

EGCC Student Government Association 2022-2023
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Madam President McCloud at 8:04pm EST.

Special Orders

None.

Attendance

- **Present:** McCloud, Domagala, Richards, Sanders, Cooper, De La Cruz, Hunter, Nickell, Rogers, Whitaker, Zhao
 - **Absent:** Hulse, Morris
- Quorum is: 9 Majority is: 6

Reading of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on September 7, 2022 were provided via email from Advisor Twyford for your review prior to this meeting.

Motion to approve: Richards Second: Sanders

Minutes approved via voice.

Officer Reports

McCloud: No report

Domagala: No report

Richards: No report

Sanders: No report

Committee Reports

McCloud: Sent HLC Criteria 3 meeting minutes from last week this morning. Also included the Faculty professional development plan that was included from that meeting.

Nickell: At last meeting, they went through some of the information – worked with Jamie/Spring. They went piece by piece to find what is missing in the evidentiary statements and went through each category. Minutes from this week aren't available yet.

Richards: Had Anna Marie Welshans as a guest, had different faculty on to talk about their successes with this plan.

Old Business

1. HLC Concerns

Students who had interest in joining the committee for HLC Criteria 3 (Nickell, McCloud, Rogers, Richards, Hunter) have been passed along to Denise Gunsur.

President Geoghegan was invited but had no updates for this meeting.

Advisor Twyford: Students received email about there not being any updates at the time, and they thought the college would have a response by that time. If students had not received any new information, faculty and staff did not get anything either. We did not receive that email, I found out by seeing it on the EGCC Friends Facebook page. As of right now, the last update President Geoghegan sent was where it stands – they files the injunction against the DOE so we can find out quicker about whether or not we can register students for spring. Advisors are ready to register, but we just need the go-ahead. There is still the argument that we didn't get the due process and things happened too quickly for us to be able to respond, but then again also, the DOE has outlined what the college needs to do to be in compliance with Title IV (Pell grant) requirements. The group on the HLC Criteria 3 committee is doing a great job, that's the part of HLC where a lot of student engagement pieces, including the need for a Student Government, can be found in the bigger picture of HLC. It's great that we have a strong representation of SGA members there. I would encourage that group to keep up the good work, participate in those discussions. HLC wanted to see that students were involved in the governance of the college. SGA is a part of that; you're not a decision making body, but you have the opportunity to be the voice of the students and share their concerns with the administration. Stay informed, keep reading the emails – I know they can be a lot to read. I know right now it can seem really discouraging because there isn't a lot of information, and we can get discouraged, too. I think things are moving in a constructive direction, there are constructive steps happening. The effort you are putting forth right now is worth it, don't let it get you down right now. You have a lot of time left in the semester. Work on this week, and then the next week, and then the next week. That's the best way to get through it.

McCloud: With spring registration, does this mean overall students or just FCB?

Twyford: Overall students. We have these weekly college updates with all employees where the president comes on and gives us information and updates on what he knows is going on and the actions the board is taking. Something I'm going to ask is when there is going to be an education campaign about what Pell is and what Pell eligibility means. Everyone is required to fill out FAFSA when they go to college. Some people will be fully Pell eligible, some are not fully eligible or not eligible at all. Your Pell is only set for a certain dollar amount. The more classes you take on Pell, and the more associates degrees you earn through Pell eligibility, that's less money in your pocket when you want to get a Bachelors degree at another college that might cost more. I know a lot of people get multiple degrees from EGCC that are totally unrelated but in the long run it might not serve as well to get all these disjointed associates degrees. You can't use Pell for a Master's degree. I used up all my Pell when I got my Bachelors. I think Pell is not something that is explained well to you all and what the FCB actually means and how it works. I think we as a college owe it to you all to have that information available.

McCloud: I just discovered in my last meeting with SVP Martin that Title IV funds mean Pell. They do need to let more people know. If you still see people saying that their union is paying

for them to attend, please let them know that's not the case. There are only 3 unions that are paying for their members to attend with a fund of \$1 million each. The unions have not been paying for us the way our account ledgers make it look.

