

Minutes of the GSG Assembly meeting on May 24, 2000

Eszter Hargittai, GSG Chair, called the meeting to order at C.A. 6:00pm. Departing from recent custom, the GSG Assembly convened in Room 309 of the new Frist Campus Center. Paul Breitman, Director of the Frist Center gave the Assembly an enthusiastic welcome and also provided a detailed tour of the nascent Campus Center.

Item 0: Tour of the Campus Center (Courtesy of Paul Breitman)

As the tour began, Paul Breitman emphasized that the focus of the campus center is to build community between all groups on campus.

A Campus Center Open House will take place this Autumn on the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th of September.

The hope is for the Frist Center to operate between 7am and 2am on weekdays and between 8am and 3:30am during the weekend.

Although much of the Frist Center was still under construction, the Assembly nonetheless received a comprehensive tour of the building. Salient facts from the tour are summarized below.

In many cases, the classrooms within the Center are wired with Ethernet connections.

The Center for Teaching and Learning will be located in the Frist Center. To provide a kind of Laboratory for the study of the learning process, classrooms have been set up with a one - way mirror.

Paul pointed out the proximity of the offices of the Graduate Student Government and the Undergraduate Student Government. The GSG office will be furnished by the Campus Center. In addition, Paul is striving to obtain computer equipment for the office that shall be free of charge to the GSG.

In addition to the offices, conference space will be available for reservation by both the USG and the GSG.

A lecture hall has been converted to a film theater, designed to present between 5 and 6 films a week. The theater also is intended to accomodate special festivals and dance exhibits.

The main concourse of the Student Center is dominated by large hallways called "streets".

The Campus Center "Beverage Lab" will furnish drinks to accomodate a variety of tastes. Both alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages will be supplied.

% The hope is to provide an environment for informal mixing of members of the campus community. Paul sketched an image of an intellectual environment in which patrons interact calmly but maturely.

% The Beverage Lab is expected to be able to accomodate approximately 50 patrons.

% Responding to questions about carding, Paul reemphasized the desire to have an informal atmosphere. The hope, he explained, was to have a situation in which rigorous checks are unnecessary.

As the tour concluded, the Assembly recessed briefly consume pizza.

Since not all present were acquainted with one another, Eszter asked everyone present at the meeting to introduce themselves.

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes

The GSG Assembly voted to approve the minutes from the April GSG meeting. Additional revisions to the minutes, pointed out by Ulrich Struve, had yet to be incorporated. The recording secretary agreed to make the necessary changes.

Item 2: Election of the Chair

Lauren Hale stood for election as the sole nominee for GSG Chair. Via a voice vote, Lauren was unanimously elected Chair of the GSG. A round of applause greeted

Lauren's election.

Lauren, acknowledging her enhanced responsibilities, called for assistance in her duties as Social Chair.

Item 3: Report of the Treasurer

Three funding requests, discussed below, were presented to the Assembly. In Karthick's absence, Lauren served as GSG Treasurer and officiated as the requests were presented.

The Princeton Graduate Ultimate Frisbee Team asked for funding to defray the cost of its trip to the National Ultimate Frisbee Tournament in Idaho. Surita Bhatia spoke on behalf of the Graduate Ultimate Team, which asked for \$200 to help fund its participation in the National Tournament.

The Assembly ultimately voted to provide the Ultimate Team with \$100, as per Lauren's and Karthick's recommendation.

The Debasement Bar, anticipating a paucity of income during the summer months, requested financial assistance for the summer. Adrian Banner, Graduate College House Committee Chair, spoke for the D-Bar.

Specifically, the D-Bar requested funding for 8 Monday evenings during the Summer. The nights occur in the months of June and July, the time during which attendance is expected to be at its lowest. Adrian anticipated that between \$200 and \$300 would be necessary for the evenings in question. After a period of discussion, a vote was called and the Assembly voted against funding the Debasement Bar.

The Graduate College House Committee asked for funding for three summer pizza parties. As Adrian explained, the pizza events have historically been quite well attended. As was true during the previous summer, the plan is to provide pizza in lieu of the traditional summer barbecues.

The GSG Assembly voted to provide the requested \$650 for the summer pizza parties. The funding will come jointly from the Cosponsorship and Social Budgets.

Item 4: Committee and Project Reports

The Furniture Drive: It seemed initially that the annual Furniture Drive would not take place. However, largely through Randy Dorwart's efforts, the Furniture Drive was expected to

take place in early June as the senior undergraduates moved out.

