

## **Minutes for the March 12, 2008 Assembly meeting**

The meeting was held Wednesday, March 12, 6pm in Frist Campus Center Room 309

### AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
  - A. Approval of the Minutes (February) -- Marina Paul
  - B. Seating of New Members -- Silvia Bulow
- II. Decision Items
  - A. Election Committee Report
- III. Reports
  - A. Chair - Shin-Yi Lin
  - B. Department Reports
    - 1. Andrew Ballinger (AOS)
    - 2. Kostas Aisopos (ELE)
  - C. Facilities Report - Jeff Dwoskin
- IV. Discussion Items
  - A. Governance - Dan Raburn
- V. New Business
- VI. Transition from Old to New Exec and Adjournment

### **I. Call to Order**

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

A draft of the February minutes was sent out to Assembly via e-mail several days ago. One comment was received; a request to clarify that being a candidate in the Campus Club Advisor Board elections precluded Giri Parameswaran (ECO) from voting on the candidates. The February minutes, with the clarification, were approved.

#### **B. Seating of New Members -- Silvia Bulow**

The new Physics rep, Pablo Mosteiro, introduced himself to Assembly. Pablo said about his new responsibilities: "Someone has to do it".

### **II. Decision Items**

#### **A. Election Committee Report**

Dan Raburn (Press Secretary) chaired the 2008 election committee for GSG officer elections. The full text of Dan's report to Assembly can be found at [2008 gsg election report.pdf](#) Dan asked Assembly for suggestions for improvement to the GSG elections process.

Kevin Collins suggested that the GSG elections be conducted via instant runoff voting (IRV) rather than plurality rule in elections where there are multiple candidates for a position. In plurality rule, voters choose only one candidate and the winner is chosen by having the most votes. In IRV, the voters rank-order the candidates, and if there is no candidate with a pure majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped and the voters are reassigned to their second choice vote. In the case where a voter does not list a

second choice, the vote is dropped. The GSG officer elections have always been run by plurality rules, whereas assembly by-elections are run by IRV (except for the PACA rep).

Several suggestions were made in order to better inform voters about the candidates running. Silvia Newell (Parliamentary Secretary) made suggestions pertaining to the meet-the-candidates forum: 1) having this forum in the style of a discussion or a debate and 2) having the forum videotaped and made available to inform all the voters despite the low attendance. Kostas Aisopos (ELE) suggested that photos be posted next to candidates' statements on the GSG website.

Kevin then initiated a discussion about when during the voting period students were casting their votes, particularly in relation to the reminders sent out via email by the election committee. Jeff Dwoskin presented a graph of the distribution of votes for each day. Three peaks in the graph coincided with the days the global were sent out by the election committee. Per Kevin Collin's request, the graph is included in 2008electionvotes.jpg.

Shin-Yi Lin (Chair) felt strongly that candidates should be able to amend their statements after all the statements were posted on the GSG website. Candidates often put more effort in to their statements when they know they are running in a contested election. Alternatively, candidates should be encouraged to submit statements assuming that they are running in a contested election.

Hilary Bergsieker (PSY) asked whether the GSG has or could endorse a certain candidate. According to Shin-Yi Lin, the GSG has never done this as an assembly/body, but it would be fine to do this as an individual who supports a particular candidate.

### **III. Reports**

#### **A. Chair's Report- Shin-Yi Lin**

*Since the last Assembly meeting, Exec has met three times. We have mainly been preparing for the changeover to the new Exec. We've also been handling a number of other issues that have been brought up by students: namely, some issues with pest control in housing and issues with the way conference travel reimbursements have been handled tax-wise by the University.*

*Silvia and I attended the focus group for the new Lewis Library. I attended the spring APGA Board meeting and the most recent CPUC Executive Committee meeting. Dan handled a press request on an article in the Princeton Alumni Weekly that will be coming out on graduate housing. Jeff will give you an update in his Facilities Chair report about the progress on cell phone coverage and the campus safety walks.*

*I followed up on the mentoring survey that was conducted by the Graduate School Office and should have been distributed to departmental student leaders (ie, given by the DGS's to the Departmental Graduate Student Committees). Based on emails from Assembly members, it looks like coverage is still spotty. I have emailed Dean Russel and Redman to see how we would like to follow up on this.*

*ECO: yes*

*NES: yes*

*PHY: yes*

*PSY: yes*

*ELE: no (but then the GSG rep emailed the DGS and got it sent out to the DGSC on 3/4)*

*MUS: no (but then the GSG rep emailed the DGS and got it sent out to the DGSC on 3/3)*

*MOL: no*

*SOC: no*

*GEO: no*

*CHM: no*

*POL: no*

*CEE: no*

*AOS: no*

Silvia Newell (Parliamentary Sec) and Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities Chair) met with Dean Sandra Mawhinney. According to Dean Mawhinney, a tax attorney recently hired by the University has reviewed the taxation policies on reimbursements for university business. Silvia informed Assembly about how taxes are applied to travel expenses.

