



**Western Washington University Associated Students  
Ethnic Student Center Steering Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

**Voting Members Present:**

BSU - Leroy Mwangi, CSA - Howard Kwon, FASA - Traci Watanabe, HOH - Sarah Kim, KhSA - Routhea Doung,  
LSU - Victor Celis, MEChA - Alejandra Escobar, MISO - Timothy O'Connor, NASU - Kylie Gemmell,  
QPOC - Alejandro Llamas, SASA - Meghna Jaradi, VSA -- Tien Nguyen

**Late Voting Members:**

**Voting Members Absent:**

ACC - Hintset Tekiu

**Non-Voting Members:**

Erin Curran-Tileston (Secretary)

**Chair:** Deng Duot

**Advisor:** Fabiola Mora

**Co-Chair:**

**Guest(s):** Vivian Kwan, Student-At-Large; Dmitry Spiridonov, Russian Club

**Motions**

SC-12-W-07	Approve the ESC-Steering Committee meeting minutes from February 8, 2012, with corrections. - <i>Passed</i>
SC-12-W-08	Table the discussion on Russian Club joining the ESC until February 22 <sup>nd</sup> 's meeting. - <i>Passed</i>

**Deng Duot, AS Vice President for Diversity, called the meeting to order at 5:08 P.M.**

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -**

Committee members pointed out that Mwangi and Duot's names were misspelled in the minutes.

*MOTIONESC-12-W-07 by Victor Celis*

Approve the ESC-Steering Committee meeting minutes from Wednesday, February 8, 2012, with corrections.

Second: Meghna Jaradi                                  Vote: 8-0-3

Action: *Passed*

**II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA -**

None

**III. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Fabiola Mora said that there is only \$602.55 left in the Steering account and that there is only \$1,000, not \$2,000, in the travel budget. She added that the Night Market will have to come out of this year's budget.

**IV. PUBLIC FORUM -**

Vivian Kwan passed out a document about Phi Kappa Phi explaining how the Western chapter is creating a Service Award to all on campus organizations. To apply an organization must submit a 300-word essay about a project or opportunity that encouraged learning. If chosen, the organization will receive a monetary award during their banquet in May. The amount is undetermined at this time.

**V. INFORMATION ITEMS -Guests/Other Business**

**A. Russian Club**

Dmitry Spiridonov said that Russian Club was approved by Activities Council about three weeks ago, but the idea has been around for a while. It was formed because students needed an environment where they can practice Russian and begin to understand the culture. Spiridonov said he feels that the Russian community is small and underrepresented in the Bellingham community. The club will be putting on a cultural event on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Spiridonov said his end goal for the club is to encompass all the language-based clubs on campus. He said this would create a place for people to feel free to speak their own native language, express themselves and

their culture, but at the same time learn about other cultures, as well. Spiridonov said he feels that this would fill the void of conversational learning in the on-campus language programs.

He explained that at the upcoming event the club hopes to have 300+ people attend. It will be held April 3<sup>rd</sup> in the VU MPR at 5pm. The club has contracted with a piroshky vendor from Seattle to cater the event. Mwangi asked what the idea behind the event. Spiridonov said with the event he wants to bring the Russian culture to Western. He said he also wanted to include ESC clubs in the event as well. This event would also be a way of introducing the new club to campus. Kwan asked if the event might be more of a cultural showcase. Spiridonov said it was originally going to be called Culture Shock, but there is already a program that goes by that name. The original idea was to put many cultures into the events program. Jaradi asked what the club's membership base is. Spiridonov said that there is currently 60 people on their email list and most of those people are committed to coming. All of the current members are from the Western Russian classes, but the club wants to expand. Jaradi asked how many people are actually attending the meetings. Spiridonov said their first official meeting is tomorrow. At their business meeting there have been four people, which is just the executive board.

Mwangi asked whether the premise of the club is to promote the Russian culture or language. Spiridonov said his hope is that when people come to meetings they will be able to have a true to life Russian experience, where people will be able to interact with the culture. Jaradi asked what will happen at meetings, will it encompass culture or just language? Spiridonov said it would be a mix of things: language, movies, news, etc. He said that he is working with the professor sponsoring the club to make meetings educational and fun. Mwangi wondered if the club is asking to join the ESC. Spiridonov said they were and this was because there more student and club involvement in the ESC. Mwangi asked Spiridonov to explain the clubs current structure. Mwangi also asked if the club is trying to work with other groups and get to know other ESC clubs. Spiridonov said the club's executive board consists of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and the advising professor. There is also a student who is being trained to be an officer after some members graduate. He said that officers are voted upon by the current executive board based on their commitment to the club and what they can bring to the club. Spiridonov continued to say that other than working with professors on campus the club has been reaching out to the Bellingham community through Russian orthodox churches to get more community involvement. The club also wants to try to make connections with local Russian businesses such as Pel Meni's.

