



GSG April Assembly Meeting

April 8, 2015

Joseph Henry Room, Jadwin Hall, Princeton University

5:59 - 7:46pm

The meeting is called to order at 5:59 pm.

Josh Wallace (AST rep) motions to approve the March 2015 minutes; the motion is seconded by Harry Krejsa (WWS rep). The minutes pass by unanimous voice vote.

Elections for the Council of the Princeton University Community (CPUC)

- The election is run by Mircea Davidescu (Vice President) who describes the work of the different CPUC committees along with past committee members:
 - Loan Le speaks on the work of the Priorities Committee
 - Kyle Keller speaks on the work of the Governance Committee
 - No one is present from the Judicial Committee (Mircea describes the work of that committee)
 - David Schwarz speaks on the work of the Resources Committee
 - Mircea Davidescu speaks on the work of the Rights and Rules Committee
- No one rejects Pres. Akshay Mehra's *ex officio* position on the Executive Committee
- Mircea nominates himself for the open position for the Rights and Rules Committee (the only position where there were not enough nominations)
- Statements given for all candidates (alphabetically, except Phillip):
 - Phillip Hannam
 - Daniel Choi (absent, Mircea reads his statement)
 - Mircea Davidescu
 - Victoria Luu
 - David Schwartz
 - Deborah Varnell
 - Mei Zheng
- Akil Word (Black Grad Caucus Delegate): Can people serve on more than one committee?
 - Mircea: No. The final decision is made by the secretary of the CPUC; we merely submit rank-order preferences of the GSG. The CPUC secretary will resolve all multiple-committee conflicts.
- Akil: Can we make nominations now?
 - Mircea: The call for nominations was already sent, so we will hold the election with the nominated candidates and pass along our ranked recommendations to

the CPUC

- Voting is done by secret ballot and results are collected as a ranked list that will be sent to the CPUC as the GSG's recommendations.
- Results (in order of recommendation):
 - Executive Committee: Mei Zheng (1), Victoria Luu (2), Daniel Choi (3),
 - Priorities: Daniel Choi (1) , Victoria Luu (2), Deborah Varnell (3)
 - Governance: Daniel Choi (1)
 - Judicial: Deborah Varnell (1)
 - Resources: David Schwartz (1), , Phillip Hannam (2), Daniel Choi (3), Deborah Varnell (4)
 - Rights and Rules: Victoria Luu (1), Mircea Davidescu (2)

Announcements (Volunteers and tabling for Communiversity and Farmers' Market)

- Mike Hepler (Treasurer): Looking for graduate demos for Communiversity (1-6pm on Sunday, April 26th) contact Mike if you have ideas or would like to participate
- Katie Wolf (Secretary): GSG will have a table at the Farmers' market for next 5 weeks and we are looking for volunteers to work at that table. The market is also looking for student organizations and departments to sit at their own tables and talk about their sustainability efforts. Contact market@princeton.edu for more details.

Discussion about thresholds for student-initiated petitions and/or referendums

- In the GSG By-Laws there are currently no rules for how a student-initiated petition or referendum that has been voted down by the GSG Assembly could still gather enough support to force the GSG to hold an election on that petition or referendum.
- Undergraduates have a signature system that with enough signatures the USG is forced to hold a vote on a student-initiated petition or referendum.
- Akshay: What would be the appropriate number of signatures before someone can force the assembly to run an election?
- What is the amount that the USG requires?
 - Kelly Roach (WWS Student): They need 200 signatures for on-signature petition (there are 5,000 undergraduates total), 500 off-signature petition
- Currently GS needs 10% of Graduate Students (270 students) in order to have an election/referendum be considered valid
- Akshay: Is this too number too high?
 - Harry (WWS Rep): 10% is not too high
- How many referendum proposals do we currently receive?
 - Akshay: No one has requested that we run a referendum, at least in the past couple of years.
- Rachael Barry (Butler Delegate): We have only run referendums in the past to change the GSG By-Laws (not to gauge graduate student support for a student-initiated petition). Are we asking to change the referendum policy or asking GSG to support/write a letter?
 - Akshay: We don't have anything in place for the latter

- Aksay: Can we force a vote even when the assembly rejects?
 - Kyle Keller (Gov. CPUC Del): We don't have anything in place in the constitution, but we could amend the bylaws
- It would be good to set in place a procedure to poll all graduate students for the future when we want to gather a consensus of all grad students
- Plan of action:
 - This month: vote on whether we should create an amendment for this
 - Next month: vote on formally introducing the amendment into the constitution
- Motion to vote on this plan moved by Daniel Vitek (Academic Affairs Chair) and seconded by Rachael Barry (Butler Delegate). Motion passes with 1 abstention and the rest approval.

