



# ASA Minutes

## 9:00 pm Haugo Room

### 4/17/2014 - 4/21/2014

**Attendance: (26) Absent: (0)**

**New Business:**

**The following conversation regarding the Reproductive Justice League was held during an online vote via email communication from 4/17 – 4/21.**

*4/17/14*

*Matt A.:*

Hello Senate!

Thank you all for such a great meeting last night - it was fun to enjoy some time off campus with all of you!

Please remember that we will have the **inauguration** of new senators and recognition of outgoing senators in Chapel on **Monday, April 28th at 10am**. Crystal is also giving her senior sermon that day, so it will be a wonderful service all around!

Also, I followed up with Jeff this morning regarding the Reproductive Justice League, and he provided me with the names of the members. They are:

Courtney Williams, Liz Yackel-Juleen, Eli Yackel-Juleen, Claire Avery, Matthew Schilling, Katelynn Kenney, Thomas Elness, Benjamin Kraft, Matthew Housiaux, Ruth Young, Elisa Berndt, Eric Voss, Zach Truelson

As you can see, this means they meet the requirement for ASA recognition in terms of membership numbers. We also had some good discussion about the group last night, so I feel comfortable opening this back up for discussion and a vote via email. If anybody has any comments regarding the group or wishes to make a motion, please REPLY ALL to this thread and we can get the ball rolling.

Finally, please have a wonderful break! Travel safely and enjoy some time with your families!

*Taylor L.:*

Senate,

As long as the group meets all of the requirements for membership, I feel like we should make a motion to recognize them as a group. Everyone should be entitled to pursue what they feel passionate about, and if these students are, I don't see a problem with having them as an established student group on campus. Thoughts?

*Brittany D.:*

I agree. They have met all of the requirements, so I think they should have the same rights that any other student group would. And like Taylor said, if they are passionate about the group they should be recognized as a group.

***Kirsten T.:***

**I agree with Brittany and Taylor. I move to recognize Reproductive Justice League as a student organization.**

**Brittany D.:**

**Second!**

*Matt A.:* All in favor? Any opposed?

*Jesse F.:* Nay.

*Taylor L.:* I vote to pass it.

*Kofi G.:* Nay!

*Matt B.:* Nay.

*Naras P.:* Aye.

*Matt A.:* Please provide an explanation for your vote- especially if you vote against the motion (nay).

*Emily G.:* I know we are already voting but I have one further question that I hope someone can answer before I cast my vote. What kinds of things will they be doing with ASA funding? I just ask because that wasn't clear in our previous discussion.

*Jesse N.:*

I strongly vote nay. Here's why. You are free to agree or disagree.

1. There is no other group on campus of this nature. The nature of this group is inherently controversial and will likely cause conflict, not just the a conversation. The Augie Dems and Republicans, while political, are big tent and do not share the controversial nature of this group. The GSA is also not the same. Its mission is to promote a dialogue and understanding between two social demographics without pushing a controversial agenda on any specific issue. I don't think it is a good idea for ASA to wade into these waters, and that would be true whether either side of this issue was being brought forth.

2. Denying them ASA recognition would not silence the conversation. They are perfectly welcome to raise the issue around campus without the tacit consent of the Student Senate (which is, what I believe is the nature of recognizing the group). Because the conversation can still go on, I do not think denying them recognition is at odds with the liberal arts or being understanding. I simply think it reduces the chances of any tense situations.

3. We should also not take lightly that some people hold deeply convicted beliefs that are counter to the fundamental mission of this group. Many of them could be trustees, donors, and students. Some of whom may not feel comfortable with the allocation of student funds to such a group.

The main reason I vote no is because of what I believe to be the controversial nature of this group and the potential pandora's box recognizing it would open.

*Kirsten T.:* Aye. I think that if they fit the requirements for an organization we should recognize them. I don't think that it is our right to censor groups because that could start a bad precedent. Also, I would be equally supportive of a pro-life group or a group supportive of abstinence.

*Scot M.:*

Nay.

Some will certainly disagree but I believe that with a school that values Christian at it's core (Lutheranism being the denomination of Christianity) these kind of groups can't receive money for their activities. I am fiercely pro-life and this for me relates back to the issue of handing out condoms on the campus. Some say most didn't care but it speaks to a larger issue for me about keeping Christian values at the core of this college-- although I guess one could argue we probably ditched that core value quite a while ago.

Also e-mail IS NOT and I repeat IS NOT an appropriate venue to discuss the legitimacy or recognition of a group like this. As uncomfortable as this topic is for some people, this has to be an issue discussed in person. To discuss it over e-mail is grossly unfair to either side of this argument.

