

Date: 12 Feb 2016

Time: 6.15pm – 7.30pm

Venue: Saga Anteroom

Note-taker: Joceline

Presiding Officer: -NIL-

Attendance: Meredith, Isaac, Ross, Aadit, Regina, Adam, Scott, Izzy, Joceline, Keith, Dee, Annette

Present: Meredith, Isaac, Ross, Aadit, Regina, Adam, Scott, Izzy, Joceline

Absent: Keith (personal commitment), Dee (academic fieldtrip), Annette (academic fieldtrip)

Guests: Sara Amjad (facilitator), Sherice (The G Spot), Ai Huy (The G Spot)

Observers: Sara Rotenberg, Swarnima, Thaddeus

Agenda:

- Ambassador Chan
 - The G Spot to update Student Government on what they have done regarding the Ambassador Chan issue

Summary: The G Spot shared that they had collated rough results from their survey and met with Dean Bridges. They also shared that Ambassador Chan has agreed to come down for a closed-door dialogue regarding human rights in Singapore. The G Spot will decide during their meeting next Monday regarding whether/ how much of the issue they will be passing on to the Student Government. Meredith and Izzy will attend G Spot's meeting next Monday as Student Government representatives.

Agenda	Discussion Points	Action
Ambassador Chan	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. G Spot<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. G Spot came up with statement of concernb. Within G Spot there were many different views – G Spot tried to come to a middle groundc. Two main demands in the statement<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Dialogue with Ambassador Chan for her to share her thoughts on Singapore's approach to human rightsii. Hoped to start conversation within school to hear different views	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Garnered about 70 responses ii. Met with Dean Bridges last Thursday and passed him preliminary report e. Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Qn1 (Was her statement problematic?) Half-half ii. Qn2 (Is there a tension between her roles?) Half-half. iii. Qn3 (Should she resign?) Majority 'no'. Remaining responses split between 'yes' and 'other/ undecided'. f. Ambassador Chan wants to come down to speak about Singapore's approach to human rights in a closed door session g. G Spot will be meeting on Monday to decide on next steps <p>2. Izzy: Is it going to be focused on the statement or just Singapore's human rights in general?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. G Spot: We haven't decided yet, but it's most likely going to be general. b. Izzy: When you say that you want to start conversation within the student body are you also referring to a physical conversation? c. G Spot: As of now we are not thinking of a physical conversation, and only have the survey. d. Izzy: Is it likely to progress to having physical conversation? e. G Spot: We haven't discussed that yet. We will discuss it next Monday. <p>3. Aadit: Is it already decided that the dialogue is to be a closed door one?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. G Spot: Ambassador Chan herself indicated a preference for having a closed-door dialogue. b. Aadit: Who is to be included in "closed door"? c. G Spot: We haven't decided yet. <p>4. Regina: Why did you think of getting Student Government involved in this issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. G Spot: Mainly because of conversations with students who expressed the view that this was an issue which Student Government should handle. However G Spot still has not decided how much we want to pass on to Student Government yet, if at all. <p>5. Sara Amjad: How has it been like for G Spot collating opinions within Yale-NUS thus far?</p>	
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	<p>a. G Spot: Some responses on the survey indicated that some people did not see G Spot as a neutral party (since we are an LGBT group).</p> <p>6. Izzy: How does G Spot feel about passing on this issue to Student Government?</p> <p>a. G Spot: As of now there are a lot of different views within G Spot. For information, 5 students from Christian Fellowship actually gave G Spot a statement expressing their personal views (<i>note: not representing CF as a whole</i>) and asking us to take them into consideration. Personally (Sherice), I think that having Student Government involved would be good.</p> <p>7. Thaddeus: I don't understand why we would want Student Government to be involved.</p> <p>a. G Spot: Responses on the survey indicated that some students want Student Government to be involved. One response also cited that in the Constitution it states that all communication with the administration should be through the Student Government.</p> <p>8. Scott: What outcome do you want from this issue?</p> <p>a. G Spot: Hopefully for something substantial. For Ambassador Chan to clarify her comments.</p> <p>9. Adam: What is your intended purpose of holding the dialogue?</p> <p>a. G Spot: To raise awareness of these issues among the student body.</p> <p>10. Izzy: Could you share with us your personal experiences from having dealt with this for the past week?</p> <p>a. G Spot: We've had to manage a lot of very different views. There are a few people in the G Spot who are supportive of Nik's views, but there are also a lot against his view. It's been difficult to balance so many different views and G Spot has no one stance. In the end we tried to come to something that everybody could agree on – which in this case was to have a dialogue.</p> <p>11. Sara Amjad: Is this meeting to figure out what has been happening or whether to hand over the issue?</p> <p>a. Meredith: As things are still in the interim phase now with no official roles or channels of communication, we were under the slight impression that G Spot would be passing it on based</p>	