The Drive is an excellent endeavor for several reasons. It enables graduate students to purchase furniture of high quality at an excellent rate, it provides furniture at no cost to volunteers, and the Drive allows needy families in the vicinity to benefit from inexpensive furniture.

Healthcare: Several hundreds of people have responded to the survey. Cristin Howley and Cesar Rosado have concluded that the data reduction involved is a massive project and have requested volunteers to assist with the project. noone had volunteered to help.

The data is stored in the form of text files containing questions and the associated responses. The hope, Eszter explained, is to complete the task by the Summer's end. Julia Morrison volunteered her services with the data processing. <Just prior to the June meeting, the recording secretary learned that Julia had completed the massive task.>

Campus Center Committee:

% One concern associated with the Campus Center is the need for an organization to apply for a liquor license for the Beverage Lab. A difficulty with the current plan is the fact that the license refers only to enrolled Graduate Students. The hope is to make the coverage more comprehensive.

A committee within the Campus Center Association has been established to deal with Membership issues. Currently, membership is not easily open to post-enrolled graduate students and alumni. (What this means is that they can individually apply for membership, but they do not have membership rights as a group.) Eszter Hargittai GS is a member of this committee.

Public Meeting with the Graduate Deans: Jason Brownlee was present at the meeting and supplied details.

% Deans Redman, Wilson, Montero, and Vice President Dick Spies were present at the meeting.

% The Graduate College has been removed from the list of possible options for expanding housing for the undergraduate

population.

% Concern was voiced over the fact that, excepting President Shapiro, only one of the University Trustees is a graduate alumnus.

% Graduate Students also expressed concern over the absence of spousal coverage within the University healthcare system.

Dean Montero mentioned that an emergency fund exists to assist with large medical debts. Indeed, the fund exists to assist with the special case of an expensive illness of a spouse, but is also available to help with the extraordinary medical expenses of single students.

% Dean Wilson stated that eventually a special committee will be formed to facilitate the flow of communication from concerned graduate students to the Deans of the Graduate School.

% The postenrollment status was describe by the Deans as a kind of bridge between the time one exists primarily as a student, and the time that one acquires a job.

% The average time of degree completion in the Social Sciences and the Humanities is 6 years.

% In general, it is not possible for International Students to extend their visa for one year. Loans falling due after student status ends is evidently a difficulty that cannot be avoided.

% Though the quality of the Princeton Graduate Program varies across departments and is difficult to assess in a concrete way, it is noteworthy that as of 5 years ago 62% of all students were graduating within seven years.

In the last three years, 2/3 of Princeton PhDs have obtained academic jobs.

% Eric Adelizzi pointed out that the University does try to convince student loan agencies to grant extensions, on an informal basis. Often, Eric explained, this works. Eric indicated that further details can be found at the URL

www.princeton.edu/~gchouse/minutes/minutes.20000515.txt

% Eszter remarked that one can obtain an additional year of visa status via Practical Training. Thus, one has the normal degree span and two additional years. The total, then, is up to seven years.

Constitutional Debate Section

The Constitution Committee, established several months ago, consisting of Kyle Morrison, Eric Adelizzi, Jim Vere, Steve Miller, Don Priour, and Scott Harper, made its report in the form of a proposed Constitution and By-Laws, with supporting documents. Kyle, the Committee Chair, introduced the draft. He explained that the Committee was formed to identify current problems with the Constitution and suggest remedies, and that the Committee quickly realized that it would be more expedient to prepare a new Constitution to replace the old.

Several amendments to the draft had been proposed, and the order of business was consideration of the amendments in turn and then the document itself. If approved, it would be brought to a referendum of the Graduate Student Body, probably in September.

% At the outset of the discussion, 29 reps were present in person or by proxy, which was more than the necessary quorum of 3/5 (or 25) under the current Constitution.

% Kyle Morrison pointed out several problems in the old Constitution, for instance:

It is unclear whether officers can vote, the Chair, Representative Secretary, and Press Secretary must be elected every semester (which is not the current practice), Assembly members are required to serve on at least one committee each, committees are required to meet at least once between every Assembly meeting, several organizations sending representatives are listed in the Constitution under different names or are different organizations than those listed, the Recording Secretary is charged with the responsibility of keeping a record of the election procedures for Representatives from each

department, the Assembly has to vote to approve these election procedures, there exists an Article in the Constitution specifying the election/appointment of graduate CPUC members by the GSG that is in blatant conflict with the necessary CPUC Bylaw the Assembly passed in March, and there is no mechanism by which the GSG encourages graduate U-Councilors (graduate CPUC members) to come and report on the CPUC proceedings.

