

Minutes recorded for the October 8, 2008 Graduate Student Government Assembly meeting

Held Wednesday, October 8 in Frist Campus Center, Room 309
Recorded by Marina Paul

Agenda

I. Call to Order

A. Approval of the Minutes (September) - Marina Paul

II. Report

- A. Chair - Christina Hultholm
- B. Social Events - Yi Wang
- C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin
- D. Health and Life - Kelly Kearney
- E. IRC - Giri Parameswaran
- F. Academic Affairs
- G. Campus Relations

III. Decision Items

- A. Events Board Elections
- B. Funding Request Vote
- C. Budget Discussion and Approval

IV. Discussion Items

- A. Wine and Cheese Event Review
- B. Discussion of Future Social Events
- C. Academic Calendar

IV. New Business

V. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

The meeting began at 6pm.

The following program representatives were seated:

1. REL - Jolyon Thomas
2. MAE - Anand Ashok
3. PHY - Ryan Fisher
4. GER - Jeff Kirkwood
5. FIT (French and Italian) – Ben William
6. CHE - Bryan Beckingham
7. PPL – Luke Patterson
8. MUS – James Steichen

A. Approval of the Minutes (September) - Marina Paul

The minutes were emailed to Assembly several days ago via gsg-assembly@princeton.edu. Aside from any minor corrections, no other comments were received. A motion to approve the minutes was approved by voice vote (none opposed).

A former department rep contacted the GSG about editing previous minutes, where it was recorded that the member was a way due to being on her honeymoon. The former

student rep wanted the sentence modified to omit this personal information about her being on her honeymoon. A motion was brought forth to strike the comment about the honeymoon from the previous minutes, but to record the department but not the name in the minutes. The motion was approved by voice vote (one abstention, none opposed).

II. Reports

A. Chair - Christina Hultholm

Since the last assembly meeting, Exec focused on two major items, aside from helping with the Wine and Cheese social:

1. Coming up with a budget for the 2008-2009 year, a decision item
2. Choosing delegates to send to the 2008 Ivy summit, held this November at Harvard University: At this point, four student reps may attend and only four students expressed interest in going – Kevin Collins, Christina Hultholm, Giri Parameswaran, and possibly Silvia Newell.

B. Social Events - Yi Wang

Yi Wang (Social Chair) summarized the outcome of the Annual GSG Wine and Cheese Social held on October 2, 2008 in the Carl Fields Center. The Social had a turnout of 300 people. The GSG intended to add a greater selection of wines, cheese and fruits. Several students wished the event had not been held on the same day as the 2008 Vice Presidential Debate. The coincidence could not have been circumvented, as the Wine and Cheese event was scheduled (and the location reserved) prior to any knowledge of the date of the debate. The Black Graduate Caucus hosted a debate-watching event several rooms away from the Social that same day, and many people circulated between the two events. This may have mitigated some of the loss of attendees, but the lower than expected attendance may have contributed to an improved quality in the event. Yi solicited feedback from Assembly about improving next year's event.

C. Facilities - Jeff Dwoskin (15 min)

Jeff Dwoskin presented a summary of the current Requests for Proposals, which included hours of service, peak hour service, annual days of operation, and the proposed bus routes (see Facilities report.doc). The proposed system has four loops that start and end at a central point, the current Dinky station.

Specific concerns with the proposed shuttle system expressed by Assembly:

1. The new system will run separate loops between campus and graduate housing complexes, rather than connecting them, increasing travel times between graduate housing complexes and cutting down social integration between graduate students. Jeff Dwoskin has contacted the Department of Transportation, requesting estimates for travel times between different graduate student housing complexes. While the proposed P-Rides system (which will be run by a professional service rather than by undergraduate students) may cover service from housing to housing, but may not be able to respond to high demand.
2. Under the proposed shuttle system, the services covered the current Blue and Green line would be covered by the proposed East Line – has the capacity been accounted for? Jeff Dwoskin was not sure of this, but he did acknowledge that the University has been responsive to adding more shuttles if buses were crowded.
3. The proposed Orange circuit line operates in only one direction. For example, students traveling from Lawrence to Jadwin would not be able to get a direct return shuttle, but would have to take a shuttle from Jadwin that makes the entire loop before going to Lawrence or walking instead.

4. A student pointed out that waiting to transfer between shuttles at night posed a potential safety issue, particularly at what is the current Dinky station.

