To: All DMC Student Council Secretaries.

From: Jeffrey Putman, President
              Faculty Student Association (FSA)

Subject: Annual Reminder **Importance of Accurate and Complete Student Council Meeting Minutes**.

The essential items that are to be included in student council meeting minutes are below. Councils will encounter difficulty when minutes have not yet submitted, or are missing signatures, dates, attendance records, votes taken, or vague motions, especially when a Club attempts to submit a payment Form and funds have not yet been transferred between accounts because minutes have not been submitted, motions are too vague, minutes are unsigned. **All can cause Council actions to be contested**.

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**Guidelines for DMC
Student Council Meeting Minutes**

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Meeting minutes are the sole official record of your organization's actions and must accurately support the validity of actions taken by the Council, particularly as they relate to Student Activity Fee (SAF) Funds. **Be clear as possible**. Anyone reading the minutes 6 months from now (or more) who was NOT at the meeting must be able to accurately determine what the action or decision was. Wording clarity is needed – do not be ambiguous. While secretary's "style" vary with the incumbent's personality, Student Council meeting minutes need to **minimally** include the following standard items:

1. **Date** (including month, day, and year), **Time** and **Place** of the meeting held. **Add Page #s in footer** (helps everyone!).
2. **Attendance**. Specify FIRST AND LAST NAMES of voting members present as well as any guests (non-voting members) present. This helps verify that the proper quorum exists to conduct business as per the organization's constitution/bylaws. A pre-printed sign in sheet can be used as the minutes cover page (*template link*).
3. **Specific Motions** made with the **voting results**. If your constitution requires a specific process to be followed, the motion needs to include the required specific process that was followed.
   a. **Full name of person who introduced the Motion, and who seconded the motion, & the Voting Results.** Voting results can be "Motion Approved (or Failed) #votes Yes, #votes No, and #votes Abstaining", or IF everyone voted in favor, minutes can state "Motion Unanimously Approved".
4. **SIGNED**. Minutes must be **signed** by the Secretary (or other officer if Sec'y is unavailable). This is particularly essential for minutes verifying the council's approval of budgets or financial transactions. It is fine to circulate unsigned minutes via eMail for advance awareness, **BUT the official minutes must be a signed copy** (such as the copy submitted with an annual budget or being attached to FSA Payment Forms or Transfers). If a Secretary is absent and the minutes are taken and produced by another officer, that officer must following these same guidelines.
5. **Attachments:** If minutes refer to a presented attachment, make sure the minutes submitted **INCLUDE the attachment!**

Student Activity Fee Related Motions: Specific minutes and votes pertaining to **money** are particularly important in meeting minutes, as they are required under SUNY Board of Trustee Guidelines for Student Activity Fees, such as:

6. If an account is being charged for an expense that is already clearly provided in the Council's certified budget, it is not necessary to present a formal motion to pay it. The payment can simply be processed on an FSA payment form.
7. When a new program, event or purchase is being funded from unallocated funds (ie: unspecified "Programs and Project account"), the motion needs to state the **intended purpose** (use of funds), **dollar amount** and **account** from which funds are being used. **Don't forget the vote tabulation**.
8. For **Fund Transfers**, the motion should specify the **dollar amount** and **account** (account title or #) which funds are being taken **from** as well as where funds are being transferred **to. Don't forget the vote tabulation**.
9. For **Budget approvals**, the minutes must **detail** the **entire budget** (income as well as expenses, every line item title and the amount of funds allocated to each). This can be done as an attachment to the minutes (rather than re-writing the whole budget into the minutes). For example, a motion could state "To approve the 2025/26 budget *as presented, see attached"* (and of course, you must remember to attach the budget document to the minutes before you send them to FSA). **Don't forget the vote tabulation.**

Submitting Minutes:

10. **Submit ALL SIGNED meeting minutes with all its attachments to Student Ctr Director in Student Center Rm 2-06. An advance eMail is helpful (scan the minutes with any/all attachments), but a payment will remain pending until a signed version is received.** *eMail link to submit signed minutes.*

Some examples on the following page…

A. **Naming the electronic document:** Finding minutes in the future can get difficult when document names are not uniform. The following document name methodology example is recommended:

> **Document name= NSC 26 Minutes 2025-06-01**, where:
> - Example: NSC is the acronym for your council (NSC=Nursing Student Council)
> - "26" is the fiscal year. (The fiscal year ending on 5/31/2026 = fiscal year 2026)
> - Date of meeting: YYYY-MM-DD
>
> **Why?** This methodology automatically puts all your council's similar documents in sequential order when sorting a folder by document name. It makes finding prior "old' year records far easier when persons need to search prior eFiles in the future.

B. **In general, If it's not in the minutes, it's not an official action. Minutes need to reflect the topic being presented or discussed, followed normally by a brief summary (synopsis) of the group's reaction to the matter.**
- If a topic requires a formal action by the Council, then a "motion" needs to be introduced for a vote to be taken. Minutes can reflect the major points made, adequately portraying both the major "pro" and "con" positions on the matter discussed.
- Minutes are not required to be a complete transcript of exactly "who said what", although some Councils prefer that the minutes reflect varying levels of such detail… best for a Secy to **ask the group** at the start of your term for what level of detail they expect in the minutes.
- **Why is a full name needed?** An action could be too easily contested well after the meeting occurred – next month, next year, by any fellow student, by an auditor, etc… based on "the person introducing the motion not being a valid voting member". If minutes don't give a full name, the Council won't be able prove the action taken was indeed valid.
- **Why is the meeting location needed?** Some organizations constitution requires that all in-person meetings be held on campus.

C. **Just some examples of acceptable wording of an action taken (a "motion):**

Example 1
> After discussion, the following motion was made by (*member's full name*), and 2nd by (*member's full name)*:
>
> **Motion:** To approve a transfer of funds from (*account title*)/ Acct # *XX-XXXXX-XXX* for $*--.--*.
> Motion passes # YES - # NO – # Abstaining.

Example 2
> (*Members full name*) moved, and (*member's full name*) seconded that:
>
> **Motion:** To approve a payment of $*---.--* to be paid to (*payee's full name*) from (*account title*) /Acct # *XX-XXXXX-XXX*. **Motion passes unanimously**.

Example 3
> **Motion:** To approve the FY2021-22 budget that was presented by (members full name) attached as EXHIBIT 1. Moved by (member's full name), and 2nd by (member's full name).
> Vote=   YES: #
>   NO: #
>   ABSTAIN: #
> > ***Of course, don't forget to then physically attach the EXHIBIT document!***

Vote Tabulation common wording examples:
> Motion PASSES: 10-1-2 (which means 10 voted YES, 1 voted NO, and 2 Abstained)
> Motion FAILS: 1 YES, 5 NO, 1 Abstaining, or 1-5-1 (which means 1YES, 5NO, 1Abstention)
> If/ when all voting members cast the same vote, can use: **"Motion passes unanimously"**.