*Jesse F.:* I agree wholeheartedly with Scot about how inappropriate it is to have this discussion over email. It doesn't do this topic justice nor the people who have opinions on the matter.

*Taylor L.:* I don't think it should be our job to censor what some people disagree with though by refusing their perfectly legitimate application. I don't like denying them their right to be a student group because we didn't think challenging the student body was an all right option. I am not delusional and know that it may cause controversy, but I think it would be good for this campus. They've showed that they follow all of our rules to become a group, and I don't want to discriminate against them before we see what they have to offer.

*Jesse N.:* I also agree with other Jesse and Scot.

*Naras P.:* I think we should hold a meeting for this after break. Although I approve the motion, I am really not comfortable with discussing this on email. It's not an easy topic to talk about in person, moreover via email.

*Krista Y.:*  
Senate,

First of all, thank you for your opinions on the Reproductive Justice League. It is important to remember that it is our job to see if this group is beneficial to the student body and the leadership and the conversations it will promote. Are the requirements met to form a student group? Ten members, constitution, and an advisor? Yes. The last meeting was a perfect opportunity to bring up further discussion and we voted to wait to have a list of the full members. We have received the list and verified that all the credentials have been met, I completely agree that email is not the most ideal venue to have this discussion, but the opportunity was Wednesday. We have already started the vote, we cannot stop it now. Everyone must reply "aye" or "nay" and we will go through with the vote. Please send any other comments as a "reply all".

Have a great night senate. Thank you for your comments and most importantly, your patience and passion.

A response to Emily's question...

As far as how the money will be spent, we allocate all student groups the same amount of money at the start of the year (\$150) with no strings attached. Ideally, the funds will be used to help print off some posters and take care of general advertising expenses that all groups most likely will have at the beginning of the year to help get them off the ground. If a group spends only part of the money at the beginning of the year then they can spend the remainder of the funds on any events without coming to us for a funding request.

*Jesse F.:* I do not think this group is beneficial to the student body or the biased conversations it will promote. I reaffirm my Nay.

*Crystal O.:*

Aye. Perhaps one of this group's meetings would be the best place to talk through the issues the group wants our recognition to talk about.

This group meets all of the requirements for Senate recognition as outlined in the Senate By-Laws. One of these requirements includes recognition from college administration, which is only granted if "the organization's intent is both parallel and non-contradictory of Augustana's five fundamental values." So, the fact we're even considering this group as a Senate means the group has already been recognized as having an intent that is both parallel and non-contradictory of Augie's core values.

I'd also like to point out that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the branch of Lutheranism Augustana serves, is all about accepting conversations of reproductive health and faith. Consider the following statements from the ELCA (you might have to download the statements):

<http://www.elca.org/churchinsociety/>

<http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Abortion>

Using my phone, I'm not sure if those links work or not. Nevertheless, both statements from the ELCA highlight the importance of talking about important issues in society. This group wants to talk about important issues in reproductive health. Awesome.

*Taylor L.:* In that case I reaffirm my aye in challenging the student body with different ideas and allowing all with a voice to be heard as a student group.

*Kirsten T.:* I completely agree with Crystal. After reading the by-laws I am not sure if it is our place to reject them since they have met the requirements. The student activities office is the place that needed to make the decision about Augustana's values. This is my understanding of the by laws and I would encourage others to read it before you vote.

*Brittany D.:* Reaffirm aye

*Jessica J.:* I agree with what Crystal has said, therefore I vote aye.

*Elliot B.:* I greatly appreciate what everyone has voiced this evening about this particular issue. Although it may not coincide with my particular beliefs nor those of some of you, I feel that I must vote "aye" based on the documented procedures and requirements in the by-laws, as well as the standing mission statement of ASA.

**4/18/14**

*Scot M.:* Reaffirm Nay.

*Hanna W.:* Reaffirm Nay.

*Emily G.:* Aye on the basis that they meet the requirements to be a recognized group and they have the right to discuss controversial issues. I feel like these "pro choice" issues can be discussed in a way that is tasteful and they have an advisor to make sure the group adheres to the college core values.

*Amanda J.:* I vote 'Aye'. I think this group deserves a chance. Besides, if the leadership is lacking and the group dies, then we've only lost \$150.

*Ray A.:* "Aye" for sure. Guys, this will be beneficial!!

*Kat V.:* Aye.

*Kofi G.:*

Hello fellow Senators,

I am coming to this dialogue late as I went to bed quite early last night. I had voted **Nay** to the motion, and here are three reasons why.

