

Academic Senate Meeting Minutes form 19 October 2017

Present: Dagmar Kusá, Iveta Radičová, Lucia Beniaková, Veronika Novotná, Andrej Čierny, Barbora Sedlačková, Jonathán Pavelka, Alexandra Telepčáková, Ivona Mičková, Georgios Merkouris

Excused: Alena Steinhauserová, Laura Palenčíková, Michal Saguľa, Tomáš Kanovský, Marta Holečková

Absent: Tomáš Iliev

(1) OPENING AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Meeting of the Academic Senate of the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA) was called by its chair, Dagmar Kusá, who opened the meeting and stated that according to the attendance sheet (Appendix 1) 10 of the total of 16 members were present at the meeting. She has presented the agenda of the meeting, which was approved without discussion:

Program of the first AS BISLA meeting in 2018/2019:

1. Opening and program
2. Election of the verifiers of the minutes
3. Election of the chair of the student section of AS BISLA
4. Study program for Spring 2018
5. Academic calendar for Spring 2018
6. Various
 - a) Minors
 - b) Electives
 - c) Student Societies
 - d) Foreign languages
 - e) Course load

Voting results on Resolution No 1: 10 (for) – 0 (abstained) – 0 (against) – 6 (absent)

Resolution No. 1: Program of the first meeting of AS BISLA in the academic year 2018/2019 was approved.

2. ELECTION OF THE VERIFIERS OF THE MINUTES

Ivona Mičková and Georgios Merkouris volunteered to serve as the verifiers of the minutes from today's meeting.

Voting results on Resolution No 2: 10 (for) – 0 (abstained) – 0 (against) – 6 (absent)

Resolution No. 2: Ivona Mičková and Georgios Merkouris were approved as verifiers of the minutes from this meeting.

3. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR OF THE STUDENT SECTION OF AS BISLA

Student members of the Senate voted on the chair of the student section of the Academic Senate in a secret ballot. Jonathán Pavelka was nominated as the candidate for this position (Appendix No.2). Ballots were collected and counted (Appendix No. 3). Senate Chair Dagmar Kusá summarized the results (6 of six student votes in favor) and noted that Jonathán Pavelka was elected the Chair of the student section of the Academic Senate.

4. STUDY PROGRAM FOR SPRING 2018

Senate has discussed and approved without discussion the Study Program for Spring 2018 (Appendix No. 4).

Voting results on Resolution No 3: 10 (for) – 0 (abstained) – 0 (against) – 6 (absent)

Resolution No. 3: Academic Senate has approved the Study Program for Spring 2018.

5. ACADEMIC CALENDAR FOR J-TERM AND SPRING 2018

AS BISLA discussed and proposed some changes to the Academic Calendar for the J-term and Spring 2018.

The **Spring semester** will start on **February 19 and end on May 31, 2018.**

The **Reading Week** takes place on **April 2 – April 6, 2018.**

J-Term will begin on **January 15, 2018 to February 16, 2018**

Senate also discussed alternate program for those who will not take part in the trip to Budapest on November 15-17, 2017, consisting on **program oriented toward November 17 Revolution** (movie, discussion, attending the Central European Forum).

Voting results on Resolution No 4: 10 (for) – 0 (abstained) – 0 (against) – 6 (absent)

Resolution No. 4: Academic Senate has approved the Academic Calendar for J-Term and Spring 2018.

6. VARIOUS

6A: MINORS

Students are not fully aware of the existence of minors or come to know about them late in their studies. Senate members discussed options for making the minors more visible:

- **Meetings with academic advisors:** Using the academic advisors from first semester to orient the student towards a minor if specific orientation is sought
- **Registration at the beginning of each semester:** Students to be reminded of the existence of minors at the registration at the beginning of each semester
- **Presentation of elective courses:** When electives are presented to the students, make sure it is clear which minor do they correspond with.

6B: ELECTIVES

Electives at times turn out to be different from how they were presented. The two weeks long shopping period is at times not enough to know
Senate recommends:

- Descriptions of elective courses to be more precise (to include anticipated work load, basic literature, types of activities...);
- Teachers can be invited for BIH discussions or to offer sample workshops in the semester prior to when their elective is offered;
- Giving more emphasis to the presentations of electives – making sure students have a chance to meet the teachers;

- The first two weeks, during the shopping period, should enable the exploration (e.g. less focus on assignments, more on discussion)

6C: STUDENT SOCIETIES

Senate members evaluated the functioning of the student societies to date. Some function beyond expectations, while others are practically non-existent. It is not clear how the societies became mandatory, and how were they shaped into existing societies, as it seems students had a different idea of what they will be at the end of last semester.

Societies will meet next Wednesday, Oct. 25th with Andrej Zeman to evaluate their work and propose how they could continue into the next semester.

After that, Senate may invite the Rector to discuss their vision for implementation into the next semester.

6D: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Students wish to give foreign languages more presence in the BISLA curriculum. Three options were discussed:

- Elevate foreign languages to the status of electives – to meet twice a week for 5 credits
- Foreign languages as student societies, focusing primarily on conversation
- Foreign language as part of the core curriculum – to mandate each student learning at least one language besides English at least passively, with the possibility of teaching some introductory courses in foreign language.

6E: COURSE LOAD

Senate has discussed the reading load in various courses. Students are willing to read more in order to cover more depth in individual courses, but this is not possible with the current work load of 5 to 6 courses and societies, (and discussions, internships, and other occasional extracurricular activities).

Free time: Students used to have mostly free Fridays, which they used for personal life, internships, working on assignments, etc. Last year, the idea of free Wednesdays was introduced. Currently, neither Wednesdays nor Fridays are free and students feel their schedule is too stretched.

One solution is to limit the number of courses per semester (e.g. to four) and reconsider delimiting some time off during the week.

Minutes verified by:

Ivona Mičeková,

Verifier of the Minutes

Georgios Merkouris

Verifier of the Minutes

Dagmar Kusá

Chair of the AS BISLA

Appendices:

- (1) Attendance sheet
- (2) Nomination for a Chair of the student section of AS BISLA
- (3) Ballots
- (4) Study program for Spring 2018
- (5) Academic Calendar for J-term and Spring 2018