1. If you are an AR, then reimbursement for your travel to a conference or for research will never be taxed if you are getting paid back from your advisor's grant.
2. If you are an AI or on an outside fellowship and traveling for university business (e.g. doing field work) and getting paid back from your advisor's grant, then you will not be taxed. If you are going to a conference, it gets more unclear, but if you are A) getting paid back from your advisor's grant and B) your advisor or your dept manager states that you are doing university business, then you will not be taxed.
3. If you are getting a travel grant from your department or the Dean's Fund for Scholarly Travel, you will be taxed b/c it counts as taxable income.
4. If you are traveling for research or to a conference and getting paid from some other source or grant, then you will probably be taxed. (The taxation on funds for conference meeting/travel is unclear because it is not easy to clarify whether such travel is for university business or for one's own scholarly advancement.)

Regarding the mentoring survey results, Kostas Aisopos (ELE) commented that he wasn't getting important information from the survey. According to Kostas, some of the information is not really meaningful or useful; other data or statistics had no specifics or details. The Politics department's DGS was not aware that he had to complete a mentoring survey. Kevin Collins (POL) suggested that there may be a communication problem between the Deans and DGS's.

Professor William Russel, Dean of the Graduate School, who speaks once every year at Assembly, will be coming to April's Assembly meeting. While the student body is already aware that GSG assembly meetings are open to all, Shin-Yi suggested that Assembly bring Dean Russel's visit to their constituents' attention to encourage any interested students to attend.

The following elections will be held during the April Assembly meeting:

1. Graduate student representatives to serve on the Priorities Committee, a standing committee of the CPUC (Council of the Princeton University Community).
2. Student representative to President's Advisory Committee on Architecture or PACA (The current student representative Anita Adithya is leaving)
3. GSG Standing Committee Chairs

## **B. Department Reports**

### **1. Andrew Ballinger (AOS)**

The PhD program in the Atmospheric and Oceanic Science (AOS) falls under the umbrella of the Geosciences department (GEO). The department is heavily involved in actively investigating the role of the atmosphere and oceans in earth systems modeling, especially relating to climate change. The program is located at the Forrestal Campus, approximately 3 miles north from main campus on Route US-1. The major factor placing the location of AOS at Forrestal is the proximity to the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (GFDL), which promotes effective collaborations with the government lab. The location at Forrestal can sometimes be a major frustration for students, because they do their coursework primarily in the GEO department (Guyot Hall), but do the majority of their research at Forrestal. As the years progress through the degree, students spend more of their time at the Forrestal campus.

Of the many applicants to the program every year, 5-10 are given offers, with the expectation that about 2-4 accept. The official program length is four years although informally this is 5 years; students are currently averaging about 5.5 years. So far, there have been 83 students in the program: 72 men and 11 women. There are currently 13 students across all years of the program, with the majority of these (12) being international students, including Nevan Fuckar and Andrew Ballinger of the GSG. The department has a 1:1 student-faculty ratio, one of the highest ratios in the university. AOS also works in closely with the 150 scientists at GFDL, so the resources available to students are immense.

The first two years are primarily spent doing coursework (~8-10 courses) and a research project, culminating with the student taking their generals - comprising both an oral and written exam. The subsequent years are spent on writing papers and producing a thesis to defend. Of the AOS graduates, the majority (50%) go into a variety of academic positions, 20% go on to government positions (e.g. GFDL), and the remainder do a variety of different things, including consulting or other work in the private sector.

As mentioned previously, a main concern for students is the program's location away from main campus at Forrestal, and the students are in strong favor of a shuttle connecting the two campuses, similar to the PPL students. A town hall meeting was held recently; most of the issues raised were concerns within the department, and not generic graduate student problems.

