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Policy on Canceling Classes and Closing Administrative Offices

Submitted by Jim Braselton

10/27/2006

Question:

This is really two questions. The first question is why are classes not being canceled and administrative offices closed between at least 8 and 2 on Monday October 30. Per Franklin's memo above, I do not know where anyone who attends class or works in Hollis, Herty, MP, or Hollis is supposed to park. The administration has told us that they have not canceled classes because this is not a university sponsored event. What is relevant that it is going to severely disrupt the transportation flow and safety around campus? Hurricanes have the same effect on the campus and are not university sponsored events, yet we cancel classes for them. Some years ago, a squirrel got electrocuted in the main transformer that feeds power to the campus, and we canceled classes then. When we have had ice storms, we have canceled classes. Since this is not a University sponsored event, who is paying for all these lost hours, costs of securing Hanner and region(s) nearby. If staff cannot get to work because of traffic problems, who is going to reimburse them for the time lost? We must remember that the President is not visiting GSU but simply giving a speech at Hanner Field House to give support to a Republican candidate in the upcoming election. If he were coming to GSU for a general visit to meet our students, I would be delighted. However, his visit is going to disrupt the lives of every person who drives on Fair Road between 7:00 and 2:00 on October 30--and it is not to meet with with general public. Note that I do view a Presidential Visit (regardless of the politics) to be an honor. Yet, I compare this quickly announced visit, with brief information supplied by the secret service at the last minute to be the equivalent of a hurricane. So, campus should be closed between the hours of 7 and 2, essential staff exempt. The cost of the closure should be absorbed by whoever is renting Hanner for the President's speech.

Rationale:

Joe Franklin's memo about traffic and parking restrictions on Monday October 30 indicates that the administration needs a firmer plan in handling campus parking and security on October 30.

SEC Response:

The decision not to cancel classes was made by Provost Bleicken. For good or ill, this was not a university-sponsored event, but rather one sponsored by a student group. The decision to cancel classes in other instances was made for reasons of student and public safety. With mandatory evacuations underway, ice covered roads that make travel treacherous or no power this would be a reasonable response. The College Republicans were charged \$5000 to rent Hanner for the event. (They were to be reimbursed by the Burns campaign.) That amount was determined by Joe Franklin in consultation with Ken Brown to cover estimated costs in campus police overtime and other associated personnel costs. The republicans themselves provided the stage, lighting, set-up crew and other items to stage the event. --Pat Humphrey, Senate Moderator

Senate Response:

From Jim Braselton a request for information about why classes were not canceled for the President's visit on October 30th and about who paid for lost time, the cost of securing Hanner, etc. Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator responded that the decision not to cancel classes had been made by Dr. Bleicken as allowed under Section 914.01 of Board of Regents Policy.

Humphrey (COST) Senate Moderator reported that Vice President Joe Franklin had told her that the College Republicans had been charged \$5,000 for rental for Hanner. He had determined that amount in consultation with Ken Brown (Public Safety). Setup and takedown for the stage, lights, and so forth, had been done by the Republicans themselves with their own road crew. According to Fred Whitt, most of the PE classes during that time were scheduled for the RAC and not Hanner. So there were no class cancellations related to the President's visit in terms of classes at Hanner.