



January 14, 2015
January Assembly Meeting
Jadwin Hall 102
5:55 pm

GSG President Sean Edington calls the meeting to order at 5:55 pm.

Daniel Choi and Jessica Wright: Grad students from the Princeton Writing Center

- Daniel and Jessica are interested in finding out how Assembly members have used the Writing Center and its programs, and whether there are suggestions for future programming.
- **Carolann Buff (MUS rep): The Writing Bootcamp is great. However, I once had a one-on-one meeting and it was with an undergraduate, which wasn't really appropriate.**
 - Jessica: I've never heard of this happening before - this was probably a mistake.
- **Kay McGown (CLA rep): What is the format of the Bootcamp?**
 - Jessica: The day begins with group writing and an exercise. Then there are a few hours when you write on your own and at the end of the day the group debriefs.
- Lizette Taguchi: The Bootcamp follow-up could be improved. I formed a group with other students who attended the Bootcamp, and we continue to meet. It would be nice if the Writing Center facilitated these follow-ups.
- Angelina Sylvain (NEU rep): A not-for-credit writing workshop would be nice.
 - Dima Goreshteyn: Writing 101/102 covers writing in the sciences (it's taught by Judy Swan). The course is about 6 weeks long.
 - Angelina: It might be difficult for people with a busy schedule to make it to the course, so a workshop instead of a course might be nice.
- Dima Goreshteyn (Lawrence rep): People in science learn to write by osmosis. The course I took was useful because I developed a vocabulary to think about my writing. Conferences are helpful because fellows spend a lot of time to help you think deeply about your writing.
 - Daniel: Conferences help to create a sense of community - you're not alone when you're writing. And a fresh pair of eyes can be very useful.
- Jessica: We have 32 graduate students at the Writing Center. It can be a nice place to have an intense conversation with someone about what you work on.

Approval of the December 2014 Minutes: Harry Kresja (WWS rep) motions to approve the minutes. The motion is seconded by April Williams (QCB rep). The minutes pass by unanimous vote.

2015 Election Plan Approval:

- GSG Vice President Mircea Davidescu has formed a plan for the election committee, which will have 5 members and be active between now and March.
- The process will be similar to the one in place last year. One change suggested this year was replacing the physical Meet the Candidates forum with an open discussion forum where students can come and talk to the candidates or submit questions to be asked. We could ask for RSVPs for the in-person forum, and if we don't meet a minimum number of RSVPs, we could do an online forum.
 - Harry Kresja (WWS rep): I like the intermediate option
- We could do a Pub Night/Meet the Candidates event.
- Kay McGown (CLA rep): Department reps could push students to go to the forums or give us questions to bring to the forum.
- A student: If there were more information provided about the candidates, I would read that information before voting. If there were beer at a Meet the Candidates event, I would be more likely to come.
- George Khoury (Pricom): The candidates could present at Procter Hall or some other space where students are present.
- Rachael Barry (GSG Treasurer): Would it be okay if in addition to bios there was a larger block of text with paired down answers to questions? The election committee and current executive board could come up with 5 questions for the candidates to answer.
 - Assembly likes this idea.
- Sean Edington: How about, in place of Meet the Candidates, we ask candidates to answer these 5 questions and have an informal meet the candidates social.
 - Assembly unanimously approves this proposal.
- Rachael Barry, Tom Morrell (GSG Communications Director), Sean Edington and Alta Fang (MAE rep) will sit on the Committee.
 - Assembly unanimously approves this.
- Lizette Taguchi: I want to add that the free meals at the GC Dining Hall are available for a period of two years so use them - or they will go away. However, they are not available for DCE students or significant others.

Discussion of Changes to the Hooding Ceremony:

- Julia Wittes (GSG Secretary): Graduate students have in the past expressed an interest in being hooded by their advisors. The Graduate School has looked into advisor hooding, and believes that it is feasible. We estimate that advisor hooding will add about 15 minutes to the ceremony, if 50 students or so choose to be hooded by their advisors. Hooding by other faculty members who are not a student's advisor may be an option. Also, advisor hooding would only be for PhD students, and not for

masters' students. Students would line up with their advisors and would be given a card with their name, their advisor's name, and their department. They would come up on stage with their advisor and hand the card to the University Marshall, who would read the names off of the cards. Then a student's advisor would hood them. No one would have to be hooded by their advisor unless they wanted to be. Possibly, an invited speaker would not speak at the hooding ceremony to help ensure that the ceremony would not be too long. I think that this could be a nice change and suggest that we try it for this year.