## **2. Kostas Aisopos (ELE)**

Kostas submitted his report in a document via e-mail – see 031208 ELE report.doc - and read from this report during the meeting. As for concerns, Kostas reported that given the low responses to his emails soliciting comments, Electrical Engineering is generally a happy department. A request to subsidize NJT buses to the malls had come from a few students. Some fifth-year students graduate before their housing contract ends, leaving them in a difficult situation; at this point, no one knows how to solve this.

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

Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities chair) gave an update on Transportation and Housing issues concerning graduate students. For the full report, see 031208 facilities report.pdf

1. Discussions are underway for a replacement for A-1 limousine services, which supplies drivers and shuttles for the current shuttle system. The shuttle system's contract with A-1 limousine ends this year.
2. Jeff confirmed with Paul Breitman (General Manager for University Services) that there will be a shuttle stop at Stanworth Apartments in the new shuttle system.
3. A shuttle survey to be sent out to the graduate student body in order to gauge concerns with new shuttle system was designed with the help of social scientists Kevin Collins (POL) and Hilary Bergsieker (PSY).
4. There has been a high demand for a bus stop shelter outside of Woodrow Wilson School, and one will finally go up after receiving the required approval from the borough.
5. Kim Jackson (Director of Parking and Transportation) is the new person who will address complaints for shuttle; we will start advertising a new email address to send complaints. Shin-Yi emphasized the need to continue to keep the GSG in the loop about shuttle concerns, as was done before.

Assembly discussed methods to encourage a high response rate for the shuttle survey. Kevin Collins (POL) asked Assembly to send emails to encourage their constituents' participation. Anne Twitty suggested offering monetary incentives or the chance to win prizes for completing the survey. According to Jeff, the group is working on this as they are aware that offering an incentive will bring about a high response rate. Kevin offered an alternative view, pointing out that this may cheapen the response rate.

Jeff Dwoskin, Hilary Bergsieker (PSY), and several other students conducted a "Campus Safety Walk" with Kim Jackson on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Specifically, the quality of walkways and lighting are being evaluated. Safety Walks along other graduate locations are expected to take place over the next month. Previous walks had been conducted, but focused on

adding blue-light phones and included a survey of just a few locations. Shin-Yi Lin (Chair) added that these more comprehensive walks are a follow-up on several letters to administrators and an earlier discussion with Public Safety Chief Healey.

When discussing the increase in e-mail quotas that will go into effect, someone asked why increasing the quota on the H-drive isn't being automatically increased, given the space allotted is very small. Shin-Yi explained that the administration received pressure from both the USG and the GSG to increase e-mail quotas. Raising the email quotas may be a result of the high demand from the undergraduates; the H-drive is not really a priority for them.

An assembly member asked whether graduate students have a website, as the undergraduates automatically do. Jeff informed Assembly that every graduate student can set up a personal website using the public\_html folder in their H-drive, but their UNIX account must be activated first.

Jeff also informed Assembly that offline talks are going on about late night patrols for public safety along labs or facilities. Shin-Yi suggested that it may be more useful for spaces that have late workers to be patrolled at night.

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

##### **A. Governance - Dan Raburn**

The Governance item was actually discussed after the Elections report and before the Chair's report.

##### **1. Proposal to revise the Standing Committees of the GSG**

The full text of Dan's proposal is included in 031208 standing committee proposal.pdf. Briefly, the Exec committee has shouldered much of the responsibility of doing the advocacy work of the GSG standing committees, due to the committees' inactivity (with the exception of the Facilities committee, chaired by Jeff Dwoskin). The former Health and Life Committee Chair, Karin Sigloch, recently graduated. The intent of this proposal is to reassign the work to the standing committees and raise the visibility of the advocacy work done by these committees. Three major actions are proposed:

1. Re-visit the division of the standing committee groups, and the distribution of responsibilities held by each standing committee
2. Hold regular elections for the standing committee positions at Assembly meetings
3. Have the committee chairs report monthly to Assembly

According to Shin-Yi (Chair), the GSG had originally consolidated the original ten standing committees into four. The goal is to have the division of the standing committees to reflect the committee's actual responsibilities, rather than reflecting the organization of the graduate administration.

Kevin Collins (POL) proposed the idea of the standing committee chairs submitting written reports rather than giving oral reports at assembly meetings, given the current concern of the lengthiness of Assembly meetings. Additionally, this would give Assembly members the chance to read the report beforehand and discuss it at the meeting if needed. Dan suggested a revision to the proposal to request that reports be submitted in writing, at least 24 hours in advance.

