A RESOLUTION IMPLORING STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE REASSESSMENT OF MOUNTAINEER IDOL AND DANCING WITH OUR MOUNTAINEER STARS

Short Title: Reassessment of Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars
Author(s): Kevin Donnelly, Senator
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Sponsor(s): Travis Rawson, President Pro Tempore
            Arpan Kumar, Senator
            Sarah Ihlenfeld, Senator
            Alex Cappadona, College Senator
First Reading Date 11-6-2019
Second Reading Date 11-20-2019

Whereas, in a recent Daily Athenaeum article written by the cultural editor, Cole McClahnahan, the WVU director of arts and entertainment, Eric Andrews, announced that Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars and Mountaineer Idol will not be held this year due to the desire to “reassess them” and “freshen them up”; and,

Whereas, WVU Arts and Entertainment has hosted Mountaineer Idol since 2003 and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars since 2010; and,

Whereas, this year would have been the 16th season of Mountaineer Idol and the 9th season of Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars, showing a deep tradition of these events being involved in Mountaineer Week; and,

Whereas, it was claimed that the decision to pause Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars was “largely a student decision,” but no known effort was made to gain the opinion of the student body; and,

Whereas, it was also claimed that a contributing factor to the decision to pause these events was due to lack of student participation; however, 16 teams (32 contestants) participated in Dancing with Our Mountaineer Stars, and the final round of Mountaineer Idol featured 13 contestants; and,

Whereas, the most recent Dancing with the Mountaineer Stars had an attendance of 250 and Mountaineer Idol had 150 in attendance; and,

Whereas, the claim of the lack of student participation is also negated by the fact that Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars was largely ran by students working with faculty in the MountainLair and Arts and Entertainment; and,

Whereas, WVU Student Katie Simms, winner of 2017 Mountaineer Idol said that Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars “changed her entire experience as a student at WVU.” Through the programs, she has “been asked to give back to the community” through local and statewide function and was able to “sign with Mon Hills
Records” for multiple albums. She has also said that without the programs, she “would not be the same WVU student I am today”; and,

Whereas, Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars and different rounds of Mountaineer Idol have included collections and silent auctions to support university and community organizations, making the event not only entertaining, but beneficial to the surrounding community; and,

Whereas, in a Twitter Poll released by a Student Government Association member, users were asked if West Virginia University should host Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars in the wake of the cancelation. Out of 1,152 votes, 65% answered “Yes”, 16% answered “No”, and 18% answered “No Opinion”; and,

Whereas, The Student Government Association is concerned that discontinuing Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars this year will set a precedent for the future such that they will not be held again;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Student Assembly of West Virginia University that:

Section 1: The West Virginia University Student Government Association implores WVU Arts and Entertainment and any other entities involved in the “pausing” and “reassessment” of Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars to release a public statement explaining why there was a need to pause these programs; and,

Section 2: The West Virginia University Student Government Association implores West Virginia University Arts and Entertainment to involve a committee of Student Government Association representatives in the “reassessment” of the Mountaineer Idol and Dancing with our Mountaineer Stars so that progress in the revitalization of the events can be tracked and shared with the student body.

Section 3: Upon its passage and approval, this resolution shall be forwarded to:

G. Corey Farris, Dean of Students
Sabrina Cave, Executive Director, Student Enrichment
Dr. Thanh Le, Director, Student Engagement and Leadership (Advisor)
Daily Athenaeum
Kate Dye, Student Body President
Eric Andrews, Director, Arts and Entertainment