

GSG Assembly meeting Wednesday August 8, 2007

Attendance

ATTENDANCE TO BE ADDED

Agenda

I. Call to order and Assembly Business

- A. Seating of New Assembly Members - Silvia Newell (PARL SEC)
- B. Approval of Minutes – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

II. New Business

- A. Agenda printouts – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)
- B. Cancellation of Assembly meetings – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)
- C. Crowding on Green Line Shuttle – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)
- D. DCE Status Deadlines – Charles Butcosk (ART)
- E. High prices of Taxi service in Princeton – Yaron Ayalon (NES)

III. Reports

- A. Department Reports
 - 1. Charles Butcosk (ART)
 - 2. Silvia Newell (GEO)
- B. Chair's report - Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

IV. Discussion Items

- A. Summer Letter Writing Campaign – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)
- B. Events Board Elections – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)
- C. Grad student orientation
- D. Wine and cheese sponsored by GSG
- E. Grad student center proposal

V. Adjournment and Happy Hour

I. Call to Order and Assembly Business

The meeting began at 6:04pm. Quorum was not met, and thus the Assembly was unable to conduct any official business. In addition, these are informal minutes.

A. Seating of New Assembly Members - Silvia Newell (PARL SEC)

Kristin Dumber is the new representative for the Slavic studies department. Kristin introduced herself to Assembly as a fourth year graduate student who lives in Butler apartments. The prior representative (Cori) had asked her to take over.

Yi Sun is the new ACSSPU representative, replacing Tian Xia. She is the new secretary of the ACSSPU, and a second year graduate student in the department of Molecular Biology.

B. Status of Assembly Minutes – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

Shin-Yi Lin (Chair) gave an update on the status of the April, May, and July 2007 minutes: April and May 2007 minutes were sent out to the gsg-assembly email list Monday August 6, 2007, and there have been no comments so far. July 2007 minutes are still being edited by the GSG executive committee. Hopefully several minutes can be approved at once at the next Assembly meeting.

II. New Business

A. Agenda printouts – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

EXEC has stopped handing out printed Agendas to Assembly to save paper. Shin-Yi Lin asked Assembly whether it was helpful to them to have a hard copy during meetings. Yaron Ayalon (NES) pointed out that Shin-Yi usually writes the Agenda on the board in the meeting room, which is sufficient. Susan Robison (PSY) thought that for longer meetings, it could be helpful.

B. Cancellation of Assembly meetings – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

Shin-Yi Lin asked Assembly for their thoughts about the appropriateness of canceling Assembly meetings. Meetings tend to be cancelled during summer when there is less business and attendance is low.

Charles Butcosk (ART) said that it would make sense to cancel meetings if quorum is not met for Assembly meetings that require votes, which has been a problem through summer.

Shin-Yi noted that while quorum was not met for the July 2007 Assembly meeting, it was very important to hold the July meeting to discuss the letter writing campaign with whichever members were present. Silvia Newell (PARL SEC) mentioned that, on the other hand, if the June 2007 meeting had been held regardless of attendance levels, she would have been the only one on EXEC present.

Shin-Yi then asked if anyone felt strongly for not cancelling, and no Assembly member responded. She then said the GSG Executive will use our discretion (regarding the cancellation of future Assembly meetings).

C. Crowding on Green Line Shuttle – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

Shin-Yi Lin told Assembly that e-mails have been recently sent to GSG Exec and to University administration about students waiting at Hibben Apartments for the Shuttle being turned away by bus drivers because the buses were too crowded for space. The buses mentioned are smaller than the larger buses used during the school year. In response to the emails, Paul Breitman (General Manager, University Services) authorized the use of the large shuttles immediately.

Shin-Yi Lin then asked what is the size or capacity of the buses, and Tara McCartney (Community Programs Coordinator, Graduate School) responded that she believed the buses can hold approximately 40-50 people.

Silvia Newell mentioned that when she lived in Lawrence Apartments, students at Hibben/Magie Apartments were turned away at peak times during the school year.

