

Minutes for the July 2, 2008 Graduate Student Government Assembly meeting

Held Wednesday, July 2, 2008 at 6pm in Frist Campus Center Room 309

Recorded by Marina Paul

Agenda

I. Call to Order

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

II. Reports

- A. Chair - Christina Hultholm
- B. Social Events - Jenna Losh
- C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin
- D. Health and Life
- E. IRC
- F. Academic Affairs
- G. Campus Relations
- H. Furniture Drive

III. Discussion Items

- A. Summer Letters Update
- B. Campus Study Space Survey

IV. New Business

- A. New Student Orientation Mugs
- B. Survey for common spaces at Stanworth - Lisa Schreyer

V. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

The meeting started at 6:06 pm.

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

Marina sent the minutes out via email last week and received no other comments aside from editing or word choice suggestions. A motion to approve the minutes was voiced and seconded. The minutes were approved by voice with no nays.

II. Reports

A. Chair's report - Christina Hultholm

According to Christina Hultholm (Chair), letters and anecdotes received so far were mostly complaints, particularly about AC, health and life, or housing.

Requests were received for student representatives for the Princeton Sustainability Committee and for the Campus study space survey (Kevin Collins has agreed to do this)

B. Social Events - Jenna Losh

Jenna Losh (Corresponding Secretary) ran the Frist Frolic this year. The GSG-sponsored annual Frist Frolic was held Wednesday, June 25, from 4:30 to 7pm on the Frist South Lawn. This year's Frolic featured a concert by Mike Montrey, and a barbeque dinner free to all graduate students and families (and whoever else showed up). 600 people were served until the food ran out.

C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin

Upcoming events or changes to housing and shuttle:

1. Air-conditioning at the GC: While placing temporary AC units into the windows of dorms in the GC would require substantial window renovations, it is technically possible to put in permanent window units. The Graduate School has come up with a budget for the approximate cost, and is seeking funding sources.
2. The Housing Policy Group held a meeting recently, and has requested a tour of Stanworth Apartments.
3. Housing Draw 2008: The preliminary housing draw statistics should be released soon.
4. Next year's housing draw: Gender-neutral room selection will be an option for the Graduate College rooms in the housing draw.
5. Housing Draw priorities: According to Lisa Schreyer, the Graduate School already considered the possibility of eliminating housing priorities given to GSG officers, community associates, but is now discussing alternatives to that idea.
6. Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities chair) is working on a written guide to "Recycling rules on campus"

D. Health and Life – Kelly Kearney

Kelly Kearney (Health and Life Committee chair) has been looking into available options for non-emergency, after-hours care, where a student can go if a student may go if they suspect they require urgent care but not the \$500 fee charged by the Emergency Room. One student suggested that emergency contraception access should be included as care desired by grad students.

A graduate student recently wrote the GSG asking about the medical/disability leave options currently available to graduate students. Normally, students are advised to leave school for long-term medical disabilities, disqualifying them for coverage. Family medical leave act does not apply since graduate students are not employees.

E. Institutional Review Committee (IRC)

At a meeting held today (7/2/08), the IRC initiated a discussion about defining the role(s) of each GSG committee member.

F. Academic Affairs (Kevin Collins)

The Academic Affairs committee (co-chaired by Kevin Collins and Silvia Bulow) met with Deans David Redman (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs) and William Russel (Dean of the Graduate School) recently to discuss increasing funds for the Dean's fund for Scholarly travel. The grant has typically funded 1/3 of requests.

Dean Russel is optimistic and plans to go back to Pri-Comm with a re-request an increase in funding the Dean's fund after having the request denied last year. The dollar amount they plan to request had not been finalized yet.

Kevin reported that he and Silvia plan to organize information regarding fellowships to make students aware of the resources available to through various sources, including departments, Deans, and smaller research centers. They are in the process of reviewing current organized databases and other grad schools' open databases.

Several suggestions were brought up improving transparency in information related to travel grant funding:

1. Information about taxes on the funding money

2. A student asked why graduate school did not send out information about the APGA summer travel grant before its deadline of May 1.
3. An NES student didn't receive the Graduate's schools decision on the application to fund his/her summer language funding program before the deadline.

G. Campus Relations

The GSG was solicited for a graduate student representative for the sustainability committee. The committee assists the University with researching and implementing environmentally-sustainable practices, and meets once a month. The student rep would provide input from a graduate-student perspective at the committee meetings, as well as keep the GSG informed about the campus sustainability issues. The student rep position was vacant last year.

Jenna Losh (Corresponding secretary) expressed interest. Jenna was approved as the student rep to the Sustainability committee by voice vote, with no objections.

H. Furniture drive

Dan gave a brief summary about this year's Furniture Drive. Dan planned to submit a record of the furniture drive with the minutes.

