



GSG Assembly Meeting  
**September 14, 2016 5:45pm**

The meeting is called to order at 5:50pm.

Review and Approval of May, June, July, and August minutes

William Smith (Politics Rep) motions to approve, Michelle Frazer (AOS Rep) seconds. Motion passes with one abstention (Jack Murphy, Geosciences Rep).

Graduate Housing Project (GHP)

Akil Word-Daniels (GHP, Lakeside Delegate) presents on recent progress and next steps:

- Project began on February 10, 2016, and its goals are to determine the concerns of graduate students regarding housing. Want to evaluate how housing is or isn't meeting the needs of grad students.
- Methodology includes surveys, conversations with housing office and grad school representatives, data retrieval from University and surrounding areas. Currently compiling report with suggestions and recommendations.
- Had over 1400 responses on housing survey (approved by Assembly and ran between April 4th and April 20th)
  - Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): as a note, this is an extremely good response rate
- Over the summer, came up with major themes, and will be meeting with housing office and key administrators to discuss them. These will also be highlighted in the report, and include:
  - Housing stock (is it meeting students' demands? What are the effects of limited housing stock on students?)
  - Communication and feedback with housing office (already met with administrators to discuss some of the issues that surfaced)
  - Families
- Next steps are to: finish gathering information for the final report, compile suggestions and recommendations, and set up follow ups. Will continue to meet with the appropriate administrators.
- Those who want to get involved can talk to anyone on the GHP or email [gsg@princeton.edu](mailto:gsg@princeton.edu)
- Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): if we were to approve a draft of the report, would

that be by November? We could also try to approve electronically

- Akil: We'll have to see how it goes
- David Walsh (History Rep): there is an interim housing director, but is there any information on when the position will be filled permanently?
  - Lily Secora (Graduate School): it's supposed to be filled this Fall.
  - Mircea: they mentioned that GSG Exec would be assisting in interviewing the candidates, but we haven't heard from them since

### Unionization Presentation

Daniel Vitek (GSG Academic Affairs Chair) presents on current fact-finding efforts regarding unionization.

- NLRB decision on August 23rd stated that graduate students at private universities can, in fact, unionize.
- GSG is constitutionally prohibited from participating in unionization efforts. As such, it will not be involved in any pro- or anti-unionization efforts.
  - Ask that members of GSG Assembly who get involved in unionization efforts (pro or against) refrain from using their GSG affiliation in the process
- GSG is trying to serve as a fact-finding body on the issue, specifically by looking at peer-institutions (both private and public) to understand what the unionization experience is. For example, NYU has a union, and the contract can be viewed online, which is a useful resource. Specific questions that we are trying to answer:
  - How and why did universities choose a specific union (e.g. United Automobile Workers, UAW, or United Independent Union, UIU)?
  - Looking at a list of around 15 peer institutions, what did they feel the union was able to accomplish, and what did it not accomplish? What issues came up?
  - What was the unionization process like? Were their student governments involved, and why?
  - What do the initial stages of unionization experience look like (e.g. finding an union, getting enough support cards, forming bargaining committees)
  - Who is represented?
- We're putting together a committee to collect this information, put it into a report and disseminate it to students. Looking for students to participate in the ground work, looking at contracts, and attempting to figure out details about the process (e.g. what would the bargaining unit look like, how big would it be)
  - Interested students should contact Daniel Vitek at [dvitek@princeton.edu](mailto:dvitek@princeton.edu) or [gsg@princeton.edu](mailto:gsg@princeton.edu)
- Will also attempt to hold information sessions, with different groups, union reps, etc.
- Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): that was a good summary. At first stage, the GSG will have to remain neutral, but if there is huge support either way, it is possible to hold a

referendum to change the constitution:

- Akshay Mehra (GSG Vice-President): but first we should assess whether other student governments were involved and whether we should do that.
- Akshay Mehra (GSG Vice-President): also want to know if it is worth sending out information to students regarding what the ruling means, in addition to the university's own FAQ
  - Mircea: along those lines, we're open to suggestions about how we should put that information out
  - Vivian Chang (WWS Rep): I think it would definitely help to have a handout and then assess interest in the issue before hosting a town hall
  - Noah Apthorpe (CS Rep): it would help to have information about unionization more generally
- Yuan Shi (Plasma Rep): university's FAQ was quite comprehensive. Is there any new information that came out from the fact-finding?
  - Daniel: goal is not to find inaccuracies or omissions in the university's FAQ, but to provide a different view on the issue, rather than the university's view (which is very similar to that of the other universities that participated in the amicus brief)
  - Daniel: we want more indigenous information, like from NYU, since the FAQ didn't address specific questions (often saying things like "it's not clear who's going to be represented"). We want a higher baseline for what people know.
- Joshua Wallace (Astro Rep): want to make sure one of the facts found is what the dues are
  - Daniel: yes, we will be looking at that

### Recruitment

- Unionization Committee:
  - Reach out to [dvitek@princeton.edu](mailto:dvitek@princeton.edu) or to [gsg@princeton.edu](mailto:gsg@princeton.edu)
- Grad Student Meetup and Career Fair: Assembly taking part in outreach
  - Planned date is December
  - Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): we have a list of organizations (companies, nonprofits, etc.). Outreach is more effective when done by graduate students (compared with administrators). Could have members of Assembly perform outreach in their own fields, since it would ensure that companies of interest to each department have representatives at the fair
  - David Walsh: suggest also reaching out to graduate alumni office
- Fall Festival volunteers
  - Next GSG party is the following Saturday (September 24th) and we will be looking for paid volunteers to hand out tickets at the door. Will be sending out email about this.