Yaron Ayalon (NES) mentioned that at Lawrence, he saw people turned away in rainy or bad weather or at peak times.

Kevin Collins (POL) said he had previously reported these concerns to A-1 Shuttle, and they had responded that their bus drivers were not reporting much of a problem. He said that this conflicts with our anecdotal evidence. Kevin sent Jeff Dwoskin (FACILITIES) a

proposal for soliciting information from A-1. Jeff believed that obtaining this information would be very difficult. Tara McCartney suggested that Kevin go to Paul Breitman about this, not to A-1.

Shin-Yi asked Assembly members to tell constituents that the University is incredibly responsive, so they should feel that letting us know about concerns and complaints could make a difference.

D. DCE Status deadlines

Charles Butcosk (ART) mentioned that a student in his department had trouble getting approval for DCE status, due to a statement by advisor in annual reenrollment report. He believed that the advisor reported that the student was working full time, while she was actually working part time. The student was initially turned down for DCE status, and then had to wait 1.5 months to get approval and 3 weeks to get her Japanese visa approved. Charles asked Assembly where there is a deadline by which students need to deal with DCE status.

Shiny-Yi Lin (CHAIR) asked Charles whether the student was signing up for reenrollment and the email bounced around to different University administrators. Charles Butcosk said that Dean Redman did see the email. Shin-Yi Lin told Charles that DCE enrollment occurs at different times from different divisions.

Charles Butcosk said that if DCE is still evolving – it should be considered that people's reenrollment should be dealt with by some date such that people don't end up languishing.

Shin-Yi Lin asked Charles to touch base with her again after checking with the student whether she was following up with e-mails every week and still not getting a response.

E. High Prices of Taxi service in Princeton

Yaron Ayalon (NES) told Assembly that he feels that Taxi service is extremely expensive. The cost from Princeton Junction to anywhere near campus is approximately \$15 for the ride, plus \$3 for luggage. He asked whether there was a way to get a deal, or team up with the undergrads to ask the University for this.

Tara McCartney (Community Programs Coordinator, Graduate School) spoke about how

the upgrade of the shuttle service and P-rides between the dinky and graduate student housing should reduce the need for taxis.

Shin-Yi Lin said that attaining a deal with the taxi drivers is less likely than getting improved shuttle service coverage.

Marina Paul mentioned that the taxi service drivers are often arbitrarily assigning fees to customers, even though there are standard rates for locations across taxi companies (for cars leaving from Princeton Junction). For example, the price from the Junction train station to Lawrence or the Dinky train station is \$12 but cab drivers will charge anywhere from \$12-20 if the customer asks for the price but not for the rate sheet (which is kept in each driver's car).

Yaron Ayalon mentioned that even with overcharging several dollars, the taxi prices are still too high.

III. Reports

A. Department Reports

1. Charles Butcosk – Department of Art and Archaeology Department

In general our program is small, 12-13 per class. The reported program length is 5 years. The average time to completion is 7-10 years. [Completion in] 7 years is aggressive. This is in line with our peers.

The newest DCE rules are affecting how are students are approaching the system. How do we game the system to get our 5 years of funding, and apply for fellowships? Receiving prominent grants and fellowships strongly affect our job search. NYC is the center of the art world, and most people end up moving there by 3rd year.

2. Silvia – Depart of Geology

Our program length is 5 years – the longest a student is seen to stay here is into 7th year. The interesting part of department is that it is among the smallest 6 departments, and this year we had 9 students matriculate – this is so large. Many faculty members have joint appointments with other departments such as ecology and chemistry, and get a lot of grad students from other departments.

Currently there is a joint faculty search in Geology with AOS. There is a controversy – there have been lots of candidates, and all candidates were men except one. Some faculty thought that the search was not aggressive enough in attaining female candidates.

Professor Tony Dahlen (a Princeton professor of geosciences and seismologist) died this summer. The obituary was in the papers, and there is a conference this September to celebrate him.

Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR) asked if the geology department had relative happy students. Silvia mentioned that the department members are social; many are part of softball teams.

