

Minutes for the March 11, 2009 Assembly meeting

Agenda

I. Call to Order

- A. Approval of the Minutes
- B. Election committee

II. Parliamentary Secretary Elections

- A. Introduction and Statements by the Candidates
- B. Balloting by Assembly

III. Reports

- A. Chair
- B. Social Events
- C. Academic Affairs
- D. Facilities
- E. Health and Life
- F. IRC
- G. Campus Relations
- H. financial report

IV. Decision Items

- A. Committee Chair Elections
- B. Motions by Eco REP

V. Discussion Items

- A. Financial State of the University

VI. New Business

- A. GCHC funding request

VII. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

A. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes for the February 2009 assembly meeting were posted on the GSG website, and the link to the minutes was e-mailed to Assembly last week. No comments were received. Assembly passed a motion to approve the minutes with a hand vote (none opposed, 3 abstentions).

B. Election committee

The Election committee presented the statistics for the 2009 election of the GSG executive committee. For the report, see Election committee March2009.doc. A motion to certify the election results was seconded and passed via hand vote (no abstentions, none opposed).

II. Parliamentary Secretary Elections

Elections for the position of parliamentary secretary were held at the assembly meeting.

A. Introduction and Statements by the Candidates

1. Ben Fong's (economics student) previous leadership experience included chairing the student unions at his undergraduate institution (Stanford U.) and being a resident advisor. As part of GSG, Ben planned to campaign for graduate student life issues like better toilet paper in bathrooms, removing laundry machine fees, and petitioning the graduate school for longer dining hours and better quality food at GC.

2. Ben Brooks (economics student) wanted to broaden role of Par sec. Ben planned to take on his own initiatives, help run meetings. He said he'd like to be the person who checks the pulse of how people feel in the room, and be the point person for people to go to. Ben planned to campaign for the addition of a REC room to Lawrence, help build the social structure in the new Butler system, and facilitate undergrad/grad activities.

3. Kevin Collins (politics student) has two years of experience on the GSG from conducting the Shuttle survey, co-chairing the Academic Affairs committee, and campaigning for travel and stipend funding. As par sec, Kevin plans to streamline bureaucracy, and welcomes the par sec roles including ex official role on the CPUC. As a politics PhD studying electoral politics, Kevin planned to improve the GSG elections process.

B. Balloting by Assembly

The vote was conducted as a secret ballot for three candidates and a none-of-the-above option. In the case of a tie with two candidates with most votes, instant run-off voting would require that votes for the other candidates would be re-distributed to the first two.

Silvia Bulow (Academic Affairs Co-chair) and Jenna (Corresponding secretary), both of whom are non-voting members of the GSG, were elected to count votes along with the current parliamentary secretary, Ashley Thrall (hand vote, none opposed, none abstained.)

Kevin Collins was elected parliamentary secretary (7 votes for Kevin Collins, 5 for Ben Fong, 5 for Ben Brooks, and 1 none-of-the-above).

III. Reports

A. Chair

1. Christina listed the accomplishments of the past year's exec.
2. Christina thanked everyone in Assembly for participating in our events, Academic committee chairs for the large amount of work, Exec, GS reps (Olivia and Lisa), outgoing facilities chair.

B. Social Events

Yi presented a report about the social events held over the past year. For the full report, see Social Report March2009.pdf. Briefly, report included the following events: New Student Welcome, Photo contest, Princeton Travel Festival, Frist Frolic (Summer BBQ), Wine and Cheese, Outdoor Action 360, and the Winter Social. Yi solicited feedback from Assembly about the past year's events:

1. A student felt that the venue for the Cheese and Wine event felt like a “mess hall”. Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities chair) responded that a new building will hold the Carl Fields Center by next year’s event.
2. Khee-Gan Lee (Astrophysics) remarked that the poor involvement of graduate students in Outdoor Action warranted a better liaison in order to serve grad students better, and offered to get involved.

