

GSG Assembly meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 6pm Frist Campus Center Room 309

Recorded by: LaTonya Trotter (SOC)

Supplements: [Proposed Budget 2007-2008 \(pdf\)](#) [Shin-Yi Lin's Chair's Report \(html\)](#) [GSG Proposal for a Graduate Student Center \(pdf\)](#)

Agenda I. Call to Order and Assembly Business

A. Seating of New Assembly Members -- Silvia Bulow

B. Approval of Minutes (July, September, October) -- Shin-Yi Lin

II. New Business III. Reports

A. Department Reports -- EEB, CHE, SLA

B. Chair - Shin-Yi

Lin C. Firestone meeting -- Shin-Yi Lin IV. Decision Items

A. Budget

Update -- Alex Ntelekos V. Discussion Items

A. Time-to-degree -- Shin-Yi VII.

Adjournment

Attendance for GSG Assembly Meeting May 9, 2007

TO BE ADDED

PRESENT

Representatives & voting delegates present:

Non-voting delegates present:

Officers present:

Councilors present:

Others present:

ABSENT

Representatives & voting delegates absent:

Non-voting delegates absent:

Officers absent:

Councilors absent:

Others Absent:

VACANCIES

Representatives & voting delegate vacancies:

Non-voting delegate vacancies:

Officer vacancies:

Councilor vacancies:

Minutes

I. Call to Order and Assembly Business

A. Seating of New Assembly Members (Silvia Bulow)

The Assembly welcomed two new representatives. Andrew Ballinger is the new AOS representative and Alan Johnson is the BGC representative. There was some conversation as to whether Audrey Dorelien was the BGC rep, but as she was not present at the beginning of the meeting, Alan Johnson was welcomed to the Assembly.

B. Approval of Minutes for July, September and October (Shin-Yi Lin)

There were no new minutes available for the Assembly to approve. There was some discussion as to the status of the minutes.

David Jorgensen (REL) expressed his concern that the lack of minutes was a very important issue for the proper functioning of the Assembly. He inquired to the board and to the Assembly about what could be done. For example would it be possible to have other members fill in to help edit the minutes?

Shin-Yi (CHAIR) provided history of difficulty with minutes. The GSG once did have General Assembly members volunteer, but there were problems with the consistency of the notes and problems with timeliness. Having the minutes recorded by a formal member of the Executive Committee was one way to deal with this problem. However, there is often difficulty finding someone willing to run for the position. David asked for clarification, is recording the minutes the recording secretary's only job? Shin-Yi affirmed this, but added that as a member of the executive committee the recording secretary also has other duties than can make it difficult to produce timely minutes.

II. New Business

No new business was discussed.

III. Reports

A. Department Reports -- EEB, CHE, SLA Robert Scogna (CHE), a 4th year student, gave the departmental report. The department mainly trains doctoral students. Their placements are geared toward industry. A few years ago, the department phased out general exams, instead requiring a B- or above in coursework. The average time to degree is 5.5 years, which is a year longer than similar programs. In general, students are happy, funding is not a problem and there are no burning issues.

Ryan Chisholm (EEB) gave his departmental report. His department currently has 36 graduate students. The time to degree is 5 or 5.5. They take generals at the end of the 2nd year. The pass rate is 95%. There is 100% placement into postdocs. There were no pressing concerns among students, except the University Shuttle.

Christine Dunbar (SLA) submitted her departmental report, but was not able to attend the Assembly meeting. Therefore, Shin-Yi (CHAIR) proposed that we postpone her report until she was able to attend.

B. Chair's Reports

Progress on Graduate Student Center Proposal

Following up on an Assembly discussion last spring and extensive discussions with the Graduate School and the Office of Campus Life, we submitted our proposal for a Graduate Student Center at the end of October. Princeton is the only such college that does not have a graduate center on campus. Although there is no particular timeline, the proposal hopes to make the larger point that establishing a center is something the university should “start thinking about.” The proposal was submitted to Marc Burstein (Facilities Administration).

Ivy Summit

The Ivy summit is an annual event where graduate student leaders get together to discuss issues and advocacy. This year's Ivy Summit was held on November 2-4 and was hosted by the Brown University delegation. While we were originally planning on going to the summit, we decided at the last minute to pull out our delegation. We had issues putting together a nice delegation.

