

GSU MEETING FOR DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES,
NOVEMBER 14TH., 1988

The following is a description of the GSU Meeting for Departmental Representatives held in 120 East Pyne on November 14th., 1988, at 8:00 p.m. I have tried to keep it short.

1. Introduction: Tama started the meeting by introducing herself, and explaining how she came to be involved in the GSU. She said that her Department - Mol. Biol. - had already started to show substantial improvements (w.r.t. stipend levels and teaching arrangements) as a result of her involvement in the GSU. She also described the general activities of the GSU since the October 10th. meeting, and noted that the subsequent speakers would describe the activities of the various committees of the GSU since that time. Finally, she noted that there were several pieces of paper available for collection by the Departmental Representatives, including copies of Christian's recent letter to the Prince, and also a questionnaire. She then turned the meeting over to the representatives of the various committees.

2. Stipend and Teaching Committees: Tom spoke on behalf of both of these committees. In connection with the Stipend Committee, he noted that this committee has two principal functions, viz: (i) to represent Graduate Student monetary concerns in Nassau Hall; and (ii) to communicate Nassau Hall's actions to Graduate Students. The principle questions on which this committee has been working are the following:

(General): How are stipend levels set?
Are stipends tied to inflation?
Why are there arbitrary differences
(+/- \$500) in stipend levels?
Should (could) there be a reasonable
minimum stipend level set?
How do we do relative to other
schools?

(In connection with these questions, Tom noted that the Committee has been working mainly (and quite successfully) with Dean Turk, but that there seems to be a "reality shift" in the perception of Graduate Student life when the viewpoint of Nassau Hall is adopted. He added that stipend levels are set at the Departmental level, but greatly subject to the influence of Nassau Hall - so that Departments often find it necessary to lobby for funds for stipends! Clearly, there are a number of issues here, and anyone who cares to take up a pen on behalf of these causes should be encouraged. A media campaign - letters to the Prince and the Nassau Weekly - ought also to be encouraged.

(Taxes): How have stipends increased in the last 3 or 4 years?

 How much have these increases been tied to taxes, and how much to inflation?

 How have increases been tied to year of study?

 How much would full compensation cost PU?

For most of these questions, the GSU is still in the process of collecting information.

In connection with the Teaching Committee, Tom noted that the following questions have been pursued:

 Are teaching duties fairly distributed?

 Are teaching loads reasonable?

 Is remuneration reasonable? adequate?

 What consideration is given to language difficulties experienced by TA's?

 Are TA's given adequate advance notification of their duties?

(Tom also noted (i) that it will be useful to discuss many of these problems with the USG, and (ii) that it will be important to take up the question of the feasibility of setting

University-wide guidelines. There are plans to distribute a questionnaire to all TA's .. and there is also a need to get people from the Humanities involved in this Committee.)

3. Campus Life and Student Services Committees:

Tad spoke on behalf of these Committees. He discussed three of the projects to which these Committees are currently attending, viz: (i) the Rotunda; (ii) the Shuttle; and (iii) the Library.

In connection with the Rotunda, Tad noted that he has been having discussions with Pat Naylor (DFS) in connection with the possibility of keeping the Rotunda open over the Christmas break. (Are people enthusiastic about this scheme? Can we get ourselves organised in time?) He also mentioned the notice board in the Rotunda - and the fact that we also need to consider other meeting places for Grad. Students, since not everyone can nor does use the Rotunda. (What are the alternatives?)

In connection with the Shuttle, Tad noted that there are problems with reliability and routing, and asked for input and for volunteers to work on these problems.

And, in connection with the Library, Tad noted that opening hours during periods when U-grads are away, and the availability of carrels to Grad. Students are issues of concern. As with the earlier subjects of discussion, Tad emphasised the need for information, volunteers, and complaints.

4. Counselling And Graduate Student Network Committee:

Christian began by saying that this Committee is staffed jointly by GSU and GWA members. It's main activities are (i) working with the Counselling Centre, and (ii) working to establish a

Graduate Student Network.

In connection with (i), Christian noted that (per head) Grad. students use the Counselling Centre more than do Undergrads (2500 hours for Undergrads, 1700 hours for Grads) - and that, even though the demand for services is rising, the supply of sessions is actually decreasing. The Committee has written to Dean Ziolkowski (with no response, to date), and to the Counselling Centre.

In connection with (ii), Christian noted that the Committee had produced a letter which will be sent to every Graduate Student, spouse, etc., and which seeks to register support for the formation of a Graduate Student Network. (The Committee has been discussing this idea with Dr. Geller, and with the U-Grad peer-to-peer counsellors.) At the moment, the plans are somewhat fluid (particularly w.r.t. the detailed workings of the network - presumably it won't be able to operate at a Departmental level!) but the response to the letter should solidify things a lot.