C. Academic Affairs

Committee co-chairs, Kevin Collins and Silvia Bulow, presented an end-of-year report:

1. Increase in stipends: based on a model for the projected cost of living done by the MIT graduate school, Kevin and Silvia pushed for a stipend increase of 6%. The Dean of the Graduate School (Bill Russel) requested this, and was able to get a 3% increase.
2. Travel funding
 - a. Dean of GS is trying to get money from departments to add to a pool of funds
 - b. Also trying to get grad alumni to donate and get that directed towards travel funding
3. the Frist Campus center was renovated so that Café Vivian was housed in a separate building space and could be open later hours
4. Firestone committee – David Jorgensen took over from Yaron Ayalon mid-way
5. Princeton Research Network – in discussion with OIT and the Dean of Research about this

The committee made the following recommendations for the upcoming year:

1. Grad student orientation – that the knowledge of Career Services be disseminated early on, especially for student in departments that discourage non-academic choices; OIT training for research-related techs (share-point)
2. Survey of graduate student body – a survey be conducted to assess needs/wants related to mentoring, teaching
 - a. Where a number of topics will be coordinated to avoid multiple surveys
3. forums for students to air concerns about specific topics, aside from assembly meetings

D. Facilities

Jeff Dwoskin, current Facilities Chair, presented his end-of-year report (see Facilities Report March2009.pdf).

The following points were discussed at Assembly:

1. Proposed changes to the shuttle system

Hilary Bergsieker (Shuttle sub-committee) reported that Kim Jackson (Director of Transportation and Parking Services) wanted feedback from Assembly about several proposed changes, to the Circulator and evening express. Decisions will be made tomorrow morning. Briefly, the proposed changes are listed below:

- a. Remove GC from AM Express, but increase Campus circulator to every 10 minutes
 - a. It was suggested that the express be renamed to relieve confusion for GC riders about time to campus
- b. Consider elimination of the Evening express
 - a. redundant with circulator in direction of residences from campus
 - b. reverse commute has low ridership

2. Take measures to limit abuse of On-demand service by students:

A lot of students are taking the on-demand shuttle instead of waiting for circulator/express in the evening. There is a concern for the negative impact this has on students calling for legitimate use. Students suggested that on-demand refuse riders who would be covered by the shuttle

3. Service disruptions:

Jeff Dwoskin relayed Kim Jackson's apologies for the recent delay in shuttle service during inclement weather. Kim had delayed the shuttles because she thought classes were also delayed.

4. Interactions between bus drivers and riders

The morale of the bus drivers has been affected by riders who are disrespectful of bus drivers. Jeff presented a set of recommended community standards for respectful behavior of bus drivers and riders.

A student brought up that standard procedure in England did not allow riders to talk to drivers while buses are running, and riders are not allowed to stand past the white line.

5. Additional suggestions/comments made at Assembly:

- a. allow drivers to pick up students running for departing buses
- b. include GPS displays at the bus stops – in progress, according to Jeff Dwoskin
- c. have buses take a more direct route from Lawrence to Dinky, and stop at GC afterwards
- d. Institute a 2nd stop at end of Butler
- e. Politics constituents have expressed concern about the recent implementation of gradual, incremental changes, and would prefer that changes were made in bulk

Jeff made the following recommendations for the upcoming Facilities committee:

1. The committee will need a new chair, as current chair Jeff prepares to graduate
2. Jeff asked Assembly to appoint him as committee co-chair
3. Jeff recommended that several subcommittees be created to distribute the work

E. Health and Life

The Health and Life committee chair was at sea on a research cruise. The report was read aloud by Christina Hultholm. As for comments, one assembly member suggested that the GSG should apply constant pressure on gym for the shortage of operational treadmills.

F. IRC

A written report was submitted by the IRC in lieu of an oral report. See IRC Report March2009.doc.

G. Campus Relations

Raja Chahal (Campus Relations chair) reported that there is no update on the plans for Campus club, other than his being renewed as a member of the board. Several assembly members believed that a soft opening was being planned for late April, while a grand opening would be held sometime later in the future.

H. Financial Report

The outgoing treasurer, Manos Koukoumidis, presented the end of year financial report (see Treasurers Report March2009.pdf). Manos pointed out that the GSG must budget money next year for the 2010 Ivy Summit, which will be hosted at Princeton University.

IV. Decision Items

A. Committee Chair Elections

Nominations were accepted for the following standing committees. A motion was made and passed to waive debate for uncontested elections.