New Director of Parking and Transportation

The new Director of Parking and Transportation is Kim Jackson. Jeff Dwoskin, Kevin Collins, Medini Padmanabhan, and Donna Sy helped to interview for the position this past month. The new Director, will oversee the shuttle, pedestrian/bicycle safety, and parking. She will start in January of 2008.

Open PriComm Meeting

The open PriComm meeting was held this Monday. Students commented on 2 graduate student proposals sent to Pricomm: increasing Humanities and Social Sciences stipends to \$25,000 and increasing the travel fund budget. These are just proposals and have not been accepted. Students brought up other issues: sustainability, rise in cost of birth control, shuttle service. Proposals are posted online after Pricomm has a meeting with an administrative group. If there are any questions about the proposals, they can be addressed to Jeff or Katherine Rohrer, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs.

Summer letter writing campaign updates

Shin-Yi reported on the summer letter writing campaigns for which there are updates.

Public safety letter. Shin-Yi (chair), Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities Chair), and Karin Sigloch (Health and Life Chair) met with Laurel Harvey and Steve Healy to discuss the letter. They are planning to set up a public safety walk specifically for the routes from graduate student housing to campus.

Child Care letter. Shin-Yi, Karin Siglock and Silvia Bulow had a follow-up meeting with Joan Girgus and the Child Care Working Group to discuss the Student Child Care Assistance Program (SCCAP). There was the impression on their end that the administrative and procedural aspects of the program worked well in its first year. GSG members requested more in-depth stats from this inaugural year. They agreed to send a formal memo with these stats and they will be shared with the Assembly. The working group is also working with the Registrar to gather more reliable data on the eligible population (marital status, kids, visa status, visa status of spouse, etc.) There will be another follow-up meeting in the Spring.

General Chair Announcements

Event Board. Thanks to Event Board members Alex Ntelekos and Kostas Aisopos for updating the Events Board website to make it more user-friendly.

UHS. There is a currently a search for a new University Health Services director. Dante Ricci is our graduate student rep on the search committee. In the interim, Janet Finnie has been name interim Director.

HPAB. Karin Sigloch will be representing graduate students on the Healthier Princeton Advisory Board. Their next meeting is November 16. The board is mainly focused on underage drinking and staff health, but Karin asked for feedback on any concerns from graduate students. Christopher Crutchfield (CHEM) asked about addressing unsafe lab practices. From his experience in Chemistry, there isn't any consistent training for folks in labs. Further discussion revealed a range of experiences: practices may be department and lab dependent. Chris was also concerned about overall safety and suggested that public safety should make it a practice to walk through the labs on nights and weekends. Jeff offered that if there were specific problems, he could be the point person to speak with. He felt there were other channels through which this could be addressed. The chair tabled this discussion.

CPC and Congratulations. Tara McCartney, currently the Community Programs Director, has accepted a position as the Assistant Director of Alumni Relations. December 14 is the last day she will serve as CPC and she will begin her new position on December 17, 2007. Congratulations to Tara. We are currently helping with the interview process for the new CPC.

December Guest. President Tilghman will be our guest for the December meeting. When we have guests, we usually ask them to discuss a specific issue. If anyone has ideas about what you would like to discuss with her, talk to anyone on the Executive Committee

Elections Committee. In December, we need to form our GSG Executive Elections Committee. This Committee works to ensure that the elections are conducted independently and fairly. If you're interested, let the Executive Committee

know. Members of this committee cannot run for any of the Executive positions.

GSG Governance/Institutional Memory Retreat. This event will happen on Saturday, December 1, 2007. Shin-Yi (CHAIR) explained the reason behind the retreat. Institutional memory is important for the GSG because it allows us to speak with administration from a place of knowledge. Executive committee has become less work over the years, but getting enough participation is a constant struggle. There is a bottleneck of knowledge that rests with longtime members Jeff, Karin, and Shin-Yi. The retreat will be a half to a full day meeting for Karen and Jeff to transfer that knowledge. There was some discussion about the retreat specifically as well as about the problem of institutional memory more generally. One question from the assembly was about whether there been any effort to put this history into writing. Jeff offered that if anyone wanted to volunteer to take notes at the meeting, this would be one way of accomplishing this goal. Further discussion revolved around several key themes:

Desired rep tenure: Chris (CHEM) asked if there any sense of what a good tenure would be? The following discussion brought up the pros and cons to having shorter or longer tenures, such as sacrificing institutional memory for wider participation.

