Navigating The Queer Wake
College Council's Minutes for the
7:30 P.M., 15 October 2003, Regular Meeting in Hopkins 1964 Classroom
Response to Homophobic Incidents

Open Time starts every meeting
Edgardo Costas-Bracero spoke on the Queer Student Union's QSU discussion of the emails that Nate Winstanley received. He recounted that the response sought was not to address the emails, but the general topic of homophobia and hatred of any minority group present on campus. The QSU wanted to do a "march kind of thing" modeled after Take Back the Night.

Christina Villegas added that the QSU wanted CC to participate in the QSU's reaction by helping to facilitate the event. Edgardo stressed that the move can only be effective with student support, and CC was the way to secure that. Mike Henry co-pres inquired when the march would be, and what CC's role in it should be. Edgardo said that neither was set as of yet, though the march is to happen in the next couple of weeks.

Committees and Groups Reports on and from student committees
Gerry Lindo all campus began, "Some groups have been good, and some groups have been bad." Most that have met have met mainly to set the year's agenda. The Committee on Undergraduate Life CUL and the Committee on Diversity and Community CDC have moved beyond that, and his reports centered on them.

The CUL is starting to consider some things that may affect students deeply. The last issue of The Record featured an article highlighting many problem with the campus social life, such as general drunken rowdiness and ACE's problems finding hosts. The CUL, at its last meeting, "talked about" this as much detail as Gerry gave the current structure of ACE, the old Social Chair system and the current Housing Coordinator system, and a proposed anchor housing system, though Gerry commented that the meeting's minutes made it seem like the latter idea was "shot down." Gerry strongly advises students to contact your CUL reps and weigh in on these issues.

The CDC this year will tackle the issue of diversity, taking a religious diversity angle. Gerry, a member, said the committee felt that tack had not been taken in the past, perhaps partly because the Jewish and Muslim populations on campus are so small. A student survey may be in the works, he said, but all is indefinite.

Crissy Campbell spoke on the Committee on the Office of Career Counseling OCC. The committee has not met yet, she said. She favored surveying students on their experiences with the OCC. She listed some goals she had for reform: questionnaires for students to fill out after they've been interviewed by a company, improvement of the OCC's current failure to prepare student for interviews with "case interviews" or "technical interviews." These are in quotes because I do not know the terms, so I am simply repeating them. For the long term, she said she aimed to get the OCC to broaden its research into other organizations, hopefully getting people to research organizations over the summer.

Ali Moiz Dodd Quad objected to what he felt were a lack of practical steps. Jessi England Class of 2006 responded that the committee had not met yet, thus they could not really speak on what the committee's goals were.

Budgets
Federico Sosa treasurer presented the requests heard by FinCom last Sunday.
Scattershot requested 1475, but was recommended 275 because their treasurer had not realized that their group had at 1300 rollover.
Student Global AIDS Campaign agreed to withdraw their request this week for an amount over 1500, because their budget lacked completeness and alternate funding.

FinCom's recommendations PASSED, 31-0-0.
Opinions

This year, only opinions pertinent to the agenda are read at meetings. There were no opinions to opinions@wso.

Opinions Unplugged has not yet begun running; Cathy Mercado, MinCo, is working on fixing that.

Godfrey Bakuli

Sage unveiled Opine and Dine, a program which will place opinion cards on dining hall tables that will get back to Council.

New Business from the Agenda

Appointments to the General Fund Allocation Cmmte.

Federico Sosa
treasurer

began by asking the secretary if he had received any selfnoms from CC members interested in the four positions. He was met with a stout "no.”

A renewal of pleas drew five volunteers: Philipp Huy, Godfrey Bakuli, Nora Burns, Peter Tosirisuk, and Nadia Moore.

The five left the room as Council deliberated their merits, to come to a decision. These deliberations are confidential, and the resulting vote is not tabulated.

Godfrey Bakuli
Nora Burns
Peter Tosirisuk
Nadia Moore

Armstrong were appointed to serve on the GFAC.

