

**Minutes for the Graduate Student Government Assembly meeting**  
Held Wednesday, February 11, 6pm at Frist Campus Center, Room 309  
Submitted by Marina Paul

**Agenda**

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Reports**

- A. Chair - Christina Hultholm
- B. Social Events - Yi Wang
- C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin
- D. Health and Life
- E. Academic Affairs
- F. Campus Relations
- G. IRC

**III. Decision Items**

- A. Events Board Elections
- B. Election Committee - presentation of candidates
- C. Election of committee chairs

**IV. Discussion Items**

- A. P/D/F policy changes for undergrads
- B. IRC discussion

**V. New Business**

**VI. Adjournment**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting started at 6:04 pm.

Two new department reps were seated: Michelle Phelps from Sociology, and Tim West from Slavic Studies. As a senior member of Assembly, Giri Parameswaran (ECO rep) agreed to mentor both new reps.

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

The minutes were sent out for review to the assembly list-serve two weeks ago. No concerns were expressed. After quorum was confirmed, a motion to approve the minutes was made. The motion passed by voice vote (none opposed, one abstention).

**II. Reports**

**A. Chair - Christina Hultholm**

Christina updated Assembly on Exec's progress in the past month and two upcoming events:

1. Exec has been discussing the changes to the P/D/F policy for undergrads – to be discussed later in the meeting (Academic Affairs report)
2. The Winter Social, organized by Social Chair Yi Wang, is to be held tomorrow – to be discussed later by Yi (Social Chair's report)
3. There will be an APGA board meeting later this month
4. Natural sciences mixer was held this week after the APGA-sponsored Graduate Student/Alumni Mixer that is being held on Tuesday February 10 from 6:00 to 7:30pm in Guyot Hall.

**B. Social Events - Yi Wang**

Yi reported that planning for the Winter Social, to be held February 12, 2009 from 9:30pm-1:30am in the Frist Multi-Purpose room, was on schedule. Yi emphasized that this event is NOT a Valentine's Day event. The menu (12 different wines, food, desserts, and beer) would be posted on the GSG website.

Yi asked all volunteers for setup to report to the multi-purpose room at 7pm.

### **C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin**

#### **1. Shuttle**

Jeff (Facilities committee chair) informed Assembly about recent updates to the Tiger Transit shuttle system and items under review by the Transportation department:

1. New schedules were put in place on Feb 2, 2009 in order to accommodate transfers, delays, and breaks. However, these changes led to overcrowding on the Express line. Kim Jackson (Director, Parking and Transportation) added a tagalong bus along the route to accommodate overcrowding.
2. The shuttle committee received positive feedback from the grad student body about the GPS and the on-demand systems. Regarding the on-demand system, Jeff reminded everyone that (1) students still need to call in advance for accommodations and (2) on-demand shuttles can't be flagged down by students to make unscheduled stops.
3. A stop at the Graduate College has been added to the Campus Circulator route after a stop at Lawrence apartments, making it quicker for GC riders to reach campus via the circulator route than the express route. Moreover, this change eliminates all transfers required for grad students to reach campus buildings from their residences. However, this change resulted in extra delays for Lawrence residents to reach campus. Jeff reported to Assembly that adjustments are being considered. One possibility would be the omission of the stop at the GC from the AM Express line to lessen delays from Lawrence to campus. Because the trip from GC to campus is now quicker on the Circulator route, students boarding at the GC may prefer to take the Circulator route. However, if only the circulator bus services the GC, GC riders can ride to campus only once every 30 minutes.
4. Since the campus circulator now covers all riders back to their residences, the AM express line may be considered for elimination and ridership data is critical for this consideration.
5. Standing room is not available on all buses; this information is available from the signage located on the side of the bus. According to Jeff, the buses added in the September fleet will have more room.
6. Jeff clarified that bus routes could not be streamlined by running them both clockwise and anti-clockwise. For example, running the circulator in the opposite direction would not be possible on all parts of Nassau St. In some cases this is due to the feasibility of the buses making certain turns on Nassau St.; in other cases, turns just aren't permitted at specific intersections.

