



Graduate Student Senate

University of Connecticut

Graduate Student Senate Minutes **October 6, 2004**

I. Call to Order

Vice-President Tracy called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM in Room 200 of the Whetten Graduate Center.

II. Approval of Minutes (September 22, 2004)

The minutes from September 22, 2004 were approved by unanimous voice vote.

III. Recognition of Senators

Ila Sivarajah of Physics
Melanie Rapino of Geography
Tsuyoshi Sawada of Linguistics

IV. Executive Committee Reports

a. President – Adam N. Rabinowitz

- WRTD Update

President Rabinowitz announced that the Undergraduate Student Government approved its contribution of \$1500 toward the WRTD Pre-Paid Fare Program, but the university administration has not yet decided to contribute the additional funds required. A decision should be made by next week.

- Safety Walk – 8 PM on Thursday, October 21st

President Rabinowitz opened the walk to everyone in attendance, and suggestions for areas to look at were requested.

- Graduate Community Meetings

Last week's meeting in the grad dorms went well, and there will be another meeting at 4 PM in the School of Business Building on October 14th.

b. Vice-President – Kisha Tracy

- Review of Senate Procedures

c. Secretary – Jeffrey Arbogast (away at conference)

- Public Relations Committee
 - Graduate Student Senate Gazette (January 2005)
 - Ultimate Guide to Graduate Student Life @ UConn

Suggestions were solicited for what should be included in the ultimate guide.

d. Treasurer – Craig Calvert

- Reimbursement Process

Treasurer Calvert requested that contact about official Senate business not be made through e-mail.

Samples of proper receipts are listed on the senate webpage. The reimbursement form is also located there. If receipts are improper, or if forms are not submitted properly, checks will not be issued. In addition, reimbursement checks are generally not issued through the mail (they are, however, in extreme circumstances). You do not personally need to pick up the check, but please let Treasurer Calvert know if someone else will be picking up your check for you. Treasurer Calvert can answer your questions during his office hours in the Senate office (Student Union 213) on Friday afternoons.

e. Parliamentarian – James Bourbeau

- Membership Expansion

Parliamentarian Bourbeau is going to avoid a complete upheaval of the constitution and bylaws, since that occurred last year. This year, he plans to expand membership in the senate. Though there are many people at tonight's meeting, there are many departments that are still not represented. Parliamentarian Bourbeau asks that anyone interested in increasing the involvement of more senators join him on his committee.

f. Activities Director – Andrea Knorr

- Events (Recent and Upcoming)

Activities Director Knorr stated that almost 100 people attended the bar night at Ted's on September 27. There will be a bingo night October 14 in the grad lounge, at which prizes from local companies will be awarded.

- Student Union Movie Tickets Available

To pick up a ticket, visit the Senate office (Student Union 213) during posted office hours.

- Help with Advertising

Activities Director Knorr asked for people to join her committee in an effort to display fliers in departments across campus. She also asked for ideas about events to hold in the Spring.

V. Standing Committee Reports

a. Student Life Committee

- Graduate Student Life Network – Upcoming Event

The next network event will be a mixer in the Grad Lounge of the Student Union this Friday October 8th at 4pm.

Another network event is at 4 PM on Monday, October the 18th in Room 200 of the Whetten Graduate Center. Wendy Richardson of People’s Bank will discuss how to plan a budget and invest on the small scale.

- Graduate Student Senate Lecture Series – Recent Event

Dean Greger spoke about trends in graduate education on the 27th of September. Approximately 20 people attended, and the session was very successful. When the Graduate Student Senate website is renovated, the handouts from that meeting will be uploaded so that people who did not attend could access the information.

VI. External Committee Reports

a. Student Union Policy Council – Andrea Knorr

b. Graduate Faculty Council – Adam N. Rabinowitz and Andrea Knorr

Guest Tom Volscho asked if they would look at the retention of minority grad students recruited through the initiative of the Graduate Faculty Council.

c. Student Welfare Committee – James Bourbeau

There is still some confusion and discrepancy regarding the dissolution of parking on North Eagleville Road. Administrators are advocating the reduced-rate parking available at the North Parking Garage.

Senator Narasimhan asked if anything would actually come of the text book “protests”. Representative Bourbeau is unsure if a bill from Undergraduate Student Government would have any effect, though acknowledged the expenses are a serious issue.

