

Minutes of the June 28, 2000 GSG Assembly Meeting

At 7:00pm, GSG Chair Lauren Hale called the meeting to order. As had been the case at the previous meeting, the GSG Assembly convened in Room 309 of the new Frist Campus Center.

Item 0: The GSG Assembly voted to approve the minutes for the April Meeting. At the same time, the attendance sheet circulated.

Item 1: Presentation by Dr. Jacqueline Mintz on the McGraw Teaching Center

Dr. Mintz, having arrived in August, will administer the Teaching and Learning Center.

At the request of Jacqueline, members of the Assembly introduced themselves.

Dr. Mintz briefly described her career and teaching experience. Her graduate work was at Berkeley in the field of Comparative Literature.

A general observation from her experiences has been that training of graduate students in the teaching arts is often quite limited.

Although assisting non-native speakers of English with linguistic skills will be of great benefit to undergraduate students, Dr. Mintz perceives the McGraw Center as a strong benefit also to graduate students. In support of this point, she pointed to the fact that teaching is of high importance in many academic hiring decision. Nevertheless, she asserted, teaching experience in recent doctorate often falls below what is needed in the academy. In particular, Dr. Mintz mentioned the case of a Stanford student whose limited teaching skills made it difficult to obtain a position at a second-tier institution. Dr. Mintz emphasize several times that the Teaching Center is meant to be an asset, and not an encumbrance, to graduate students.

As Dr. Mintz explained, one branch of the Teaching

Center provides linguistic assistance to graduate students for whom English is not the first language. Presently, 130 students are in the program.

The broader component of the Center's ambitions is to provide graduate students with resources to enhance their teaching skills.

% Meetings will be scheduled between the McGraw teaching and the Directors of Graduate Study of the University's departments.

% A call for proposals from members of the University has been made. Dr. Mintz, on several occasions, indicated that the McGraw Center would be receptive to input from graduate students. In fact, Dr. Mintz mentioned as she moved through her presentation that the Center is in need of assistance with its web page.

% A set of conferences has been established. Regrettably, attendance has been poor at many of the seminars that have already been held, though attendance at some of the lectures has been reasonable.

The attendance of approximately a half dozen seminars will be mandatory for first time Assistants in Instruction in the departments which choose to adopt the program. The seminars probe ways to refine speaking skills and are in addition to the teaching workshop held at the beginning of the academic year.

As Dr. Mintz concluded her speech, she responded to questions from the GSG Assembly. A topic that received considerable interest was the set of required seminars.

% Karthick Ramakrishnan encouraged Dr. Mintz to serve as an "advocate" for graduate student issues, and to help show the larger community that graduate students are important members of the University, and to undergraduate teaching in particular.

% Eszter, referring to the experience of the Sociology

Department, stated that Teaching Center's program for her department had been reviewed and found by many Sociology graduate students to be too inflexible.

Though not necessarily in reply to Eszter's question, Dr. Mintz explained that the teaching seminar requirements would vary from department from department. However, she stated that the McGraw Center would try to operate the program in a flexible manner.

% Jason Brownlee expressed concern that mandatory teaching programs would add to teaching burdens and thereby exacerbate the postenrollment problem.

% It was suggested by a member of the assembly that some of the teaching seminars be moved either to the summer or to the beginning of the academic year. In this manner, the burden to those with heavy research schedules would be considerably diminished.

Item 2: Officer Reports

Report of the Social Chair:

Lauren, serving the dual role as GSG Chair and Social Chair, mentioned that the Graduate College Pizza party had gone quite well. Only a dozen pizzas remained as the event drew to a close. Though the party's popularity did not match that of last year's pizza event, the attendance still was considerable.

Lauren mentioned the possibility of a GSG ice cream social.

Report of the Treasurer:

Karthick Ramakrishnan, GSG Treasurer, stated that \$1500 is the budget total. However, since only \$510 remains in the cosponsorship budget, Karthick suggested that a budgetary reallocation in the near future might be wise.

Item 3: The Matter of the GSG Office Telephone

The funding of the GSG telephone has been a ringing issue for some time. Karthick Ramakrishnan revealed that \$176 already been spent on the telephone during the current academic year. In discussing the telephone, voting was

placed on hold while Eric Adelizzi and other Assembly members discussed a few pros and cons of maintaining the telephone.

% Frequency of use of the telephone is expected to increase as the new GSG office opens and is occupied. NOT having access to a phone in the office would be an inconvenience to those working late in the office collaborating on GSG matters.

% General agreement appeared to be that the expense of the telephone is its sole liability. Eric reminded the assembly that our investment in the University endowment will soon be providing enough of a return to offset half of the annual telephone costs.

Item 4: Current Business

The Graduate Student Orientation was the first item of business to come before the assembly.

% It was suggested by a member of the Assembly that we again distribute GSG souvenirs to students at Registration. As Treasurer, Karthick Ramakrishnan recommended that we avoid spending more than \$400 on the GSG souvenirs. Nonetheless, despite the fiscal concerns, the assembly appeared to be in favor of the idea of obtaining trinkets for distribution at Registration. Though several specific ideas were examined, it was ultimately decided that former GSG Chair Scott Harper be consulted for advice.

% As the discussion of possible GSG souvenirs continued, Karthick reminded the Assembly of the existence of the "Passport to the Arts" program. The Passport program is a considerable value because it provides 10 free passes to art exhibits at local museums.

Karthick suggested that the GSG ask the University to make the passes available to graduate students this year, whereas in previous years they had been available only to undergraduates. Ulli reported that he had heard speculations that the Provost's office may offer it this year, in honor of the Centennial of the Graduate School. (Karthick later sent a letter to Provost Jeremy Ostriker, requesting that the 'Passport' be made

available to graduate students, and the and the Provost replied that such a program would indeed be offered this year.)

