



GSG Assembly Meeting

Jadwin 102

March 8, 2017 5:45pm

The meeting is called to order at 5:59pm.

Approval of February minutes

Will Smith (Politics Rep) motions to approve the February minutes. Bernat Guillén Pegueroles (PACM Rep) seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

Presentation and Approval of Election Report

- Daniel Vitek (GSG Academic Affairs):
 - Had significantly higher turnout this year (27% vs. 13% and 15% in the previous two years). 7 Executive Committee positions were up for election, none of them contested. Everyone was successful in their respective position. Had a single contested election on CPUC, won by Ariel Gerwitz.
 - Had a couple of technical bugs. One arose from using an old draft of the survey (this was fixed in a few hours). The other likely followed from the fact that we didn't emphasize enough that the emails were personalized, so some people forwarded the email to mailing lists and were unable to take the survey.
 - A few students couldn't find their email, so we set up a temporary solution by sending those students a preview of the survey. However, we can't confirm the identity of responses submitted this way, so we suggest that we do not count these votes.
 - 85% of the respondents were in favor of the SPEAR referendum.
 - We discovered that Qualtrics cannot be used for surveys, but only for research. We might need to switch to another system in future elections.
 - Questions:
 - Michelle Frazer (AOS Rep): You mentioned that some people complained about receiving mass emails through mailing lists calling for people to vote a specific way in the referendum.
 - Daniel: We received one complaint about that. We know that the USG has specific rules about that not being allowed, but we don't. If this is something Assembly cares a lot we should consider it for future elections. We received a single complaint about it, so,

personally, I'm not too worried.

- Brian Kraus (Plasma Physics Rep): We had such a big improvement in turnout. Do we have any idea on why that is?
 - Daniel: We had a referendum in the ballot this year, which is not usually a case.
 - Jonathan Balking (GSG Communications Director): There is at least some evidence to suggest that it was the referendum, since the number of abstentions was quite high.
 - Mattias Fitzpatrick (GSG Social Officer): There was also a really nice poster that someone made.
 - Daniel: We also made sure that the candidate statements opened in a separate page this time around, so that people couldn't complete the survey in 5 minutes without having to go through 41 survey pages in order to do so.
- Michelle: How did the turnout compare to the last divestment poll?
 - Daniel: I think it was fairly close. I seem to recall it had been around 20-25%.

Will Smith (Politics Rep) motions to approve the results. Noah Apthorpe (Computer Science Rep) seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

The Assembly welcomes the new Executive Board members: Jonathan Balkind (President), Akshay Mehra (Vice-President), Bernat Guillén Pegueroles (Secretary), Adam Fisher (Special Events Officer), Mai Nguyen (Facilities Officer), Hendia Edmund (Health & Life Officer), Kate Pukhovaia (Academic Affairs Officer).

Appointed positions - candidate introductions and vote

The Assembly hears the candidate introductions for people running for Executive and CPUC positions through appointment. Candidates:

- Treasurer: Danny Gitelman, Alexander Song, Amit Halevi, Zachary T. Hervieux-Moore
- Communications Director: Emily Kern, Noah Apthorpe
- Social Officer: Amitesh Datta, Eric Glynn
- Priorities Committee: Joseph Avery, He Sun, Christopher Hale
- General Council: Jasmin Alsous, Akshay Mehra
- Resources Committee: Abigail Novick, Archit Verma, Maximilian Vogler, Jason Windawi
- Rights & Rules Committee: David Ribar
- Special Committee on Naming: Molly Herron, Anastasia Korolkova, Isabel Morris

The Assembly conducts a closed-ballot vote for the appointed positions.

Graduate Housing Project Final Report

- Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): The final report was completed and we want to discuss the creation of a follow-up committee to continue the work.
- Akil Word-Daniels: A month or two ago Assembly received a draft of the graduate housing report, in order to provide feedback. The administration has now also looked over it and offered suggestions, and we've gone over it again to address all suggestions. Last time we also determined that we would need a vote to release the report and data.
- Questions:
 - Michelle Frazer (AOS Rep): When you say released publicly, do you mean that graduate students will have access to it in addition to administration?
 - Akil: Yes, it will go out through the GSG. Princeton Alumni Weekly is also interested in getting a copy.

Will Smith (Politics Rep) motions to approve the public release of the report. Brian Kraus (Plasma Physics Rep) seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

- Akil: We have a lot of follow-up questions, such as with regards to pricing of meals at the GC, or availability of housing. Most of the issues that we'd like to follow up on are policy issues, so a follow-up committee would be talking with USLC and other administrators, for example. If you're interested, please talk to me after the meeting, and feel free to tell other people (you don't need to be on the GSG to be part of the committee).
 - Sarah-Marie Bruno (Off-Campus Housing Delegate) and Will Smith (Politics Rep) express interest.
- Mircea: We can also send a recruiting email which we'd like Assembly to forward to their constituents.
- Robert Decker (French & Italian Rep): Could we post the report on the documents section of the GSG website?
 - Mircea: That's the plan.

Executive Summary

- Grad Student Center run:
 - Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): The GSG ran a graduate student center pilot in the evenings of Monday-Thursday throughout the month of February. We had a mixture of open times and event times. When we tallied up attendance, it seemed like we had over 300 attendees in the evenings. They were tightly concentrated around happy hours, but there were people interspersed throughout at events

organized by students, such as the improv club or Valentine's event. People didn't really use the open times, so it would be good to determine if it was because there is no demand for this, or because this was only a temporary thing.