- Carolann: This would be a nice gesture because there is a feeling that all of the focus is on the undergraduates during Commencement weekend.
- Sean Vanatta (HIS rep): Graduation still feels a really long way off but this seems pointless to me. This could also create stress for some students who don't have a good relationship with their advisors.
- George Khoury (Pricom): Most of our advisors were probably hooded by their own advisor.
- Some departments have co-advised students. What would we do in these cases?
 - Julia: We hadn't considered this case. We'll have to look into it.
- The motion to approve advisor hooding passes, with 4 votes against and 1 abstention.

Executive Committee Report

TigerTransit Consultants:

- Our understanding is that they will focus on evaluating the current shuttle bus program, which operates 5 days/week (with the exception of the Saturday Shopper).
- Student volunteers are requested to meet with the consultants. Burcin Cakir, Joshua Wallace, Harry Kresja, Cagin Ararat, Michelle Frazer, Genna Gilner, Debbie and Baxter Oliphant volunteer.
- Will volunteers be solicited from the entire grad student body?
 - We wanted to first get volunteers from Assembly and then reach out to the broader student body.
- Baxter Oliphant: If you reach out only to people involved in the GSG, you may only get people with grievances.
- Michelle: I take the Forrestal/PPL line - my Department has thoughts on how the service could be improved.

Lakeside issues:

- Rent forgiveness will only apply for students who stay out their current lease or move to Lakeside. The Exec Board's position is that anyone affected by the Lakeside delays should get those two months' rent waived. We thought that we had resolved this with administrators. However, now we're being told that if you leave your transitional housing early you won't get the two months rent forgiveness. Those people can apply to the hardship fund
- Sean: It would be useful to have a statement from housing stating you will not be charged for May and June.

- A student: my friend spoke to her lawyer, and her lawyer said that changing the terms of rent reimbursement is a breach of contract, and possibly illegal.
- Apparently the internet at Lakeside will not be on the University's network. The Exec Board Committee members think this is a bad idea because everyone would have to VPN in to access University resources. In the common space they would have University internet so it seems there's no reason why they couldn't do this. Hibben/Magie had Princeton internet. There is also concern about how Cluster printers will work for students at Lakeside.
- Parking at Lakeside: We will argue for one spot per bed that is occupied by a graduate student.
- The Lakeside Hardship Committee will start accepting applications in June.
 - If your temporary housing costs more than your rent at Lakeside, you should be reimbursed for the difference.
 - We have heard that June 1 is too late to start accepting hardship applications.
 - Gregory: Maybe May would be a good time
 - Harry: What will happen to people who are graduating?
 - Sean: We will think about this and bring it up to the administration.
- Lizette: ACC should come to Assembly at an appropriate time.
- Pam Mueller (Health and Life Chair): I encourage people to come to the Lakeside info sessions - the turnout has been poor.

Winter break:

- This year's break was 2 weeks instead of the usual 3. While this doesn't seem to have mattered to most graduate students, it did matter to some.
 - Cagin Ararat (Academic Affairs Chair): This matters to international students
 - Sean: In our department, the first years have to write a few huge papers during this time.
 - Kay: A lot of students take their generals in January and February. We take classes right up until our generals; so it helps to have the extra week.

Insurance issue:

- We are looking into whether some graduate students can be treated as staff for insurance coverage purposes, given that in some respects the staff insurance plan offers more generous coverage. Janet Finney is going to look into the disparities between the insurance plans and will talk to the University lawyers.
- Opposite sex domestic partners are not permitted on Princeton insurance even though same sex domestic partners are permitted. Janet Finney was not optimistic about getting this changed.
 - Kay McGown (CLA rep): How will this affect trans partners?
 - Julia Wittes (Secretary): Gender shouldn't factor into these insurance decisions at all.

Open Forum:

Jean Nava (LGSA) initiates a conversation about the departure of the Deans of Academic Affairs and Diversity from the Graduate School

- Deans Diana Mitchell and Dean Jackson Weaver have both left recently and this is very concerning to latino students. It is difficult for us to recruit latino graduate students when this is happening at the University. The administration hasn't told us what they want to do and it seems as though they've put diversity on the backburner.
- Another student: this is scary - losing the Deans of color makes us worry about what's going on behind the scenes at the Graduate School. Is Princeton not making counter-offers so that they can keep these people?

Vice President Mircea Davidescu motions to adjourn the meeting. The motion is seconded by Harry Kresja (WWS rep) and the meeting is adjourned.