Giri Parameswaran (ECO) urged that a culture develop within the GSG of officers presenting regular and written reports to the Assembly. He felt that this would make the Assembly's deliberations more efficient, by allowing for more informed debate and spending less time listening to officers reading from pre-prepared reports. Giri stated that reporting was particularly important in the case of Committees, so that Assembly could be kept abreast of (and prioritize) the advocacy work of the GSG.

Yaron Ayalon (NES) felt that chairs should have the option of not writing a report if there is nothing to report; otherwise discussions at Assembly may not be productive.

Kevin acknowledged that a verbal report should suffice if there was nothing significant to discuss. However, he argued that there are important benefits to submitting regular written reports: written records can bring the inactivity of a standing committee to the GSG's attention, or heighten the salience of an issue.

Rob Harron (Math) motioned to accept the proposal as is. Before moving on, Jeff and Karin, most recent committee chairs, were asked to discuss why they weren't pushing for the inclusion of monthly written reports. Karin Sigloch (previous Health and Life Chair) felt it didn't make sense to report orally every month, but the idea of a written monthly report is fine. Jeff Dwoskin felt he would be willing to write one if Assembly wanted this. The motion was then seconded by Giri Parameswaran (ECO).

Kevin Collins amended the motion to require a written report 24 hours in advance. Rob didn't want to mandate a written report, especially in instances where there was nothing new to report. Kevin then made a motion to revise his proposed amendment: reports would be out to assembly at least 24 hours in advance, and the chair would be present during Assembly meetings to be available for discussion. The motion was seconded by Yaron Ayalon.

Before a vote was conducted, assembly members debated the merits of requiring written reports. Giri Parameswaran stated his disapproval of having this mandate in the regulations. Several assembly members argued that having multiple emails sent out would flood the mailboxes of recipients, many of which are not keeping up with the GSG-related emails sent out, and increase the workload of the standing committees. Kevin (POL) suggested that the emails be sent to Exec, who could then distribute them in 1 email, possibly attached to the agenda.

A hand vote was conducted to accept the proposal to revise the standing committees, with the amendment to require the standing committees to submit written reports at least 24 hours in advance. The vote did not pass (4 YAYS, 6 NOS).

A motion was made to approve the proposal as is. The motion was seconded, and a hand vote was conducted. The motion passed with 15 YAYS and 1 ABSTAIN.

## **2. Proposal to form an Institutional Review committee (IRC)**

The full text of Dan Raburn's presentation can be found in 031208 irc proposal.pdf. Briefly, the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) was conceived as a result of concerns raised about how the GSG functions. Examples of recent concerns include making urgent decisions when quorum is not met at assembly meetings, improving the election process, and preserving the institutional memory of the GSG. The purpose of the IRC is to take the initial steps towards identifying issues and solutions, and provide a forum for discussion. The proposed IRC would not be a taskforce; the idea would be that the results of these offline discussions would be presented at Assembly for further discussion.

A poll taken at Assembly showed that almost everyone in the audience felt that the formation of the IRC would be beneficial.

Yaron Ayalon (NES) proposed that amendment that the IRC come up with discussion items by the next Assembly meeting (April).

According to Dan, the IRC would come up with a 6-month agenda, which would be presented at Assembly, and the items on the agenda would be prioritized by Assembly. Yaron felt that some actions or decisions may need to be expedited, rather than at the end of the 6-month term. Shin-Yi Lin (Chair) suggested that this kind of action could be done by a member of Assembly as a free agent.

Kevin Collins (POL) proposed that the IRC not be a standing committee, but rather operate under a sunset provision: the IRC shall be disbanded within one year of its formation unless reauthorized by assembly.

Ashley Thrall (incoming Parliamentary Secretary) was concerned that these GSG offline discussions could divide the GSG into an exclusive group of knowledgeable people and another group that is ignorant of the details. According to Giri, anyone is invited to the IRC discussions.

A motion to accept the proposal with the friendly amendment and the presentation of the 6-month agenda at the next assembly meeting passed unanimously without discussion.

Kevin Collins (POL) argued that the parliamentary secretary should be an ad hoc committee in the IRC. Ashley Thrall (Incoming Parliamentary Secretary) and Giri Parameswaran (ECO) were nominated as co-chairs. Both accepted, and were voted into their positions with 15 YAYS.

## **V. New Business**

No new business was discussed at the meeting.