Vice-President Tracy opined that one university will not affect change, but it is still worth bringing up the issue.

d. Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Committee – Craig Calvert

Professors in the upper 3-5% are eligible but the official announcement is confidential until made public around March.

e. Master Plan Advisory Committee – Craig Calvert

- Public Meeting - Master Plan Update October 13, 2004, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. in Bishop Room 7

Representative Calvert believes that we can bring up the parking issue at this forum. There is a website: www.masterplan.uconn.edu, where you can see what is in the works.

Representative Calvert requested that any interested person serve on open committees, including Mansfield Downtown Partnership, women's committee, and faculty standards.

Senator Fyler noted that there was no date listed on the agenda for the Master Plan Update meeting.

VII. Internal Committee Representative Elections

- a. That the Graduate Student Senate elect Alireza Senejani for membership in the Finance Committee.

Senator Senejani was elected to the finance committee by unanimous vote.

- b. That the Graduate Student Senate elect Gregory Stork for membership in the Finance Committee.

Senator Stork was elected to the finance committee by unanimous vote.

VIII. External Committee Representative Nominations

- a. Public Arts Committee – Colin McMullan

External Committee Representative Nomination approved by unanimous voice vote.

IX. Issues Forum

- a. Graduate Assistantship Issues (5 minutes)

Senator Woody brought up the issue of exploitation – working more hours than you have signed a contract for. She brought up the issue to faculty in her department, and was told

to “keep her mouth shut”. President Rabinowitz recommended that anyone in that situation should talk to him and Dean Henkel.

Guest Tom Volscho noted that an international student in his department was notified two weeks before expiration he/she would lose funding because of failure to complete the teach/speak test. In addition, an international student in his department works more hours than agreed to through contract signing.

Guest Jennifer Williams noted that some students are intentionally expected to work more, to prepare for what to expect after leaving UConn. That is, their assistantship duties are an extension of their education.

Senator Narasimhan said that 100% of TAs in his department work more than expected.

Parliamentarian Bourbeau asked for the important distinction of what hours are...is this person actually scheduled to be in a particular place for a time greater than 10 hours? Or is some of the extra time doing things like grading papers on their own time?

Vice-President Tracy asked that more specifics be documented, and the entire issue brought to the GSS and Dean Henkel in a more formal manner, if necessary.

President Rabinowitz noted that if confidentiality is a concern, it would be better to discuss things with him individually rather than in a public forum. It is important that we have specific cases, rather than the perennial generic complaints.

b. Parking/Transportation Issues (5 minutes)

Senator McCook informed the Senate that construction will begin in the parking lot in front of the yellow Old Dairy building on Monday, October the 10th, but those that park there were only notified today (Wednesday, October 6) that construction will begin, and parking will be disallowed. He has concerns regarding when construction will terminate and how permanent this loss of parking will be. There is a lack of shuttle service to this area of campus. The graduate student council from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources discussed these issues today and asked him to bring these issues to the Graduate Student Senate.

Senator Scott stated that to his knowledge, there is no reimbursement for travel expenses for students on branch campuses. Senator Jurgilas informed the Senate that the Economics department adds an additional hour to stipends to accommodate this.

Senator Sopcak mentioned a constituent’s observation of construction workers leaving the North Garage at 3 PM at excessive rates of speed with some seen driving on sidewalks.

Senator Jain was upset that last Saturday he tried parking in X Lot, but there was an event at Jorgensen so he was asked to pay \$3. Guest Rachel Schwell also noted a parking garage pass does not always allow entrance to the garages on nights of events.

c. Health/Safety Issues (5 minutes)

Senator Prunier said that she was told the copay for physical therapy is \$25, but was informed by President Rabinowitz that it is in fact \$15. President Rabinowitz told her to call Anthem and have the physical therapist contact Anthem as well. He advised the Senate to document the name of anyone at Anthem saying that the copay for physical therapy is \$25. Guest Rachel Schwell said she paid \$25 for physical therapy in July.

Senator Fuhrel wants to know if anyone is interested in contacting Anthem about reimbursing for gym membership. She mentioned this was a benefit under the old insurance plan but is no longer available under the current plan. Senator Rapino said some Blue Cross/Blue Shield programs reimburse \$150 for gym memberships in a program called “Healthy Lifestyles”.

X. New Business

Treasurer Calvert reported that \$5708 remains available from the special allocations budget.

- a. That the Senate allocate a total of \$431.65 to the Math Graduate Student Association for their Halloween Party on October 29, 2004 on the 1st floor of the Math Department (MSB).

