



Graduate Student Senate

University of Connecticut

Graduate Student Senate Minutes **March 14, 2005**

I. Call to Order

Vice President Tracy called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM in Arjona 311.

II. Approval of Minutes – February 7, 2005

The minutes were approved without objection.

III. Recognition of Senators

IV. Executive Committee Reports

a. President – Adam N. Rabinowitz

- University Budget
- Graduate Assistant Health Insurance

As explained in an e-mail to senators on February 21st, President Rabinowitz stated that we have been having some very good conversations with Donna Munroe, UConn Vice President of Human Resources and Payroll, who is in turn working with Tom Woodruff of the Retirement and Benefit Services Division of the Office of the State Comptroller to obtain quotes for an improved benefits plan. Steve Kuchta, Graduate Student Trustee, and Mike Kurland, Director of Student Health Services, have also been involved in these discussions. By improved benefits we are talking about items such as (but not limited to) lower copays, out of pocket limits, and a reclassification of OB/GYN and mental health to primary care copays as opposed to specialist copays. What we do not know right now is what the cost will be for these improved benefits and what will be feasible to obtain.

Rabinowitz also stated that Rep. Merrill has chosen not to introduce legislation concerning graduate assistant health insurance.

Senator Sabadini moved to add an issue forum on health insurance lasting 10 minutes. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

- Summer Issues

- Grad Residences Summer Fee

Student Trustee Kuchta is working with Sam Miller, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs to reduce the increase from the \$1400 charged last year.

- Work Study

President Rabinowitz advised students to contact Financial Aid if they have yet to receive a response for summer work study because the policy has changed twice (from the old policy to a new policy back to the old policy).

- WRTD Meeting

b. Vice President – Kisha Tracy

- Newsletter Finished and Distributed

c. Secretary – Jeffrey Arbogast

- Ultimate Guide to Graduate Student Life @ UConn
- Hilltop Apartments Closure for Summer 2005

d. Treasurer – Craig Calvert

- Announcements
- Public Affairs Homecoming Funding Approved

e. Parliamentarian – James Bourbeau

f. Activities Director – Andrea Knorr

- Event Updates

- Pasta Dinner – almost 200 students attended
 - Bar Night at Ted's – almost 100 students attended
 - Trivial Pursuit Tournament – Wednesday
 - Ice Cream in Graduate Student Lounge – Wed. Mar. 30th
 - Bus Trip to New York City – Sat. Apr. 9th
 - Spring Event – Sat. Apr. 16th

V. Standing Committee Reports

a. Student Life Committee

- Graduate Student Senate Lecture Series
 - Off Campus Housing Forum on Thursday at 4 PM in Whetten 200
 - Off-Campus Housing Fair on Wednesday in Wilbur Cross
- Graduate Student Life Network
 - Depression in Graduate School – Senator Falco, facilitator

VI. External Committee Representative Reports

- a. Graduate Faculty Council – Adam N. Rabinowitz and Kisha Tracy
- b. Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Selection Committee – Craig Calvert
- c. Parking Committee – Andrea Knorr
- d. University Senate – Kisha Tracy

After numerous meetings with legislators, UConn President Austin reported that both party caucuses are against the tuition freeze proposed by Governor Rell.

According to the graduate school, course renumbering (implemented in 2007-08) will not impact plan of study approval.

Representative Tracy reported that she raised the issues about Hilltop Apartments that Secretary Arbogast discovered and got the administration and Senate thinking about the issue. UConn President Austin stated that students should not have to pay more to live in alternate housing than they would have paid to live in Hilltop Apartments.

A proposal for the Center for Off-Campus Services will be presented at the next meeting. Senator Sabadini asked about the timeline for the center's implementation. Tracy responded that the web-based portion will proceed in Fall 2005. President Rabinowitz also reported that Town of Mansfield code changes to create an enforcement and inspection agency could be approved within the next week or two.

Senator Morill will assume the second graduate student seat in University Senate.

- e. Provost's Library Advisory Committee – Kisha Tracy
- f. Environmental Health and Safety Committee – Jeffrey Arbogast
- g. Scholastic Standards – Amy Sopcak
- h. Growth and Development – Andrea Fuhrel

Senator Sabadini asked if medical evacuation and repatriation in were included in the Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2003. President Rabinowitz responded that it was but was found to be too expensive so the university opted to self-insure at no cost to students.

- i. Student Union Policy Council – Andrea Knorr
 - Wireless Access by April
 - Bulletin Boards up – bring flyers to information desk for posting (2 weeks maximum)
- j. Town/University – Andrea Knorr (cancelled)
- k. Public Arts Committee – Colin McMullan
- l. Lab Safety Committee – Craig Calvert

The chemical inventory system will be initially implemented in Biology/Physics and Chemistry buildings. Senator Prunier noted that required training is always offered at the same time, making it difficult for some students to attend.

VII. Issues Forum

- a. Use of the Gradlist-L Graduate Student Senate E-mail List (5 minutes)

President Rabinowitz asked what postings are acceptable to this voluntary informal list. Should postings include Senate-funded and Senate-sponsored events only? If postings are not so limited, what other events should be posted.