He also underscored that the most critical problem with the old Constitution is that it does not account for the fact that there are vacant Representative seats. As the specified quorum is 60% of ALL Representative seats, and owing to the number of open seats, this means

that virtually all of the votes the Assembly has held in the last year are invalid. In addition, the requirement for amending the Constitution to change even the simplest things like the names of the organizations sending Delegates is 2/3 of ALL seats, so amending the Constitution without a referendum is very nearly impossible.

% Eric Adelizzi pointed out another, more humorous fault, that under the current Constitution, it is necessary to elect officers at every meeting! In addition, the current board of officers does not correspond to the officers listed in the document.

% Jim Vere began the discussion of the major features of the new draft.

The draft allows the Assembly to pass By-Laws, which may be adopted by 2/3 of the de facto representatives. This allows for easier amendment of the organization's operating procedures. A judicial procedure was also created to provide for the unlikely event that there are constitutional or representative disputes, or it becomes necessary to remove a member of the Assembly from any of his or her posts.

% Eric Adelizzi pointed out a number of significant changes proposed.

In 1992, the Assembly had passed an amendment to give larger departments proportionally more seats, and to enlarge the number of departmental seats; this failed not because it was voted down, but rather due to a lack of turnout. The present proposal mimicked the 1992 proposal.

% Kyle Morrison moved the draft before the Assembly. Jim, as Representative Secretary, laid out the order of consideration of the amendments. Jim announced his plan to begin with the least controversial and explained the rules under which the proposal

would be debated.

% There were several questions about the draft from members of the Assembly.

& Dave Baker inquired whether the new Constitution would address the quorum problem faced by the Assembly under the current Constitution, namely an inability to reach a quorum. Eric responded that a quorum had been lowered from 60% of all filled seats to 50% of active seats. (An active seat is defined as one held by a Representative who was present in person or by proxy at at least one of the last three meetings.)

& Jason Brownlee stated that when the GC House Committee passed its recent Constitutional amendment, a copy of the Constitution was circulated with words stricken through and added in bold so that the changes were obvious. He suggested that such a copy would be useful for this debate. Eric and Kyle answered that although the spirit of many portions of the old document had been retained, wording and the order of items had changed so much that most of the document would be stricken through. Eric added that the most important comparison was between the proposal and current practice, as the assembly had strayed somewhat from the word of the old document.

& Eszter Hargittai asked about the phrase

"excluding industrial action";

Jim explained that "industrial action" is a technical term for union activity such as striking.

% Ann Morning presented the first amendment, namely to adopt gender - neutral language and change all instances of "he" to "he or she" and "his" to "his or her". Beverley McKeon agreed. Eric stated that the Committee had discussed the matter, deciding that "he" was the standard usage. The motion to adopt Ann's proposed amendment passed by a large margin.

% Karthick Ramakrishnan's amendment was discussed next. In Karthick's absence, Manuel Sales presented it. The amendment was to combine the roles of Corresponding Secretary and Press Secretary on the grounds that the two roles overlap.

& Eric Adelizzi stated that Web Page Administrator, his job and the one that would become Corresponding Secretary in the proposed new document, was traditionally responsible for answering correspondence, splitting this duty with the Chair. Eszter, a former Press Secretary, said that there should be two positions since each involved a good deal of work. Beverley, the current Press Secretary, disagreed.

& The motion failed, attracting only two or three votes.

% Ann proposed the next amendment, which would retain the one-rep-per-department system. Her fear was that smaller departments would be disadvantaged in the proposed new system.

& Manish Vachharajani suggested that it is difficult, if not impossible, for one representative to understand the needs of a department as large as Electrical Engineering.

& Eszter Hargittai remarked that small departments have more post-enrolled students and are therefore larger than the Registrar's figures might indicate.

Eric said that the draft Constitution provided that post-enrolled students would be counted in the totals, if they paid dues.

& Jason pointed out that Electrical Engineering has not sent a representative to many meetings recently and wondered whether and how the additional seats would be filled. Eric remarked that 22.2% of the graduate student body is represented by half of the departmental representative seats and suggested that this was unfair.

Kyle said that everyone pays the same \$5 fee and should be entitled to equal representation.

& It was suggested that specifying the number of total seats in the By-Laws would make it easier to change the system one way or another in the future. Beverley said that the 22.2% figure was not accurate, because Special Interest Seats were not counted in the total.

Kyle said that the Special Interest Group Seats were not unique, because their membership overlapped with departmental seats and with one another.

