

RATIONALE BEHIND PRIVATE MINUTES FOR STUDENT ORGANISATION RECOGNITION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Student Organisations portfolio of the Student Government has decided to keep minutes of the Student Organisation Recognition and Budget Allocation Committee private. The following is the rationale for this decision:

1. **CONFIDENTIALITY**: The role of the Student Organisation Recognition and Budget Allocation Committee (henceforth referred to as ‘the committee’) is to review proposals, constitutions, and budget proposals of newly formed student organisations, with the purpose of recognising them as official student organisations of Yale-NUS college (this recognition comes with several benefits like ease of booking common spaces both in Yale-NUS and NUS, budget allocation from Yale-NUS, access to Student Organisations room etc.). In this process of recognition, the Committee is often in close contact with the Student Organisation leader and suggests changes, recommendation etc. to the proposal. These suggestions, and critiques to the proposal are precisely what the committee discusses in its meetings. At the nascent stage of any student Organisation, their proposal, and the suggestions made to them are confidential between the student org and the committee. Further, individual members of the committee itself are also bound by confidentiality, and do not release any information to the student body at large. Releasing minutes would be a breach to this confidentiality, and principle of one-on-one communication.
2. **CASE-BY-CASE DECISIONS**: The committee also allocates budget, judging each organisation’s requirement on a case-by-case basis according to their budget proposal. For the sake of fairness, the committee requires that organisations demand no more budget than they truly require. If minutes were made public (which would mean that the budget allocated to each organisation is made public), there is a possibility that new organisations view the allocated amount as benchmark and form their budget proposal with respect to this previously allocated sum (to previous organisations). The decision to keep minutes private is hence aligned with the committee’s desire that organisations request budget based solely on their demand, and are not influenced by previously allocated amounts.
3. **PAST PRECEDENT**: Three iterations of this committee have existed before the term of this council and all of them have kept private minutes. We cite past precedent to assure the student body that this committee’s decision to keep minutes private is not an extraordinary move.
4. **TRANSPARENCY AMONG ORGANISATION HEADS**: However, the Student Organisations Portfolio is aligned to furthering the principle of transparency enshrined in the constitution, and followed by the Student Council. In our effort to do so, we aim to

increase communication among Organisation heads by hosting gatherings of heads of organisations with similar goals/missions. We hope this will be a step towards transparency among organisations.

5. **PUBLIC DOCUMENTS**: The Student Organisations Portfolio is also committed to being approachable and open to any member of the student body. In our effort to do so, we plan to collate all information regarding starting and running an organisation into a document. We will be releasing this information document, along with the principles of recognition to the public, and will also have period for public dialogue to gather public feedback on the principles of recognition. The documents will be released by the end of Semester 1 of Academic year 2016-17.
6. **UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE**: However, we do recognise the need for complete transparency between the Student Government and the student body. So, in case a student does require (otherwise private) information regarding a student organisation, there is a possibility of acquiring such information after obtaining permission from the leader(s) of the student organisation in question.
7. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**: All members of the committee are bound to declare their conflicts of interest as they arise over the course of the recognition and/or budget allocation process. A conflict of interest, as per Student Government Constitution Article X, is where a member of a Committee is a meaningful participant in a non-Committee party to a Committee decision. Meaningful participant means, in the context of Yale- NUS College, that the member of said Committee is in a leadership capacity of a student group, has a vested financial interest in the outcome of a Committee decision, or has a vested personal interest in the outcome of a decision as it pertains to them in a non-Committee capacity, or if any of the above applies to a significant other of the Committee member.