5. GSU Constitution Committee:

Doug began by noting that the Steering Committee is not recognised as representative, nor is it elected, nor is it self-perpetuating (e.g. in the event of a "tragic bus accident") - hence the need for a Constitution. He presented a summary of the Constitution-in-progress, under the following headings:

- Name
- Purpose
- Membership
- GSU Assembly
- Funding
- Ratification

He suggested that \$5 per year would be an adequate fee, and that the Constitution should be

ready for ratification in February, 1989. (Those who want further details about this should contact Doug, or one of the other Committee members.)

6. Elections Committee:

John noted that there will be three sorts of groups which will have members elected to the GSU Assembly:

Departmental Representatives
Housing
Interest Groups

He noted the need to set out a procedure for elections (in order to legitimate claims to being a representative organization), and suggested that elections will fall in the third week of each semester (with two half-Assembly elections per year). The elections will be supervised (run) by the Departmental Representatives...

7. Dean Z. Reappointment Committee:

Emily began by noting that Dean Ziolkowski is up for reappointment at the end of this year - and that, provided Dean Ziolkowski wants the job and the President Shapiro decides to offer it to him, the reappointment is a foregone conclusion. It seems that Graduate Students should at least have some input into the decision-making process, and the aim of the Dean Z. Reappointment Committee is to see that this is in fact the case. So far, the committee has (i) written a letter to President Shapiro, offering input (as yet we have received no output from him); (ii) arranged to meet for discussion with Carl Wartenburg (the GSU participants in this meeting were Tad, Emily, and Alan); and (iii) entered into discussion with those Undergraduates who were involved in the discussion of the reappointment of Dean Lowe.

Emily concluded her presentation by appealing to anyone with information about or personal

experience in dealing with Dean Ziolkowski to contact her.

8. Social Committee:

Sarah discussed some of the main activities of the Social Committee, such as:

1. Planning a major party, scheduled to follow the elections (A "GS Unity party")
2. Organising a Grad. Student Coffee Hour (in Murray-Dodge?)
3. Organising interdepartmental study breaks
4. Producing and selling "GSU" buttons

She called for volunteers from the sciences to join this Committee.

9. General Discussion:

A variety of issues were raised in the general discussion which followed the Committee reports. The following is a brief note on each, in the order in which they were raised.

1. Health Insurance: What has the GSU done about Health insurance? Not much! (We hope that a Committee is about to be established.) Given the stress on Health and Dental Insurance in the survey, it is clear that something should be done. (Rae noted that there is a fund available through Dean Montero's office for those who can't meet their medical expenses.) Presumably, what is needed is a more comprehensive group policy, which provides 100% coverage ...

2. Community Service: Sarah suggested that it might be a good idea to establish a Community Service Committee, which would gather together information on community action. (Perhaps a flyer, or one-off publication might be all that is required. Otherwise, it might be better to think of the Committee as associated with, rather than as part of, the GSU. The crucial question would be whether the duties of the Committee

would go beyond information collection and dissemination.) (We have heard that some people in WWS have already started to establish such an organisation.)

3. Teaching Surveys: Discussion of this issue is contained in the main part of the report.

4. E-Mail: The question of a GSU account was raised. Alan is working on it ..

5. Housing Committees: Questions were raised about the prospects of a housing coalition. Not much has happened on this front. Any volunteers?

6. Role Of GSU Departmental Representatives: It was suggested that the following are the main duties of the GSU Departmental Representatives:

1. Self-promotion (i.e. making it known to fellow Graduate Students that you are the Departmental Representative for their Department).

2. Posting Newsletters, etc.

3. Running meetings within Departments.

7. Some Things It Might Be Useful For Departmental Representatives To Have:

1. A summary of the Nov. 14th. meeting. (This is the document you are now reading!)

2. Minutes? Better: the Newsletters (which are sanitised versions of the minutes).

3. A list of all Departmental Representatives (to be included on the next Newsletter?)

4. Space on Departmental Bulletin Boards. (Use Coloured String?)

5. An executive summary of the Constitution (plus one full copy of the Constitution to each Department).

6. Outreach to Departments with no Representatives. (Perhaps we should send letters to the Grad. Student secretaries.)

8. Useful Information:

Steering Committee meetings are Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the USG office in the Rotunda.

All Grad. Students are encouraged to get involved in the GSU.

Thanks to Tama for organising this meeting, and to all those who participated in it.

Graham Oppy

(for the GSU Steering Committee)