Twyford: That's correct. I don't know which 3 unions it actually is, but yes, by and large, the unions are not actually paying.

Cooper: I was doing a deep dive of the other union websites and they actually make it seem that once all Title IV funds are used, that they cover the balance. They make you think that it's a benefit and they're paying it for you but they're not.

Twyford: That's an area I think more students need to be aware of and understand. I know there was the thought that the DOE is saying you can't go to college, but they're not saying you can't go to college – you just have to do in the way that everyone else has done it by applying for FAFSA, using what Pell you have available, and then covering the rest through other means, whether that is through loans you take out or actual scholarships provided by your union. EGCC has the lowest rates of tuition I've ever seen, so you wouldn't be anywhere near the amount of loans we had to take out. Going to EGCC is definitely a very smart move in the long run for so many reasons. They're not saying you can't go, they're saying we want it done right. We all want it to be done right, too. We want to see it done the correct way so we can continue to serve you and you can continue getting the education you're seeking.

Kennedy: I think it's also important to note that it's not the DOE is against unions or free college. I think anyone would be excited about getting students degrees without debt. You can't just say that there's funds when there aren't funds. If the unions were actually subsidizing and actually paying the college money, there would be no issue. There would still be some HLC issues because they're looking at other things, but that may have gotten the DOE interested. The DOE isn't against unions, and they're not the bad guy – they're just doing their job.

Twyford: That's all the update I have on it. Watch for the emails and updates, sometimes you get information before we do.

Whitaker: What happens if they stonewall us and we don't know if we can register or not? In other words, we wouldn't have an answer till November.

Twyford: I truly don't know but I know that with the courts, the day that the SGA VPs met with SVP Martin and I met with President Geoghegan, we were told they were conferencing with the courts to get a date set. They want to set a date so they can find out when they can get the ball rolling for students with registration. I see on Facebook about students who are concerned with enrolling and then being able to drop if things fall through – if you look at the college calendar, you'll see that drop dates for each term are usually about 2 weeks into that term, so the drop date for January start dates isn't actually until mid-January. You will be able to find those dates in your binder, with all of the drops and withdrawals. There is plenty of time to drop classes into January. I just can't see it happening like that. I think that the main thing is that they might drag it out and it might hard to get an appointment, but they will make sure that every student who wants to get registered, gets registered. It'll just be the advisors who are working overtime to get those appointments filled and get you registered for the spring semester. It's not a great answer but it's what I'm thinking will be the case.

Whitaker: just a comment about the unions. The way it was presented to me by my union, its actually a group of unions, they have these added benefits – Union Plus. It’s presented as a scholarship so I don’t see how the DOE has issue with that if it’s a scholarship, that’s exactly what it is, so why should we have to get loans? I looked at my records and the way they, as far as I know, they’re paying, they’re one of the groups that are paying, because it changed how it was entered as payments in my personal ledger. It says Union Plus specifically and the amounts, so I believe that I’m under one of them that is paid, but I don’t know for sure because I’m not in that inner loop. But its hard for me not to look at the DOE as a bad guy in this, it looks political. It looks like they’re hindering people’s ability to get educated and forcing them to take out student loans.

Twyford: I know that those ledgers are going to say Union Plus for just about everybody. What union are you with?

Whitaker: United Postal Workers

Twyford: So what I’ll do at that meeting on Friday is ask what the three unions are that actually pay into that fund.

Kennedy: I’d also be interested to see how much they pay into that fund. I believe I was in a meeting with President Geoghegan and he said that the total for the three unions was \$1 million, not per union. We understand, this is a very emotional subject, this is your future that is being affected.

Whitaker: United Postal Workers, you won’t find that from them. It’s several unions that participate with Union Plus. My assumption is that there are dues that go towards Union Plus that helps us get all of these benefits, if that makes sense.

Twyford: I don’t think you were marketed to the right way. There are a lot of places that say that they’re doing it through Union Plus, but everyone who is Pell eligible, it all gets pulled into one thing and then it covers out for everybody, and the students who are getting the “scholarships” are the discounts. It’s subsidized off of what is being provided by all the other Pell.