Kelly Roach (2nd year Masters School of WWS) Referendum on Divestment

The question: Shall the graduates call on the Trustees of Princeton University and the Princeton University Investment Company ("PRINCO") to divest from multinational corporations that maintain the infrastructure of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, facilitate Israel's and Egypt's collective punishment of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or facilitate state repression against Palestinians by Israeli, Egyptian, and Palestinian Authority security forces, until these corporations cease such activities?

- Undergrads will vote on the Referendum on Divestment on April 20th. The referendum was proposed by the Princeton Divests Undergraduate group and other undergraduates groups have signed on to support the referendum as well.
- Some examples of proposed referendums: Divesting from South African businesses, Darfur, fossil fuels, etc. Current examples: Caterpillar construction equipment contracting with the Israeli government.
- The question is: Should the GSG Assembly approve a poll of the entire graduate student population?
- Rachael Barry: Has anyone looked into what this divestment will do to cuts to resources, etc.?
 - Kelly: There is not a lot of transparency right now, so doing this will make that more visible and allow us to know what is exactly being invested in
- The language in the statement is not specific enough about which companies we would divest from.
 - Kelly: HP has a close relationship with the occupation and the service maintenance
- Akshay: Will there will be a town hall?
 - Kelly: There was a large discussion today for undergrads, and there will be other events (occupation 101), give people a chance to ask questions, hopefully more formal debates
- Is there more language for this some place?
 - On the Princeton Divests website: tab for referendum with exact questions posed to undergraduates. We might want to use similar language
- Julia Wittes (Facilities Chair): Is there any language/process to decide which

companies we would divest from?

- Kelly: Can't define companies, but can define standards (can use UN standards, and other organizations that have published standards)
- Yuan Shi (PPPL Rep): What will people vote on? yes/no vote?
 - Kelly: There will be opportunities for discussion that will refine the questions that will be asked
- Yuan: If people vote for no, will people will interpret it as not interested or as a negative response?
 - If vote No, they are stating that they don't want to call on the University to divest.
- Genna (Social Chair): What is "broader" involvement, average election turnout is very low, what is the number that will represent a graduate student involvement?
 - Kelly: As long as it is along the typical average of turnout for an election, then it will probably be determined as support
- Genna: Is an election the best way to do this? Why not get signatures?
 - Kelly: The election gives it a more official note. Already gathered 700 signatures on this issue
- Michelle: There are a lot of atrocities in the world, why focus on this one? Why not take a broader stance?
 - Kelly: Can't divest from everything. This can serve as a place to start, can set up an infrastructure for this. There may already be federal and national for divestments in other areas, this is an area that doesn't fall into this
- Eduardo Lerro (COM Rep) Does this petition include any positive investment strategy of where the money should go?
- Is there another place to talk about this? Discuss it without directing questions towards Kelly.

Kelly sits down, discussion begins between Assembly representatives

- Sean Vanatta (HIS Rep): Grad student turnout is already low. Princo makes 18% because it is good at investing. Does it matter which companies, since all corporations are evil to some extent.
- Kay (Health Chair): Resources Committee wants to know if students support divestment. The questions is should graduate students be involved or do should we let the undergrads speak for us? What are the ways we can mediate the violence that Princeton as an institution does in the world.
- Daniel (Academic Affairs Chair): Try to influence PRINCO to make more moral choices and the social impact of the companies they are voting on
- Akil (BGC Del): We are voting on whether to poll the graduate student body.
- David Schwartz (CPUC Resource Del): Resources Committee perspective - consensus is important
- Deborah Varnall: Will the Resources Committee see numbers or do we need to have a consensus for all graduate students?
- Eduardo Lerro (COM Rep): Some people think that some things do not need a vote. Just because the undergrads vote doesn't mean that we need to.