1) First and foremost is what I view as the **exclusiveness** of the organization in question. The Reproductive Justice League takes an entrenched position on the very controversial political issue of abortion and reproductive freedom. In its constitution, it has affirmed a commitment "to guarantee every individual the right to make personal decisions regarding reproductive choices." This is hardly the kind of open-mindedness and the embrace of diversity that Augustana College advertises in its mission statement. I am for healthy dialogue, one that welcomes different views on a given issue, even ones that we may not like. The Reproductive Justice League does not sound like a group that will accept pro-life members into its fold. Note that this is in sharp contrast with an organization like LGBT which seeks to build a bridge not only between members of the gay community, but also with people who may not be so inclined. My responsibility to diversity will not permit me to vote Yea for the Reproductive Justice League.

2) On this thread, there has been a lot said about how The Reproductive Justice League meets all the requirements to be deemed a school organization. That may be true, but I believe it takes more than just meeting a set of prerequisites for a group to prove its authenticity. That, infact, is why we are having this conversation right now. Besides those guidelines, we need to also deliberate on the potential benefits or drawbacks of a potential organization. An as I have demonstrated above, the Reproductive Justice League may meet all our numerical and constitutional requirements but it fails to clear the very important bar of being an open association of all Augustana students.

3) My responsibility is first and foremost to the over 300 freshmen that I represent. I cannot in good conscience vote in a group that has a mission that I know approximately half of them are opposed to. The ASA Constitution, the ELCA by-laws, and the Augustana Mission Statement are all admirable assertions, but let us always remember that our first allegiance is to the students who voted for us or who expect us to represent their values and positions. Behind those students, we have an entire brigade of parents, alumni, and donors to whom we are also responsible. A significant number of them will not vote Yea and neither will I; doing so will be betraying their trust.

*Matt B.:* Senate, Please read what Kofi just sent out. What he said was incredibly true and very important, I couldn't have said it any better myself. Thanks for your viewpoints Kofi!

*Emily W.:*

I also apologize for my lateness on joining in the conversation, but I must say I enjoy reading everyone's comments. Even though it is a pain to get emails, it is an excellent chance to hear everyone's opinion.

Aye.

Every group on campus is exclusive if you don't share their views. As long as they do not harm or tear down other students or the community, I believe they deserve a chance. I understand this is a controversial issue compared to most groups on campus, but I strongly believe in the power of peaceful discussion. Even though this group is in support of one side, I think they can still bring healthy discussion to campus and their group

even includes a person who is on chapel staff this year, which I think speaks to their diversity. I also strongly agree with Crystal's comments.

*Kale M.:* Aye. They meet the requirements for a group as outlined in the constitution; therefore I see no reason in not giving them a chance

*Sam H.:* Oppose.

*Kat V.:* I apologize for not supplying a reason for my "Aye" vote the first time. I didn't see Matt's email until after. Our ASA mission is to represent all students on campus. It seems like we've placed a lot of emphasis on the individuals that would be offended by this group, forgetting that there are students, faculty, and alumni who would be in favor of this group. I've also gotten the impression that we would support a pro-life group on campus; therefore, I believe we have no right to deny this group. I'd also like to restate what Emily Weber said: **"Every group on campus is exclusive if you don't share their views."** In some way all groups on our campus are exclusive. Not everyone is interested in unicycling, running, philosophy, or Harry Potter. Yes, this group is controversial, but I think it's even more important for us to accept it because of its controversial nature. Being a liberal arts college, our professors strive to give us the knowledge and ability to face tough questions and to respectfully listen to other's opinions. Thus, regardless of any of our personal interests or views on the subject, I believe we have no right to refuse this group.

*Ray A.:* Addressing Kofi's concern, We wanted the club to give an update concerning meeting the requirements, and they have. Let's keep in mind that every club has a compelling interest to express it's opinion with the hopes of influencing members (whether or not a few prospective members might be pro-life). And most importantly, this club moves Augustana into an incredible light of DIVERSITY. The kind of diversity Augustana will be proud of advertising in the not so distant future, WHETHER OR NOT this senate approves of them.

*Maggie D.:* Aye.

*Joel H.:*

Senate,

As I have just now joined this conversation I am a bit behind. I have read everyone's emails and I am torn about this group. Krista, you pointed out that this is an official vote and that we had time on Wednesday to have this discussion. I will respectfully disagree for the sole fact that it was the end of the week before Easter, we had already been at Tre Lounge for an hour and a half, and many people had tests they were more concerned about. As this may not be a good enough excuse, I still find this vote via email for a student group such as this to be irresponsible. I would go back to what Scot said on this matter. Furthermore, I would ask the senate as well as the President and Vice President to reconsider this vote and wait for a proper ASA meeting.