Whitaker: It would be like a membership at Sam’s Club, it’s like an added benefit. For example, I can get a mortgage, I can get a car loan, theres other things that I can get discounted or do whatever they do to get better pricing. So this scholarship is the same thing, it’s just another service under this umbrella of services.

Twyford: I would question whether or not the money that gets paid in union dues gets passed through as a payment to the college. That’s where there’s a difference. There are only 3 unions that actually do that.

Kinase-Leggett: What the DOE is saying is that Pell eligible students is being used to subsidize students who don’t get Pell.

Twyford: I see the question from Domagala, I don’t know which ones, so that’s why I plan to ask at the employee meeting and will pass it along to you. If we find anything else out at the meeting, I think we should be able to pass on to you as the elected body of the students. I’m all about transparency. I will try to let you all know what we find. I know there isn’t a lot that’s solid there but it’s what we can tell you for sure right now.

Hunter: in the long term, in the end, if the unions don't pay and it goes in a different direction, would we still be held liable to pay for the next term in case we decide we don't want to attend the school anymore?

Twyford: Unless you drop the classes. If you sign up for classes and things change – drop them. Drop them in time so that it doesn't count against you and you get billed. There are payment plans that are available to students to make it easier for you.

Kennedy: Shop around if there is a worst case scenario, but you will likely find that EGCC is still the most cost effective and affordable option when it comes to loans.

Whitaker: So they're going to come back and try to make us pay for what has already happened if they don't get this program?

Twyford: No, they wouldn't try to get students to pay. It would come out of college funds and probably the insurance that the college carries.

Whitaker: Should the worst come to light, you said you can get loans, but I foresee a lot of people saying "that's it" when it comes to college.

Twyford: that would be unfortunate. I know people have different life situations. If you were not Pell eligible, and you had to take out a loan – would the work you've already put into it be worth taking the loan to complete it? I just don't think it's going to get there or be the case.

Whitaker: if you read the stories from classmates each semester, I think this union scholarship opportunity pulled a lot of people out of the fire and this is their chance to pull themselves out of bad situations, that's why I think it would be the end road for a lot of people.

Twyford: I'm sorry that they ever marketed to you all in this way. I don't think it was worded right, I don't think it was processed right, and I wish it hadn't been done like this. I think there were better ways to have done this program and I can't help but feel for the students stuck in this situation. We want you all here, and see you get involved and engaged and get your educations.

Whitaker: it almost looks like a way for us to pay for Biden's forgiveness and all these other things, the money has to come from somewhere. It's like, ok, here's a group of people we can force to take student loans, the money has to come from somewhere. It could be farfetched, but having decades of dealings with the government and they're sneaky.

Twyford: It's a theory, we don't know, we have to see how it plays out. We won't know anything until we get the next update.

Motion: Table

Made by: Cooper

Seconded: Richards

2. OER Concerns (Shipping costs of PrintShop items, printed OERs for students needing accommodations, OpenStax vs. O'Reilly)

SVP Roeschenthaler, will be attending 10/19 to discuss OER concerns.

Motion: Table
Made by: Nickell
Seconded: Richards

3. Accessibility/Accommodations

Director of Accessibility Services Dawn Gombar and Coordinator Alisha Alls had been invited to attend when this meeting was originally scheduled for August 18. They will need to be reinvited if this topic is still on the table.

Dawn Gombar is in attendance for this meeting to discuss concerns about accessibility and accommodations. **note: Alisha Alls is no longer the coordinator, she has moved into a new role.

access@egcc.edu – for confidential information
dgombar@egcc.edu – for other questions

Gombar: If you have specific concerns, let's address them individually and confidentiality since this is a public forum.