Suggestions for improvement to the proposed shuttle system:

1. Add an additional stop on Alexander Road near the Lawrence Apartments on the proposed brown line, on its route southward down Alexander Road. This would allow students an alternative to waiting for the Lawrence-specific loop. In the current and proposed shuttle systems, there is a bus doing this (Helm stop), but it stops in only one direction.
2. Adding a stop at Millstone apartments on the Forrestal Shuttle route. The proposed Forrestal shuttle runs a 14-seat shuttle to Forrestal once an hour.

Overall, students were very displeased with the proposed shuttle system. The proposed system is markedly different from the one that Director of Parking and Transportation Kim Jackson discussed at the May 2008 Assembly meeting, including improvements such as weekday service from 7am to 1am, and more express shuttles added to Butler apartments.

Exec was working on getting Kim Jackson to answer questions at the November Assembly meeting. In addition, Kim Jackson would be present at the next CPUC meeting, to be held on November 10 at 4:30 pm in the Betts Auditorium. Yi suggested that Exec send out a global email to all graduate students.

Lisa Schreyer asked Assembly to send her and/or Olivia Martel information about what Kim presented at the May 2008 Assembly meeting.

D. Health and Life -Kelly Kearney

Kelly's report follows:

In late August, Jeff and I met with Janet Finnie (interim director of UHS), Michele Gregory (SHP manager), and Peter Johnson (UHS director of medical services). At the meeting, we discussed several of the issues that we originally brought up as part of the letter-writing campaign:

1. Doubling the SHP dental subsidy so it covers twice-yearly cleanings: They were receptive to this idea and were looking into the feasibility.
2. Health care when UHS is closed: We agreed that it probably wasn't financially feasible to keep UHS open during the summer and other breaks, but are working on establishing a system of off-campus care along with reimbursement for transportation that would provide grad students with low-cost care during these times. We are compiling a list of reputable facilities that grad students can use as an alternative to emergency rooms, mostly urgent care centers. UHS would be willing to reimburse students the cost of transportation (taxi or train) to get to one of these using their emergency fund.
3. Informing grad students of the services available: I gave Janet, Michele, and Pete a copy of the FAQ that I circulated at the last meeting for review. They liked the idea of a for-students-by-students one-stop website with health information. I made some minor revisions and additions based on their feedback and have now posted the FAQ to the GSG website; UHS may add a link to it from their site in the future.
4. Birth control subsidies: Though the decision to stop providing brand name varieties was based on the assumption that it would be too expensive following the change in federal law, UHS had never done any specific calculations of this.

They have now done so. Currently, they are providing two generics; these cost the university \$9 per pack and they sell them to students at \$6 per pack, with the university subsidizing ~\$50000 per year. They looked into the cost to provide to brand name options: Ortho Tri-cyclen Lo (pill) and NuvaRing. These would cost the university \$36 and \$54 per pack, respectively, adding \$192000 to the subsidies the university would take on if they were offered at the same \$6 price as the generics. They aren't able to support that high a subsidy at this time. I was going to follow up on whether the cost would be more bearable if UHS offered these two brands at the pharmacy rate of \$20 per pack instead (this would still benefit students by allowing them to avoid the deductible associated with the Medco prescription plan).

I believe I also mentioned briefly that I joined the Student Health Advisory Board, a historically undergraduate organization that acts as the go-between for students and UHS. They were interested in getting a graduate student perspective on their board and invited me to apply. I'm hoping that I can learn more about the undergrad perspective to student health, and hopefully gain their cooperation in issues that affect the whole student body.

E. IRC - Giri Parameswaran

Giri (co-chair, IRC) briefly introduced the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) as a committee formed to review how the GSG functions. At the end of the one-year review period, the IRC would present a report of its recommendations to the GSG. Giri informed Assembly that the IRC would be holding a meeting after Assembly meeting, about scheduling future IRC meetings.

F. Academic Affairs

The Academic Affairs committee is in the process of collecting data about stipends across all of Princeton's graduate student departments and programs. Kevin reminded assembly members to send information about how stipends are distributed in their respective departments and how they varied with graduate student year, pre- and post-general exam, and for teaching versus research assistants.

Several students have sent the GSG complaints about the short loan periods for the books borrowed from the Lewis Library.

The Undergraduate Student Government (USG) is attempting to change the academic calendar. This topic was discussed further under discussion items.

G. Campus Relations

Nothing to report.