Charles Butcosk asked where most students go after graduating. Silvia mentioned that the department research can be split into seismology research and environmental geology research. With environmental, most students chose to go academia, but some go into environmental consulting. The seismologists are tapped for the oil industry. There is tension about this – the faculty all think we should go into academia.

B. Chair's report - Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

Exec has met three times since the last Assembly meeting. We have been working on the following projects:

- 1) Exec has been working on the drafting the summer letter writing campaign letters.*
- 2) Alex and I met with leaders of other graduate student organizations to discuss a proposal for establishing a graduate student center.*
- 3) I was the graduate student representative to help Dean Dunne (of the Undergraduate College) hire the new director of Campus Club. Dianne Spatafore, currently working at Penn, will be joining us next month as the new director.*
- 4) Jenny has been working with a graduate student volunteer, Raja Chahal, on the fall Wine and Cheese event.*

Next Assembly meeting will be in Frist 307 -- we can't have our usual rooms because the Registrar has not released it for use as a classroom. Kellam Conover will be giving an

update on work with Campus Club. We will also be getting an Events Board update and running elections for the board members.

V. Discussion Items

A. Summer Letter Writing Campaign – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

The Letters we are writing are being kept in line with last month's informal votes:

Relating to academics:

1. Increase the University's travel funding budget to increase support of conference travel
2. Improve Firestone library services
3. Provide more office space for graduate students in Firestone

Relating to DCE:

4. Request that DCE tuition not be significantly increased from \$3500 for the 2008-2009 year
5. Request that 2nd year DCE students be eligible for University fellowships

Relating to health and public safety:

6. Improve access to medical services:
 - a) request University subsidies for birth control prescription given the recent price increases
 - b) increase dental coverage from \$125/year under basic Student Health Plan
 - c) increase access to McCosh services during the summer and academic breaks
7. Improve availability of statistics on graduate student families at Princeton and reconsider existing policies for child care subsidy program
8. Improve shuttle service: expand regular shuttle schedule and system, expand after-hours P-Rides Express
9. Improve sidewalk quality along roads leading from campus to graduate housing units

Relating to standard of living:

10. Continue improving Housing Office customer service, housing application/draw/assignment/moving process
11. Improve availability of air-conditioning units in graduate housing
12. Support sustainability initiatives led by Shana Weber and her Sustainability Office

Kevin Collins (POL) asked what the housing letter will contain. Shin-Yi Lin said that

since last year was one of the worst years in the Housing Draw, we are going to ask housing, how do we feel about improvement or progress since last year? What will be the metric to make this analysis? We should emphasize that customer service should be first.

Kevin Collins then asked what Butler Apartments will become. Shin-Yi Lin said that we don't know. Tara McCartney (Community Programs Coordinator, Graduate School) added that we don't know but it will still be graduate housing, and Hibben will become grad housing only.

Shin-Yi Lin asked for questions about any other letters.

David Potere (OPR) what is the coverage for catastrophic illness? Shin-Yi Lin said that some funds come from McCosh, and Tara McCartney said that other funds come from the graduate school.

Tara asked, "What will the childcare letter address?" Shin-Yi Lin said that it would be a follow-up on Karin Sigloch's (Chair of the GSG Health and Life Committee) initial emails, advocating for better communication between working group and graduate student parents, and better clarity – to continue and maintain the relationship. We will meet with Joan Girgus (Special Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty) in the fall. The letter will get better statistics on grad student parents, reiterating removing the spousal employment requirement. The letter will include anecdotes received from the student body.

Parents felt they were not getting grandfathered in. Shin-Yi Lin – said no, that wasn't it – U-LEAGUE

David Potere (OPR) mentioned an anecdote about a constituent who had complications in pregnancy. She had a catastrophic illness and received no relief. This student was in contact with Dean Russel about her situation.

Tara McCartney (Community Programs Coordinator, Graduate School) suggested that students contact Dean Montero, because she has dealt with a lot of students in the past in these matters.

David Potere (OPR) asked why the cap is so low, and how it was set up for the grad student demographic when it may have been based on a different population for

estimations.

