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UPUA textbook initiative sparks debate

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Andrew Dunheimer

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Lauren Blum

At Wednesday night's UPUA meeting, a resolution was passed for the allocation of funds to support the initiatives of the UPUA Textbook Advocacy Group.

The University Park Undergraduate Association passed Resolution 08-07 for the allocation of \$479.98 to fund the second initiative of the TEXTBOOKS SUCK campaign titled Operation Lollipop and the Textbook Heroes Program.

Centre County Commissioner Michael Pipe addresses members of UPUA about the upcoming election.

UPUA TAG first launched the TEXTBOOKS SUCK campaign on Sept. 5 at FreshFest, an event for new students to learn more about UPUA while enjoying various entertainment. At the event, representatives collected data from students about how much they spent on textbooks for their first semester at University

Park.

The representatives found that students spent an average of \$469 on textbooks, said UPUA Secretary Julia Schrank.

In order to gain further information on the cost of textbooks, collect more input from students and provide tips for students, UPUA TAG organized the event Operation Lollipop that will be held in the HUB-Robeson Center this Friday. The event cost \$450.58 of the \$479.98 that was passed by the assembly.

"Our goal is to make sure that this is based on a large student body poll," Schrank (junior-French and Spanish) said. "At the event, students will first fill out a Google survey and in exchange, they will get a lollipop with a textbook tip and a highlighter with TEXTBOOKS SUCK and our Twitter handle written on them."

The remaining \$29.40 will be used toward the Textbook Heroes Program for awards that will be given to professors, nominated by students, who aim to help cut back the costs of textbooks for students in their classes.

When the legislation was still up for approval, At-Large Representative Elias Warren motioned to yield the floor to students who were in attendance at the meeting because he said he felt the student voice should be heard.

"This is my third year on UPUA and a major issue we have is that we don't solicit student opinion enough,"

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Warren (junior-management) said. "It could be something that goes viral or it could potentially be a waste of student money. I wanted to hear what students have to say about this. That is why I made the motion."

However, Smeal College of Business Representative Rishi Mittal made an objection to the motion because he said it didn't seem as though the students wanted to speak and that Warren did not handle the situation in the proper manner.

"We have a lot of opportunities for students to speak," Mittal (junior-finance) said. "If at any time, a student comes to the microphone, we will almost never say no. The way [Warren] handled it wasn't the way we do things on UPUA."

Warren's motion to let the students speak was ultimately failed.

"The sheer act of the assembly voting against the motion to allow students' voices to be heard is mind-boggling—I can't believe it," Warren said. "How could we deny students the right to speak, where's the harm? It's our job."

Along with the passing of Resolution 08-07, the assembly voted to endorse eight representatives to the Office of Student Conduct Judicial Hearing Board as well as swore in Nursing and Health and Human Development representatives.

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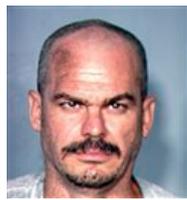
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