Senator Jurgilas questioned the numbers in the proposal. Rachel Schwell of the Math Graduate Student Association answered that things were changed to cushion the budget in case the prices changed, and the rest of the budget had not been updated accordingly.

Senator Stork asked how much was spent last year, as well as how many people attended. Rachel answered that attendance was 30-40 people, and about the same amount of money was spent. Senator Stork then wondered how the event would be communicated to the entire grad population, since e-mail was listed as a form of advertising. Treasurer Calvert notified Senator Stork that the math department’s e-mail would be forwarded to the Graduate Student Senate, so that the event could be advertised through the Senate webpage and e-mail system.

Senator Senejani asked if any money was requested of the Mathematics department. Rachel said that department funds a picnic every year, and there is a graduate student get together every year; however, money was not requested for this event. Senator Senejani also wondered what room the event would be in, since the special allocation request only said 1st floor of the Materials Science Building. He was told that there is a room set aside, and will be posted in advertisements.

Senator Scott moved to end debate. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The proposal was approved by unanimous voice vote.

- b. GSS – 04/05 – 04: That the Graduate Student Senate allocate \$50 to renew the Mansfield Downtown Partnership membership.

Vice-President Tracy said that this was approved last year, and this money would allow someone to vote at the annual meeting this year. The committee will be discussing what will be included in the downtown.

Senator Jurgilas asked who else is at the meetings. President Rabinowitz stated that any individual or organization can pay a fee and have a vote, although voting rights are only at the annual meeting.

Senator Scott asked if the Graduate Student Senate could pay \$100 and have two votes. President Rabinowitz answered no, but said individual graduate students can vote, and pay less than \$50.

Senator Scott moved to end debate. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

XI. Other Business

Activities Director Knorr asked for ideas about how to advertise events in new, unexplored ways. Senator Scott asked if the Executive Committee had explored advertising on the buses. Guest Jennifer Williams said a 24" by 11" sign costs \$63 for display on the buses for one week, and UCIT makes them for \$17. Senator Fuhrel asked about advertising in the Advance. Activities Director Knorr notified her that the Advance has changed its policy on submission of events, and now only accept things that are already on the university events calendar. Senator Fyler opined that the best way to advertise is to get more people to the Graduate Student Senate meetings. Senator Adisa suggested advertising on the radio station.

Vice-President Tracy offered to e-mail the Senators with all events that will happen before the next meeting.

Alternate Senator Vickers of Art announced that the fine arts grad students will have open studios at the Depot Campus Visual Arts Research Center on October the 28th at 7 PM.

Senator McCook asked for help in writing a constitution for a graduate organization for animal sciences.

Senator Adisa announced that the graduate writing activities committee has poetry readings every 1st and 3rd Monday of month in the Stern lounge of CLAS.

Guest Jennifer Williams announced that there is a curriculum vita/resume workshop offered by Career Services on October 22nd.

XII. Adjournment

Senator Adisa motioned to adjourn meeting, it was seconded and unanimously moved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

Attendance

Executive Committee

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

Senators

Kofi Adisa of English (At-Large)
Gorjan Alagic of Mathematics
Andrea Fuhrel of Psychology
Carrie Fyler of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Rishi Jain of Chemical Engineering
Matt Jura of Mathematics
Marius Jurgilas of Economics
Clayton McCook of Animal Science
Srivatsan Narasimhan of Mechanical Engineering
Kim Petrovic of Family Studies
Rachel Prunier of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Melanie Rapino of Geography
Franklin Scott of Philosophy
Alireza Senejani of Molecular and Cell Biology
Ila Sivarajah of Physics
Amy Sopcak of History
Daniela Sovea of English
Tsuyoshi Sawada of Linguistics
Gregory Stork of Educational Psychology
Dennis Stupka of History
Julia Thomson of Political Science
Lauren Woody of Music

Alternate Senators

Cara Vickers-Kane of Art

Guests

Ann Cheney of Anthropology
Phil Gee of Physics
Rachel Schwell of Mathematics and the Math Graduate Student Association
Tom Volscho of Sociology and the Organization for Graduate Student Action
Jennifer Williams of Higher Education Student Affairs
Shikui Yan of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Graduate Badminton Club

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey E. Arbogast
Secretary, Graduate Student Senate

Andrea Knorr
Activities Director and Acting Secretary