

From the Office of Vice President for Judicial and Legislative Affairs

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Report on Executive Vice President Corr's Misuse of Student Body Funds

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Background:

Article II, Section 10 of the Student Association Constitution empowers the Vice President for Judicial and Legislative Affairs to “investigation and prosecute alleged violations of the Student Association Constitution and/or Bylaws.” The Office of VPJLA does not proactively seek out potential violations, but rather investigates violations when they are observed by the VPJLA or brought to the VPJLA’s attention. Immediately following allegations that Executive Vice President Morgan Corr violated numerous Bylaws in connection with a transfer of funds, the Office of VPJLA undertook an investigation into the incident. On March 20, 2006 the VPJLA transmitted a letter to Mr. Corr formally notifying him that he was under investigation.

There were two allegations against Mr. Corr. First, Mr. Corr violated Bylaw 409, Section 4 (f) when he transferred funds from the Executive budget to the respective budgets of the International Affairs Society, Muslim Student Association, and Students for Justice in Palestine. Second, Mr. Corr transferred the funds from the Executive budget to the budget of the International Affairs Society in order to procure support for his SA Presidential campaign.

Presumptions:

At the outset of this investigation, Mr. Corr was presumed innocent. As with any other investigation from the Office of VPJLA, the target of the investigation always remains presumed innocent until a preponderance of the evidence proves the allegations true.

Allegation One:

To determine whether or not Mr. Corr illegally transferred funds from the Executive Budget to the budgets of the International Affairs Society, Muslim Student Association, and Students for Justice in Palestine, the VPJLA contacted Mr. Corr, Vice President for Financial Affairs Stephanie Adelman, as well as, the members of the Senate Finance Committee.

On March 21, 2006 Vice President Adelman provided the VPJLA with an "Account QuickReport" printout for all transfers of funds from the Office of Executive Vice President budget. This report documents three transfers relevant to this investigation. First, a transfer on February 8, 2006 to "IAS Co-Spon" in the amount of \$1,000. Second a transfer on February 27, 2006 to "Muslim SA" in the amount of \$500. And third, an additional transfer on February 27, 2006 to "Students for Justice in Palestine" in the amount of \$500. This evidence combined with the Expenditure Approval Forms signed by Mr. Corr proves that the three alleged transactions did in fact occur.

On March 20, 2006 the VPJLA sent a series of questions to each member of the Finance Committee. The purpose of these questions was to determine what, if any, role the Finance Committee had in approving Mr. Corr's transactions. The VPJLA learned from Michelle Tanney, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, that she was verbally notified of the aforementioned transactions for the first time on Tuesday March 7, 2006, almost one full month after the transfer of funds occurred. Prior to this transfer the Finance Committee never voted on approving or disapproving it.

Bylaw 409, Section 4 (f) states that, "no student body funds allocated to the executive will be directly or indirectly transferred to an organization without the consent of the Finance Committee."

On February 8, 2006, \$1,000 was transferred from the Executive budget to the International Affairs Society per Mr. Corr's request. At this time the Finance Committee was not notified of the transaction nor did they consent to the transaction, as such, Mr. Corr's actions violate Bylaw 409, Section 4(f). On February 27, 2006, when Mr. Corr requested the transfers of funds to the Muslim Student Association (MSA) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) he once again failed to receive the consent of the Finance Committee and once again violated Bylaw 409, Section 4(f).

When confronted with the aforementioned charges Mr. Corr did not deny the fact that he authorized the transfers of funds to IAS, MSA, and SJP; nor did Mr. Corr ever claim to have sought Finance Committee approval. Mr. Corr claimed that he was not at fault because he "acted in good faith." Mr. Corr contended that he should not be penalized for his actions because he did not know that they were in violation of the Bylaws.

While this investigation was underway, Mr. Corr publicly defended his actions, claiming that he “wasn’t going to let Bylaws hold student organizations down.”¹ This statement of Mr. Corr’s indicates that he was, in fact, aware that he was violating the Bylaws, but instead chose to ignore the law.

While Mr. Corr’s statements to the VPJLA and his statements to the campus media seem to contradict each other, that fact is irrelevant. Mr. Corr’s purported ignorance of Bylaw 409 is not a defense against the charges presented. Whether Mr. Corr did not know of Bylaw 409, Section 4 (f) or whether he chose simply to ignore it, a violation was committed.

Allegation Two:

By far the more serious of the two allegations levied against Mr. Corr is the second. This allegation is that Mr. Corr’s February 8, 2006 transfer of funds to the International Affairs Society was done in order to secure the IAS’s endorsement for Student Association President. To assess the validity of this accusation the VPJLA obtained statements from members of the IAS Executive Board, Senators, SA Presidential candidates, and Mr. Corr. Additionally, the VPJLA reviewed IAS budget reports, the minutes from several IAS Executive Board meetings, co-sponsorship requests, emails exchanged between Mr. Corr and Jesse Baker, Chairman of IAS, as well as, other documents relating to the IAS endorsement.

