

Minutes for the August 2008 Graduate Student Government Assembly meeting

Held Wednesday, August 6, at 6pm in Frist Campus Center Room 309

Recorded by Marina Paul

Agenda

I. Call to Order

A. Approval of the Minutes (July) - Marina Paul

II. Reports

A. Chair

B. Social Events

C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin

D. Health and Life - Kelly Kearney

E. Academic Affairs - Kevin Collins

F. Campus Relations - Raja Chahal

III. Decision Items

A. Approval of the Budget for Mugs

IV. Discussion Items

A. IRC Report (Giri Parameswaran) and Discussion

B. Summer Letters Update

C. Campus Study Space Survey

V. New Business

1. Pri-Comm (Giri Parameswaran)

2. Volunteers to bring food for Assembly meeting

3. Scheduling the September Assembly meeting

4. Approval of the budget for the Wine and Cheese Social

VI. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

The meeting began at 6:07pm.

A. Approval of the Minutes (July) - Marina Paul

A draft of the July minutes was sent out to Assembly via email 2 days ago. Jeff pointed out that there is a factual error written in the July minutes about installing AC units in the GC and will be sending a correction. Once the meeting reached quorum, the minutes were approved by voice vote.

II. Reports

A. Chair

Sent by email from Christina (who was not present at the meeting) and read by Ashley: *This month, the executive committee and the committee chairs have kept busy working on the writing letters for our advocacy campaign, which you will hear more about from their respective authors later in this meeting. We also spent time designing the new mugs we will be giving to incoming students, and although we were constrained by budget considerations, we hope that you will like the ones we chose. Looking forward to the fall, we started initial planning related to the wine and cheese party. If anyone is interested in*

helping us with this event, please contact us at gsg@ We began to discuss the upcoming Ivy summit as well, which will take place from October 24-26th. We are going with a relatively small delegation, but anyone interested in being a part of it should submit a short paragraph describing why they should be the one to attend. We especially encourage those who expect to be involved in the gsg for the next few years to apply. Finally, we have a number of events coming up during new student orientation for which we would like to have volunteers, so if you are willing to participate, please let us know. I will let the committee chairs fill you in on the rest of what we've been working on in July. I apologize for not being able to be there tonight, but I am looking forward to seeing you in September.

B. Social Events

No report was submitted.

C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin

The Facilities subcommittee met with Kim Jackson approximately two weeks ago.

Updates and recent developments related to Transportation issues:

1. P-Rides Express is being redesigned, expected to run year-round, be professionally run, have expanded hours (perhaps 5am?), and still cover the gap between late night NJT transit trains and the Dinky.
2. Grad commuters won't be permitted to park in lot 25, but will be able to park in lot 21
3. Hang tags: improve late approvals for last minute requests, case-by-case approval
4. Parking permits: only one residence parking permit will be granted per incoming dual-car family. Parking for the second car may be made available elsewhere on campus; will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
5. Forrestal campus residents: unclear where they will be able to park.

D. Health and Life - Kelly Kearney

Most of the questions or concerns Kelly receives about student health are complaints about students' lack of understanding of their health plan. In response to this, Kelly created a Student Health document and distributed it to Assembly, requesting feedback before the document goes online.

E. Academic Affairs - Kevin Collins

Kevin deferred his report to later, under discussion items.

F. Campus Relations - Raja Chahal

1. The opening of Campus Club has been massively delayed, and no upcoming meetings to plan it have been scheduled yet.
2. Raja is planning the Wine & Cheese Social, tentatively held on Thursday September 25. The Social will be held in the Carl Fields Center and will include an outdoor area. Raja has looked into holding it in the Icahn auditorium, but the Icahn administration has been hesitant to host student events there in the past. Kevin Collins (POL) is interested in seeking additional funding sources (particularly from alumni) for Wine & Cheese.

III. Decision Items

A. Approval of the Budget for Mugs

Every year, the GSG distributes free mugs to incoming graduate students at the new-student sign-in event during Orientation week. The issue of the previous design (a black coffee mug with the caption "Kiss me and I'll turn into a PhD" with a mug) had been

brought up at the previous assembly meeting. Some students felt that the mug design was in poor taste; while others felt the mug excluded Masters' students. As an alternative to using the previous mug design for this year's mug order, Jeff came up with a new design for the mug: a white mug with black type, the front image consisted of the Princeton University shield and logo, with the back of the mug being the Grad Tower.