1. Less money was earned this year than the previous year. Dan is working with the University to expand the drive next year. Possible contributing factors:
 - a. Advertising: last year's undergraduate class president helped advertise the event
 - b. Change of location: the drive lost the Dodd/Brown site. This site was replaced with one at Witherspoon, which is not as close to undergrad dorms.
2. Suggestions:
 - a. Advertise to underclassman also
 - b. Improve advanced storage – trailer trucks could be used to store the stuff coming from earlier move-outs such as underclassmen
3. Brainstorming session are being planned to take place in late summer/fall

III. Discussion Items

A. Summer Letters Update

95% emails received from graduate are related to AC, health ad life, housing. More anecdotes are needed about DCE, travel grants.

A discussion ensued about a letter written about the safety of the Alexander Road/ College road crossing. A student was almost run over by cars that didn't stop. It was believed that the location may follow under the jurisdiction of the borough.

Several ideas were brought up to improve pedestrian safety:

1. Observation of traffic at the site by a police officer, as was done before the flashing lights on Washington Road were installed
2. Speed detectors
3. Installing flashing lights, as was done on Alexander
4. Removal of parking spaces that line the area, obstructing the view of pedestrians. However, Assembly was aware that this would lead to loss of revenue for the borough.

Final list of letters with volunteer writers:

1. GC Air conditioning (at least in coffee house) [Jeff]

2. 10 year campus plan and additional grad housing (long term) [Jeff, Annie]
3. Housing [Jeff, Christina]
 - a. Accountability for housing office (if they underperform) (e.g. wrong e-mail lists for alerts; work orders feedback on when things will get done, no tice of resolution/not fixed)
 - b. Reducing # of moves & have better prioritization of location options (and not choosing some at all);
 - c. finding out move-in dates early; stagger move-in dates
 - d. stay later in the summer to increase availability from vacated units
 - e. GC summer rents - \$150/week for no A/C and limited kitchens
 - f. More flexibility for summer contracts (minimum 2 weeks)
 - g. Apartment assignments computerized (and therefore faster)
4. VP Dickerson – health/life issues [Silvia, Kelly]
 - a. Dental subsidy – improvements to amount in SHP, or be part of a regular dental insurance plan (staff plans?)
 - b. Birth control – continue advocating for law changes, and add other types of birth control to subsidy; cover more on SHP/Med-Co, lower deductibles?
 - c. Child care center – make sure it serves grad students sufficiently – involved in planning, cost for students, hours of facility, etc.
 - d. Dillon gym and McCosh hours over the summer
5. DCE tuition increases; rent/dining increases no faster than stipends; cost of living increasing generally or stipend increases
6. Travel grants [Silvia, Kevin]
7. Frist Café Vivian renovation purpose – better summer hours and options.
8. Campus safety – burglaries?? Safety of the places we live. [Ashley, Christina]
 - a. Safety, lighting, and monitoring of parking lots (esp. at residences)
 - b. Blue light phones
 - c. P-rides express over the summer – safety issues
 - d. Spouses added to e-mail lists (for housing notices, campus safety alerts, residential committees)
 - e. Make sure grads in offices are notified of building issues (e.g. bomb scare at E-QUAD)

B. Campus Study Space Survey

The survey discussion was delayed until the August Assembly meeting.

IV. New Business

A. New Student Orientation Mugs

Free mugs are given to incoming students every year at Graduate Student Orientation. Last year's mug has a frog with the quote "Kiss me and I'll turn into a PhD". Getting mugs with new designs for the fall 2008 orientation came up, in part because the current mug may exclude master's students.

Ideas:

1. Include a graduate student related comic, such as those drawn by Jorge Cham (PhD comics)
2. different size/shaped mugs

Giri Parameswaran (ECO) moved that Exec make the final decision.

B. Survey for common spaces at Stanworth - Lisa Schreyer

Lisa Schreyer (Assistant Dean for Resident Life) reported that in her recent meeting with Andrew Kane (Director of Housing) and Sandra McCourt, it was decided that a survey would be useful to determine how graduate students want to utilize the common spaces at Stanworth and Hibben/Magie apartments.

Lisa requested that the GSG administer the survey, rather than the graduate school, because students have been more willing to respond to the GSG in the past.

Several students felt that the GSG should be very judicious about conducting any future surveys. The GSG recently helped administer a very comprehensive Shuttle survey, and sent out multiple reminder e-mails to maximize rider feedback. Several students felt that conducting a survey so soon after the Shuttle survey was unwise. Another student suggested that perhaps this new issue could still be lumped into surveys combining several other issues. However, in feedback about the from the transportation survey, two responders had said the survey was too long; thus combining issues may be more risky than sending multiple short ones with no reminders.

Silvia Bulow argued that the GSG should consider this survey, since graduate students were lobbying to provide input for how these spaces are utilized. Kevin Collins (POL) moved to let Exec decide. Christina Hultholm (Chair) motioned to let GS conduct it, while letting Exec provide input.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:59pm.

