
Derek Khanna removed from SGA senate meeting

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Commuter Area Senator Derek Khanna was removed from last night's Student Government Association senate meeting in what he described as a demonstration in support of the first amendment.

Khanna submitted a motion for last night's meeting that proposed the senate's retraction of a resolution it passed last week. The previously passed resolution requested that the publication *The Minuteman* apologize for comments that the senate described as slander in its last meeting.

Khanna believed the previous resolution violated the paper's right to free speech and distributed a legal argument to members of the senate in support of his motion.

Senate speaker Shaun Robinson declined to place the item on the night's agenda and refused to entertain Khanna's multiple attempts to add the motion to the agenda. Robinson delivered no comment in regards to his ruling.

During and in between the next several motions, Khanna made many attempts to make his motion heard, going so far as to take over the senate podium. At this point, several other senators addressed Khanna, attempting to convince him to allow the senate to continue with its scheduled agenda.

One of these senators, Rudy Mahotiere of Central said, "I understand and respect Derek's passion, but I feel that the manner in which he conducted himself was inappropriate. The motion had been ruled dilatory, but I suggest that he seeks out other avenues in the bylaws to have his motion looked at seriously."

Senator Alan Stephan of Central further explained that since the previous week's motion was non-binding, it doesn't actually have an effect on or limit *The Minuteman*. He added that according to the SGA bylaws, the stated time to reconsider a motion is during the meeting in which it is passed.

After several more attempts by Khanna to make his motion heard, during which he cited out parts of the SGA bylaws related to a senator's right to speak during sessions, speaker Robinson asked Khanna to leave

the room. He replied that only the University of Massachusetts Police Department would be able to remove him from the senate chamber. Following this statement, Robinson proceeded to call University police and placed the senate in recess.

The recess lasted 20 minutes, during which time three officers appeared, and Khanna willingly left the senate chamber.

Following his removal, Khanna said, "The SGA is violating its own bylaws and refused to hear a legal motion. If defending free speech requires my arrest, so be it. It's ironic that the bill was supposed to allow The Minuteman free speech, and in the process of sponsoring it, my freedom of speech was violated."

He went on to explain that since a fully functioning judiciary didn't exist prior to the night's meeting, the senate was the only medium in which he could challenge the bylaw in question.

Southwest Senator Josh Davidson defended Khanna's demonstration.

"I support and admire Senator Khanna's efforts on this matter, particularly when it is in the best interest of the senate to hear the argument. This is just another case of the SGA's failure to conduct itself in a responsible manner," he said.

After the recess ended, the senate voted on a motion that asked for the Cape Cod Lounge in the Student Union to be placed under student control. Senator Subhan Tariq sponsored the motion and based it on the necessary fee to book the room. He added that 20 years ago, the room existed as student-controlled space. The motion passed.

After the meeting ended, chancellor of elections Sean McNair conducted SGA Judiciary elections. Junior legal studies major Rob Weed was elected chief justice and sophomore political science major Chris Marquis was elected associate chief justice. On his election, Weed said, "We're happy to finally have a fully functioning judiciary."

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