Jeff offered three pricing options for mugs for 1648 incoming students

1. Mugs with the old design for \$1500 for incoming students
2. \$1670 for new design, for incoming students
3. \$1731 for mugs for incoming students plus the Executive committee and additional mugs to sell to current graduate students who wanted the new mugs.

David Jorgensen (REL) suggested that mugs be given out every year for incoming assembly reps. Jeff thought that the extra mugs from new student sign in (all incoming students don't end up picking up mugs) can be distributed to reps.

Hilary Bergsieker (PSY) wondered if there would be enough surplus mugs from new student sign to allow returning students to purchase new mugs. Jeff anticipated that a substantial number of current students would want the new designs.

Giri Parameswaran (ECO) moved that the option to approve the third option (including orange in the Princeton University logo, extra mugs for Exec and the option for current students to buy the new mugs). The motion was approved via voice vote with none opposed.

B. Academic Affairs (Kevin Collins)

Kevin recently met with staff members of the Office of the Executive Vice President to discuss graduate students to the Study Space Assessment Project (SSAP). The SSAP was formed to evaluate study space needs for the campus and upcoming policies for the new Lewis Science Library.

The major concerns for graduate students discussed at the earlier SSAP meeting are the following:

1. Study space – needs for graduate students don't overlap completely with those of undergraduate students, and their patterns of usage do not necessarily follow traditional academic calendar
2. Creation of a graduate student center
3. Separable access to portions of new library
4. healthy vending machines (short term options, comfortable lounge areas)

For additional graduate perspectives, Kevin invited two of the staff members of the Office of the Executive Vice President involved in the SSAP, Matthew Kinsey and Veronica Demtchouk, to the Assembly meeting. Veronica will be putting together a report of recommendations.

Expansion of study space hours and facilities: Several students wanted a 24-hour study space on campus. According to Matt, President Tilghlman is strongly against having a 24-hour study space on campus, believing it would contribute to an unhealthy atmosphere. Graduate students felt that the current options were not sufficient. For example, the GC study room is very small with a capacity of 6 and has candy-filled vending machines available. While the general exams vary across departments, some exams may result in

students studying for 6 months straight, yet in some departments pre-generals students don't get offices.

Healthy late night food options

Students wanted healthy late night food options available after dining centers for graduate students closed. According to Matt, a number of vending and food options are expected, including a microwave, are anticipated at the Lewis Library.

Access to computers and computer programs for research

According to Ashley Thrall (Parliamentary Secretary), students in the Civil Engineering do not have sufficient access to computers and the computer programs that they need for their research. Kelly Kearney supported the need for public computer lab. She felt that the computer cluster at Frist campus center was not sufficient, allowing access only to the Princeton intranet and Princeton web-emails. Matt felt that the way to proceed was to go to departments/department heads and ask what the department-specific needs are.

Campus Club

Matt and Veronica were interested in understanding the level of interest among graduate student interest level for the campus club. Raja Chahal, who's involved in planning for the Campus Club, explained that the opening of Campus club has been significantly delayed, and the GSG is trying to make sure that graduate students establish a strong presence when the Club opens.

Summer/Academic holiday hours

Matt and Veronica got the impression that during the summers, the university hours really shut down, and the University was not recognizing that the presence of graduate students here.

Graduate Student Center

Matt and Veronica were interested in finding out why graduate students felt that Frist Campus Center or the renovations to Café Vivian could not fulfill the needs that a separate graduate student center would. Currently, the university is looking at the student center as a way to address that need without creating a separate center for graduate students. Since Frist is not an old building; the administration may be reluctant to build something entirely new.

Students argued that the student center will replace all of the benefits received from having a separate center for graduate students: what graduate students want is a place with 24 hour access, computer access, places you expect to see graduate students. Several major points are below:

1. Other universities recognize the benefit of dedicated graduate student centers, and have such student centers. A comparison should be made to peer institutions, such as UPENN
2. Frist center doesn't have many study spaces, and we are often kicked out of or can't get access to reservable spaces.
3. The push for a graduate student center was not solely for a study space; in fact it is only one least reason to argue for a student center.
4. A major drawback is limited student access to Frist – for example, graduate student can't even get in for the GSG assembly meetings during the summer!!