The International Affairs Society is the second largest student organization on campus. There is no doubt that their endorsement is a valuable commodity to all persons seeking elected office. Over the past few years IAS has not endorsed any SA Presidential candidates, however, in the fall of 2005 IAS decided that they would resume their endorsement procedures for the 2006 SA Election.

These endorsement hearings were discussed publicly for the first time at the IAS General Membership Meeting (GMM) held on February 1, 2006. Mr. Corr was in attendance at this meeting and approached Chairman Baker immediately following this

¹ Butler, Brandon. “Corr Under Scrutiny.” GW Hatchet, March 23, 2006.

meeting. At this time, according to Chairman Baker, Mr. Corr made an unsolicited offer to give the International Affairs Society \$1,000. Prior to this offer, Mr. Corr publicly announced that he was running for Student Association President.

At the February 6, 2006 meeting of the IAS Executive Board, the Student Association endorsements were once again discussed. At this meeting much of the logistical information for the endorsements was worked out.

The next day, on February 7, 2006, Mr. Corr sent Chairman Baker an email to once again discuss the transfer of funds. This is the first documentation that Mr. Corr intended to transfer funds to IAS. On February 7, 2006, Mr. Corr and Chairman Baker exchanged several emails discussing the transfer of funds, as well as, the IAS endorsement and the IAS election caucus.

On February 8, 2006, per Mr. Corr's request, \$1,000 of Student Body Funds was transferred to the International Affairs Society.

On February 27, 2006, the International Affairs Society announced that they are endorsing Morgan Corr for Student Association President.

Chairman Baker admitted to the VPJLA that from the outset he was skeptical about this transfer, fearing what appeared to be an "under the table" exchange of funds. According to Mr. Baker, that fear was alleviated because Mr. Corr led IAS to believe that this transaction was "a completely legitimate, open, and sanctioned transfer of funds."² This transaction was, however, quite the opposite. This transfer of funds was illegitimate, under the table, and prohibited by the SA's financial regulations.

Mr. Corr claims that this money was given to organizations that needed it most. However, IAS's application for midyear review, submitted two weeks before this transfer, projects a surplus of funds for the end of the year.

Mr. Corr claims that this money became available in his budget because of an unexpected discount received for Colonial Coach. However, Mr. Corr's budget reports

² Excerpt taken from Jesse Baker's responses to a questionnaire filed for the VPJLA.

indicate that the final transfer to US Coachways occurred almost two months before the transfer to IAS. The timing of this transfer coincides, not with when the funds became available, but rather with when the election season had officially begun.

On March 23, 2005, the VPJLA conducted a final interview with Mr. Corr to discuss this allegation. Mr. Corr claims that his decision to transfer funds to IAS was not linked to their decision to endorse for this year's SA election. Mr. Corr, in fact, claimed that he "didn't know there was an endorsement at the time (he) offered them the money." When analyzing the veracity of this statement it is important to note that Mr. Corr was admittedly at the February 1st General Membership Meeting of IAS where this endorsement was first publicly discussed. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Mr. Corr's running mate this election season, Angie Chang, sits on the Executive Board of the International Affairs Society.

Conclusion:

No one but Mr. Corr can say with absolute certainty what motivated his actions in this case. Absolute certainty is not, however, the required proof threshold. Instead, any investigation requires a conclusion based upon the greater weight of the evidence. In this case that evidence is overwhelming. Every indication obtained throughout this investigation indicates the following:

First, Mr. Corr illegally transferred funds from the Executive budget to the budget of the International Affairs Society, as well as the budgets of the Muslim Student Association and Students for Justice in Palestine;

Second, when Mr. Corr requested this transfer he was aware that the International Affairs Society would be publicly endorsing a candidate for Student Association President; and

Third, Mr. Corr transferred \$1,000 of Student Body Funds to the International Affairs society two days after IAS publicly announced that they would be endorsing a candidate for Student Association President.

Recommendation:

Bylaw 105 states that, “violations of the provisions of all Student Association Bylaws numbered 300 and higher shall be sufficient grounds for disciplinary actions to be taken against the Student Association member in violation.”

In addition to violating Bylaw 409 (f), Mr. Corr also violated the oath he took upon being inaugurated. This oath was to serve students and to always represent the best interests of the student body. In this case, Mr. Corr disregarded that oath and worked to serve his own political ambitions. As a result, the Vice President for Judicial and Legislative Affairs recommends that Executive Vice President Corr be impeached and removed from office.

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The Student Association