If this is not enough, I will request FURTHER DISCUSSION on the topic in a full senate meeting which I am allowed to do because this is the first I have read on this matter. To put this in different words, I will not move forward in this voting process because I am requesting further discussion before any vote can take place. I guess this is the only step I see fit in a vote via email.

Understand I am not attempting to slow anything down nor offend anyone. I have the utmost respect for the ASA senate and for that reason proper discussion is the only way to move forward on this topic.

Thank you all for your time and concern for Augustana's well-being.

*Katelyn J.:* I too agree that we should postpone the vote if possible so that we may discuss this topic in person. However, if this is not possible, based on what I have read, I vote aye. The group has met the constitutional requirements, is not any more exclusive than any other group, and is a group that will challenge us as students to listen to and give feedback on controversial issues, only strengthening our own values no matter what they may be. I think Crystal made some good points as well.

**4/19/14**

*Dan S.:*

Nay.

I apologize for taking so long to cast my vote; I have been going back and forth on what my stance is. I did not come to my decision based on my personal views (although it would have been easy to). I came to my decision for the same reasons Kofi did his. It does not seem to me that the purpose of this group is to *create awareness* or *bridge dialogue*. If that were the case, I may have cast a different vote. In order to be a student group, you must do more than meet the prerequisites. Just because I meet the prerequisites for a job does not mean that I am going to be hired. The same is true here. As student leaders we represent the entire community of Augustana (not just present students, but past and future). I am not willing to approve of a group that I don't think would be voted in by my constituents, as well as the donors who are a large part of what makes Augustana College such a great place to be.

I hope everyone has a blessed Easter break.

*Leah M.:* Aye.

**4/21/14**

*Joel H.:* Nay.

*Matt A.:*

Hello Senate!

I hope you all had a restful break and safe travels back to campus today!

**The votes are now all in, and the motion to approve the Reproductive Justice League has passed 18-8.**

Jim, Krista, Brittany, Elliot and I met today to discuss the vote, and we talked at length about the protocol and procedural side of the voting process. While I still stand behind the initial decision to hold the vote electronically after having discussing the RJL at our meeting last Wednesday, I do want you all to know that all of your comments in the email thread over break have been taken seriously. **With that said, I have decided to veto the recognition of the Reproductive Justice League so that we can further discuss it in person. To be clear, I am not vetoing this because I disagree with the approval of the group, but instead I wanted to recognize the desire from several of you to discuss this more at length as a senate before bringing it to a vote.**

I want to instead convene the senate for a special meeting this **Wednesday, April 23rd at 9pm in the Haugo room** so we can have an open conversation about both the Reproductive Justice League and the process of online voting. There is some vague wording in our governing documents about what ASA has the power to do with regards to the approval of student groups. While changes to our bylaws will not be made by this current senate, it will likely be an important topic of discussion next year, and something that we should talk about as it pertains to the Reproductive Justice League.

I have attached two documents for you to look at **prior to the meeting** on Wednesday. They should look familiar, but *please* take some time to read through them carefully before we meet.

Thank you for your attention to detail on this. I look forward to our discussion on Wednesday.





SENATE MEETING MOTION SHEET  
FILED BY ASA DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AIMÉE FISHER

DATE 04/16/14 MOTION # 0416145

REGARDING:

Motion to recognize Reproductive Justice League as an official Augustana student group.

*via online vote*

*following receipt of list of members*

MOVED: *[Signature]* SECONDED: \_\_\_\_\_  
FURTHER ACTION:

*[Signature]*

*veto*  
Matt Anderson  
ASA PRESIDENT

VOTING RESULTS:  
AYE 18 NAY 8 ABSTENTION 0

COMMENTS:  
*Action vetoed due to procedural technicalities.*

SENATOR	PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
Amanda Johnson	x		
Brittany Dardis	x		
Elliot Blue	X		
Emily Grandprey	x		
Emily Weber	x		
Hanna Werling	x		
Jesse Fonkert	x		
Jessica Johnson	x		
Joel Hermann	x		
Katherine Van Gerpen	x		
Leah Murfield	x		
Matthew Bell	x		
Naras Prameswari	x		
Taylor Lambert	x		
Dan Schmidtman	x		
Kofi Gunu	x		
Katelyn Johnson	x		
Kaitlin Romano	x		
Ray Asmah	x		
Crystal Ortbahn	x		
Kirsten Titze	x		
Scot Missling	x		
Sam Hoskins	x		
Maggie Dally	x		
Kale Merrel	x		
Jesse Nelson	x		

OFFICER	PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
Matt Anderson	X		
Krista Youngberg	X		
Seth Vogelsang	X		
Aimee Fisher	X		

ADVISOR	PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
Jim Bies	X		