

**Minutes for the February 13, 2008 Assembly meeting**  
Wednesday, February 13, 6pm at Frist Campus Center Room 302

**Agenda**

**I. Call to Order**

- A. Approval of the Minutes (December, January) - Marina Paul
- B. Seating of New Members - Silvia Bulow

**II. Decision Items**

- A. Campus Club Advisory Board Elections
- B. Funding Request - Alex Ntelekos
- C. Proposals for provisions for lack of quorum

**III. Reports**

- A. Valentine's Day Dance - Jenny He
- B. Department Reports:
  - 1. CHM - Christopher Crutchfield
  - 2. NES - Yaron Ayalon
  - 3. ECO - Giri Parameswaran
- C. Library Taskforce Report - Yaron Ayalon
- D. PriComm Report - Ryan Harper
- E. Facilities Report - Shuttle and Housing - Jeff Dwoskin
- F. Chair - Shin-Yi Lin

**IV. New Business**

- A. GSG Exec Candidates and Statements

**V. Discussion Items**

- A. Proposed GSG taskforce

**VI. Adjournment**

**I. Call to Order**

The February Assembly meeting began at 6:10pm. According to Silvia Bulow (Parliamentary Secretary), quorum was met with 21 of 22 voting members present at the meeting.

**A. Approval of the Minutes (December, January) -- Marina Paul**

At the January 2008 Assembly meeting, approval of the December 2007 minutes had been tabled to include several comments from assembly members and the Dec 2007 attendance list. Marina Paul informed assembly that December minutes were updated to include the missing information, and the attendance sheet was posted on the GSG website as a document.

The January 2008 minutes were sent out several days ago to assembly, and Marina received no comments except for a request to include the attendance sheet. The attendance sheet for January has been posted online.

Marina also informed Assembly that the attendance sheets corresponding to assembly meetings from August through November 2007 have also been posted online.

A motion to approve the December 2007 and January 2008 minutes was brought forth, seconded and passed.

### **B. Seating of New Members -- Silvia Bulow**

The new Chemistry department representative, Keith Reber, is a first year graduate student who replaced the previous rep just this past Monday. After introducing himself to Assembly, Keith briefly mentioned that the Chemistry grad department doesn't have large issues, but he would be giving a full report on the Chemistry department later on in the meeting.

The new Slavics department representative is Tim Portice. Tim is a 5<sup>th</sup> year who "crushed his opponent in the mid term election" for rep.

The ORF rep has stepped down.

Jenny Lah, a first year student, is the new WWS rep. Jenny had been very involved in student government as an undergraduate, and expressed her interest in finding out how it works in graduate school. According to Jenny, a major concern amongst WWS students is student stipends.

## **II. Decision Items**

### **A. Campus Club Advisory Board Elections**

The Campus Club is scheduled to open this fall. Currently there are four open slots for graduate student representatives on the Campus Club Advisory Board. Students interested in getting involved can also run for the Program Board (where we have 6 graduate student representatives). The Campus Club Advisory Board will have a total of four graduate and nine undergraduate student members, which is proportional to the number of students in the student body.

Originally, five graduate students were running for the Advisory Board slots, but one candidate (Paul Scott) withdrew, leaving four candidates for four open slots. The four candidates are Raja Chahal, Calvin Chan, Saurabh Gupta, and Giri Parameswaran. Each candidate introduced themselves and gave a brief explanation of why he was interested on serving on the advisory board. Raja Chahal is really interested in helping organize the upcoming Campus Club. Calvin Chan explained that this is 10<sup>th</sup> year in total on campus – four as an undergrad, six as a grad student in Electrical Engineering, and was at Princeton when campus club closed down. Calvin is very interested in seeing the club come back. Saurabh Gupta is a third-year student (ELE) who said that he hasn't felt that

he is a part of the campus. Saurabh joked that he has had a lot of time to reflect in graduate school, and what he misses in grad school is working with people, and looks forward to this opportunity. Saurabh felt strongly that the campus club will give him the opportunity to be a part of the Princeton community. As the elected president of his undergraduate class, he was responsible for and chair of all student activities, had close interaction with university administrators, and managed the finances for his class. Giri Parameswaran (ECO) felt that as Frist Campus center is really an undergrad-oriented place, he felt motivated very motivated to develop a space on campus for graduate students to just hang out and interact with people.

