

GSU Assembly Meeting Minutes

February 26, 1997

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by presiding officer, Robert Weiner.

Present: 31 reps. 13 non-reps. Sign-in sheet attached.

Item 1: Motion by Press Secretary Evan Haefeli to approve pre-distributed (via email) minutes of 1/29/97 Assembly meeting approved by unanimous consent.

Item 2: Report of Representative Secretary Jill Reiss. Three new reps. have joined the Assembly. They are Yu Chen (Electrical Engineering), Susan Bernofsky (Comparative Literature), and Sherrie Glass (Woodrow Wilson School). Classics no longer has a rep as Paolo Asso has stopped and not been replaced. Forty seats are now active and six seats are vacant. Consequently the quorum (60%) required to conduct business for this meeting was 24 reps.

Item 3: Co-Chair/Project Coordinator Robert Weiner turned the meeting over to Co-Chair/Treasurer Peter Park to moderate the debate over adopting a resolution regarding the Yale graduate student employees right to organize a union. Peter asked if there were any objections to the 30 minute time limit for debate suggested by the Executive Committee. Since there were objections, the time limit was suspended. All persons who signed onto the list for discussion spoke. The merits of two proposed resolutions were debated. The first had been pre-circulated by the Executive Committee to the reps in hard copy on February 19 along with some supporting documents. The second was developed by Greg Godfrey (Civil Engineering & OR) based on discussion over email and telephone with many reps, including members of

the Executive Committee.

Ryan Siders (Mathematics) made a motion that the GSU not be allowed to make "political statements" as a general rule. Several reps objected that this motion was improper because it was inimical to the very nature of an organization such as the GSU. Furthermore such a policy would require a Constitutional Amendment and a troublesome process of defining what was and was not a "political statement." Instead, a motion was made to vote just on whether or not the GSU should pass this one particular resolution and the improper motion was withdrawn. The motion that the GSU should make a statement was passed 21:9 with 1 abstention.

Following this, discussion turned to establishing the voting threshold proper for passing a resolution on this issue. Two threshold proposals were made: one, suggested by the Executive Committee, for 50% + 1 of the active seats; another, suggested by Jon Paul Rodriguez (EEB proxy), was for a simple majority as used for normal business. A motion was made to vote between the two proposals. The proposal for 50% + 1 of the active seats (i.e. 21) was passed 23:7.

Item 4: Karen Lipton Dentler noted at 8:20 that the representatives of the University's Working Group on Race Relations had been waiting outside since 8:00 to address the Assembly. Peter Park turned the meeting back over to Robert Weiner who introduced the guests from the Working Group: Robert Durkee (Vice President for Public Affairs), Wilbur Hicks (Ombudsman), Kevin Hudson (class of '97), Patrice Jean (Graduate Student; ppjean@princeton), Janina Montero (dean of Student Life), and Joann Mitchell (Associate Provost & Special Assistant to the President, joannm@princeton). Discussion continued until 9:00 and Assembly members were encouraged to continue discussion with the Working Group informally. After thanking the Working Group for their visit, the Assembly returned to business.

Item 5: Robert Weiner inquired whether the Assembly preferred to table discussion on the Yale resolution or continue, given the lateness of the hour. Many reps expressed a desire to finish the matter tonight. Greg Godfrey then suggested that a non-binding vote be taken to gauge the Assembly's preference between the two proposed statements. Godfrey's revised statement was preferred 21:2 (Robert, as the presiding officer, did not vote).

Several reps then returned to the room after speaking with the Race Relations Working Group and it was announced that a quorum was present. Greg Godfrey then made a motion for a roll-call vote to accept the revised resolution. Steve Miller (Math proxy, Ryan Siders having left the meeting), questioned whether the GSU could constitutionally pass such a resolution. In consideration of the late hour and the desire of the majority of the Assembly to finish business, Greg then immediately amended his motion to add the proviso that should the resolution be accepted, it would not be released until Steve's constitutional objection was resolved.

The motion was approved by roll-call vote 22:4 at approximately 9:15, with the co-chairs voting last as is customary. Voting in favor were: Xiuyuan Lu (Anthropology), John Sebastian (Chemical Engineering), Peter Park (Chemistry), Greg Godfrey (Civil Eng. & OR), Susan Bernofsky (Comparative Literature), Dan Wallach (Computer Science), Jon Paul Rodriguez (EEB proxy), Doug Miller (Economics), James McFarland (Germanic Languages and Literature), Cynthia Hooper (History), John Stewart (MAE), Jill Reiss (Molecular Biology), Brian Kierland (Philosophy), Robert Weiner (Politics), Roberto Lint-Sagarena (Religion), Scott Harper (AOS), Heather Vanbuskirk (Hibben/Maggie), Sara Godfrey (Lawrence Apts.), Evan Haefeli (Off-Campus), Patrice Jean (Black Graduate Caucus), Kapil Agrawal (Council for International Graduate Students), Christine Jones (Women's Center). Voting against were Steve Miller (Math proxy), Don Priour (Physics), Max Karasik (Plasma Physics), Surita Bhatia (Graduate College House Committee). 14 active reps were absent at the time of the vote.