The Letter

Responding to homophobic emails in the wake of Queer Bash, and reaffirming the College's commitment to diversity and acceptance of queer students

Chin Ho
co president

read the draft of the letter to come before Council for its decision on whether or not to sign. The below draft is the letter draft after some minor alterations by Council consensus, thus it is not the exact draft brought before Council at the start of the meeting. The Secretary apologizes for his inability to secure a copy of the original draft, but assures that the below draft contains alterations of meaning:

Dear Williams Students,

Recently, several marked instances of homophobia by Williams students towards other Williams students have shaken the college's queer community, and left many queer students feeling unsafe on campus. Among the most explicit of these instances was an email sent by a Williams student to the party host of the Queer Student Union organized Queer Bash:

"Why dont u faggots keep to ur god damn selves. You people disgust me. I keep my heterosexuality to myself. Why dont you queers keep to yourselves. I almost threw up when i saw all that crap you people wrote on the sidewalks last week. You’re all goin to hell. It was adam and eve, not adam and steve.”

Additionally, queer students have received other discriminatory emails, and many queer students have been verbally harassed or confronted over the last week. This behavior is a violation of community standards.

Accepting membership in this community entails an obligation to behave with courtesy to others whose beliefs and behavior differ from one's own; all members and guests of this community must be free of disturbance or harassment, including harassment based on sexual orientation. Although the College seeks to assure the rights of all to express themselves in words and actions, they must do so without infringing upon the rights of others or violating standards of good conduct and mutual respect.

In light of this disrespectful behavior, the Williams student body joins members of the Williams College administration in reaffirming the College's commitment to diversity and its full acceptance of queer students. Discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, religion, creed, age, or disability, will not be tolerated by either the administration or the students of Williams College.

Procedure provides that people from outside of Council speak first. Sophie Hood expressed her approval of this draft of the letter, and her relief that its language had not been toned down. She also called the events that sparked it the "quintessence of discrimination.” Edgardo Costas-Bracero also approved of this draft over the former, but said he would like to see the paragraph on general discrimination extended. He said also that the QSU had agreed that this had to be approached from a “hatred in general standpoint,” not merely as a response to just the two emails.

Dan Rooney
Mills Thompson

objected to characterizing the emails as discrimination. He said that discrimination is an act of selecting one group over another.
The letter itself never faced serious opposition in Council. Inclusion of the text of the offending email was the main point of contention.

Arguments against including the email begin here...

The emails, by contrast, were a matter of hatred or prejudice, but not discrimination. **Jim Irving** Class of 2005 said that by the dictionary, he thought Dan was right, but that use of the word here is best because it makes a stronger point. **Nate Winstanley** Class of 2004 took issue, saying that discrimination is any time someone is singled out for who they are, just as he was by the sender of these emails. He also related the extensive steps he took to ensure that his forwarding of the offending emails to various listservers, with the names of the senders attached, was within his rights and wise by the standards of the groups and deans he consulted.

**Cathy Mercado** MinCo announced that ACE will formally support the letter. The most central debate over the letter by far was the inclusion of the text of the offending email. From this point on, discussion revolved around that decision., a question raised by **Jim Irving** Class of 2005.

**Jessi England** Class of 2006 supported the inclusion of the email for the necessary sake of showing what exists on campus. **Ikem Joseph** Dennett added that this was fair, because the point of the offending email was to single out Nate, thus singling out the sender is a justified response.

**Ilunga Kalala** Junior Advisors opened the anti inclusion argument. He stressed the fact that the student would know that it was his email being publicized, and himself would not feel safe on campus. This action and the beliefs “are a product of wherever he comes from. We don’t want him leaving here with that same kind of mentality.”

**Aaron Wilson** all campus mentioned that he had received emails from constituents urging him to raise the following point: the name of the sender has been sent around the entire campus. Everyone will associate his name with the entire episode. Aaron aid he wanted to voice his discontent over how the email was handled, and asked how the kid can ever be reintegrated into a campus that regards him as Williams now does.

**PJ Bonavitacola** Pratt said that, homophobia is the sender’s freedom of speech. Homophobia needs to be rooted out where it comes from a larger issue than Council can “take into hand.” Including the email will not do anything but “piss his friends off and make him feel like crap.”

**Ilunga Kalala** Junior Advisors stated again that the email is getting around. It is not important to throw the email back in his face. Ilunga reemphasized that he did not like either of the kids who sent the emails, but that it was necessary to keep in mind that in denouncing the act, we must resist the temptation to strike back.

**Chris Ryan** Brooks, Chadbourne, Perry acknowledged the need to make the condemnation letter strongly worded, but said he worried about the rights of the student. It was necessary for Council to recognize that people make mistakes, he said, and that we ought not to say. “If you screw up once, you’re done, you’re through.”