While the election was essentially uncontested, a formal vote was still conducted by Silvia Bulow (Parliamentary Secretary) after the candidates left the room.

A few concerns were brought up about the candidates for the advisory board positions. One student pointed out that all of the candidates were male. Another student brought up the issue that if a sixth-year graduate student were voted in, there is the concern that he might not finish his term because of his graduation schedule. After some discussion, it was acknowledged that 1) only these four students were interested in running and 2) that no one is aware of a sixth-year student's graduation date and so a candidate should not be eliminated based on this.

A motion to vote in all four candidates at once was brought forth. When taking a count of hand votes, Silvia Bulow (Parliamentary Secretary) realized that more hands were raised than there were eligible voters. She reminded assembly that only department or program representatives and special delegates were eligible to vote. After a re-count, the vote to approve the four candidates was supported by all but one uncast vote (Giri the ECO rep, who was also a candidate for the positions).

David Jorgensen (REL) asked why we don't record the "NOS" and the "ABSTAINS" in addition to the "YESSES". Shin-Yi Lin (Chair) explained that in this case it had been a unanimous vote, but it was not formally announced to everyone. David requested that the votes be counted and announced to assembly, and Shin-Yi agreed to do this. She then called the candidates back into the room and congratulated them on their success.

### **B. Funding Request (Alex Ntelekos)**

The Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at Princeton (ACSS) has requested \$1200 from the Events board to fund their annual New Year's party. Alex Ntelekos (Treasurer) explained that Events Board is not permitted to grant the funding request without the approval of the GSG when the requested money is over 5% of its budget as it is in this case.

Yi Sun of ACSS is here briefly stated the request.

*The Chinese New Year fell on February 7 of this year. The ACSS-sponsored party will be held on February 24<sup>th</sup> in Carl Fields Center. The party is held annually with 300-400*

*attendees. About 100 will be directly involved in performing in the party. This year, ACSS would like to request \$1200 from the events board. \$2000 is the total budget for the party. This year, the ACSS would like to request \$1200 from the Events Board. They usually ask the GSG for 900\$ and the grad school for the remaining 300\$. Since the funding sources have now been combined, we are asking for the total.*

Alex Ntelekos (Treasurer) motioned to approve the funding request, arguing that Assembly approved the request ACSS made last year for the same event. Yaron Ayalon (NES) asked whether this request had already been approved in the fall, and Alex clarified that the ACSS had been granted money for their Moon Festival party this past fall. The motion was seconded and approved (with no NAYS and 2 abstentions).

### **C. Proposals for provisions for lack of quorum**

Giri Parameswaran (ECO) has initiated a discussion on how Assembly can make urgent decisions at meetings where quorum is unmet. In order for quorum to be met at an assembly meeting, over half of the active members must be present. The impetus for having the discussion at this meeting was to approve the candidates who are voted in during the upcoming election at the March assembly meeting even if quorum is not met.

Two models were proposed for how Assembly would function at meetings when quorum is unmet: the “Plasma rep” model presented by Dan Raburn and the “Eco rep” model presented by Giri Parameswaran (ECO). The models are summarized briefly below; for full details see Overview.doc.

In the Eco Rep model, an assembly meeting moves into “The Committee of the Whole” when quorum is not met (see ECO Rep Model.doc) and then decisions that require only a simple majority can be voted on. Within 2 working days, the Parliamentary Secretary would email all assembly members the decision and voting results, giving any voting member the right to object within 3 working days before the ruling goes into effect.

In the Plasma Rep model, **all** present voting members at a meeting where quorum is unmet must discuss a decision item and agree on the terms of a motion brought forth in order for a vote to be conducted via email. A proctor would email all assembly members with the details of the motion and the debate that took place at the meeting, and the rules for a vote that would run for over at least 3 days. For the email-vote to take into effect a quorum of voters must vote, and the motion must pass by a simple majority.

