

Minutes of the August 30, 2000 Graduate Student Government Meeting

At 7:08pm the meeting was called to order by GSG Chair Lauren Hale.

Item 0: The attendance sheet was circulated and pizza became available to the assembly.

Item 1: After a minor factual correction, the minutes from the July meeting were approved by the assembly.

Item 2: Thanks were given to the former recording secretary Don Priour. Jeff Davis was unanimously elected to fill the remainder of the term of Recording Secretary, which lasts through the September meeting.

Item 3: Social Chair report: The "First Chance Dance," an orientation event for graduate students sponsored by the GSG, which will take place on September 15, was discussed. Jason Brownlee asked what criteria would be used to select the DJ since the DJ at the last event was mediocre. No definitive answer was found. Since a bartender usually is paid \$75 for an event, it was decided that 1-hour volunteer shifts by GSG members would save money. The organizers of the dance, Yesim Tozan and Bill Jordan, were mentioned. Alcohol will be free. Sign up sheets for bartenders and clean-up/set-up crews were circulated by the social chair. Eric Adelizzi asked if bartenders needed to be certified by the University, but the consensus of the assembly (based on previous events) was no.

Item 4: Treasurer Report:

The \$575 spent on 1,000 bottle openers to be distributed to new graduate students will be split between the budget for this year and the one for next year. Manuel Sales was reimbursed \$90 for expenses incurred while attending the "Ivy Leaders Conference" in Philadelphia in March. It was noted that the fiscal year ends with this meeting. David Linsenmeier from the Graduate Christian Fellowship asked for \$75 for their welcoming activities for this year. Steve Miller asked how many students attend these activities. The answer was 25-30 regular members with 40-45 students usually in attendance. Allocating these funds from the current budget was unanimously approved.

Item 5: Web Administrator Report:

Eszter Hargittai (former Chair) is no longer in the GSG assembly but wanted to remain on the GSG-active list. This resulted in a discussion about this e-mail list.

Members of the GSG can voluntarily sign up for this list, and its intent was to reduce the traffic on the GSG assembly list. Jason Brownlee gave a brief opinion. If the GSG-active list were open to everyone then there would be too much traffic. It could also lead to the spreading of rumors since something discussed on the list may be misconstrued as being passed by the GSG. Mr. Brownlee believes that any GSG representative should be able to decide if someone can be added to the active list. Since other GSG meetings cannot be closed, he believes that everyone should be able to see e-mail correspondence. Eric Adelizzi called this a "troublemaker's letterbox." It was noted by members of the assembly that graduate students would like some access to what is being discussed, and the possibility of a read only list was raised. Mr. Adelizzi mentioned that e-mail about scheduling matters, etc. go out to only officers. Lauren Hale stated that it should not matter if people read what the executive committee discusses. A motion was made to vote on making the list read only for non-assembly members, but more discussion occurred. Many committee members randomly spoke and interrupted other speakers, and order was temporarily lost. Steve Miller raised the idea of a "graduate chat room." The various options at this point were deemed to be (1) a GSG chatroom, (2) an open active list, (3) a read-only active list, or (4) the status quo. The status quo was defeated with only one vote in favor. The open active list was defeated. The read only active list easily passed. The chatroom idea was then discussed. Much discussion continued, and several odd questions were asked. Several of the delegates appeared to be completely unaware of the issue on which they were presently voting. Arguments against the chatroom were solicited. An assembly member mentioned that Jim Vere, who was not in attendance, would need to set up the chatroom, so his opinion should first be sought. The idea to change the chatroom to a newsgroup was raised, and one member asked what a newsgroup is. It was mentioned that the PUGRAD newsgroup already exists, so a link to this newsgroup could just be added to the GSG web page. Georg Essl pointed out that the PUGRAD list had almost no traffic whatsoever. A motion to vote on adding the link contingent on the existence of this newsgroup was made. This motion to utilize the PUGRAD newsgroup passed, and the logistics were to be discussed in the future. A question was then raised as to how someone could get a message forwarded to the GSG. One answer was through a representative, but this led to the question of whether the representative would then have too much power. No definitive

answer was found. At 7:42pm the assembly finally moved on to other business.

Item 6: Grad. Student Trustee Committee

David Linsenmeier discussed the document on "Young Graduate Alumni Trustees" that was prepared by himself, Lauren Hale, and Karthick Ramakrishnan on behalf of the Graduate Student Trustee Committee (Graduate Representatives of the Council of the Princeton University Community and the Graduate Student Government). He stated that there are 40 members of the Board of Trustees, with 13 of those alumni. Four are recent undergraduate alumni, and one must be a graduate alumnus. The proposal is to get more graduate student alumni representatives on the board. The proposal was summarized, with the main recommendation that two recent graduate alumni trustees replace two of the nine at-large members. He mentioned that he had spoken with Janet Dickerson (Campus Life) and Ann Halliday and that the next step was to send the report to the Board of Trustees and others in the University hierarchy. The discussion then moved to comments on the report.