III. Decision Items

A. Events Board Elections

The Events Board meets twice a month to review funding requests made to the GSG for social events. Current members of the board include Manos Koukomidis (GSG Treasurer and Events Board Chair) and Lisa Schreyer and Olivia Martel, both representatives of the Graduate School. Four positions, to be filled by graduate students, are currently open.

The following four students were nominated for positions for the board:

1. Alexander Ruder (Politics)

2. Divjyot Sethi (Electrical Engineering)
3. Kostas Aisopos (Electrical Engineering). Kostas was not present at the meeting, but Manos read a brief candidate statement written by Kostas.
4. Raghuv eer Vinukollu – (Civil and Environmental Engineering), a former Assembly rep and a candidate for Treasurer during last year’s GSG elections.

A motion was made to approve all four candidates. The motion was approved with none opposed, no abstentions.

B. Funding Request from the Graduate College House Committee

A request was made by Nick X (Graduate College House Committee rep) to the GSG Events Board to partially fund an investment in higher quality lighting for major events. The details (e-mailed to the Events Board) are below:

The Graduate College House Committee is currently investing in its own set of light fixtures to be used in the D-Bar and at special events. Our goal is to improve the appeal of social activities for all graduate students. Proper lighting is an important aspect of any performance, and we expect to see a noticeable improvement of the quality of our events.

This is a major capital investment which will happen in four phases:

1. Purchase portable lighting infrastructure to enable the use of light fixtures at special events (Completed)
2. Invest in high-quality lighting suitable for nightlife-style events (In Progress)
3. Invest in stage lighting suitable for more formal events and live performances (Planned)
4. Install permanent, non-portable lighting infrastructure in the DBar to allow the use of light fixtures on a weekly basis without time-intensive setup (Planned, dependent on customer demand)

The Graduate College House Committee and the D-Bar have decided to finance the acquisition of light fixtures with 1,400. The funds are contributed from the following budgets:

- * GC House Committee General Funds: 500
 - * D-Bar Funds: 400
 - * Halloween Party Budget: 500
- TOTAL: 1,400

We would like the GSG to match this contribution and provide 1,400 from the GSG budget for this project.

Additionally, officers of the GC House Committee have volunteered to solicit department sponsorship for this project. We hope to secure another 1,000 to 2,000 this way, resulting in a final budget of approximately 4,000 or more.

Officers of the GC House Committee can come to the next GSG meeting to discuss this funding request.

Itemized budget: We are obtaining permission from the administration of Princeton University for every light fixture before we acquire them. We are currently evaluating the following set of equipment:

Intelligent Lighting

4x American DJ X-Scan LED Scanner (399.99, 10lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-xscan-led-scanner-p-1615.html>

2x American DJ Mega Bar LED (449.99, 7lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-mega-bar-led-p-1531.html>

2x American DJ Revo III (269.99, 10lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-revo-iii-p-1539.html>

2x Chauvet Vue VI - Vue 6 (249.99, 6.6lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/chauvet-vue-vi-vue-6-p-1616.html>

Special Effects

2x American DJ Color Expander (119.99, 4.41lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-color-expander-p-1373.html>

2x American DJ Hydro Simulated Water Effect (99.99, 3.9lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-hydro-simulated-water-effect-p-1376.html>

Black Lights

2x American DJ Mega Bar UV50 (179.99, 4lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-mega-bar-uv50-p-1532.html>

Strobe Lights

2x American DJ Mega Flash DMX (149.99, 5lbs)

<http://www.djdepot.com/american-dj-mega-flash-dmx-p-1061.html>

(NOTE: We are not allowed to use fog and haze. Most of the lights will therefore look less impressive than in the demo videos.)

Other sponsors: We will try to solicit department sponsorship for this project.

A discussion ensued about the merits of funding the request with GSG funds:

1. Usage

1. Two reps from the D-Bar reps expressed interest in using the lighting for D-Bar-sponsored events, especially during monthly events or 3-4 parties reg. held per semester. Some students felt that in order for this request to be funded by the GSG, events using the lighting should be open to all graduate students. While the D-Bar events are indeed open to D-Bar members, members can bring up to 9 guests over 21: thus any member of the graduate student body over 21 years of age can attend any D-Bar sponsored event.
2. Nick (GC House comm. Rep) clarified that the idea is to permit usage of the lights for events hosted by the GSG or other graduate student groups. While the lighting units are portable, in some cases transportation of sensitive lighting may not be practical; lighting may be easier to rent from professional companies provide door-to-door service. Some students felt that there may not an actual benefit of the lighting being available for use by the general graduate student body.
3. A student brought up that while there may be a small minority of students not allowed into a D-Bar event, the attendance at such an event may be much greater than that at other events previously funded by the GSG-Events Board, such as the Chinese Moon Festival Party. The student reasoned that if a large portion of the graduate student body is benefiting from this investment, this would be an appropriate use of GSG funds.

4. Since the lights would be a significant investment and require some knowhow, students would probably have to undergo a brief training session to learn to operate and maintain the lighting equipment. Assembly felt that students should have access to a GSG-funded investment. Perhaps there can be more formal application process to request use of the lighting.

Assembly discussed the amount of money that should be granted:

1. Some students expressed concern that the GCHC was making a request for money before defining the precise costs of the lighting. According to Nick, they know what fixtures they can use, but they need to determine specific requirements for running the intelligent lighting in terms of power and wiring.
2. Several lighting units had already been purchased at the time of the funding request. This prompted the question of why all the lighting had to be purchased at once, instead of accumulating the lighting over time with their own funds. Nick responded that a few units is really not enough to improve the lighting of a large event, and so they plan to purchase a large number to make the difference. He posed the alternative question - why not buy them all at once, if you can't really use a small number?
3. Assembly discussed where in the budget the funding for this event should come from. At the time of the meeting, the available surplus from the 2007-2008 budget was unclear because some transactions were still in process. However, no more funding requests had been made of the GSG events board, and one-third of any unused surplus by October 31, 2008 would go to the endowment, so several students felt that funding the GCHC's lighting request could be an appropriate use of surplus money.

A motion was made to fund the request with surplus funds of 2007-8 budget. The motion passed by hand vote with 13 proposed, 1 opposed, 5 abstentions.

C. Budget Discussion and Approval

The GSG budget proposed for the 2008-2009 year was sent out to Assembly several days before the meeting (see Proposed_Budget_2008-2009.xls). Several of the changes from last year's budget are described below:

INCREASES

- 1.) Allocating \$500 more to the Fall Social Event to cover expenses (to expand the event and avoid having to ask the Events Board for extra money).
- 2.) Increasing the budget for the orientation welcome package and gift by \$200 to reflect increasing costs.
- 3.) Increasing the "Other Events" budget from \$1000 to \$5050 to allow the GSG to organize more events. N.B.: the funding to the Events Board remains the same at \$9000. The additional funds allocated to the "other events" category comes from a projected revenue increase of over \$4000 (the result of a growing graduate student population).
- 4.) Office Supplies and Phone/Internet recombined as "Office Expenses". Plans to disconnect phone, retain voice mailbox to cut costs. Overall budget increased by about \$100, with the intention of purchasing customized stationary for the GSG (for letters, thank you notes, etc - will not include specific names on the letterhead, so can be used for many years).

CUTS

- 1.) Events Board Refreshments and Operating Budget: cut \$200, from \$450 to \$250. Actual expenditures in this category were only \$216 last year, and the new line item

budget proposed reflects estimated costs.

2.) Taskforce and Counseling Refreshments budget: cut \$500, from \$900 to \$400.

3.) Executive Committee Discretionary Fund: cut \$180, from \$800 to \$620.

Kevin Collins (Academic Affairs Co-Chair) motioned to allocate \$250 from the \$500 office budget for new GSG election software. The current software was implemented by OIT and difficult to program. In fact, Jeff Dwoskin (Facilities Chair), who will be graduating, is the only person who knows how to program the software. The GSG will need to invest money into new, more-user friendly software as per Jeff's recommendation.

The motion was seconded and passed via hand vote (8 approved, 2 opposed, 4 abstained)

Assembly discussed whether they felt it was appropriate to spend \$1800 on food for assembly ("Monthly General Body Meetings Refreshments", under GSG operating expenses). Giri Parameswaran (Eco Rep, IRC) argued that the GSG assembly members attend meetings to represent their constituents, and should not require meals to incentivize this duty. Giri felt that it was reasonable to order food when meeting ran long, but not for all meetings. He felt holding assembly meetings at 6pm was not a sufficient reason for assembly reps to expect dinner; attendees still had time to schedule their dinner meal around the meetings. Giri suggested that assembly members pool money to buy dinner for the meeting as an alternative.

Ashley Thrall (Parliamentary Secretary) motioned to keep \$1800 budgeted for Monthly General Body Meetings Refreshments. The motions was seconded and passed by hand vote (14 approved, 1 abstained).

Giri motioned to remove refreshment costs from "Events Board Refreshments & Operating Expenses" to fund only the Events Board operating expenses. Assembly discussed the merits of using GSG funds to cover expenses for refreshments for Events Board meetings. Manos (Treasurer, Chair of Events Board) argued that usually only a light lunch is purchased, and provides an incentive to fill the board positions. Yaron argued in favor of covering expenses also, given that the Events Board meetings save Assembly so much time by doing the work of evaluating funding requests. (The Events Board can make decisions on funding requests itself without Assembly's intervention as long as the money requested is within 5% of the total Events board budget. Otherwise, Assembly must vote on a decision at meetings.

Hilary Bergsieker (PSY) motioned to approve the budget exactly as is.

A motion was made to strike "events" from the line item "other events". The motion was seconded and passed with no oppositions.

The motion to approve the budget "as is" was seconded and passed via hand vote (18 approved, none opposed, and one abstained).

IV. Discussion Items

A. Wine and Cheese Event Review

Suggestions made for improving next year's Wine and Cheese Social:

1. Food sold out fast, GSG needs to budget more for food

2. Good reviews received so far may have been in part a result of losing some crowd to the VP debate. While this was an unintended but beneficial side-effect, the GSG may want to consider holding next year's social on a date or more spacious location (such as the Campus Club when it opens) that will lessen crowding.

A member of the graduate student body has raised the issue that the Wine and Cheese Social event, advertised as an event focused on alcohol, may be violating a rule in the Rights, Rules and Responsibilities handbook for Princeton Students. The student was not present at Assembly, but discussed this with both his/her department rep and Lisa Schreyer. While the student chooses not to drink for religious reasons, and feels that funding an event that many graduate students don't attend (because of their choice not to drink) with students fees may not be appropriate, he or she does not raise an issue with the event itself but the contradiction in the rule.

According to Lisa Schreyer, The Graduate School has been approving this event every year, and thus doesn't believe the event is violating any rules. While an event can serve alcohol to students above the legal age, the RRR handbook does say that the advertising should not focus on alcohol. Lisa did recommend that the name change be considered and could solve this problem. Raja, in absentia, had passed along his proposed name change: The **Cheese** and Wine Social".

B. Discussion of Future Social Events

Several suggestions were made for new social events alternative to alcohol-centered events:

1. Social events for graduate students held on central campus (such as at the Frist Campus center) – for example, tea and cookies
2. Outdoor movie nights during the summer, when there's not much going on.
3. Lawn parties for graduate students
4. chocolate tastings or dessert parties

Yi Wang (Social chair) announced several of his ideas for Valentine's Day events, and encouraged feedback from Assembly:

1. co-organizing a Valentine's Day party in Manhattan with a peer institution in NYC, perhaps at a club or other venue
2. Sponsoring another event on the same night of Valentine's Day, to offer a dance-free alternative to the Valentine's Day party. This would be an event held at Princeton's campus, but inviting regional colleges.

C. Academic Calendar

The undergraduate student government (USG) is conducting a survey on the undergraduate student body in an attempt to reform the current Academic Calendar. The USG sent the survey to the GSG by email, requesting that the survey be conducted on the graduate student body as well. Possible changes to the calendar could include the following:

1. Removing fall break
2. Combining fall break with Thanksgiving break
3. Ending the fall semester before January 1
4. Shortening the exam period, which is currently over 3 weeks, to 1 week
5. Adding a 13th week to the semester's curriculum

Assembly discussed the pros and cons for the current academic calendar.

1. Several assembly members felt that the university, including administrators and professors, would be resistant to any changes to the current system.
2. Several students supported that ending the fall semester before January 1 would permit some students to spend more time at home. This would be particularly welcomed by international students or students who have long or expensive trips home. Students supporting merging fall break with Thanksgiving for this same reason.
3. On the other hand, other students felt that they enjoyed the time to recover during January before returning to grade final exams.
4. A student pointed out that lengthening the academic calendar during the spring semester could reduce time available during the summer to spend in internships.

Assembly began to debate the administration of the survey. No resolution was made.

IV. New Business

A student brought up a current concern with the Physical Therapy service at Princeton offered through UHS.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