After several clarifications of each model were requested, a debate over the advantages of each ensued. Giri felt the Eco Rep model was less demanding on Assembly members. Dan felt the Plasma Rep model makes use of email voting, for which there is already precedent in the Constitution. Kevin Collins (POL) stated his preference for the Eco Rep model due to its simplicity, particularly because there is one less step in the decision making process. Andrew Ballinger (AOS) agreed, and expressed his opinion that the Eco Rep model doesn’t reward the members who didn’t show up for meetings as the Plasma

rep model does. Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities Chair) pointed out that the Eco Rep model still gives all voting members the ability to object.

A motion was made to approve the Eco model if and only if amendment no. 7 in the Eco rep model (see V.7 in ECO model.pdf) was included. Briefly, amendment no. 7 requires that the parliamentary secretary inform all voting members of the decision via email, allow 3 days for objections, and requires that if any objections are made that the decision is decided at the next assembly meeting where quorum is met. The motion to add the amendment was passed (12 YESES, 1 NO)

David Jorgensen expressed concern that the right to object within three working days be extended to five straight days. This provision was agreed upon and added to the proposal.

A motion to approve the Eco Rep proposal (with amendment 7 and the revision to allow 5 straight days for objections) was brought forth, seconded, and approved with 15 YESES and 2 NAYS.

Praveena Joseph-de-Saram (MOL) motioned to recommend that a summary of the discussion that led to the decision be included in the Parliamentary Secretary's email. David Jorgensen (REL) seconded the motion. Kevin Collins (POL) raised the issue that the summary may be subject to influence by the writer (assumed to be the recording or parliamentary secretary). Giri Parameswaran felt that the inclusion of a summary should not be required for the motion. At this point, Praveena withdrew her recommendation because of the possibility of the summary biasing the voters.

### **III. Reports**

#### **A. Valentine's Day Dance—Jenny He**

Jenny He (Social Chair) gave a brief update on the progress of the Valentine's Day Dance being held Thursday, February 14, 2008 (Jenny's report was given earlier in the meeting, before moving on to the decision items).

The dance is being held at the Frist Campus Center, Building level B. According to Jenny, we would be trying out the new dance floor at the party, and plenty of food and wine would be available for non-dancers to enjoy themselves too. Jenny asked that volunteers help during one of two timeslots – between 5-6pm for decorations/set-up, and at 1:30-2am to help move stuff out after the dance has ended.

Jenny also brought up the idea of a mentorship program for GSG members, where veteran GSG members would pass on information to new ones. Jenny suggested that this could be done by having lunch with the new member to bring them up to speed. Praveena Joseph-de-Saram (MOL) volunteered to be a mentor.

## B. Department Reports

### 1. Chemistry (Keith Reber)

*The Princeton chemistry department is experiencing an exciting period of growth and development. Construction of a new chemistry building has recently commenced, with an expected completion date in the summer of 2009. This state of the art facility will replace Frick Laboratory, which has housed the chemistry department since 1929. Additionally, the chemistry department is pursuing a number of new faculty appointments in order to reinforce existing areas of research and diversify into new disciplines. Most recently, the department has recruited Abigail Doyle of Harvard University who will be accepting graduate student researchers beginning in the fall semester of 2009.*

*Currently, the chemistry department includes 130 graduate students and 60 postdoctoral researchers. In February of 2008, offers of admission were extended to 75 applicants with the objective of forming an incoming class of 25 students. It is the intent of the department to gradually increase the number of students admitted each year as additional faculty join the research staff and the new chemistry building is completed.*

*During the first year, graduate students are assigned a faculty advisory committee to assist them in choosing classes and joining a research group. All chemistry graduate students are required to take six classes, which are typically completed during the first year. Although students are free to select any courses that interest them, they must also satisfy a distribution requirement by taking at least one class in four different subdisciplines (e.g. organic chemistry, physical chemistry, organometallic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, etc.). The department will allow at most two 400-level classes to count towards these course requirements. Students are also able to substitute courses from other related departments, most commonly physics, engineering, and molecular biology. In order to satisfy the course requirement, graduate students must maintain a grade point average of B or better over all six classes.*