Karthick Ramakrishnan and Ulli Struve explained that the Passport program will now be made available to PhD students this year, in honor of the Centennial of the Graduate School. Previously, only undergraduates had had access to the program.

% The attention of the Assembly turned next to the Activities Fair. Karthick introduced the topic, reminding the Assembly that although the undergraduates enjoy an Activities Fair which documents for them in a vivid fashion recreational options on and off campus, graduate students evidently lack such a session. A major obstacle hampering graduate student attendance has been the fact that the Activities Fair has, in the past, conflicted with Graduate Orientation.

To remedy the situation, Karthick drafted a letter to Dean Dunne. On hearing the letter, the Assembly approved sending it via email to Dean Dunne with copies sent to Deans Montero and Wilson in addition to Ulriche Struve. In brief, the letter encourages the administration to consider including graduate students in the Activities Fair. The letter appear below.

Dear Dean Dunne,

We, the Graduate Student Government, urge you to include graduate students and graduate student Activities Fair this year. Having an inclusive Activities Fair is important to help graduate students feel more welcome and integrated into the campus community.

The Graduate School is supportive of our effort to have an inclusive Activities Fair this fall. We ask that the organizers of the Activities Fair and the Graduate School Orientation coordinate calendars so that there are no scheduling conflicts.

We thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

The Graduate Student Government

(passed unanimously on Wednesday, June 28)

% Eric Adelizzi informed the Assembly that the Graduate College House Committee is compiling a new Guide to the Universe for Graduate Students. Interested individuals were urged to contact Eric regarding desired inclusions in the guide.

% The last item of business connected with graduate student orientation proved to be the Orientation Dance which shall be held on September 15 in the Chancellor Green. Evidently, the dance shall be held in the last year in which social occasions shall take place in the Green as it now exists. Evidently, graduate students are only allowed one event per year at the Chancellor Green.

The Assembly next faced the task of setting the protocol for the constitutional referendum to be held in the Autumn.

% Discussion ensued on whether having the Referendum at Registration would be reasonable. Kyle argued that the only viable opportunity for the passage of the referendum is Graduate Registration. In fact, for the referendum to succeed, it must pass by a majority that is at least 1/3 of the Graduate Student Body. Karthick argued that an informed vote on a large document would be difficult for first year students. He recommended an online vote as a possible alternative.

Other Assembly members suggested that administering the email vote would be a massive task. On the other hand, it was argued, Registration is a convenient venue for voting graduate students as well as the GSG members conducting the vote. To remedy the difficulty of first year students being asked to vote very quickly on a large document, it was suggested that first year students be given an opportunity to vote at a different time. This did not seem difficult in practice because the first year graduate students register at a different time than the other graduate students.

Ultimately, upon Lauren's suggestion, the Assembly determined that it would set the Referendum voting procedure at the next GSG meeting.

% Since Pro and Con positions exist on the Referendum, Lauren Hale and Karthick Ramakrishnan had recommended that the Assembly adopt the Australian System. Eric Adelizzi agreed that this was a good idea and he presented the idea at the June 28 meeting. At Princeton, the Australian System has experienced at least one precedent in the case of the Graduate College House Committee. Eric indicated that in this case, the House Committee Referendum operated smoothly under the Australian System.

& In the Australian System, in a similar manner to the situation with the GSG Constitution referendum, one has a pro and a con side. Each side is given the duty of fashioning a proposal supporting its views. Under the Australian System, the pro and con sides, through separate majority votes, arrive at proposals in favor of their perspectives. After a brief period of discussion, the Assembly appeared to endorse Eric's proposal.

Item 5: Committee Reports

Campus Center: Nathan Marsh gave the report. He reiterated the fact that the operating hours shall be quite generous. What is more, trinkets and T - Shirts will be distributed at the Frist Center grand opening in mid September.

The current plan is to move the GSG office to its new location in the Frist Center this July.

Karthick Ramakrishnan asked Nathan to check whether graduate student organizations will have access to student organization spaces and staff support in Frist.

Healthcare: Julia Morrison completed the process of encoding and analyzing the data collected during the survey. Karthick Ramakrishnan summarized aspects of the analysis.

% In general, graduate students are appreciative of the McCosh Health Center as well as its medical staff.

% Judgment is split on the suitability of the summer operational hours.

% Interestingly, substantial numbers of students have forgone annual dental check-ups. Another sizable subset have, at least on occasion, declined to purchase prescription drugs.

% A marked desire for basic dental coverage was noted in the surveys. The next priority was a desire for a reduction of the deductible.

% Karthick recommended to the Assembly that a formal report on the Health Care Survey be published. Brief discussion on this point ensued. Eszter Hartittai and Bill Jordan volunteered to assist with the report, to be due in late September.

% The Assembly thanked Julia Morrison for her diligence in compiling the Health Care data with a round of applause.

Item 6: New Business

Kyle, leaving behind an impressive legacy, announced his withdrawal from the postenrollment committee. Those interested in joining are encouraged to volunteer.

Concern evidently exists that fish is difficult to obtain at the Graduate College during the season of Lent.

The Assembly thanked Eszter for her excellent service as GSG Chair with a round of applause.

Item 7: Adjournment: The June 28 GSG Meeting adjourned at 9:14pm.

The next Graduate Student Government meeting will be held in Room 309 of the Frist Center on July 26 at 7:00pm.

[These minutes were written by GSG Recording Secretary Don Priour.]