Senator Sabadini asked what restrictions exist and who makes decisions about what to post. Rabinowitz replied that he has moderated postings and denied individual listings for things like apartments. Senator Scott suggested using a message board instead of a listserv. The general consensus was to remain with the status quo. Sabadini stated that she raised the issue to inspire discussion of the issue.

- b. Graduate Assistant Health Insurance (10 minutes)

Senator Sabadini stated that she feels like her time is wasted when senators are not asked to be involved in things that they should be involved in. At the November 3, 2004 meeting, the Executive Committee promised to update the Senate with any new information about graduate assistant health insurance as it became available. At that meeting Senator Stork asked if administrators could attend a Senate meeting and the Senate voted to formalize such a request. Sabadini would have liked to hear if administrators were asked to attend but could not. At that meeting, Sabadini also asked for a copy of the request for proposals (RFP) from 2003 along with information from the university budget about university contributions to graduate assistant health insurance along with planned premiums for the next two years. While Sabadini stated that she cannot be certain that her e-mail to President Rabinowitz prompted discussion of this issue with the Senate, she would prefer that she not have to prompt such discussion.

Vice President Tracy replied that administrators were requested to attend a Senate meeting but responsibility for graduate assistant health insurance changed over that time making it difficult to schedule such a meeting. Tracy acknowledged that the Executive Committee should have informed the Senate of this hurdle in scheduling a meeting.

Graduate Student Trustee Kuchta continues to work on getting the information requested. Much of it is simply not available.

In response to questions about the lack of new information beyond that disclosed in the February 21st e-mail to senators, Tracy said no new information is available to present. She also stated that senators should be continually polling their constituents on this and other issues without prompting from the Executive Committee or the Senate.

Rabinowitz said that the key focus is currently a determination of what our group looks like. Anthem has been resistant to providing information about the group because it considers its information proprietary. Mr. Woodruff is looking at state pool of providers but there is no talk of issuing an RFP.

Sabadini moved to extend debate 5 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Rabinowitz reported that questions from the Graduate Student Senate prompted the university administration to ask its own questions and begin taking action. The university has designated Donna Munroe, Vice President of Human Resources and Payroll, as the university administrator responsible for graduate assistant health insurance. In this role, she is working with Tom Woodruff of the Retirement and Benefit Services Division of the Office of the State Comptroller. While the Graduate School has an obvious interest in graduate assistant health insurance, it does not have administrative responsibility for it. In 2003, Chief Financial Officer Lorraine Aronson and Vice President for Operations Dale Dreyfuss had administrative oversight and were focused on financial impact to the university. Now, Human Resources has responsibility and focuses more on employees. Sabadini agreed that Human Resources are good people to be working on this.

Parliamentarian Bourbeau moved to extend 5 minutes. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Vice President Tracy responded to a question from Senator Jurgilas about the lack of Graduate School involvement to clarify that the Graduate School remains interested in graduate assistant health insurance but does not have administrative responsibility to secure a new plan.

Senator Jura moved to end discussion but the motion failed to receive a second.

Guest Aaron Schultz read an e-mail reply that he received from Ms. Munroe on Thursday, March 10th and contended that it demonstrated that the Executive Committee was not presenting all information to the Senate. Vice President Tracy and Parliamentarian Bourbeau asked how he reached that conclusion based on the content of that e-mail. Schultz did not respond with a specific area where the e-mail reply differed from what had already been communicated to the Senate.

Guest Barbara Campbell encouraged senators to be active in seeking information from constituents.

VIII. Old Business

- a. GSS – 04/05 – 12: That the Senate amend the Graduate Student Senate Constitution and Bylaws to move provisions from the Constitution to their proper place in the Bylaws.

Sabadini moved to vote on the proposal. The motion to vote was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote. The proposal was approved by unanimous voice vote.

IX. New Business

X. Other Business

XI. Adjournment

Senator Sabadini moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey E. Arbogast
Secretary, Graduate Student Senate

Attendance:

Executive Committee

Adam N. Rabinowitz, President
Kisha Tracy, Vice President
Jeffrey Arbogast, Secretary
Craig Calvert, Treasurer
James Bourbeau, Parliamentarian
Andrea Knorr, Activities Director

Senators

Malia Bajpai of Political Science	Melanie Rapino of Geography
Daniela Falco of English	Laura Sabadini of Psychology
Andrea Fuhrel of Psychology	Tsuyoshi Sawada of Linguistics
Gary Gianetti of Allied Health	Franklin Scott of Philosophy
Matt Jura of Mathematics	Alireza Senejani of Molecular and Cell Biology
Marius Jurgilas of Economics	Ila Sivarajah of Physics
Clayton McCook of Animal Science	Amy Sopcak of History
R. Brooke Morrill, Jr. of English	Dennis Stupka of History
Rachel Prunier of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	Lauren Woody of Music

Alternate Senators

Murat Ataol of Physics	Ted Efremoff of Fine Arts
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Guests

Barbara Campbell of English and OGSA	Aaron Schultz of Psychology and OGSA
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