Definition of the problem: Andrew Ballinger (AOS) Is the problem of student engagement in GSG really about institutional memory, or something else? LaTonya (SOC) suggested that part of the problem could be not having leadership and meeting structures that invited larger participation. Another member added that he was amazed during the September meeting that the shuttle discussion happened last and many people left before it could be discussed. The logistical problem of needing voting items to be first to have a quorum was noted by Shin-Yi.

Communication: There were questions from the Assembly about whether the retreat was the best way to address this problem. Institutional memory could also be improved with better forms of communication. Having a GSG wiki was proposed. Obstacles to the wiki were discussed: who will take the time to generate the original content as well a question of its usefulness as we already have a website and a secretary who posts information to the website. The wiki proposer acknowledged that the start up costs of a wiki were significant, but once started, we wouldn't have to reinvent the wheel every few years like we would have to do with verbal transfer of knowledge. Sylvia (PARL SEC)

said we could easily set up an empty wiki and interested parties could organize around filling it out. Discussion about the wiki also brought to the surface some problems with the GSG website which make it difficult to rely on for information, such as multiple links to multiple constitutions.

IV. Decision Items

This item was unintentionally overlooked until the middle of the discussion items. But for the sake of clarity, is listed here.

A. Budget Update (Alex Ntelekos)

The initial budget had a line item of \$1250 for our participation in the Ivy Summit. Because the Executive Committee pulled the delegation, Alex proposes that we transfer that \$1250 to the events board. There is also an addition to our income stream of previously uncollected \$640 in fees. A unanimous hand vote approved the proposal to transfer the total of \$1890 to the events board.

B. Firestone Meeting and GSG taskforce (Shin-Yi Lin and Yaron Ayalon)

First the Chair gave a brief report from the Firestone Meeting. One outcome of this set of meeting was a concern that there is no constant group of people who are concerned about these issues, such as GSG library task force. Yaron Ayalon (NES) presented the reasons why such a task force would be useful: having a constant group that library staff knew would always be working on these issues and that student committee members represent the GSG and the entire graduate student community every step of the way. A proposal was made for Yaron to be the chair of the taskforce; he would then take responsibility for gathering other members. A point of clarification was made that this taskforce was only for Firestone and only for the duties agreed upon. A unanimous hand vote placed Yaron as the chair of the taskforce.

V. Discussion Items

A. Time to degree

Shin-Yi Lin started the discussion by asking us each person present to share the time to degree in their department and what the feeling in the department is around

this issue. However, the majority of the discussion concerned how we should conceptually think about this issue and how logistically best to discuss it.

Charlie Butcosk (ART) expressed his opinion that placement and time to degree data are the primary levers the university uses to make departments and programs make specific changes. These two measures are the primary way that departments are evaluated and prodded. He stated that our discussion on time to degree should grapple with whether using time to degree as a yardstick or metric was across-the-board appropriate.

Along this theme the following discussion raised the complexity of this issue:

- How valid time to degree is as a useful metric depends in part on what students plan to do after graduation. A short time to degree is often appropriate when post-doctoral positions are the norm, but longer degree programs may make more sense where graduates move straight to academic positions.**
- Smaller departments and the humanities have different issues. Clara Tuan (EAS) noted that comparing her department and other humanities with a 4 to 5 year time frame was a poor fit and did not fit the reality of their degree requirements.**
- Shin-Yi Lin asked how does time to degree matter in terms of competitiveness with other programs.**

The Assembly also grappled with how to have this discussion. There were reports from some departments but not from others. Some felt that the departmental reports sent by each rep contained much more information than the assembly could digest for this discussion and that not all of the questions were applicable to all departments. The question was raised whether we could come up with a series of questions that applied to every department. Charlie Butcosk (ART) offered to help with this initiative if the Assembly thought it was useful.

Shin-Yi closed the discussion by stating that if anyone wants to help re-imagine and shape the goals for a discussion on time-to-degree, they should talk to her or Charles.

Meeting adjourned.