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	<p>on what some of us heard informally. It's good to know that they are still discussing this issue. It's also good that as Student Government we are able to understand what G Spot has been doing in the event/ non-event that we take it on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Sara A: Does the decision lie with G Spot or Student Government? c. Regina: Both groups will discuss independently. d. Meredith: The point made earlier about the Constitution stating that communication with administration on behalf of the student body being done by Student Government is interesting to think about, regardless if we take it on or not. <p>12. Izzy: What is the timeline going forward?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. G Spot: We will be having a meeting next Monday. b. Izzy: So when can Student Government expect to have updates? c. G Spot: Next Wednesday. <p>13. Scott: When is Ambassador Chan coming for the dialogue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. G Spot: 1st week of March. <p>14. G Spot: Does Student Government think that you want to take on this issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thaddeus: No. b. Aadit & Regina: Yes. Having a neutral party is important. It is also important to work together with G Spot on this. c. Isaac: The Student Government should be a neutral body that collates responses, distils ideas, and presents them back to the student body. d. G Spot: The idea has been raised that we could pass over the entirety of the survey responses to the Student Government, depending again on decisions made next Monday. e. Isaac: It probably isn't a good idea to pass it over because Student Government might not know how to interpret the results anyway and they might be unintentionally misconstrued. f. G Spot: Agreed. <p>15. Thaddeus (in response to requests to elaborate on his stance): Student Government can be a passionate minority that hijacks an apathetic majority. We will be setting a negative precedent for</p>	
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	<p>Student Government if we were to call for a member of the Governing Board to resign. The student body shouldn't have a say in hiring/ firing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. G Spot: There is a distinction between whether Student Government should initiate dialogue and whether Student Government should be asking her to resign. b. Thaddeus: The body that issues a statement and facilitates dialogue should be the group where everybody has passionate opinions. c. Aadit: You are being contradictory. There is no single organisation more qualified to speak on behalf of student body than the Student Government. d. Thaddeus: The body that calls for resignation should be a group that cares about the issue. e. Izzy: There is no resignation happening. What we can do is have a dialogue. f. G Spot: Just to clarify, passionate people doesn't refer to people against Ambassador Chan. Within this group of passionate people there are people with different views. g. Thaddeus: Student Government is not representative enough of the student body to issue a statement. h. Izzy: Student Government is only here to facilitate conversation i. Isaac: It is an assumption that the student body will come to a consensus and even be able to have one statement representing it. We are more likely to present all the different views within the student body and facilitate discussion. j. Aadit: We cannot assume that we're not going to ask for her resignation. k. Regina: We will not just be collating opinions within ourselves and issuing a statement. For example we would have focus groups with students in the student body. <p>16. Sara Amjad: Thad's fear seems to be that a survey will only reach a limited number of people and Student Government will issue a statement that speaks on behalf of this small group of people.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Izzy: We require large numbers of people before changes can be constitutionally made. We don't have autonomous power to change big things. b. Thaddeus: Based on how things usually go, only small group will likely be heard. If we end up issuing a statement, it will only be representing a small group. c. Aadit: All polls in the past have been passed through quorum. We will back up with numbers when presenting our findings. d. Thaddeus: But we are still not representative enough of the student body. 	
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	<p>e. Aadit: We don't get to decide whether Ambassador Chan should resign. It is only up to us to decide whether we should canvass for opinions.</p> <p>17. Sara Amjad: There seem to be two issues here – one is Ambassador Chan, and the other is regarding how decisions are made. These are more big picture questions e.g. Who does Student Government represent? How do you know you are representing the student body? What kind of statements can be issued? I see that you're asking larger questions.</p> <p>a. Thaddeus: Why do we need to do this if G Spot can do it?</p> <p>b. Regina: We are more representative and neutral than the G Spot.</p> <p>c. Thaddeus: But are we actually more representative?</p> <p>d. Ross: There is value in that we're relatively more neutral.</p> <p>e. Sara A: The other question is why shouldn't a student group do this instead of the Student Government? When does an issue become worthy of a Student Government taking it on?</p> <p>f. Izzy: With reference to the constitution, we should have a say in taking this issue on.</p> <p>g. Isaac: This is an issue relevant to us as it has already garnered external response from Singapore and the world. It is an issue related to the reputation of our school. Student Government has the duty to represent the student body and we can use this platform to canvass for more ideas. We have the chance to empower others who might not be interested in the issue if G Spot were to canvass. If the rest of school doesn't see it as issue, that is also an important finding.</p> <p>h. Thaddeus: It's not about the right to be involved, but whether this is the best platform. A G Spot facilitated dialogue would be best.</p> <p>i. Izzy: The assumption that G Spot is a LGBT group might turn some people away, or G Spot might be seen as not neutral.</p> <p>j. Aadit: If what you said is valid, we would have no authority to do anything. The point of Student Government is that it is a group of people who have been elected to represent the student body. G Spot is not an objective group.</p> <p>k. Thaddeus: What makes us more objective?</p> <p>l. Aadit: We don't have 'LGBT' in our name. We were elected to this role.</p> <p>m. Thaddeus: The opening of the possibility of issuing a statement calling for the resignation of a member of the Governing Board concerns me. Student Government is valid to take a stance on</p>	
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student life, but not on matters like this.