- Michelle Frazer (AOS Rep): If you disagree with the referendum, then there is a possibility that the graduate student population can turn it down, so the votes may show that there is a consensus either way
- Kay (Health Chair): If there is a controversy, then we should bring it a vote
- Michele: Most grads don't know of this issue, so is there time to discuss this issue?
 - Akshay: Not concerned about what the referendum states, but how do we involve grad students in this larger issues
- Deborah: Do faculty have a referendum process?
 - Kelly: No
- Kyle: $\frac{1}{3}$ must vote ... so many need to be in favor in order to have a consensus.
- Julia: People may not be informed, or have enough time, so we can hold an open forum to get people informed this
 - Daniel (Academic Affairs Chair): The urgency is that undergraduates are having a lot of discussion leading up to the April 20th vote
 - Akshay: We should have GS specific forum
- Julia: We can have it so the vote is:
 - Approve the running of the election,
 - Approve the running of the election on the condition that we hold a public forum
 - Disapprove the running of the election
- It is decided that we will first count the yes/no via secret ballot and then determine if there should be a public forum.
- There is a motion to conduct the vote, and a second to that motion. Secret ballots are distributed and counted out by VP Mircea:
 - Approve(18)
 - Against (8)
 - Abstain (1)
- The majority vote is "Approve", so we will allow graduate students to vote on the issue.
- There is a motion to vote on the condition that we hold a public forum:
 - 1 against
 - 2 abstain
 - Majority approve
- The majority vote is "Approve", so we will hold a public forum before we conduct the graduate students vote on the issue
- Akshay: In the final election what would the numbers be in order to get graduate student approval?
- Kyle: The traditional numbers for an election are that: $\frac{1}{3}$ of GS need to vote in the election for us to certify the results. Of those $\frac{1}{2}$ must be voting yes.
- Akshay: Should we stick to the standard number?
- Kelly: We should not have as high of standard as the constitutional standard of votes
 - Rachael: When we needed to make a financial change to the GSG, the assembly was able to got 40%, it just took a lot of effort
- Daniel: Will it matter to the resources committee?
- Michelle: Majority represents 10%

- Vlad (LGSA Rep): Is this a standard for all GSG referendums or this one in particular?
- Sean: If important we will get the numbers
- Jenny: Do we have to stick to the undergraduate schedule of voting on April 20?
- Kay: What are we trying to do if we set a standard for turnout?
- We may not be thinking clearly because of personal ties to this vote. We should maybe not set a number for “majority” for future precedences
- Sean: Word the question as: “Do you support the statement...”
- Rachael: Motion to use the wording “ Do you or do you not support the following statement” as a poll to present numbers to the Resources Committee rather than trying to decide if the graduate students have a consensus.
- None reject, 3 abstain, majority approve.

Executive Committee Report

- University Services Meeting (March 26)
- Campus Planning Mapping Tool Focus Group (March 31)
- Labyrinth Books Focus Groups (April 7, 14)
 - Daniel (Academic Affairs Chair) is in charge of the Focus Group, looking for more grad students for the focus groups; let him know if you are interested
- Updates on CPS wait-room options for graduates
- Petition Dillon Gym Massage Room

Open Forum (your ideas for future policy, initiatives, guest speakers, feedback, ...)

- Angelina: Urban Congo Expression Group:
 - Undergrad group that got together - a lot like blue man group but call them “Urban Congo Expression Group” dressed up in tribal costumes and performed at several events some students found their performance offensive.
 - They self disbanded, sent out a message that they apologized but there was no consequences
 - The group was recognized by at least ODUS and UGS
 - Will the GSG do something about this?
 - Akshay: Is there something specific we can do?
 - There should be a statement (some grads don’t know about it). Should be more transparent
 - Mike: This was a recognized Student Group?
 - Registered Undergrad Group (no funding)
 - If exec members agree we can write a statement and have exec name on it
 - If assembly members approve a statement - we can put the “GSG Assembly” name on it
 - Kay: This is something we can vote on by email before our next meeting

Daniel motions to adjourn the meeting, Rachael seconds the motion; the meeting is adjourned 7:46pm.