Matt felt that the graduate student center is much bigger issue than the campus study survey is covering, but the report is a place to include the idea student center as a solution to several of the problems listed above. The goal for SSAP is a written report by mid-September

IV. Discussion Items

A. IRC Report (Giri Parameswaran) and Discussion

The Institutional Review Committee distributed a hand-out of the major ideas being discussed at recent meetings (IRC_report_Aug08.doc). A discussion of the four major ideas areas covered in recent IRC meetings took place at Assembly:

1. Have the GSG run the representative elections to formalize the process and timing of service

The arguments for formalizing the elections included the following:

- a. Formalized time period will minimize gaps in turnover. If students resign as reps early, however, the election for the position should also occur early
- b. the formalized time period would allow everyone to start and attend an annual orientation into the GSG at the same time

Arguments against this idea:

- a. Some students were against the massive oversight by the GSG that this would entail
- b. Many departments have had to beg students to be reps; there may not be enough students to run contested elections. One way to incentivize this may be by adding power to Assembly or involving assembly members in more decision making by mandating service on subcommittees, etc.
- c. A “one-size-fits all” approach may not suit all departments. For example, a small department may be able to round up everyone in one room and run the elections themselves. A department without any volunteers for the position may have to fill the position without an election. Departments may need to be allowed to opt out of the election.

2. Use proportional allocation of representatives, based on number of students per department

Student reps from several small departments felt concerned that their voices would be swamped out by larger departments.

3. Re-organize “Cabinet” and officer positions to redistribute duties and reflect actual roles

4. Have executive committee officers elected by Assembly instead of the student body

Several arguments promoted having Assembly elect GSG officers.

- a. Assembly’s selection of exec members may result in a better relationship between the groups
- b. Assembly may be able to set criteria (such as previous experience on Assembly, for example) for certain positions
- c. Assembly could have a better idea of the job descriptions/qualifications of the candidates

- d. Hannah Seidel (proxy for EEB) felt that as a member of the student body who doesn't participate or vote for anything, she would feel more comfortable with Assembly electing the members.

The major argument against having Assembly choosing officers of the cabinet was that many members of the student body may be against a small number of students selecting people for positions that came with priorities in the housing draw. Hanna Seidel (EEB proxy), who expressed earlier that she would have more trust in Assembly deciding who runs the Cabinet, agreed with this statement. Some students felt this may be an unwise choice, fearing that there may be a backlash that was seen in the 2008 Lawrence resident committee elections. However, the IRC proposal had the student body represented by department reps they elect or select themselves.

The IRC recognized that many assembly members appreciated the timing of the department rep terms of office and improving Assembly's involvement in the decision making process. The next IRC meeting would be held on Tuesday at 6pm at the D-Bar.

B. Summer Letters Update

1. Air condition in the GC letter: a draft is available. The letter pushes for wiring the common spaces, such as the coffee house.
2. Housing letter: in progress. This letter will address immediate housing issues as well as requesting the university commit to looking into expanding housing options to maintain the number of students housed.
3. Health/Life letter: a draft is ready. The letter requests continuing the Student health subsidy for birth control, child care options for graduate students, budgeting for the recommended two annual visits to the dentist, and extending the summer hours of University Health Services.
4. DCE letter: the letter is an updated letter from last year
5. Travel funds letter: a draft is coming up. The letter will request that students be allowed to use their \$500 grants anytime during the student's tenure at the University, rather than within one year of the grant. The letter will argue that Princeton's travel funding for students is not up to par with those at peer institutions, and that travel funds are not a luxury but a necessity for graduate students' academic and professional development and maintaining Princeton's international reputation.
6. Campus Safety letter
7. A new letter to request Healthy vending options on campus – such as healthy foods vending machine, esp. for after-hours was proposed. Assembly authorized the GSG by voice vote to write this letter.

V. New Business

1. Pri-Comm (Giri Parameswaran)
 - a. As a student rep on Pri-Comm, Giri asked Assembly to start giving input/ideas for upcoming funding requests, as the academic year starts next month.
 - b. Also, Giri is considering initiating an award or recognition graduate students for service to the graduate student body. Kevin Collins supported this idea.
2. Volunteers to bring food for Assembly meeting: Ashley Thrall (Parliamentary Secretary) planned to have a sign-up sheet at the next assembly meeting.
3. Scheduling the September Assembly meeting– this meeting may need to be moved from the second Wednesday of September in order to accommodate orientation events – allow Assembly to participate in new student orientation and allow new students to attend

the first assembly meeting of the academic year. A motion to hold the meeting on September 17 was approved with none opposed.

4. Approval of the budget for the Wine and Cheese Social

The GSG bylaws require Assembly to re-approve the budget for a social event when its budget goes over the initial allocated amount. \$900 was originally allocated last year for the Wine and cheese social, but it is anticipated to cost \$2500 this year.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:33pm.