& Adrian Banner asked why the apportionment is done by departments;

Eric Adelizzi responded that there is no good alternative, as graduate students are all primarily affiliated with a department. The fact is that most graduate students are likely to be in their department frequently, and this aids communication; additionally, Eric suggested that departmental representatives, except in the case of very large departments like Electrical Engineering, know their constituents and vice-versa.

& Eszter suggested that e-mail communication eliminates the need for multiple representatives from each department, as it aids communication. Ann was reluctant to allow decisions to reside in the By-Laws, where they are more easily amended

Ann suggested that the Assembly should emulate the U.S. Senate by having equal representation from each department.

Kyle commented that the House of Representatives style would be a better model if it was necessary to choose, as the only reason both exist was to serve as checks for one another; Eric said that the size of the U.S. House is not Constitutionally fixed but set by statute. Eric added that smaller departments would remain overrepresented, even if more seats were given to larger departments, because there would be a minimum threshold under which each department would be given one representative regardless of size. He said that the Senate was a poor model for representation

in the GSG because it was established in a somewhat undemocratic fashion in order to allay the fears of smaller states which stood to lose sovereignty.

& There followed some discussion on international students, which was extraneous and duplicated later.

& Jason Brownlee said that the GSG doesn't pass laws and so the interests of the larger departments aren't excluded. He said that the key was that all viewpoints be represented.

GSU) Steve commented that he became involved in the GSG (then the during the debate over the graduate student strike at Yale, where the Science departments were expelled from their graduate student organization because they disagreed on fundamental issues.

& Beverley McKeon asked how the Assembly could be sure it was increasing representation.

& Dave Goldberg suggested that the current Constitution was inflexible and that the decision should be placed in the By-Laws and that the By-Laws should state that there would be one representative per department.

There followed considerable discussion on how to phrase this, and Ann Morning accepted the result as a friendly amendment to her own.

& Debate was closed and the amendment passed to allow for one representative for each department or recognized program.

% The next amendment considered was Karthick Ramakrishnan's on the creation of 7 at-large seats. Manuel Sales again presented on behalf of Karthick Ramakrishnan.

In Karthick's proposal, the idea was that elections would raise awareness of the GSG and its work on campus as well. In addition, Manuel stated, the amendment would make the GSG more democratic.

Under the proposal, departments would still be represented as they are currently.

% The Assembly passed several small amendments to Karthick Ramakrishnan's amendment, changing the polling location to the Frist Campus Center from the Chancellor Green, altering the electing body from the Student Body to the Graduate Student Body, and altering some non-substantive phrasing to better match the rest of the Constitution.

The Assembly struck out the reference to departmental representation, as the issue had just been settled by Ann's amendment.

% After minor, noncontroversial changes were suggested and accepted, more serious discussion of the amendment began.

& Kyle Morrison suggested that the amendment would be irresponsible unless one could guarantee a voting turnout threshold.

& Jason Brownlee argued that this was the first and only means of proportional representation.

& Eric Adelizzi feared that the voter turnout would be low (thus increasing the chance of an unrepresentative election), and that the election would be cumbersome to run.

& There was discussion concerning the meaning of the single transferable vote, which was explained by Jim Vere. Ann Morning suggested that this amendment could be sent back to the Constitutional Committee or the author or to the author for polishing.

& Manuel Sales accepted a friendly amendment from Jason to put in a 10% threshold in turnout for the election to be valid. David Goldberg suggested that perhaps a small group of friends would run and the outcome would not be representative.

& Steve suggested trying both systems by awarding 4 seats for the largest departments and adding 4 at-large seats. Robert Osada suggested that friends getting together is always a risk, even in departments. Ulrich Struve suggests that a voting threshold would help prevent the "friends" problem.

& There was some discussion about vacant seats, and it was finally established that under the Constitution the Executive Committee would be responsible for soliciting candidates and conducting a new election.

& Eric Adelizzi suggested 20% would be a better threshold but did not move to amend. Jason mentioned that only 30%-40% of the House of the Graduate College voted in the recent amendment concerning membership and the D-Bar, and that this amount of turnout was unusually large.

& Manuel Sales accepted a friendly amendment to move the number of at-large representatives to the By-Laws.

% Ann Morning moved that we table the amendment discussion to the next meeting; this was defeated.

& Steve Miller suggested that the substance of the amendment was preserved and that the only change involved shifting things to the By-Laws. The change was approved by the Assembly.

& Eszter Hargittai felt that 7 was too large a number. Manuel Sales suggested putting no less than 5 at-large representatives in the Constitution or By-Laws; this suggestion was not accepted by the Assembly. Eric Adelizzi recommended lowering the number from 7 to 3, and this passed.

