



Erik Paulson <epaulson@unit1127.com>

Re: 16th Session Inaugural Student Council Meeting

Brian Benford <benford2@wisc.edu>**Sat, May 2, 2009 at 7:47 PM**

To: Brian Benford <benford2@wisc.edu>

Cc: Raechel Catherine Bartz <rbartz@wisc.edu>, Kurt Gosselin <kgosselin@wisc.edu>, ALEXANDRIA LINDSAY HARRIS <alharris2@wisc.edu>, Eric Robert Heywood <heywood@wisc.edu>, Eric Sklar Hoyt <hoyt@wisc.edu>, Colin Jeremy Ingram <cjingham@wisc.edu>, Adam Michael Johnson <amjohnson25@wisc.edu>, Martenzie William Johnson <mwjohnson6@wisc.edu>, Tyler Junger <tjunger@wisc.edu>, Joseph Kenneth Koss <jkkoss@wisc.edu>, MATTHEW L MANES <manes@wisc.edu>, Sheala Ann Mullaney <smullaney@wisc.edu>, Erik Steven Paulson <epaulson@wisc.edu>, Melissa Danielle Roitstein <roitstein@wisc.edu>, Theotis Sharpe <tsharpe@wisc.edu>, Grant Robert Smith <grsmith4@wisc.edu>, Templeton IV Templeton <ttempleton@wisc.edu>, Matthew David Tobelmann <tobelmann@wisc.edu>, Elizabeth Innes Wrigley-Field <wrigleyfield@wisc.edu>, Kaitlyn Elizabeth Ziebell <kziebell@wisc.edu>, Jonah Herbekian Zinn <jzinn@wisc.edu>, ajmadsen@wisc.edu, Rebecca Sloan Newman <rsnewman@wisc.edu>, Khamseng Yang <kyang24@wisc.edu>, Matthew Paul Beemsterboer <beemsterboer@wisc.edu>, Benjamin Beduhn <bbeduhn@wisc.edu>, campus@dailycardinal.com, news@badgerherald.com

Morning Folks,

I hope you all are well and at peace after the first meeting. I want to thank you all. Those of you for your support and for your words, and even those of you who couldn't support my role as chair, for your thoughtful debate and service.

Last night I felt I couldn't put two thoughts together as I was immensely distracted thinking of my sister. When the debate centered around age and experience, I was hit with the reality that even though i believe you are as old as you feel, others perceptions of you are as real as self. Perhaps some of you are right to question age. I'd be lying if I didn't wonder the same thing when I decided to return to school again after years of being away. I've always felt that education was a lifetime journey and right. Sadly, countless thousands of people, regardless of age, that desire to attend the UW are not able to. As I said last night, there are, and will be, thousands of laid off, misplaced or underemployed women and men looking to advance their education to reach their full potential. I am one of the few lucky ones who has been blessed to have this awesome opportunity, Some of you can't accept or are not able to see this. Some can't put a face to these people I've described. That's okay, because you are far removed from their experience but I, and other members of the council are not.

While I was not personally offended by anything said last night, I was reminded of my past thoughts or reflections wondering if going back to school was a privilege only for mostly white, young adults from financial means. I can't accept this as I advocate daily for others to have access to education. I know my journey can serve

as a model for others and I take that very seriously.

As I get to know you all more, I am blown away by your potential. I was impressed by some of you and your complete command of the by-laws and your political gamesmanship. I was most impressed by you who could open your hearts and give voice to the debates in a respectful manner.

I've always been accepting of my limitations. I'm proud of who I am and what I've done. Yes, there have been many times in my life that I wished I could have a "do over" to amend my past mistakes. But I've learned from these moments and built on my character. Last night I tried my best to convey my desire to serve and offer my experiences and skills. I must confess that I found the suggestion or notion that ASM experience should trump many years of other public service to be mystifying and suggests that centralize power is desirable by some. I've always known that within any political body, institutionalize knowledge can be gleamed and learned quickly by those who are staff or others that are willing to share. Last night, a few of you demonstrated this ability with much needed and appropriate points of order to keep the meeting running smoothly. Thank you.

No matter what happens at the next meeting, I am completely confident that we are on a journey to do great things as a council. Hopefully without sounding condescending, I'm very proud of you all and look forward to our joint service

Have a great weekend and best of luck on your studies,
Brian