- Social Chair committee - focus on Diversity & Inclusion
  - Mattias Fitzpatrick (GSG Social Chair): film series starting this month, focus on D&I and followed by informal discussions. Food for thought series discussing issues such as allyship also kicking off.
  - Mattias: we want to do more of these types of events, and want volunteers to help organize them
    - If interested, contact Mattias at [mvwf@princeton.edu](mailto:mvwf@princeton.edu) or [gsg@princeton.edu](mailto:gsg@princeton.edu)

### Executive Summary

- GHP meeting with administration:
  - Akil: had a few meetings about several issues, including communication and accountability. Have not yet talked about housing stock, because it's a sensitive topic and we want to make sure we have all the information analyzed beforehand.
- Reorientation Event planning:
  - Michelle Frazer (AOS Rep): is there a date for reorientation?
    - Mircea: yes, December 8, in Friend Center (004/006/008). Will be sending out announcements when plan is more concrete to discuss how we're going to invite various professional development groups.
    - Michelle: is that going to be too close to the career fair?
    - Mircea: that's an important consideration, and we'll be bringing it up with Amy Pszczolkowski (Associate Dean for Professional Development). The goal was to get a time when most graduate students are still here, but which is not too hectic.
- Graduate Student Center Planning
  - Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): had originally planned to have a 1-month pilot in July, in campus club, which was strategically moved to October. But reservation was not moved due to clerical error, so there is no reserved space. Currently investigating all options regarding this issue.
    - In terms of fact-finding, speaking with student groups on campus and students in general - students seem to be interested in a café, bar, or a lounge. Also some interest in having a meeting room.
    - Plan going forward is to make general design of rooms that would fall into the graduate student center, make inventories, so that we're ready to go once a space is actually available
  - David Walsh (History Rep): regarding the pilot program - would that mean reserving a specific room in campus club for a certain time for an entire month?
    - Mircea: that was the idea.
    - Noah Apthorpe (CS Rep): worried that reserving campus club would not

- be representative of how popular a graduate student center would be, since it doesn't have a café or a bar
    - Mircea: the idea would definitely be to include those concepts in the pilot, such as making food and drinks available (not necessarily alcohol)
    - Lily Secora (Graduate School): when it comes to serving alcohol, if it is for free, that's fine, but if you charge, then you need to have a permit (e.g. reunion events all need a social affairs permit)
  - David Walsh: since there is already a Keurig machine at campus club, could try to source an espresso machine
    - Mircea: this is definitely something we can look at

### Open Forum

- Robert Decker (French & Italian Rep): regarding the NLRB ruling - beyond giving us the right to unionize, what other effects does it have? Curious, for example, on how it will affect our tax status
  - Daniel Vitek (GSG Academic Affairs): talked with Sanjeev Kulkarni about this, and change in status is just change in collective bargaining recognition. The ruling itself shouldn't have an impact
  - Richard: so, for example, they wouldn't give us a W2 under the new employee status?
    - Jonathan Balking (GSG Comms Director): my understanding is that the ruling on employee status only affects students who would already be receiving a W2 (students that would be teaching, for example)
    - David Walsh (History Rep): just to clarify, under the NLRB ruling you would still be allowed to participate in union elections and join a union even when not under employee status for collective bargaining purposes, since students go between student and employee status quite regularly
- Jonathan Balking (GSG Comms Director): since Amy Pszczolkowski moved, I was wondering if there is a replacement for her in career services
  - Mircea Davidescu (GSG President): there is none, at the moment. Presumably her work was divvied up between the other members. It's safe to say there will be an effect from her absence, but they are looking to find someone.
    - Lily Secora (Graduate School): the position has been posted, and the interview process is in motion, so there will be a person there
  - Noah Apthorpe (CS Rep): always found it unsatisfactory that graduate students only had a single dedicated employee in career services. Wondering if the GSG wants to make a statement requesting that that be changed.
    - Mircea: we can work on writing a draft and submitting it to Assembly for approval.

- Michelle Frazer (AOS Rep): anyone else having issues with the roundabout outside Lakeside? People coming from the East don't follow the yield side
  - Akshay Mehra (GSG Vice-President): we have to sit down with Kim Jackson (Transportation and Parking Services) in general, so that would be a good time for us to bring it up. We can also send an email to Public Safety, since they might be the ones dealing with the signage issue
  - Julia Wittes (Molecular Biology Rep): something I once proposed was to keep the foliage low in the center of the roundabout, as it's hard to see to the other side
  - Michelle: that would be great, but yield side is clearly visible so we might need something more
  - Akshay: we will bring this up at meeting with University Services (September 15th)
- Jonathan Balking (GSG Comms Director): my understanding of the wording of the constitution regarding the unionization issue, is that if we take a position on the issue then we would no longer receive funding from the university, so it's not a decision to take lightly:
  - Akshay Mehra: also worth considering that we have to deal with the administration on a regular basis, and we do require some good will, so we'd have to seriously consider whether we would be able to have the same impact, if we made a move to change the constitution
- David Walsh (History Rep): emailed idea to Mircea, that while graduate student center is still in prep mode, the new bar that opened up (Dinky), could be a place for graduate students to congregate, except it is prohibitively expensive. It occurred to me that the GSG could reach out to the owners, asking if it would be possible to arrange some sort of discount for graduate students.
  - Mircea: that is a great idea and we will follow up on that
  - Julia Wittes: could we also get the university to help on this? They might own the land and have some pull on the issue.

William Smith (Politics Rep) motions to adjourn the meeting, Robert Decker (French & Italian Rep) seconds. The meeting adjourns at 6:47pm.

**Next meeting:** October 12th, 2016 5:45pm