Kevin Collins (POL) asked what is the maximum grant given to a student through emergency funds.

David Potere answered that is was twenty-thousand dollars.

Shin-Yi Lin may be easier to start a new fund than change a new one.

Hardship panel pleading is much harder for having an insurance plan that is inclusive

David then asked if anecdotes would be helpful at this point about this situation.

Yaron Ayalon (NES) asked if this is about Aetna Chickering?

David said yes.

Yaron told Assembly that his understanding of Aetna Chickering's coverage – 200 deductible, 80% coverage from school until \$5000, and then 100% after \$5000 up to half a million dollars.

Shin-Yi Lin asked whether Yaron was in contact with a specific woman in Student Health, and he said he was.

B. Events Board Elections – Shin-Yi Lin (CHAIR)

There are several Events Board positions need to be filled. There will be elections in September. Alex Ntelekos (TREAS) anticipates a lot of appeals and work for Events Board the next month. He has recommended a temporary member (Raja Chahal, molecular biology) until elections. Quorum is not met here. Can we have an email vote? Robison moved to email vote. The motion was passed.

Shin-Yi Lin moved to include Jenny too.

C. Grad student orientation

The Graduate student Orientation will take place this year on September 11-12 2007. GSG will help out with orientation, and will have a table at the international student orientation. If anyone on Assembly would like to help, let Shin-Yi know.

D. Wine and cheese sponsored by GSG

This will take place the following Thursday 9/20 at Carl Fields Center. Jenny He asked Assembly if anyone plays good live music, please let us know. Shin-Yi Lin said that she will send an email later asking for volunteers for it.

E. Grad student center proposal

Shin-Yi asked how many Assembly members had had a chance to read the document. About half of the Assembly members raised their hands. Shin-Yi Lin then asked whether assembly had any questions.

Kevin Collins (POL) asked where the grad student center would be put, and he mentioned that it wasn't clear to him from reading the proposal. Shin-Yi Lin explained the format we were given to follow was what are the needs and how do we envision that being fulfilled? We weren't being asked to really specify where it would happen. The University could allocate this space if it needed. Kevin Collins said that he believes in the idea, but had a hard time imagining it.

Rob Harron (D-bar) asked where on campus would there be a "centrally located" space. He asked, wouldn't it be closer to Prospect House, rather than Frist Campus Center. He was concerned that they could choose a bizarre location to house the Student Center. Shin-Yi Lin said, "We define center of campus the same as University: Frist Campus Center based on activity and walking distance (distance from Frist to anywhere else on campus is 15 minutes).

Shin-Yi Lin brought up whether Assembly felt whether academic vs. social needs should be emphasized in the graduate student center proposal. Academic needs include Office spaces, allocating space. The proposal also talks about the need for open space for studying, doing work, due to limited space in dept.

Shin-Yi Lin informed Assembly that this could be a very long term idea: "We need to be creative about what could be useful later when we aren't even here".

Susan Robison (PSY) brought up that she thought that it would be good to include the sister institution examples, because she had thought, during the initial introduction of that idea, that it would be useful. Tara McCartney (Community Programs Coordinator, Graduate School) said that after she and Dean Schreyer worked on their proposal – Dean Russel was given the document that contains the original information including the comparison to the sister institutions.

Kevin Collins (POL) asked, "What is the game plan for the graduate student center proposal?"

Shin-Yi Lin gave some history to the Assembly about the idea for the graduate student center. Exec and Ivy Summit delegates initially had this conversation: What could a Graduate Student Center do? We solidified that idea here, Lisa Schreyer (Assistant Dean for Student Life, the Graduate School) & Tara McCartney worked in parallel, and we brought this up at CPUC up to last spring.

Mark Burstein (Executive Vice President) and Facilities met with us. The meeting included someone from Vice President Dickerson's office (who we had talked to before). Now the proposal is worked on by GSG and the graduate school, Graduate Student life and Burstein's office. We are waiting for feedback.