A graduate U-Council member had been unaware of the substance of the report and asked how the assembly could be expected to vote on approving the document since not everyone in the assembly had read the report (the report was made available only shortly before the meeting). Another member said that because of a time crunch (the document needed to be submitted to the Board of Trustees before Friday, September 1, 2000) immediate action was needed. The U-Council also wanted to meet to approve the document before it was sent, and the U-council name would not be on the document unless they first approved it. An assembly member wanted the wording to be stronger. Another member said that since graduate students are a level above undergraduates they therefore are more qualified to participate in the government of the University.

At 7:55pm Steve Miller moved to vote to approve the idea but not necessarily the wording of the report. Jason Brownlee wanted to approve the document and suggest corrections and improvements. David Linsenmeier stated that truly writing a document by committee is impossible since one person must write most of the document. Eric Adelizzi was uncomfortable with approving a document not in its final form and moved to approve the idea now with a full e-mail vote on the revised document to occur between 9am and 12:00pm on Friday, September 1. This suggestion was taken and the vote in favor of this idea was approved. Jason Brownlee then moved to

thank the three authors of the document.

Item 7: Vote on Constitution Packet

Eric Adelizzi mentioned that an information packet on the proposed constitution was sent out 10 days prior to the meeting. A motion was made to vote in favor of distributing the Constitution Packet, and this motion was approved.

Item 8: Newly submitted petition

This petition, written by Jason Brownlee and submitted to the assembly by Michi Taga, called for the direct election of GSG officers by all graduate students and would amend either the current or proposed constitution. The petition was signed by over 100 graduate students (140), and Mr. Brownlee stated that it should go forward for referendum, which he said is required by the constitution. There was disagreement and confusion over this point. Mr. Adelizzi stated that (under the present constitution) if the petition were voted on by the assembly but not passed then it need not be sent to all graduate students. He twice read aloud Article 6 of the current constitution (concerning the procedure to be followed for amendments). There was substantial discussion on procedure by members of the assembly. Bill Jordan noted that it might be confusing if graduate students are presented with a new proposed constitution and amendments to the current constitution at the same referendum. David Linsenmeier stated that if over 100 graduate students want this petition to be considered by all graduate students then the GSG should not prevent it. Steve Miller opposed this idea and said that the idea for the petition first should have been mentioned to the GSG before it was made into a formal petition. Mr. Adelizzi stated that there were numerous incompatibilities between the proposed amendment and the new proposed constitution. In addition, he listed over 10 examples of unclear phrasing in the amendment that he said would lead to significant confusion. These problems include questions over term limits, tie votes, what procedure is followed when no one runs for a particular office, the ability to override, and other loopholes in language. Mr. Brownlee believed that these problems should be listed in a nay statement and that the assembly should bring the petition forward to be voted upon by all graduate students. He

believes

that it is not the assembly's job to decide whether the petition should be

improved because of incompatibilities with the proposed constitution or whether

it should be "bottled up." He further stated that

"constitutions trump by-laws" and that the constitution provides a clear process for amendment, which he wanted the Assembly to follow. Lauren Hale

stated that it

was irresponsible to withhold the petition and believed that the petition should be voted upon by all graduate students at the referendum. Mr. Miller reiterated that the petition first should have been submitted to the assembly so that unclear language could be revised, etc. Mr.

Adelizzi

noted that the amendment was incompatible with the proposed by-laws adopted

at the May GSG meeting. He also noted that the new by-law unanimously adopted at the July 27, 2000 GSG meeting required a one month waiting period between the submission of a petition and a vote in the Assembly. He stated that assembly members needed time to consider the amendment, form an opinion, and construct aye and nay statements. He wanted each assembly member to be on record as in favor of or opposed to the amendment.

He quoted Section 4 of the by-law, which states that a petition must be voted

on at the GSG meeting following the meeting at which it was first presented,

so this required a delay of at least one month. Mr. Brownlee believed that

the petition should be submitted for a vote by all graduate students at registration and announced that he was very disappointed in the GSG.

He said, "Eric, this isn't about you and it isn't about me. We cannot debate

this in the Assembly because 140 graduate students have said they want to vote on this." Mr.

