

The SPECTRUM

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO

WEDNESDAY MARCH 18, 1992 VOLUME 41 NUMBER 60

Black Student Union angry over proposed budget cuts

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Student Association Senators were braced for conflict at a March 4th meeting as angry BSU (Black Student Union) members threatened protest. The BSU members were reacting to the discovery of a budget proposal that would decrease their funding by \$3500 next fall.

The BSU found out about the proposed cut after members saw a copy of the proposed budget earlier in the day.

SA Treasurer Jennifer Bucklin said the Senate Finance Committee had spent the entire week putting in long hours to get the budget proposal ready in time for the Senate meeting on March 4th. The proposed budget, completed only that morning, was due to go before the Senate for a vote.

Due to the unexpected presence of the BSU members, the Senate decided to put the budget vote off until all clubs could have the same opportunity to review the changes in their own proposed budgets.

"We are not playing favorites. We will delay the vote until all clubs have been given an equal chance to see their proposed budgets," Bucklin said. "Letters will be sent to each club, informing them of what their

proposed budget increases or decreases are and why," she said.

The Senate listened briefly to the complaints of the BSU, but decided that budget matters should not be discussed at the meeting. The decision was made after members of the Senate said that the BSU would be gaining an unfair advantage in voicing their concerns over the proposed budget while no other groups had any knowledge of the proposed budget.

The BSU students at the meeting said they were unhappy with the Senate's decision to end all discussion about the proposed budget.

Frustration over cuts

"The understanding I got is that the Senators are here to meet the needs of the students," one BSU member stated. "I come here today for the BSU. We are very frustrated about the budget. The amount of black students has gone up, not decreased, we need more money, not less," she added.

According to Bucklin, the decisions behind the proposed budget were due to factors involving both the individual clubs' performance and also the future projected budget of SA.

The finance committee, made up of eight senators and Bucklin, holds



The Spectrum/Andrea Schaffino

Senators tried to finalize the budget at a March 4 Student Association Senate meeting.

hearings before the budget proposal is made. Clubs are encouraged to attend a hearing to plead their case. At the hearing, a club can request a level of funding and explain to the finance committee why they deserve it.

"The finance committee looks at how active a club is, what kind of events it sponsors and its level of organization," Bucklin said.

Bucklin explained that there are six types of clubs, each with a council

chair whose job it is to keep lines of communication open between the clubs and SA. Clubs should be holding regular meetings with their

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Budget: BSU actual cut only \$1500 *from page 1*

council chair so that they in turn can inform SA of each club's needs.

The finance committee uses the input from the council chairs and the ledgers from the club's present and past years to determine the level of funding the club deserves.

BSU \$1500 budget cut

According to Bucklin, although the BSU's budget is proposed to be cut from \$26,000 to \$22,500, their actual operating budget is only to be decreased by \$1500.

The remaining \$2000 cut will be from the elimination of BSU's co-sponsorship line. This line included money that was set aside in the budget, to be given out to other clubs for co-sponsored events. "All other clubs must co-sponsor events using their own money," Bucklin said.

Bucklin explained that more money was going to be made available to the club coordinators that advise the clubs. This money is used by the coordinators to give back to clubs that express a need.

She added that when determining the amount a club deserves, the committee looks at the club's contributions to the university and the community as a whole.

"You can tell just by looking at a ledger, whether or not a club has been active or if they have shut themselves off," Bucklin said.

Each club is rated on how well it works within the university, how it fosters good community relations and what it does for the university as a whole. "While

it's important that a club foster good relations with the community, it's more important to [be active] in the university," Bucklin said.

Bucklin explained that while the BSU has done much within the community, it should do more on campus so that its events are more accessible to the university population.

"The proposed amount of PODER and the BSU was more money than a whole category of clubs combined," Bucklin explained, "more money than all forty academic interest clubs."

The finance committee also looks at the amount of money a club fund raises on its own, Bucklin explained. "The BSU has done no fund raising, while some clubs have raised many times their operating budget," she said. "If we increase a club's funding this year, we can at least maintain that level of funding next year. Chances are that money won't be around next year."

According to Bucklin the university is expecting a steady decrease in undergraduates in the next few years. Fewer undergraduates equals less money that SA has available to give out to clubs.

Clubs that need money may request additional funding from their council chair.

All clubs should be receiving a letter explaining their new budgets. Bucklin suggested that any clubs with questions should seek the help of their coordinator.