Howard Kwon asked if Russian Club can successfully incorporate the other language clubs, if it would be considered a language club or a culture club. Spiridonov said that if the club is able to connect with the language clubs the club's name might change and while each language would have its own autonomous meeting, monthly there would be a larger meeting to bring all the clubs together. Traci Watanabe asked if Spiridonov will be able to move towards his goal with the limited time he has left at Western. Spiridonov said that while he is a senior, the other executive board members are his friends so he plans on remaining as involved as possible after graduation. He also stated that before the club was created the current executive board created a plan of how to reach the goals the original creators had for the club. He added that the club has done a great deal as a new club and may be able to make a great deal of progress towards their goal before the end of the year. Watanabe asked if anyone from Russian Club has gone to any ESC club meeting. Spiridonov said he had attended to HOH Lu'au but wasn't sure which clubs were part of the ESC.

Kylie Gemmel pointed out that Spiridonov kept going back to the idea of language, where the ESC is more focused on issues that face each club's community. She asked Spiridonov how Russian Club would fulfill the ESC's mission statement. Spiridonov said that while one aspect is not advocated for by the ESC why a club can't focus on it as one aspect of the club as a whole. He added that, in his vision, he plans to fulfill the requirements that Gemmel asked about. Spiridonov said he believes that language is culture and that it must be included in clubs in some way. Jaradi said that while many clubs do have language components language learning is not the basis for the mission of the ESC. The mission of the center is to focus on issues facing communities and to look at social justice. She asked Spiridonov what makes Russian Club different from other language clubs and how they would implement more social justice or cultural aspects to meetings. Spiridonov said Russian Culture is strongly tied to the language. He said that when trying to reach out to a larger community language is a way to respect others and be able to make connections faster. Jaradi asked what other things the club will do as far as awareness of cultural issues. Spiridonov used the current election going on in Russia. He said that he wants to educate people on the issues in Russia and America that pertain to Russian citizens. He wants to make sure club members know the culture, the difficulties within the culture, difficulties in America with Russian culture, and also about other cultures all together.

Sarah Kim asked how Spiridonov's lofty goals fit within the ESC's vision. She also asked if there has been outreach to the language departments on campus. Spiridonov said that his vision is moldable and it could be worked to fit with the ESC's vision. Jaradi asked if the club has done outreach to Russian Western students or have they been more focused on people outside of Western. Spiridonov said they had been looking at both groups. Jaradi said that in order to be member of club at Western a person must be Western student. She also asked how Russians are historically underrepresented in America and at Western. Spiridonov said that most villains in films are Russian and the culture has been made to seem like a group of drinkers, bad people, and creators of bad communities. He said that the stigma from the Cold War is still around. Spiridonov said that there are very few people who really know about the Russian culture. He said that many people from this culture who come to America from Russia do not speak the language and are afraid to speak out. Celis asked, while he sees that people are interested in the club, what the benefits would be from joining the ESC when the club seems to be having a great deal of success already. Spiridonov said that he wants to work with the ESC and the clubs to make his club better. He added that he believes that there is more teamwork and involvement in the ESC that he would like to be associated with.

Duot asked Spiridonov to talk about the idea of funding that Spiridonov had mentioned during a meeting the two had. Spiridonov said that while AS clubs get funding, he wants to get funding to put on large events and there are opportunities to receive money. He also acknowledged the fact that he would not be able to ask for money from Activities Council and ESC's Steering Committee, which he originally had planned to do. Mwangi asked how the club would be able to involve Western students who are interested in learning about the culture but may not speak the language. Spiridonov said he executive board members must be able to understand the language, but all the movies, music, and talks can be translated so anyone can be involved. Tien Nguyen said that while he says he wants to join the ESC because it is a family, the club seems to go against this idea by only want Russians or Russian speakers as executive board. She added that while each ESC club may focus on one ethnicity or culture anyone may be on the executive board. She asked Spiridonov how other people would be welcomed to the club even if they don't speak language and can't be an officer. Spiridonov clarified that he really only wants at least one officer to speak Russian. He elaborated that the deciding factors commitment about who would be a part of the executive board would be based on a person's commitment, aspirations, and vision.

Spiridonov said that the club will be having their first official meeting on Thursday February 16<sup>th</sup>, from 7-8pm in CF 110.

***MOTION ESC-12-W-08 by Meghna Jaradi***

Table the discussion on Russian Club joining the ESC until February 22<sup>nd</sup>'s meeting.

Second: Victor Celis

Vote: 12-0-0

Action: ***Passed***

**VI. ACTION ITEMS-**

None

**VII. INFORMATION ITEMS - Steering Representatives**

**A. New PC Banner Poliev**

Duot said that there is a concern that Publicity Center banners are being stolen. Kim asked if a club's banner was stolen or damaged will the club have to pay for it. Mora said that they would.

**VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS -**

None

**IX. ROP REPORT**

None

**X. CUM REPORTS -**

Mwangi thanked everyone for their support of the BSU Heritage Dinner.

**XI. OTHER BUSINESS -**

None

**THE OFFICIAL MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY ACCLAMATION AT 6:20 P.M.**