- n. Regina: This is an important point. Should we only collate student opinions on student life?
- o. Thaddeus: Is it a possibility that if a majority of the student body wants her to resign, we will issue such a statement?
- p. Regina: If it does reflect the opinion of the student body then yes.
- q. Thaddeus: How will we decide at what point is considered a majority of students?
- r. Swarnima: I want to bring up the example of gender-neutral housing. A small group of students wanted it so Student Government issued a poll. Student Government presented the results of the poll to the administration and let them do what they wanted with it. In this situation, Student Government was a neutral arbiter who collated opinion. Your concern is valid but irrelevant. Since neither G Spot nor Student Government has made firm decisions, there is no point discussing these matters now.

18. Scott: Can you go through the timeline of events that have passed?

- a. G Spot: The comments at UN UPR were made on 22 Jan. We issued our statement last Monday, Nik's article came out on Wed, and we met with Dean Bridges on Thursday.
- b. Scott: Who reached out to Ambassador Chan?
- c. G Spot: President Lewis. No official invite has been sent to Ambassador Chan yet.
- d. Izzy: Did President Lewis reach out on his own accord?
- e. G Spot: Yes. President Lewis informed Dean Bridges of this, who in turn told us. Nik and Francesca also met with President Lewis. That meeting concluded with the consensus to start with dialogue.
- f. Sara A: And then things blew up on social media over the weekend?
- g. G Spot: Yes, kind of. There was the article by YDN, Mothership, and the Straits Times.
- h. Izzy: Do you know what the responses were to the YDN article?
- i. G Spot: Not really. The other prominent response was the Facebook post by the other Ambassador at Large.

19. Sara Amjad: It sounds like there has been a quick escalation of things. Going back to Thad's point – when does an issue become relevant for Student Government to handle? Is it like Isaacs' point, when media gets involved? These are some things to think about – when does an issue become relevant to

	<p>Student Government? If it does become relevant to Student Government, what does that relevance mean and what can we do about that relevance? The fears are related to the infinite possibilities e.g. can Student Government ask a Governing Board member to step down? Looking at the big picture, this relates to parameters. However, these questions might not be relevant to this specific issue since G Spot hasn't yet decided on the next steps.</p> <p>20. Izzy: Do you have any ideas on what tone you'll want the dialogue to have? a. G Spot: This will be discussed next Monday.</p> <p>21. Scott: Would it be possible for you to provide us a summary of your meeting next week? a. G Spot: Yes.</p> <p>22. Thaddeus: Why does G Spot have to decide to hand over to Student Government? For example, can Student Government vote to do it even if G Spot does not want us to? a. Scott & Meredith: According to the constitution yes we could do that, but for now we will wait for G Spot's decision.</p> <p>23. Izzy: Can a Student Government representative be present at your meeting next week? a. G Spot: Yes.</p> <p>24. Scott: Who is your point of contact from CF? a. G Spot: Melody Lau, Mark Lee, Xueyin, Derek Hum, and Se Ern wrote us the statement, but this statement was not on behalf of CF. The statement represented their personal views as individuals. However we don't think they plan to do anything further.</p> <p>25. Izzy: Are there any volunteers from Student Government to attend G Spot's meeting? a. Meredith: Me. Full disclosure – I am technically a member of the G Spot. b. Izzy: I can go too.</p> <p>26. Scott: I understand that Nik cited a diversity passage in his article – could you tell us more about that?</p>	<p>Izzy and Meredith will attend the G Spot's meeting next Monday</p>
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	<p>a. Sara A: Technically there is non-discrimination statement for the whole college. Nik cited things from the student life website under DOS, which is not counted as senior administration i.e. policymaking. If people are looking for the college's stance, it would be better to go to the non-discrimination statement. If there are updates to this, I will let you know.</p>	
Miscellaneous	<p>1. Meredith: Can I clarify the Student Government's current powers?</p> <p>a. Sara R: As the elections timeline was delayed, it is difficult to go strictly according to the constitution. From my understanding at the moment you can still vote, but no one has veto power and as long as an impartial arbiter who acts as speaker is present.</p> <p>2. Sara Rotenberg: The Constitution review committee would be willing to give a summary of the constitution to Student Government.</p> <p>a. Scott: Everybody should read the constitution.</p> <p>b. Meredith: Agreed, but there are certain technicalities which we might be unsure of.</p> <p>3. Scott: When is the old government handing over?</p> <p>a. Regina: I will check with Dave.</p> <p>b. Some discussion over the merits of Slack vs Telegram.</p> <p>c. Regina: Izzy, do you have minutes from our first meeting?</p> <p>d. Izzy: I will send them out.</p>	<p>Regina will check with Dave about handover. Izzy will send out the minutes from our first meeting.</p>

Agenda for next meeting:

Reminders/ Updates: