

Wednesday November 11, 2009
GSG meeting

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Minutes
 - a. GSG Assembly, Wednesday 14 October
3. Decision Items
 - a. Neuroscience Representative to GSG Assembly
 - b. Graduate Student Fee Referendum
 - c. Executive Committee & Officers of the GSG.
 - d. Election Committee
4. Reports
 - a. Chair
 - b. Academic Affairs Committee
 - c. Campus Relations Committee
 1. Outdoor Action Report
 - d. Facilities Committee
 - e. Health & Life Committee
 - f. Social Committee
5. New Business
6. Close.

1. Welcome

The meeting commenced at 6:13pm.

2. Minutes

A motion to approve the October 14 2009 minutes was approved with none opposed. Since quorum was unmet (only 17 voting members present; 20 required for quorum), Assembly approved the minutes while acting as a committee of the whole.

3. Decision items

a. Neuroscience Representative to GSG Assembly

Motion: That the GSG Assembly accept the following amendment to the By Laws:

Proposed Amendment to By Law I(3)

Recognized Programs. The following academic programs are recognized as separate Academic Units: Applied and Computational Mathematics, Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, History of Science, Neuroscience, Plasma Physics, and Population Research.

Moved: Praveena Joseph-de Saram

Seconded: Giri Parameswaran

The motion was not voted on because Assembly did not have quorum. Voting on the proposed amendment was deferred to the next meeting.

b. Graduate Student Fee Referendum

A description of the referendum was sent in advance of the meeting by email (111109_ReferendumProposal.doc).

Motion: That the GSG Assembly propose the following amendment to the Article X, Section 1 of the Constitution regarding the graduate student fee, and that the question be determined by a referendum of the graduate student body:

Proposed Amendment to Constitution X (1)

A ten-dollar annual fee collected each semester shall be assessed to all graduate students who are enrolled full-time and are in residence, and collected from such qualified others as wish to join under the provisions of Clause III-2.

The referendum shall be held in conjunction with the annual officer elections and shall ask the following question: “Do you think the graduate student fee should be changed from \$10 per year to \$10 per semester?”

Moved: Giri Parameswaran

Seconded: Kevin Collins

In discussing the proposed referendum, Assembly discussed three issues:

Should the referendum be put to the graduate student body?

Assembly did not unanimously support the fee increase, but agreed that it may not be representative of the graduate student body’s sentiments. Assembly did agree to permit the issue to be put on a ballot and up to a vote by the graduate student body.

By how much should the current graduate student fee be raised?

Assembly discussed two major concerns with raising the annual fee to \$20, which is double the current fee:

1. A high proposed increase may make it less likely to be approved. Voter turnout (including electronically) is already a problem (several email reminders needed to be sent to the graduate student body for the last vote) and may make it difficult to get enough yes votes
 - a. Alternatively, multiple choices for fee increases (votes on \$2 increase, \$4 increase, and so on) could be offered on the ballot
2. Graduate students may not support a doubling in the annual fee, especially since the fee was doubled from \$5 to \$10 several years ago (and some current graduate students were enrolled during this fee increase)
 - a. A total of \$20 is not large – this can be spent in 1 day
 - b. \$15 was suggested in the meeting
 - c. Advertising how much our peer institutions charge may make students realize that this isn't much
 - d. Students may not even pay attention
 - e. Advertising what events the events board has funded via publicity may help
 - f. Could reassure students that the fee won't be raised for another given # of years
 - g. \$5 increase may not be enough and would improve the quality of those events have running already but would not enable the Events Board to fund more events.
 - i. With this increase, the cap on funding requests may be able to go down –the current status may be discouraging - some groups may be scaling down their events
 - ii. Lisa spoke on behalf of the Events Board and argued that they could easily spend almost double their budget based on the requests turned down

Should there be an inflation clause?

Assembly discussed adding a clause where the fee would automatically each year by an incremental amount. The motivation for this would be to allow for inflation without having to have the student body vote to approve every increase. This increment could be annual and/or in proportion to inflation or increases in graduate student stipends and could be on the ballot in addition to or instead of doubling the student fee.

Assembly discussed the following concerns with including an inflation clause:

1. Last time the fee increase was put to a vote to the graduate student body, the fee increase was approved, but the adjustment for inflation was not → people may prefer option to make that decision rather than an automatic pass
2. Graduate student stipends do not increase uniformly across departments
3. Graduate student body would feel disconnected to GSG if their voting ability was taken away
4. Students may be concerned about screwing over students in the future because they won't be able to anticipate what students will want in the future

5. Adding a second question may cause students to choose between the two options even if they are separate choices

Three straw polls were conducted to gauge Assembly's opinion about the vote.

1. Poll #1 – all students present were asked to vote in favor of one of the following three choices for the amount to increase the student fee:
 - a. 17 were in favor of a ten dollar increase
 - b. 2 were in favor of a five dollar increase
 - c. # in favor in keeping the fee at \$10 and keeping 10, increasing it some amount – not recorded
2. Poll #2 - # of questions on the ballot
 - a. 18 voted in favor of having a single question
 - b. 5 voted in favor of having two questions
3. Poll #3 was conducted with the option of having only 1 question on the ballot:
 - a. 14 voted in favor of a \$10 increase
 - b. 5 voted in favor of a \$5 increase

The motion was put up to a vote. A friendly amendment to strike the first statement was added and seconded. The motion passed with 18 in favor, no oppositions or abstentions.

The following things were agreed upon:

1. The referendum would be conducted in February 2010.
2. Since there were no nay votes, Assembly was not required to form a “No” committee. No members volunteered to form a “No” committee.

c. Executive Committee & Officers of the GSG.

Assembly received a document describing the proposal in advance of the meeting (111109_AmendmentProposal.doc)

Motion: That the GSG Assembly note the attached proposals to amend the Constitution, By Laws and Standing Rules, to include the Chairperson of each standing committee as a member of the Executive Committee, and which reallocates the responsibilities of the Officers of the GSG between a President, Vice President, Communications Director, Secretary and Treasurer.

Moved: Giri Parameswaran

Seconded: Aurelien Fraisse

The motion above proposed that Assembly deal with this issue during next month's meeting (December) and constitutes one month's notice. The motivations behind the proposed changes are the following:

1. To consolidate the current executive committee, which may be too large to meet regularly as a whole and conduct business efficiently
2. Incorporate the committee chairs positions into the executive committee

Housing priorities could not be guaranteed to change with changes to the Executive committee. GSG can only structure its organization efficiently and make its case to the housing committee, which meets and makes decisions on an annual basis.

d. Election committee

The corresponding secretary was nominated for the position (and had accepted the nomination in advance of the meeting). The nomination was seconded. Two departmental reps (Clifton Perry (REL) and Daniell Rowles (MOL)) volunteered to serve on the committee.

4. Reports

a. Chair

The report was emailed in advance (see 111109_ChairsReport.doc) and was not discussed in length at the meeting.

The Chair requested that Assembly send brief descriptions of their roles in the GSG and photos of themselves to the website developer, would be posting these on the new website.

b. Academic Affairs

The committee had nothing to report.

c. Campus Relations

The campus relations chair was not present at the meeting but had previously sent an email to Assembly requesting that reps advertise the upcoming APGA career mixer (to be held on November 18th from 6-7:30pm at Campus Club) and for volunteers to assist in running the event advertise it to students in your department!

1. Outdoor Action

The graduate student liaison to the Outdoor Action Program recently met with Director Rick Curtis to discuss increasing graduate student involvement. The following are the major points of their discussion:

- a. the director will send notice to upcoming events to Lisa Schreyer (Assistant Dean for Residential Life) so that upcoming events can be included on the monthly events bulletin for graduate students (this should be implemented soon)
- b. There are upcoming organizational changes – the OA office will transfer to office of campus life, how it is funded will be changed- and this will probably improve involvement to grad student
- c. OA website will be adding a craigslist type of board
- d. OA will probably try to get funding from GS
- e. OA is working on an option for graduate student leader training

d. Facilities

i. Shuttle

- a. The committee had no major updates since the recent email to the graduate student body- email (see Nov09_Fall ShuttleChanges.doc)
- b. The GSG has received very few complaints from students about the new shuttle system
- c. no signage has been added at shuttle stops; no response from Kim Jackson (Director, Transportation and Parking Services (TPS)) after emailing her two months ago
- d. A suggestion was made at the meeting that the GSG could take it upon itself to add signs.
 - i. Some individuals have done this
 - ii. Should the GSG take money from its own budget to do TPS's job?

ii. Housing

Assembly will receive a detailed report from the Shuttle committee soon after the meeting (the body of the report is found in 111109_FacilitiesReport.doc). The committee outlined the major updates:

- a. A students-only meeting to discuss housing before the meeting with the housing policy committee is tentatively held on next Wed November 18 (students could email gsg@ to suggest better times that wouldn't conflict with the APGA mixer).
- b. Hibben/Magie construction: the committee met with the Facilities department and the Graduate School. The University has put out a request for qualifications for developers and will sort through these and pare down to smaller number, and give them request for proposals. Hibben/Magie will still on the graduate school draw for next year, and faculty/staff will move out by June.
- c. Butler will still be in the draw, and will probably be in the draw of the following year.
- d. Requirements for developers
 - i. University will have rent control after allowing developers to set initial values to below-market rates for graduate students.
 - ii. Hibben/Magie is intended to be all grad student housing
 - iii. University will put in input for operating standards/maintenance requirements
- e. Housing for pet owners displaced from pet friendly housing (Butler) – Stanworth Apartments is pet-friendly (Local law requires separate entrances for apartments with pets) but has fewer units than Butler
- f. University will involve graduate students focus groups and developers will want our input
- g. Next year's contracts for H/M will be for 11 months (not the usual 12 months) to accommodate a two-year construction plan (to be finished two Septembers from now). The committee raised the issue of how these students will be accommodated during the month of June and plans to raise it again at the next meeting.
- h. Housing at Stanworth Apartments will be added to the draw for June 2011, but only enough units to maintain 70% students housed. Since other

faculty/staff housing is going to be delayed for budget cuts, the university is going to maintain faculty/housing

- i. When the GSG asked housing to provide list for requirements for the developers, Andrew Kane (Director of Housing) requested the GSG give the department of housing a list of graduate students' frequently asked questions.

e. Health and Life

The committee had nothing to report.

f. Social

1. Winter Ball (held in February in place of a Valentine's Day party). Date and Location were still undecided and discussed at the meeting.
 - a. Potential dates:
 - i. The week before Valentine's Day to minimize conflicts with graduate student recruiting
 - ii. The same week as GSG elections – make it an Election Day party. Alternatively, have an additional election day party
 - iii. Need to check with the Graduate College to make sure the date does not conflict with the GC formal (which is traditionally held in March)
 - b. Potential location
 - i. The committee would like to hold it in campus club, since the money for the event has already been already allocated and would cost less in campus club

5. New business

Lisa Schreyer (Assistant Dean for Residential Life) made several announcements that would affect graduate students:

- a. Students who use direct deposit for stipends will no longer have the option to receive a paper statement and will have to choose between receiving a paper check and a direct deposit.
- b. Students in some departments have not received tickets to update PUID cards. These students may need to get them at the New South/Tiger Card office.

6. Close

A motion to adjourn closed the meeting at 7:48pm.