*In the second year, each graduate student selects two faculty members to serve on their general exam committee, and a third faculty member is randomly assigned by the department. Although the research advisor is also present, they do not participate in the actual examination. The general exam consists of a 1.5 hour period in which the candidate discusses their research progress and presents a research-based written proposal. This is followed by a 20 minute question and answer session during which faculty members test the breadth of the candidate's knowledge of chemistry. The grading for the general exam is pass/fail. Typically, 40% of second-year graduate students take the general exam in November while the remaining 60% take the general exam in January. In **special** cases, the general exam can also be taken in May.*

*Although an additional meeting with the thesis committee is not mandatory during the second year, the chemistry department hopes to make this a requirement in the future. A graduate student is currently required to meet with their committee after giving a third year seminar and the department recommends one meeting with the thesis committee during each subsequent year. The average time to degree within the chemistry department is 4.75 years. Typically, the time to degree falls within the range of 4.3 years to 5.1 years, depending on sub-discipline.*

## **2. Near Eastern Studies (Yaron Ayalon)**

*The Near Eastern Studies department is a small department. There are currently 26 grad students in years 1-5, 4 in year 6, and about 5 in more advanced years. The department also operates a 2-year MA program for those interested in the Modern Middle East. It admits 2-3 students a year, one of which is always a military guy.*

*Most PhD students are historians by their disciplinary orientation; a few are interested in religion or political science. The department is considered especially strong in the early Islamic period and in the history of the Ottoman Empire, though this is changing toward a focus on the modern period*

*The program length is 5 years, but it takes most people 5.5 to 6 years to finish.*

*Each year between 4 and 6 grads are admitted through a two-stage admission process. The “graduate visit weekend” is one of the things the department is notorious for: short-listed applicants are invited to Princeton for a weekend of interviews and a seminar where they have to present a paper and respond to questions (this year it’ll take place 2/22-23). Unlike other departments, this is done before admission decisions are made. The course of study is: first 2 years classes (6 seminars a year), generals at the end of year 2/beginning of year 3, defending a dissertation proposal 4 months after generals, individual research. Many students travel to the ME or to archives in Europe for research. Many others take language programs outside Princeton, especially in Middle Eastern languages.*

*There are 11 professors in the department, 9 of whom are tenured (and are actually full professors). There are also 8 language teachers and 3 professors who are not in a tenure-track position (instructors). The department is in the process of change in the past few years, as the older professors are in the process of retiring. Two years ago one professor joined the faculty, this year 2 more and next year 2 more will join.*

*The department has seen increased enrolment in undergrads, but not in grads, which means grad students have to precept more than in the past.*

*The NES department is usually considered indifferent when it comes to graduate students’ affairs. There’s a graduate student committee, but its chair traditionally did all the work.*

Yaron was asked to clarify several details:

1. Because of the increase of undergraduate enrollment in the program, teaching precepts has gone from an option at the time of Yaron’s entry into NES to a requirement.
2. The languages offered by the NES department include Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Hebrew. Syriac, Armenian and other ancient languages have started being taught recently. Students need to know at least one major language fluently. Knowing additional ones are an advantage during admission.

3. Before defense of the proposal, A-range grades are desired for all classes; 2 Near Eastern languages plus 1 European language by generals.

### **3. Economics (Giri Parameswaran)**

In the interest in time, Giri Parameswaran (ECO) tabled his department report, and passed out printouts in the meeting. For the report, see ECO Report.doc.

### **C. Library Taskforce Report – (Yaron Ayalon)**

Yaron gave an update on the taskforce's recent meeting with Assistant librarian Dotty Pearson:

*The Renovation project has been put on hold because of a decision by the faculty committee (library), which the taskforce was denied permission to observe. They are in the process of visiting other recently renovated libraries, after which they will be submitting a report to the architects at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> academic year. Then, focus groups will be convened to hear the architect's proposal. The removal of metal carrels because of safety concerns will be delayed to next year or the year after, but not canceled. The staff lounge will be renovated - the furniture and equipment is old and will be replaced.*

*The good news: there will be the option of photographing pages from the special and rare books collections, instead of paying the current \$18.00 fee to get copies. While this is going to happen, the date it goes into effect is still TBA. Currently the decision is waiting to be approved because one person thinks it's a bad idea.*

