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DSG looks to reform YT process

Ashley Dean

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Duke Student Government suggested several changes to ameliorate past concerns about fairness and cronyism in the Young Trustee Nomination Committee at its meeting Wednesday night.

A proposal put forth by sophomore Jordan Giordano, DSG vice president for community interaction, suggested equal representation for DSG and the InterCommunity Council both on the YTNC and during the final voting process.

"The Young Trustee is the most powerful undergraduate at Duke," Giordano said. The Young Trustee is a regular voting member of the University's Board of Trustees and is essentially President Richard Brodhead's boss, he added.

The 16-member YTNC currently consists of members of ICC, which is composed of leaders from a number of student organizations.

YTNC winnows down the applicants to three finalists and then all DSG and YTNC members vote in the final selection.

"I don't think DSG is involved enough in the process," Giordano said.

The new proposal entails DSG and ICC each selecting 10 electors to sit on the YTNC.

ICC and DSG's votes for the final three candidate would also be weighted in order to give both sides equal representation.

"We didn't want any single group, whether it was DSG or ICC, to have a final say in the process," said DSG President Elliott Wolf, a junior, about the proposed changes.

In addition, any ICC member who runs for Young Trustee would be ineligible to be on the YTNC and could only be replaced by the president, vice president or second-in-line of the organization he or she represents.

"We were worried... that there was conflict of interest running for Young Trustee and having the ability to appoint people to the nominating Committee," Wolf said.

The proposed plan would lessen concerns of cronyism on the part of DSG as well, Wolf added.

"We felt this was a lot fairer in that DSG couldn't push through its candidates," he said.

The Senate will not vote on the changes until its next meeting Jan. 17. A timeline for the nomination and selection process was approved by unanimous consent.

In another presentation, senior Jimmy Soni, vice president for academic affairs, spoke about a pilot project he hopes to implement in the spring to address the University's lack of a core course for all

students.

"The idea with our project right now is to develop some common intellectual currency," Soni said.

Students would be able to select one class from among six or seven large lectures taught by an esteemed faculty member, he said.

DSG Chief of Staff Paul Slattery, a junior, said he felt the program would be a positive addition, as the course would provide a common ground for all students.

"I think [Duke] is the Wal-Mart of universities," Slattery said. "You pick the classes that you need."

Although the project is still in its nascent stage, Soni said the administration is supportive of the idea. He wants to accept submissions from faculty for proposed courses this spring, and implement the program in Spring 2008.

He hopes it would eventually become a requirement for sophomores and part of the "sophomore-year experience."

The Senate also approved a resolution to establish a Duke Undergraduate Business Advisory and Resource Committee.

Duke lags behind other universities in helping students seize business opportunities, said senior Jason Gross, co-president of The Duke Entrepreneur.

"[DU-BARC] would make student businesses viable via vis-a-vis funding," Gross said, adding that it would provide students with advisors, as well.

DSG also unanimously approved a resolution that would streamline the process of recognizing new student groups and providing event funding.

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