Two key services the office has: standing classroom accommodations – you get a letter from us and you use it in your courses; temporary medical accommodations – you have a temporary situation to get extensions for set timeframes, allowing make up for medical reasons. (6 weeks is the maximum timeframe for extension beyond the term)

For this office's purposes, **only the student's** diagnosed disability or their own diagnosed medical emergency can be used for accommodations – not those of a child or family member in your care. Those situations are at the discretion of the instructor. Both of those things require documentation.

Standing classroom accommodations require a document from a medical professional from within the last 5-7 years. We have a form that you can give your doctor, or they can fill something out on their office letterhead. Must say student name, birthdate, and diagnosis.

Medical extension requires a very current documentation – hospitalization papers (admission and discharge), recovery period statement from a doctor, statement of care without hospitalization with beginning and end dates

Whitaker: Does the diagnosis violate any HIPAA laws?

Gombar: No, it is confidential within this office to help a student be successful. Students don't have to disclose anything they don't want to.

Richards: This isn't a frequent issue, but it's only happened once – I was given a form to give to the instructors, and I did that, and one instructor didn't accept it. They said they thought it had to come from Office of Accessibility directly, not from the student. Second issue is that not many students know that you help with medical extensions for hospitalizations.

Gombar: To address instructors and the forms – instructors are trained and there are many opportunities for them to know what they can/cannot do or accept from students from this

office. When you encounter an instructor who is misinformed about this process (it must be given to the instructor by the student), immediately reach out to the office and I will reach out to the instructor to take care of it, pass it up the chain of command if necessary. For the second issue, I will make sure that information is more readily available or publicized.

Cooper: Thanks for explaining what your office does and what you do/don't do. A lot of people don't know about extensions that are available to them. If you need any help spreading the word about this, we can help, but more students need to be made aware of it. I see a lot of instances of students saying they were doing their work from the hospital, etc. If they knew they could get an extension, it could help a lot of people.

Gombar: Thanks for the feedback, I'll rework that into the information that I present.

Cooper: How long does the process take for new students or student recently finding they need accommodations?

Gombar: Conservatively, a week. If things move smoothly, it can be within 24hrs. Very responsive to emails. Will let students know that the request has been received and is being reviewed. Then you will be sent a letter outlining your specific accommodations to give to your instructors.

McCloud: Are discussions in all accommodations or just case by case?

Gombar: Very case by case basis, typically for very chronic situations. This is because it's a participation situation. Discussion is supposed to replicate the "in person" portion of the class, so without discussions, you don't have the engagement between students and instructors.

Hunter: For someone who is getting social security disability, would their benefit letter be accepted, or would they need something else?

Gombar: It has to have the diagnosis on it, and those statements don't have that listed on there. That's why a statement/form from a doctor is required.

Whitaker: About the discussion posts, say someone had an illness where they couldn't participate, would it be better to drop/withdraw classes and take another semester?

Gombar: That's very rare. You have to consider where the illness came about in the term. Have to consider satisfactory academic progress in the terms. Week One is different than something that comes up in Week Seven.

Always available for meetings and discussions, please reach out if there is anything else. Any word of mouth "marketing" can help get the word out about the services.

Motion: Close

Made by: Domagala

Seconded: Richards

New Business

Richards: SGA meetings conflict with PTK meetings, which cost \$99 to join and can be beneficial to attend.

Made by: Nickell, Domagala

Seconded: Whitaker

Announcements

New meeting schedule:

- ~~August 24~~
- ~~September 7~~
- September 21
- October 5
- October 19
- November 2
- November 16
- November 30
- December 14 (Finals Week)

EGCC 101: SGA is Wednesday, September 28 at 9pm after our next meeting. We'll use this as an opportunity to be a student forum.

Please text President McCloud if you need anything – 304-896-4850

Please follow our Instagram (@egcc.sga) and TikTok (Egccsga). We also have a GroupMe group chat. We'll look at getting a Gator with the SGA logo on it.

Closing Remarks from Advisors

Communication ideas – Discord server

Adjournment

At this time, I would entertain a motion to adjourn...

Motion: Nickell

Seconded by: Hunter/Richards

This meeting is adjourned at 9:18pm. ***Our next meeting is Wednesday, September 28 at 8pm EST.***