November 1, 2010
In re: Personal Senate Projects

CHIEF JUSTICE TAYLOR AND ASSOCIATE JUSTICE BROWN joined by Associate Justice GLASER, Associate Justice JONES, and Associate Justice HYNES, of the Court:

On March 26th, 2010, a constituent submitted a grievance asking whether personal Senate projects are considered official Student Union projects or initiatives. If personal Senate projects are considered official Student Union projects, then they have access to Student Union resources including but not limited to printing and room reservations. In looking at this case, Constitutional Council examined the Constitution and Statutes, and interviewed a Senator concerning some typical personal Senate projects.

The term ‘personal Senate project’ does not appear in the Constitution, Statutes, or any other governing document. For the purpose of this opinion, Constitutional Council will define a personal Senate project as any project initiated and conducted by a Senator or group of Senators. Constitutional Council has determined that there are currently two methods for a personal Senate project to become an official Student Union project.

The first method appears in the Statutes Article II, Section 1a. Section 1a states that Senate committees have the power to “pursue projects pertaining to” matters relevant to that committee. Constitutional Council has determined that this means any projects, including personal Senate projects, can become official projects of Student Union if the committee approves it by majority vote as outlined in Article II, Section 1a, v, ii.

The second method is referenced in the Constitution under Article V, Section 2a, v, ii, and Article V, Section 4a. Senate has the power to “enact any legislation concerning matters of policy”, under Article V, Section 2a, v, ii. Furthermore, Article V, Section 4a states that “[a]ll acts of the Legislative Branch of the Student Union shall be considered the official stance of Student Union” unless vetoed by the President of the Student Union within 3 days. Constitutional Council has concluded that, when used in conjunction, these two powers provide for the adoption of a senate project by a Senate resolution.

In summary, the term ‘personal Senate project’ does not appear in our governing documents. However, personal Senate projects can be classified as official Student Union projects if they comport with one of the two methods described above.

There was no dissent.