

# Student government groups plagued by complicated rules

ASUO Senate, Executive are often faced with problematic student group situations

## News analysis

**Kira Park**  
Freelance Reporter

With finals just a weekend away and upcoming student government elections in April, groups like the ASUO Student Senate and ASUO Executive can often find it difficult to follow the pages and pages of rules that control the actions of student government.

Student senators and executive officials, however, said this year's student government is doing a good job of following rules, and when needed, coming up with new ones.

When student government officials don't read their own rules closely enough, there can be problems. March 5, representatives from Grupo de Capoeira, a Brazilian martial arts group, found themselves waiting more than three hours at a senate meeting just to be told they weren't eligible to receive the money they were asking for. The Brazilian group wanted \$300 to host a special ceremony, but the senator who originally told them they could ask for the money didn't realize that the group had a number of procedural hoops to jump through.

Student Senator Andy Elliott explained the March 5 meeting was an

example where the problem wasn't caused by any one senator; it was instead a general failure of the senate not knowing the ins and outs of particular rules.

Elliott and Ben Strawn, another student senator, said the senate's rules and procedures go through a rules committee that decides what changes to make to existing rules and sends amended rules to the full senate for approval. If the senate has passed any changes, they must then be approved by the ASUO Constitution Court. University administration officials are consulted but do not have any power to approve or veto the senate's rules. Elliott said the senate goes on a training retreat each year to go over the procedures and rules for new senators to learn and returning senators to review.

Strawn said the senate has never purposely disobeyed its own rules. Elliott added if the senate, as a whole, knowingly broke one of its own rules, it would be a "constitutional crisis," and in such an event the entire senate would have to go before the court and could be unseated. He said a grievance can be filed against an individual senator who is violating a rule, which could lead to anything from a formal reprimand to an impeachment hearing with the court.

The senate uses parliamentary procedure to help the meetings run in an organized fashion, but it can choose to follow those guidelines as

closely or loosely as it wants without violating any of its rules. Elliott explained the difference between rules and parliamentary procedure is that parliamentary procedure helps create and maintain order, and rules create a predictable process that must be followed and ensure fairness of decisions.

ASUO Vice President Ben Buzbee said executive rule changes must be passed in a ballot measure during general elections in order to amend the constitution. Like the senate, the executive goes on a weekend retreat at the beginning of each year to familiarize new staff to the job and rules.

Buzbee said executive rules are fairly well defined. When there is confusion, he said, it's usually related to student groups' understanding about funding and eligibility for student incidental fee money. He explained the executive is working with newly recognized groups to make sure they understand the rules.

If a member of the executive breaks a rule, ASUO President Rachel Pilliod evaluates the circumstances and severity of the situation. Buzbee said that it has never been an issue, but if the president or vice president was to violate a rule, the senate could vote for impeachment or censorship, or the officer could be sent to the court if at least 10 percent of the student body's signatures were gathered.

Kira Park is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

## Attack

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"It was a 'sucker punch'-type attack," he said.

According to EPD reports, the apartment manager of a complex at the 600 block of East 15th Avenue called to report the incident just before 2:30 a.m.. When officers arrived at the apartment where Long was located, the suspect had fled the scene.

Investigators believe Jones, an anthropology major, was at his last known address — 1584 Hilyard St. — as recently as March 12.

Investigators say Jones is aware he is wanted by police, and they advise citizens to call EPD immediately instead of making contact with the suspect.

Anyone with information regarding Jones' whereabouts should call EPD at 682-5111.

Contact the reporter at caronalarab@dailyemerald.com.



Long

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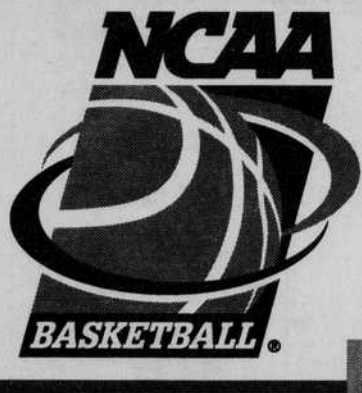


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