Adelizzi announced that the petition is misleading in that it implies that

the qualifications for officers have not been reduced in the proposed Constitution. Mr. Miller again

stated that the assembly should have been informed of the petition beforehand, especially since Mr. Brownlee and Lauren Hale knew about the petition for quite some time. Ms. Hale also said that she was very

disappointed at the apparent stalling tactics being used. Questions arose

over the language used in the bylaws, and nearly every member of the assembly was confused over the wording in the current constitution and bylaws. Ms. Hale wanted to vote to override the bylaws that were unanimously approved at the July 27, 2000 GSG meeting. Mr. Linsenmeier suggested a new petition that would instruct graduate students to vote for the proposed constitution, this new petition, or neither. A motion to vote to table the current discussion was made. Most assembly members did understand the events that were occurring or the discussion, which was somewhat chaotic. More debates occurred concerning whether a vote could occur on the motion to table. Mr. Miller stated that the petition should be postponed to the next GSG meeting in September. At 8:43pm the assembly decided to move on to other business. Mr. Miller moved to vote on the date of the next GSG meeting (a privileged motion). A vote was taken in favor of holding the next meeting on September 27, 2000. A motion to move on to other business was then approved. A sign up sheet for volunteers to work at the ballot box at registration was circulated. Three volunteers (Eric Adelizzi, Steve Miller, and Jason Brownlee) were solicited to serve on the Referendum Committee, which is chaired by Jim Vere, ex officio.

Item 9: Orientation

1. The Welcome Sheet for new graduate students was announced.
2. Two Activities Fairs were announced -- one at the GC and one campus-wide. Lauren Hale had spoken to Janet Dickerson about narrowing the gap between undergraduates and graduate students in terms of activities represented and mentioned this to the assembly.
3. Trinkets: Volunteers were solicited to pick up the bottle openers (to be distributed to new graduate students) on September 8, 2000.

Pavel Diko volunteered.

4. Passport to the Arts: The distribution of a passport to the performing arts (10 free tickets to performances at Richardson Auditorium and McCarter Theater subject to considerable restrictions) to graduate students was announced. Undergraduates receive these tickets each year, while graduate students are receiving them this year only because of the Centennial of the Graduate School. It was mentioned that Communiversality would be held on April 28, 2001.

Item 10: Housing Update (from Ulli Struve via written correspondence announced by Steve Miller)

"By the end of this week, Princeton University will be able to assist all the incoming students on the waiting list (i.e., offer them housing either in undergraduate dormitories, faculty/staff housing or other units in town, which could include affordable housing units throughout the township; details are still being finalized). Please remind the assembly that housing is only guaranteed to incoming students who make the April 15 housing application deadline. The incoming students

on the waitlist DID NOT make this deadline date but because of the unusually large number of the incoming class and the housing shortage in the area we (Graduate School, Housing Dept.) made every effort to accommodate them. However, there is not much that we can do for the returning students on the waiting list. Housing has been in contact with returning students giving them various realtor and apartment search services/listings."

Questions were raised concerning what measures will be taken to alleviate the housing shortage next year. A committee on Housing was formed, with Georg Essl and Radhika Wijetunge volunteered for membership.

Item 11: Ombuds Mediation Program for graduate students

It was announced that the Ombuds meeting will take place on Thursday, August 31, 2000 at 2:00pm, and volunteers were requested.

Item 12: McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning

The AI resource meeting was announced. GSG members interested in representing the GSG at this meeting were asked to see Lauren Hale.

Item 13: Health Care: Results of the survey undertaken last semester will be presented at the September GSG meeting and will be given priority.

Item 14: New Business It was announced that only three people had volunteered to be bartenders at the First Chance Dance, and more volunteers were requested.

Item 15: (continuation of Item 8)

Steve Miller moved to put the discussion of the petition off to the next GSG meeting in order to allow other groups to develop a response or to formulate a new referendum. Eric Adelizzi thought that the authors of the petition might want to rephrase it. He mentioned that the constitution and the bylaws would be in conflict if both the proposed constitution and the proposed amendment pass. Under the proposed constitution, the same change as proposed in this petition (direct election of officers) could be effected

by a simple vote of the assembly. Tamar Friedmann questioned whether a referendum actually has to be run by the GSG. Mr. Adelizzi stated that a referendum committee is needed to count votes for any referendum, so that if the GSG does not run a referendum, the "referendum" is not official. Mr. Miller believes that the petition should be sent to all graduate students soon, but it first should be voted on by the GSG at the September meeting. Mr. Adelizzi stated that the amendment should be examined carefully to avoid any potentially disastrous effects due to poor diction and phrasing. Mr. Miller stated that a committee should be formed to revise the petition, but no other members agreed. A member then suggested waiting until the next meeting and possibly submitting a newer version of the petition that is more compatible with the proposed constitution. Mr. Miller volunteered to help write a new amendment in line with the old one but more compatible with the proposed constitution. Several members stated that if a vote to override the bylaws were taken (so that the amendment could be voted on presently) then they would question if a quorum of members actually was present, and this could cause the meeting to adjourn. At 9:21pm the debate degenerated into a considerable amount of unstructured talking. A member noted that a future potential referendum might even occur after the one during registration.

Item 16: Adjournment At 9:24pm the GSG assembly meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2000 at 6:00pm in room 234 of the Frist Campus Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey M. Davis