**Jonathan Landsman** secretary said that members should consider why they believe it is right to condemn the email. He said that he believed that the offense was not in the email’s causing discomfort, because discomfort is something that the QSU itself supports and intentionally generates at times, but in its threatening aspect, which we regard as unacceptable and crossing a line. Holding this value, he said, we must also weigh the extent that the campus would be made a more threatening to the sender as a result of publishing the email, now that his name has been attached to it. Jonathan then moved to amend the letter to strike the quoted text and join the surrounding sentences with a semicolon.

**Nate Winstanley** Class of 2004 reiterated that the letter related to the kid’s conscious actions, whereas Nate himself was targeted for nothing, for simply sending an email advertising Queer Bash. Nate responded to the issue of freedom of speech with “I’m not even going to address that because. Yeah.” Nate said he is afraid now, he is locking his doors, and this is not OK. The letter, for these reasons, needs to be as strong as it can.

**Jim Irving** Class of 2005 commended Nate for his action on the email, saying that it took bravery. He reemphasized that the word of what had happened, though, was already out, and the job of any action should be to educate people on how serious and real this is.

**Peter Tosirisuk** Morgan, Lehman asked Nate if publishing the email text would make him any less threatened, and suggested it might make him more threatened.

**Gerry Lindo** all campus “Goddamn it, people, I don’t like the way this is going at all. When did this become about this kid the emailer getting hurt?” The name is out there, it has happened. Gerry cited Council member’s own statements of prior ignorance, and stated that many people do not know about this yet, but that everyone eventually know is the way it should be. This email must be out in the open; it is not fair to queer students to sweep it under the rug. It must be remembered for what it is.
Regardless of what you feel about the outcome, it is this secretary's strong opinion that you must hand it to Council and its process for the exploration of this issue.

May the criticism and complaints come. If one's desire is for swift action of a unanimous nature, one may be dissatisfied. If one's goal is for measured action following an exhaustive, bilateral discussion, I challenge anyone to find a better, and more thought-diverse example.

Cathy Mercado MinCo agreed, and asserted that removing the email's text would lessen the realness of the incident.

Sophie Hood, not a Council member, was allowed to speak by exception made by the co presidents. She called the letter “an incredibly diplomatic, well crafted resolution.” She recalled the Mad Cow incident, during which minority groups packed the room, and offered that one reason QSU members were not present at tonight’s Council meeting was due to fear, which is unacceptable. Inclusion of the email is a motion of honest dialog, in stark contrast to the email itself, and we must make the differentiation.

At this point, a motion to close debate and vote on the amendment to the letter passed. PJ Bonavitacola Pratt motioned to make the vote on this amendment a blind vote. Nate Winstanley Class of 2004 strenuously asserted that, if there was a vote to make the vote blind, he would write down the names of every member who voted to make it blind. Aaron Wilson all campus, equally strenuously raised a point of order to object to Nate's remarks, which he called completely out of line. Other members of Council voiced their agreement, and called the comment itself threatening.

Mike Henry co pres, exercising his authority to interpret the bylaws of Council, ruled the motion to make the vote blind as unallowable, because provision for it is not made in our Bylaws. Jonathan Landsman secretary, voiced his strong disagreement with Mike's interpretation, saying that the provision for publicizing how members vote is specified only in bylaws and not the Constitution, and thus may be overridden by a 2/3 vote. Co presidents make the final call on these rulings, however, and the blinding motion was quelled.

The amendment to the letter now came to a vote.

☐ Amending the letter to strike the quoted offending email FAILED, 14-15-2.

☐ Endorsing the letter PASSED, 23-8-0.

New Business from the Floor

The CC-WSO Committee Drew thinks campus@wso needs a change

Here, Drew Newman asked for the membership of the Council committee with WSO. Drew was under the mistaken impression that the email had gone out over campus@wso and WSO had approved the email; Nate corrected him by informing him that it had gone over Williams Students, and. Cyndi Haley, secretary to the dean, had approved it. Drew asked Council to direct the committee to strike the rule banning parties from being advertised over campus@wso. Chin Ho co pres said he would look into it.

Meet the President A committee to help you do just what it sounds like

Nora Burns Spencer, West said that she and Chris Ryan Brooks, Chadbourne, Perry were trying to form a committee to help students meet the president of the College on in informal setting. Nora asked for volunteers to be on this committee and help get it working. Philipp Huy all campus, Nate Winstanley Class of 2004, and Veronica Mendiola Gladden volunteered.

Absentees Two absences in a row or three in a term result in a members’ expulsion, unless overridden by the secretary's discretion or petition to the Council

Thomas Kunjappu Agard, Garfield, Wood

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Landsman
Secretary of College Council