*A major concern has been the prevention of stolen or lost books. The security guards have agreed to spend less time on phones, and be more attentive to bag checks. A guard is being added during the most critical hours (11-4pm). Security guards should be checking every compartment of the bags of people who exit the library; however, this has been very inconsistent. Books keep disappearing. Eventually metal detector strips will be added into all the books, and hopefully this will resolve the stolen books issue.*

*The taskforce has requested to have Chancellor Green Café extend hours for late workers/ students in library. While the hours won't match library hours, staying open until 8 or 9pm is desirable.*

### **D. PriComm Report - Ryan Harper**

As student representative on the Priorities Committee, Ryan Harper (a 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduate student in Religious Studies), and Jeff Dwoskin (also Facilities Chair) make recommendations to the fixed budget. Ryan gave a presentation on the upcoming changes that would affect graduate students. For details see pricomm FY09.pdf. Only a few highlights are listed below:

Stipends in the Humanities and Social Sciences increase 3% every year, and this year it will increase 4.16%. This remains very competitive relative to its peer institutions. AR/AI stipend is set separately and is also scheduled to increase 3%.

Jeff Dwoskin added that he and Ryan and have been pushing for separate consideration from undergrads for dorm rate increases; this will soon be started.

According to Ryan, discretionary funds of \$5000 per year will be allotted to professors in the humanities/ social sciences. These funds are modeled on those granted by peer institutions. The funding could affect students pulled by individual professors.

There are several improvements will be made to University Health Services. The number of medical assistants on the staff will be increased. There are more traveling students and professors, and the new staff will cover consultation for travel/immunizations. A counselor will be specifically trained for substance abuse issues, and graduate students can take advantage of this as well.

An additional data analyst will be hired for the graduate school. According to Dean Lisa Schreyer, a large amount of time has been spent reorganizing data by the graduate student administration; this will help relieve some of the burden.

When Ryan asked for questions or comments from Assembly, Shin-Yi Lin (Chair) voiced her opinion that it is important for us to advocate for evaluating DCE tuition increases separate from other tuition increases.

Since we had heard about stipend increases in the humanities and social sciences, it was asked how stipends for students in the sciences and engineering will be affected. According to Ryan, these stipends are set by the government, not by the graduate school.

A member asked why the student health plan rate was increased. According to Ryan, the student health plan was increased because it doesn't increase every year.

When asked to clarify the status of birth control funding by the University, Ryan explained that discretionary funds sourced this: PriComm didn't see this.

When asked about the timeline in which the above changes will occur, Jeff explained that this will occur in July, which begins the new fiscal year.

Ryan was asked for a clarification of how spending years are affected by the fluctuations in endowment and spending, and he explained that money is available from the flush years.

Shin-Yi Lin reminded Assembly that March is the election for the new PriComm members and that we would like to make sure that equally, if not more, competent members are elected in.

#### **E. Facilities Report - Shuttle and Housing – Jeff Dwoskin**

Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities committee Chair) gave an update on long-term changes that will occur in graduate housing (for details, see facilities report.pdf).

Silvia Bulow added that newly renovated housing will be up to the current housing standards and students' expectations with respect to aspects such as air-conditioning, thermostat control, wiring, etc.

Housing at Stanworth Apartments will become graduate housing. Stanworth will be pet- and family- friendly. Stanworth is within biking and walking distance, and will be accessible by the new shuttle system as well.

There will be new shuttle routes implemented next year –for details, see facilities report.pdf.

Jeff asked for any comments or feedback from assembly. He also reminded Assembly that the Campus Plan is available on the Princeton web and to please remind constituents to look at the brochure.

Kevin Collins expressed his interest that Facilities specify criteria to determine success or failure of the new system, and a plan B in the case of failure. When David Jorgensen (REL) asked why we don't prioritize the list rather than adding to it, Jeff responded that the University makes those decisions based on costs and on their own priorities. A student expressed interest in the demand for shuttling to Forrestal for seminars and other events held there. Jeff responded that the University acknowledges that something needs to be done about this and it is on the radar.