- Questions:
 - Mohammad Sharad (Electrical Engineering Rep): How did you count attendance?
 - We tallied by event (through event organizers), we did headcounts for some events (such as happy hours), and we also have rough hourly attendance records.
 - David Walsh (History Rep): Was it 300 individual people or 300 all total?
 - Mircea: 300 all total.
 - Robert Decker (French & Italian Rep): If this were to become a permanent thing, would you have to use the same space?
 - Mircea: The reason we ran it in that space was because that room was the only thing available on campus. We would argue for something nicer and even a bit more central. The ideal situation would have been to hold it at Campus Club, but scheduling turned out to be complicated. We're trying to increase our presence on the basement of Campus Club specifically.
- Jonathan Balkind (GSG Communications Director): President Eisgruber has responded to the general education task-force report, which included a provision to change the academic calendar. The response suggests that they'll be forming a standing committee to come up with the best calendar before putting it to a faculty vote, so be on the lookout over the next few weeks/months when they'll be searching for volunteers.

Open Forum

- Merle Eisenberg (Lakeside Apartments Delegate): Since the GSG is supposed to be neutral on unionization I wanted to point out that some of the communications mentioned talking to the Graduate School about holding information sessions, and they would obviously only give you one side of the conversation. It's important to note that there are two sides to this conversation.
 - Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): I'd like to offer a rebuke. In that same email we explicitly advertised a PGSU event, which one could argue will also only offer one side of the conversation.
 - Jonathan Balkind (GSG Communications Director): Maybe the language didn't get it across, but the point was to provide grad students with a list of resources they could reach out to for information.
 - Merle: That wasn't clear.
- Brian Kraus (Plasma Physics Rep): Continuing on the discussion about the extent to

which the GSG can be political, at a time where groups might be reaching out for support: does the GSG have any thoughts about how the Day of Action went? The GSG sponsored drinks for this event, which I think was a great initiative. I'm curious about how people felt: did you go to the event? Did you enjoy it?

- Robert Decker (French & Italian Rep): It seemed like it was rather successful. I went to one class that was very full. It was my understanding that from a political perspective, it wasn't necessarily one-sided. There's apparently a professor on campus that is opposed to climate change, and from what I gather there was a fruitful discussion after his talk.
- David Walsh (History Rep): I led a teach-in at the event and thought it went really well. I also would like to thank Vivian Chang and Brian Kraus who helped organize the event.
- Robert: And former Exec member Mike Hepler, if I'm not mistaken.
- Mike Zhang (Art & Archeology): We're trying to start an academic writing program that focuses not just on grammar and vocabulary but also offering professional instruction on how to write with scholarly focus and applying methods, and using academic language. Right now we are in the planning stage, and we're trying to gauge the level of interest for the project.
 - Audience 1: I've received a number of emails from people in my department about the same initiative and people think it's a good idea.
 - Mircea: We've discussed this at Exec and came up with a number of offices on campus which could help (McGraw, Writing Center, and so on). We'd like to know what we, as the GSG, can do to help make the initiative successful.
 - Luciano Vanni: The point is that this University does not offer professional help to its graduate students when it comes to writing. It seems to be the only University that doesn't do so. As an international (or even native) student, your only solution is to pay for a course which can cost up to \$10,000. The difficulty right now is to reach all graduate students because not everyone feels comfortable saying that they have problems with English, especially in the Humanities. At this point, the McGraw center is thinking of organizing a focus group, and we'd be happy to have a GSG representative. The end result could be providing help in small groups or one-on-one help.
 - Mohammad Sharad (Electrical Engineering Rep): I served the McGraw center and one of the projects was to find new ways to help graduate students. Please contact me and I can connect you with them. They are themselves looking for ways to support us.
- Robert Decker: If any of you would like to have representatives from the PGSU to come to your department to offer information about unionization, they'd be happy to do it. Feel free to contact me. You can find my email on the website (rdecker@princeton.edu).

- David Walsh: You can also reach out to askpgsu@gmail.com. There's an event coming up next Monday, March 13, at Labyrinth Books. We'll have speakers from various other Universities and organizations, and will go out for drinks at Triumph afterwards.
- Peter Waddell (Chemistry Rep): There were a couple of students in my department interested in organizing a trip for March for Science. They were wondering if they could get funding to get buses to take people. They have 50 people interested in going so far, and are anticipating more.
 - Max Hirschberger (GSG Treasurer): There are different sources. You can come to the GSG directly, of course, but the GSG only has \$1,000 in discretionary funds, so the options are limited there. You can also reach out to Events Board. Even if you're an individual, you can register and ask for funding.

Elections - winners announcement

Exec positions:

- Treasurer: Zachary T. Hervieux-Moore
- Communications Director: Emily Kern
- Social Officer: Amitesh Datta

CPUC positions in rank-ordered list (highest score first)

- General Council: Jasmin Alsous, Akshay Mehra
- Priorities Committee: He Sun, Joseph Avery, Christopher Hale
- Resources Committee: Abigail Novick, Maximilian Vogler, Archit Verma, Jason Windawi
- Rights & Rules Committee: David Ribar
- Special Committee on Naming: Isabel Morris, Anastasia Korolkova, Molly Herron

The Assembly welcomes the new members.

Robert Decker (French & Italian rep) motions to adjourn meeting. Will Smith (Politics Rep) seconds. The meeting adjourns at 7:02pm.

Next meeting: April 12, 2017 5:45pm