#### **2. Housing**

At the CPUC meeting, President Shirley Tilghman announced that the whole ten-year campus plan, including housing-specific initiatives, is on hold. Chad Klaus (Assistant Vice President, Facilities) is working on strategies alternative to housing, and will be presenting to the Grad School later this month, and meeting with the GSG soon after that.

According to Jeff, a graduate housing policy committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 13, 2009. Jeff intended to ask for the release of grad draw statistics, and look into correcting draw data for the students who were successful not by their graduate year but by receiving housing priority or by being pulled in by roommates with higher housing priority. The housing policy committee would also discuss modifying the graduate housing draw to allow students who were successful in the draw to retain their current units, rather than having to move if they received a low housing priority score.

### **Election software**

Jeff has been working with OIT to get new software for the GSG elections. The software will not be implemented by this election, but is scheduled for next year. The new USG president is also working on getting better software for USG elections, so Jeff is trying to team up with the undergraduates on this issue.

### **D. Health and Life**

Kelly Kearney reported that Dr. John Kolligian has been chosen as the new Executive Director of University Health Services. Dr. Kolligian is the former director of Psychological Services, and has worked on issues related to grad student psych/counseling this past year.

### **E. Academic Affairs**

Co-chairs Kevin Collins and Silvia Bulow have been developing the Princeton Research Network (PRN). They are currently trying to expand this idea to include search-based emails outside the University. They received positive feedback from several deans, and looking into discuss them with other deans.

### **F. Campus Relations**

The Campus relations committee has nothing to report.

### **G. IRC**

The IRC has nothing to report.

## **III. Decision Items**

### **A. Events Board Elections**

Manos announced that election for the 2009-10 Events Board members would take place at the March 2009 meeting. One spot on the board was vacant at the February meeting, and Raja Chahal (Campus Relations chair) expressed interested in filling in the vacancy until the elections. Raja was elected to fill the events board vacancy by voice vote.

### **B. Election Committee - presentation of candidates**

Pablo Mosteiro (Chair of the Election Committee) gave a progress report on the 2009 elections for GSG executive committee officers (see [2009ElectionReport.pdf](#)). As of the meeting, there were no valid candidates for the position of Parliamentary Secretary. One student was nominated after the deadline, and a second accepted his/her nomination after the deadline.

The current Constitutional by-laws state that the election by the graduate student body is void when there are no nominees. The position is to be advertised 3 weeks in advance of the election date to the entire graduate student body. Anyone can run, and assembly votes on the candidates by ballot. The election committee had discussed two alternative proposals for how to address this issue prior to the assembly meeting. While the election

committee acknowledged the pros and cons for each proposal, the committee rejected both proposals because they were not in agreement with the by-laws already in place.

1. Open the position to only candidates already running in contested elections; have candidates elected by assembly
2. Re-open the position to the entire graduate student body and the par sec elected by assembly

Assembly discussed whether they should deviate from the by-laws in this case. The following points were made at the meeting:

For:

1. The par sec should be elected by the graduate student body because it is arguably the second most significant position on the committee and has ex-officio roles
2. The par sec receives advantages like housing priorities, and thus should be elected by the graduate student body

Against:

1. There is very little time for the election committee to re-advertise the position
2. This creates more work for the election committee
3. This extra effort may generate little results, as we had no valid candidates by the deadline the first time around.

According to the GSG constitution, a 2/3 majority vote is required to suspend the rules. 2/3 of both inactive and active seats were not present at the meeting. It was not clear to anyone present at the meeting whether the 2/3 majority referred to all voting seats, or only the active seats. In order to make this interpretation, a 2/3 majority vote of the active seats was required. Ashley Thrall (current par sec) confirmed that over 2/3 of the active seats were indeed present at the meeting.

Assembly voted in favor of interpreting the constitution as requiring a 2/3 majority vote of the active seats to suspend the rules (12 in favor; 3 against).

**Par sec will be voted in by ballot by Assembly.**

### **Approval of the GSG Executive committee candidates**

After discussing the changes to grading policies for undergrads taking grad courses, Assembly continued the discussion about the election. The election committee found no problems with the candidates' statements. (See submitted statements at <http://www.princeton.edu/~gsgelect/2009/statements.html>). A motion was made to approve the list of candidates. The motion was seconded and passed via hand vote (13 approved, none opposed, 1 abstention).