[Note: Although the following statements do not change the official tally recorded at the meeting, these representatives who missed the vote would like the record to show how they would have voted had they been present: In favor of the resolution, Sherrie Glass (Woodrow Wilson School) and Ming Xu (ACSSPU). Opposed to the resolution, Mike Blanton (Astrophysics).]

The conditionally approved resolution reads as follows:

- (1) Whereas the Graduate Student Union Assembly at Princeton University (GSU Assembly) registers its deep concern regarding the threats of academic reprisals, such as withheld letters of recommendation and loss of teaching assignments, that Yale University has made against graduate students for participating in union activity;
- (2) Whereas the GSU Assembly is aware that the National Labor Relations Board has formally charged Yale University with violating federal law by engaging in unfair labor practices against graduate students employed as Part-Time Acting Instructors and Teaching Fellows; and
- (3) Whereas the GSU Assembly further recognizes that, whatever opinion its individual members may have about the advisability of union organizing among graduate students employed as teaching staff, there is no question graduate student employees have the right to form a union if they choose, without fear of retaliatory actions designed to damage their academic careers.
- (4) Therefore, be it resolved that the GSU Assembly hereby supports the right of graduate student employees to choose for themselves through open and democratic processes whether to unionize. The GSU Assembly also urges university administrations to respect these processes and to recognize unions organized in this manner.

Immediately upon passage of this motion, Robert Weiner reported to the Assembly that there was a representative of the Press outside waiting to interview GSU members about the Yale resolution vote. Since the resolution was approved on condition that it not be released to the public pending assessment of Steve Miller's constitutional challenge, the Assembly decided that GSU reps were not to comment publicly on the resolution debate and vote until this was resolved.

Item 6: Judy Yanowitz (Molecular Biology) reported that the Health Care Project Team is now working to implement the findings of the recent Health Care Survey and called for a grad student volunteer for the Student Health Advisory Board (SHAB). Those interested can contact Karen Gorden, Director of Health Education at McCosh. There is also a position for a graduate student spouse on SHAB. She further mentioned that someone from the Health Center will be coming to the next Assembly meeting.

Item 7: Roberto Lint-Sagarena (Religion) distributed to those reps present a letter from the Post-Enrollment Project team to be distributed to each Department's Director of Graduate Study. The letter will also be emailed out to all reps.

Item 8: Robert Weiner reported that the CIT Policies Project Team had produced a detailed letter, analyzing graduate student access to computing resources on campus and offering suggestions to improve same. The letter will be sent by email to reps for consideration before being sent to CIT and Deans Montero and Redman.

Item 9: Tu Lee, of the Hong Kong Students Association (HKSA), made a funding request of \$670 for a party at the International Festival. Given that the GSU only has \$1,250 to co-sponsor events

for the rest of the fiscal year and our knowledge that several other requests (including APGA reunions, the Graduate College summer BBQs, Butler Apts. Cinco de Mayo, and CIGS spring film festival) will be coming, the HKSA request was tabled. Peter Park announced that he would urge the other organizations to submit their formal requests immediately so he can make an informed recommendation for allocating the remaining funds.

Item 10: Brian Kierland (Philosophy) suggested that we request the university's telephone office to send out a Graduate Student Directory supplement, as they did in December 1995. Brian agreed to investigate this.

Due to the overcrowded agenda, there was not enough time to report on developments since the last meeting. It was agreed that the co-chairs would submit the reports to the Press Secretary for the record as follows:

Item 11: Peter Park reported the results of the funding requests since last meeting. \$100 was voted for the Women of Color Dinner 23:0 with 1 abstention. \$175 was voted for the Jewish Heritage Week celebrations 26:3 with 2 abstentions. He further reported on the vote taken to revise the GSU's statement as printed in the most recent newsletter. The vote to revise the statement failed 8:18 with 5 abstentions.

Item 12: Robert reported that the graduate Housing Department has implemented a policy change benefiting post-enrolled students. Following the GSU's suggestion, post enrolled students will now be permitted to sublet university apartments. Details are available in the grad housing packet. Thanks to the Assembly's liaisons to the Housing Policy Committee; Sooji Park, Heather Vanbuskirk, and Max Karasik.

Item 13: Robert and Peter met on February 8 with the President of

the USG, Jeff Siegel, and Kelly Prill, President of the CPUC. The four agreed to have two more meetings this semester in the hopes of establishing a pattern of three meetings between the heads of the undergraduate and graduate governments per semester. More details on this meeting will be provided later.

Item 14: The GSU phone and voice mail have been activated (8-4GSU).

Item 15: The co-chairs met on February 25 with Dean Joy Montero to discuss a wide range of GSU activities.

Item 16: The Executive Committee met on February 7. A report on this meeting was sent to all reps via email on February 10 in a message entitled "Essential Notice for GSU Assembly Representatives." A print-out of this message is attached.

Meeting adjourned 9:40 PM.