Kevin Collins asked if we need to get this past the trustees too. Shin-Yi Lin replied that it would depend on the size of the project. Yale's Graduate Student Center would set up by an undergraduate alumnus, who saw the lack of facilities for graduate students at Yale, and donated the money.

Grace Wang (CPUC) is a Harvard alumnus. She said that while they had a student center, it housed mostly exec offices, and a café with bad coffee. "But Princeton has a lot more activities. Grad students at Harvard are NOT happy." Grace and Shin-Yi agreed that the spin could be, we've done these events, and we would like this other space to do these things.

Shin-Yi Lin said that we realized at the IVY summit conference that we are doing well relative to sister schools. She also said we floundered initially in front of Mark Burstein because we had not good model when he asked for it.

Charles Butcosk (ART) students complain most about no standard location for a bar. Dan Raburn then asked Tara McCartney if there is anything new on the U-PUB. Tara said that the University is trying to create an on-campus bar. "Pub Nights" was a first start in Chancellor Green. Just before it happened, the township found a way to squash it, thinking the University was not being up front with them about licensing, etc.

Shin-Yi Lin explained that NJ is very strict about licensing. That may explain why we have a lot of Bring-Your-Owns in the area. Tara mentioned that there is something

happened at Ryder U. This may spill over to other NJ education systems. Shin-Yi Lin mentioned that if there were a graduate student center, there would be the ability to serve alcohol. Not necessarily house, but alcohol could be served there.

Shin-Yi Lin said, “We started with social items. Should we organize it differently?”

Susan Robison mentioned that at least the social concerns listed apply to everyone, whereas the office spaces for example are applicable to some departments.

Kevin Collins said that he felt the twenty-four hour study space is important, aside from just office space. Shin-Yi Lin said that while we did mention twenty-four hour access, University doesn’t want to encourage the twenty-four hour studying lifestyle. Rob Harron (D-bar) then added, “What about accommodating different lifestyles/hours?”

Someone added that graduate students can hold office hours there at later hours.

Kevin Collins asked, can we defeat long term need by getting short term needs fulfilled? Silvia Newell (PARL SEC) said no, because some of the proposal’s stated solutions meet different needs. Shin-Yi Lin mentioned dance space conflicts experienced by the Princeton Salsa and Tango Clubs as an example of a need that can’t be solved with other short term solutions.

Kevin said that if we emphasize social reasons that can be met with short term, than we may kill the idea. Silvia then asked him if he votes to flip the priority to academic over social needs. Kevin said that he didn’t want to decide for everyone, but he felt that the risk was there.

Yi Sun (ACSSPU) asked “who is in charge of the graduate student center? Is it the GSG?”

Shin-Yi Lin said that it will probably be some joint control by GSG and Graduate School, or a director of the center could be hired specifically for the task.

Raja Chahal (graduate student, molecular biology) asked what we would be getting – whether it would be a building, or a section of a building. Shin-Yi Lin said that we purposely did not include it, because they asked us to write the proposal about the needs of graduate students without confining it to a specific type of housing.

David Potere (OPR) felt that the bar may sink the graduate student center idea. But the idea of a bar could fire up imaginations on campus. Rob Harron (D-bar) – University is on board, but the borough becomes in control of it. David then added that this could be really about a bar, “That’s what we really want”.

CB added that what is most needed is not planned space but unplanned space. Shin-Yi Lin reminded everyone that next week, Kellam Conover will talk about campus club. We have some similarities with Campus club in that flexible space. However, the campus club is to pull in undergrad and grad students equally.

Kristin Dumber (SLA)–asked if children were going to be included in proposal. Butler will close, which will mean that students lose outdoor space, and nexus for students with children.

She also asked if the flex space would be the same as the wood floor room. Shin-Yi replied that it’s written that way: that central space could have furniture pushed out to accommodate activities such as dancing.

Shin-Yi Lin asked Assembly to read over the GSC proposal, and get comments into EXEC by Friday. She then reminded everyone that this is an internal working document and not yet a public one.

V. Adjournment and Happy Hour

Shin-Yi Lin reminded everyone that the next meeting September 19th, 2007 at 6pm in Frist 304). The meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.