### **C. Election committee chairs:**

Assembly discussed whether committee chair elections should be held in March (as opposed to April, as was done last year) so as to coincide with the transition from old to new exec. A motion to hold elections for GSG committee chairs in March was approved.

Christina proposed the following standing rule: that the GSG agenda is sent out 48 hours in advance to the entire student body, not just to Assembly. Assembly would be able to revoke this rule in the future with a simple majority. The proposal passed (14 approved, none opposed).

Christina proposed the following standing rule: that Assembly is asked 48 hours in advance for any inclusions to be made to the assembly meeting agenda. The proposal was passed (11 approved, none opposed).

#### **IV. Discussion Items**

##### **A. P/D/F policy changes for undergrads**

In November 2008, several changes were made to grading policies that applied to undergraduates taking graduate courses:

1. Undergraduates must get permission from the course professor and their dean in order to take graduate level courses.
2. Using the PDF option for courses outside the student's home department is no longer permitted. This option was later restored.
3. Undergrads must now submit additional written work as part of the grading.

The PDF decision was reversed because professors were not happy with restrictions being placed on their ability to decide grading options. Assembly discussed how the presence of undergrads in grad classes affected the quality of the graduate student educational experience. The comments and anecdotes varied across classes and departments that no overall consensus/graduate student opinion was reached.

##### **B. IRC discussion**

At the December meeting, assembly was not able to reach a consensus about how various members of the GSG should be elected and what priorities members should be offered. In turn, the IRC developed a questionnaire to poll the graduate student body to get their opinions. The IRC requested that the questionnaire be added to the ballot for the GSG executive committee election, if assembly was in favor of doing so and the election committee felt it was feasible. During the course of the discussion, question 5 was added. The following five questions were discussed:

1. How should GSG assembly reps be elected?
2. How should committee chairs be elected?
3. Should GSG officers have pre-requisites for running?
4. How does the GS body feel about giving housing priority to the exec committee?
5. What is your program/department?

For the final questionnaire, see [ballotquestionnaire.pdf](#).

Assembly discussed the following points, regarding the merits and problems of the poll:

1. Did the general and question-specific introduction need to be expanded?
2. How would the voter be given the choice to refuse the survey?
3. Would a survey be more effective?
  - a. 1100 students responded to the shuttle survey ; however this turnout may be because shuttle concerns affect everyone
  - b. How representative will this be? For example, departments of the contested elections may be over-represented.
  - c. These questions could be included in a large survey of graduate student issues.

By straw poll, Assembly felt it was worth considering adding the questionnaire to the ballot. (11 approved; 1 against). Ashley Thrall (current par sec) confirmed that as of

7:22pm, quorum was met. Assembly then discussed each question individually and approved all 5 questions for inclusion with the ballot.

### **Question 1**

The following suggestions made by Assembly members were incorporated into the original question 1:

1. offer the choice of selecting reps by a hybrid option, where unfilled department rep seats can be filled from some students at large
2. strike the last statement (which was thought to be misleading) in the introduction or add an opposing statement
3. add a statement about the number of votes required to conduct business
4. include the purpose of filling all seats, including constitutional reform

A motion to include question 1 on the ballot passed (13 approved: 0 opposed).

### **Question 2**

The following suggestion was incorporated into original question 2:

1. Explain that committee chairs do not get housing priorities

A motion to include question 2 on the ballot passed (14 approved: 1 against)

### **Question 3**

A motion to include question 3 on the ballot passed (13 approved).

### **Question 4**

The following suggestions were incorporated into the original question 4:

1. Explain the purpose of offering housing incentives to GSG and housing representatives
2. Add that 7 GSG officers and 29 residential committee members would be granted housing priority in the upcoming draw

A motion to include question 4 on the ballot passed (13 approved).

### **Question 5**

A motion to include question 5 on the ballot passed, after the following motions were passed:

1. A motion to include a statement about the confidentiality of the voting process and a link was approved with 14 votes.
2. Motion to improve introduction was approved with 14 votes.
3. Move to add question 5, with the condition that the voter must consent to a request to take the survey passed (10 approved, 2 against)

A motion to move onto separate system (google survey) failed (6 approved, 6 against).

## **V. New Business**

No new business was discussed at the meeting.

## **VI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:57pm.