## **VI. Transition from Old to New Exec and Adjournment**

The new GSG Executive committee members introduced themselves to Assembly. Ashley Thrall is the new parliamentary secretary and a second-year Civil Engineering student. Jenna Losh is the new corresponding secretary and a Geosciences student. Yi Wang is the new social chair and a third year computer science. As social chair, Yi Wang handed out a list of his initial ideas for social events for the upcoming year, and encouraged Assembly and particularly members of the Events Board to participate in the social event. He also suggested creating a social co-chair position, and/or a social committee. Yi hopes to work with Kostas, who ran against him in this year's elections, who has some great ideas. Emmanouil Koukoumidis ("Manos") is the new treasurer and a student in the Electrical Engineering department, and also chair of the Events Board. Anne Twitty is the new press secretary and a student in the History department. Anne is particularly interested in housing issues, and felt that GSG can do a better job of publicizing housing and other concerns of the graduate students.

Several students were concerned that the new chair, Christina Hultholm was not present at the meeting. According to Shin-Yi, Christina had an emergency to attend to and could not make it to the meeting, but had a statement which she emailed to Assembly.

Dan Raburn thanked Shin-Yi Lin, who had committed a lot of her personal time over the past 3 years as Chair and the past five years in the GSG. Shin-Yi worked one year each as a recording secretary and corresponding secretary, and then as chair for 3 years.

Shin-Yi spoke to Assembly that it had been a privilege to work with the old Executive committee. Her summary for the progress GSG has made over the past five years is included in 3-Transition.pdf.

*Before the new Exec comes online, I wanted to say that it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with the old Exec, the three previous Executive Committees, and the Assembly for the past five years as we've worked to serve and represent our graduate student body. Over the past five years, I've learned more than I ever thought I could about Princeton and universities in general. I've met many other graduate students outside my department and a handful of really wonderful graduate alumni. I've also had the particular joy of welcoming three classes to Princeton as Chair during Orientation.*

*I've also had a chance to see the GSG grow and succeed. Along with Jeff Dwoskin and Dean Schreyer, we have served on Assembly for long enough to be able to provide a bird's eye view of all the hard work that the GSG has done. And before I step down as GSG Chair, I would really like to give you an idea of how things have changed in the past five years.*

When I joined the GSG in 2003:

- the graduate shuttle was brand new
- the graduate housing draw was done by hand and there were separate draws for the different complexes
- no possibility of student status after your program length
- there was limited support for graduate students with families
- we only had \$6,000 going towards GSG and GSG-sponsored social events
- GSG Assembly meetings ran 2-3 hours long and we handled each funding request in meetings
- The first Ivy Summit, a yearly meeting to compare notes with our student government peers in the Ivy League, had just happened

Since then:

- DCE extends student status for up to two years
- Family-friendly initiatives: reduced dependent SHP cost, maternity leave, child care subsidy, birth control cost subsidy
- APGA career mixers are now a regular thing for all divisions
- the Princeton Research Symposium is almost at its fourth year
  
- the housing application is now online, the draw is automated, and additional retention policies have been put into place
- some summer food service at the GC
- Café Vivian/Frist renovations happening in 2008
  
- the fall event has now become a very successful Wine and Cheese
- we have added summer Frolic at Frist event to our annual roster
- we have over \$18,000 going towards GSG and GSG-sponsored social events
- new programs to integrate undergraduate and graduate student communities: residential RGSes, Campus Club
- we've submitted a proposal of having a graduate student center/social space on central campus, unaffiliated with housing units
  
- GSG fee reform
- Co-sponsorship reform: task force to come up with funding rules, Events Board
- Governance: by-laws for elections re-written, committee structure re-organized, GSG has a detailed write-up in Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities
- we have gotten housing and parking privileges for GSG Exec members, and parking privileges for Committee chairs
- Assembly/Exec has become much more social
  
- we will be hosting the Ivy Summit in fall 2009

*And now, the University has come to a very exciting time, with both the Sustainability and the Campus Plan recently announced. The GSG is at a great time and place to think broadly about the support of graduate education at Princeton and the place of graduate students in the University community.*

*But before we moved forward, I felt it was important to acknowledge those who have worked so hard in the past:*

Nicole Esparza  
Meredith Safran  
Leonard Pease  
Brigitta Lee  
Josh Friess  
Aleks Donev  
Jack Tinsley  
Guillaume Sabouret  
Kellam Conover  
Karin Sigloch  
Dan Raburn  
Alex Ntelekos  
Jeff Dwoskin

*And, again, it's been a deep privilege to meet and work with you all.*

*So now, let's congratulate the new Exec and welcome them into office.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.