#### **F. Chair - Shin-Yi Lin**

*Exec has met four times since the last Assembly meeting. Silvia was acting Chair while I was out of town for two weeks.*

*We held the GSG retreat for the first time -- approximately 10 students attended. We had positive feedback so we are thinking of holding it again in the spring.*

*Jenny has been working hard on the GSG Valentine's Day Dance this Thursday.*

*Jeff, Dan, and I met with President Tilghman to discuss our proposal on a Graduate Student Center. This proposal had been passed on to VP Burstein and VP Dickerson last fall.*

*Jeff, Silvia, and Dan met with Housing Office people to discuss long-term housing plans. They will present the details shortly as part of the Facilities Report.*

*Silvia also worked with Dottie Pearson of the Library to organize a focus group to discuss the Science library with science graduate students. The meeting will be on Monday 2/18 at 4pm -- for the Chemistry, EEB, Mol Bio, Geosciences, Astrophysics, Mathematics and Physics departments. If you are interested, please email me ASAP.*

*An update on the UHS Director Search: Dante Ricci has been our graduate student rep on the search committee. In January, three candidates were invited for interviews. The University did not find any of these candidates suitable and are extending their search. Dante will continue keeping us updated with any new information.*

*As I mentioned in my email, the results of the Graduate School's mentoring survey should have been released to department Graduate student committees. Please contact your DGSC student chair to verify that this information has been passed along. If not, please email me so that we can report back to the Graduate School.*

*I also mentioned the APGA/GSG social science mixer, which is scheduled for March 11. So far, I've emailed Assembly, the GSG Volunteers list, and the DGSCs of the Social Sciences departments. So far I haven't gotten a response. I think it is really important that current students are willing to help out with these mixers, because I think that the graduate alumni should not put their energy in events that current students do not have any interest in.*

*Finally, we should return to the issue that has been raised on the gsg-assembly listserv about the department reports. Again to clarify terminology: the "department reports" that are in the monthly Assembly meetings (the 2-3 people who go each month per the agenda) are the brief 5 minute \*oral\* report that allows each rep a regular chance to give a status update on issues/concerns in their department. The "department report" that we are specifically discussing now is the \*paper\* report that describes standard progress/procedures/policies/resources in your department (the one that was based on a draft I came up with for my department, Mol Bio). We have three issues to discuss: 1) What is the progress on the time-to-degree discussions? 2) Are these paper "summary reports" (let's rename them for clarity) worth compiling and 3) Will these summary reports help in the time-to-degree discussion.*

*I will say again something that I mentioned in November regarding Charles' (Art and Archaeology) question about posting time-to-degree stats: The Graduate School IS planning on posting these stats. They said so this fall during orientation. I have followed up with Dean Redman as to the progress and am waiting to hear back from him.*

Dan Raburn brought up the idea of publicizing the GSG committees more. Most students don't know who chairs them or participates in them.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **A. GSG Election -- Dan Raburn**

Assembly was asked to consider the case of a candidate whose nomination for Social Chair was received two hours after the stated deadline. Raja Chahal had mistakenly been under the impression that Jenny He (current Social Chair) would run again for the position of Social Chair, and then decided to run and submitted a nomination after finding out this was not the case. Raja was told by the Election committee that he could

submit his statement and that Assembly would decide whether or not his nomination was valid.

Dan Raburn (also Press Secretary) objected to the request, expressing his opinion that allowing Raja to run for Social Chair would be unfair to the other candidates whose nominations were submitted on time. Raja's eligibility to run for Social Chair was put to a vote; the vote was initially tied with 8 YESES and 8 NOS. The issue was re-voted with the same result. According to Dan Raburn, the Election Committee never reached a decision and can vote, and as chair, he broke the tie with his vote of No.

All remaining candidates were approved at Assembly without discussion.

Dan reminded Assembly that any member of the student body will have the opportunity to learn more about the candidates at the Meet the Candidates forum held on Wednesday, Feb 27, 2008.

## **V. Discussion Items**

### **A. Proposed GSG Task force**

Several assembly members have expressed interested in performing an institutional review or governance review to improve the efficiency of the GSG. Kevin Collins (POL) motioned to table any discussion on this to another meeting, since by this time a large portion of assembly members had already left the meeting.

Shin-Yi Lin publicized a blood drive being run by a group of graduate students; the group is looking for volunteers.

## **VI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at: 8:09 pm.