1. Health and life - Kelly Kearney (written statement submitted to the GSG in lieu of oral statement)
2. Academic Affairs
 - a. Jayanti Owens (Sociology department) – not attending; written statement submitted to the GSG in lieu of an oral statement
 - b. Silvia Bulow – former parliamentary secretary, current co-chair academic affairs
 - i. Silvia affirmed her interest in continuing projects that she and Kevin have just gotten off the ground, including the Princeton Research Network (calendar readers, where you can search your topics of interest at this site), getting an updated searchable database of funding sources with reminders if possible
3. Campus Relations– Christina Hultholm, outgoing GSG Chair
4. Facilities –Bill Zeller, current computer science rep

Aurelien Fraisse and Kevin Collins were elected to count votes. The candidates were asked to leave the room in order to conduct the vote. The outcomes for the standing committee chair elections are listed below:

1. Kelly Kearney is the Health and Life Chair for the upcoming year, with 16 votes
2. Silvia Newell is the upcoming chair of Academic Affairs with 17 votes. (Jayanti Owens received 3 votes)
3. Christina Hultholm is the new Campus Relations Chair with 15 votes
4. Bill Zeller is the new Facilitates chair with 16 votes

B. Motions by current Eco Rep and incoming GSG Chair (Giri Parameswaran)

Giri Parameswaran presented 10 motions in writing (see Giris Motions March2009.doc). He briefly outlined motions 1-10, and moved 1-10 en bloc.

1. The following points were discussed regarding Motion 6:
 - a. public advertisement of meetings between committees and administration, which are often private or event confidential, might imply that those meetings are public
 - b. Setting date/times in advance may not be feasible and any time changes may require multiple notifications.
 - i. Reducing flexibility by scheduling in advance reduces responsiveness; however only 24 hours notice is required
 - ii. Alternatives suggested: inclusion on a list-serve, listing on the GSG website (then the problem is about publicity), or joining the committee (preferred)
 5. Not knowing meetings ahead of time may be deterring involvement. The GSG should be increasing transparency and involvement
 6. People who really want to participate won't be deterred. Student participation in committees has been pretty sparse, it's a motivational issue not informational
2. An amendment was made to motion 6:
 - a. Hilary proposed an amendment to strike first sentence and ask that the GSG direct the committee chairs to provide 24-hour notice to assembly of meeting time/dates/venues
 - b. The amendment was seconded and passed via hand vote, with 2 oppositions. Giri moved to strike the motion.
3. The following points were discussed regarding Motion 1:
 - a. This is a directive from Assembly to the H&L committee, but April is soon and the H&L committee chair is out of the country on scholarly research and is not available for discussion
 - b. A larger concern was brought up about putting a large workload on committee chairs. Can motions 1-10 be passed without passing motion 11, which "assign[s] some additional responsibilities to the existing committees"?
4. After discussing motion 1, Giri motioned to vote to close debate. The motion failed to pass.
5. Yaron Ayalon motioned to table the discussion. The motion was seconded but failed to pass.
6. Aurelien Fraisse (incoming Corresponding secretary) motioned that "Health and Life committee chair" be replaced with "GSG Chair" in motion 1, where the GSG chair would now be responsible for running the Mental Health Campaign. Giri, the incoming GSG Chair, accepted this responsibility.
7. Motions 1-5 were brought to vote and passed

One student brought up later in the discussion that he felt that passing en bloc was undemocratic; and felt this should not be happened. It was suggested that the motions be addressed separately. The following motions were brought to a hand vote:

Motion 1 - passed (vote of 12 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention)

Motion 2 – passed with none opposed

Motion 3 – Kevin Collins proposed that the campus relations chair would be well suited for this. The motion passed with none opposed.

Motion 4 – the motion carried with none opposed, none abstention.

Motion 5 – the following arguments against the motion were made before the motion was put up to a vote:

1. Silvia pointed out that this would be redundant in April, given that the reports were given at the end of the terms of the committee chairs/exec chairs.
2. Kevin Collins argued that committee chairs often have control over the pace of progress, since we are mostly advocates, and depend on the university groups to get the work done, so there may not be a reasonable schedule

The motion carried with none opposed, one abstention.

Jeff – asked to be elected Facilities co-chair. Jeff was elected with none opposed, and none abstained.

Kee-Gan Lee (Astro rep) proposed to close discussion, and table the rest of minutes. The motion passed with 11 in favor, 4 opposed. One new business item was discussed before the meeting adjourned.

V. Discussion Items

A. Financial State of the University

This topic was not discussed in the interest of including a new business item.

VI. New Business

A. Graduate College House Committee funding request

The GCHC made a request at the GSG assembly meeting for a minimum of \$900 to fund their winter formal. The GCHC was asked to justify the requested amount, especially in light of recent funding by the GSG of lights for the D-Bar. The year's request made by the GCHC was for the same as the amount granted by the Events Board last year.

A motion to fund the request was made, seconded and approved with no objections and 3 abstentions.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:16pm.