& On Kyle's recommendation, the election dates were moved to the Bylaws. Another change suggested by Kyle and accepted was an addition stating that when fewer candidates than the number of seats run, the vote would be to approve or disapprove.

% Karthick Ramakrishnan's amendment was then brought to a vote. The amendment did not pass.

% As the hour was nearly 10pm, there was then a motion to adjourn and continue discussion at a later date.

There was discussion about whether this should be an extraordinary meeting or at the next regular meeting and when the meeting would be held. Apparently, there was no good date for anyone.

The motion to adjourn was put to a vote and defeated. Eszter Hargittai called for a three minute recess.

% The meeting resumed and Jim Vere announced that some people had left and that there was now only one seat above a quorum.

% The three remaining amendments before the assembly dealt with the issue of representation of special interest groups.

One was proposed by Manuel Sales, one by Ann Morning, and one by Steve Miller and the Constitution Committee in response to the first two of the remaining amendments.

& Manuel Sales immediately withdrew his amendment in deference to Ann Morning's. Ann agreed to withdraw her amendment in favor of working with Steve Miller's, provided that some changes were made to Steve's proposal.

% Steve Miller's amendment, which proposed the creation of a new class of Senators, was adopted as the working amendment. Senators would have every right of Representatives except for the right to vote on funding requests.

Steve Miller stated that the Constitutional Committee had established

non-voting delegate seats because it felt that departmental representatives could do an adequate job of representing their constituents in most issues. Steve continued, saying that issues faced by minority groups which cut across departmental lines could be brought to the attention of the Assembly by a non-voting delegate, adding that it was fairly certain that the Assembly would take such issues seriously.

% There were several changes proposed to Steve Miller's version

of the amendment:

& The term Senator was stricken and the term "voting Delegate" substituted.

& The next change pertained to the limitation that the number of voting delegates be less than one-eighth the number of departmental seats, which would currently be 4. This restriction was stricken. Its removal was accepted as friendly by Steve Miller.

& Ann Morning next suggested that the requirement that organizations sending voting delegates have 1% of the Graduate Student Body (17-18 students currently) as voting members should be lessened. She specifically objected to the adjective "voting" modifying "members".

Discussion then ranged over what constituted voting membership.

% Discussion turned to the status of the Women's Center. Kyle Morrison said that groups must be represented by voting members. Eric Adelizzi pointed out that the Women's Center has no voting membership and that their representative is an appointed, paid employee. Further, Eric remarked, women make 16 out of 39 filled GSG seats, 3 of 7 Executive seats (including the GSG Chair), and 4 of 7 CPUC seats, while they comprise only about a third of the Graduate Student Body. Therefore, Eric contended, women were not underrepresented.

% It was also mentioned during the discussion that the Council of International Graduate Students had no elections and that the Black Graduate Caucus did not specifically keep a list of active members but considered all African American graduate students members.

Kapil Agrawal, CIGS representative, said that he felt uncomfortable claiming to represent all international students, as he did not really do so.

% In the end, the requirement that organizations sending voting delegates to the GSG Assembly constitute 1% of the Graduate Student Body and submit an annual list of members was replaced by a statement of legislative intent appended to the clause under discussion.

On the motion of Ulrich Struve, the word "unrepresented" was changed to "underrepresented".

% Eric Adelizzi suggested several cosmetic changes to avoid the necessity of renumbering clauses.

% Eszter moved that the Women's Center join the Black Graduate Caucus as a group being granted voting delegate seats. The motion passed.

% A question arose on the amendment to the Constitutional draft. Eric Adelizzi asked for the floor, but Steve Miller moved to close the debate. Steve's motion passed, debate was closed, and the amendment passed.

The last item of business was the main motion to send the proposed Constitution to the Graduate Student Body for referendum, as amended. Lauren Hale moved to have the motion tabled until the next meeting. However, the motion to table failed.

% The motion was made to close debate. The required 2/3 majority was obtained and debate was closed.

% Finally, the assembly turned to vote on whether to send the proposed constitution (as amended) to the Graduate Student Body for ratification. As Assembly members prepared to cast their votes, Chair-elect Lauren Hale and Jason Brownlee left the room and the meeting. Several members of the assembly expressed their concern and asked them to remain.

% Manuel Sales questioned the presence of a quorum. Since a quorum evidently was absent, the assembly was not able to vote on the issue of sending the constitution to the referendum.

% After a brief period of informal discussion, the meeting adjourned at circa 10:30pm.

The next GSG Meeting will be held at 7:00pm on June 28 in Room 309 of the Frist Campus Center.
