222