



Graduate Student Senate

University of Connecticut

Graduate Student Senate Minutes **November 17, 2004**

Guest: Kristin Eschelman – University Libraries

Kristin Eschelman of University Libraries attended the meeting to get feedback from graduate students as the library strategically plans the state of the university libraries in the year 2010.

Members of the Senate encouraged internet connectivity throughout the library including a wireless network throughout and wired connections in the same areas as books and journals. Students should be able to check notebook computers out for use in the library with a student ID. Software should be available to meet needs of all students (specifically Fine Arts using Adobe products). A larger and more up-to-date media library with more software options is needed. Taped lectures are beneficial as demonstrated by successful pilot project for a virology class.

Records (specifically zoological records) should be more easily accessed online (without asking a staff member for access). More international journals should be available. The library is trying not to move from hardcopy to electronic subscription journals unless forced to do so as is happening more and more. Coordinate searching of available electronic and print journals. Remove old print journals from shelf once replaced with electronic subscriptions or simply indicate that the latest journal is available in electronic form. All-day access to SciFinder Scholar is useful.

A reasonable turnaround for inter-library loan would be two weeks with increased communication when delays occur. The central ownership and management of departmental libraries is not feasible. Later hours of operation (even 24 hours) are needed, but services may not be needed at all times. Books are often found incorrectly placed. On-demand check-out and reserved floors for quiet group study would also be useful.

I. Call to Order

Vice President Tracy called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in Room 200 of the Whetten Graduate Center.

II. Approval of Minutes (November 3, 2004)

The minutes were approved without objection.

III. Recognition of Senators

IV. Executive Committee Reports

a. President – Adam N. Rabinowitz

- Graduate Community Meeting

The discussion at the community meeting in the Biology/Physics Building primarily concerned North Eagleville Road and the enforcement of speed limits and prevention of jaywalking.

- College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Graduate Student Council

The council requested President Rabinowitz attend their meeting. The council discussed numerous issues including the need for bus service to Horsebarn Hill/Arena, the return of graduate assistant parking near a barn being torn down, and concerns about health insurance copays (especially for those with serious medical conditions).

b. Vice President – Kisha Tracy

- Library Report

Circulations requested meeting with Vice President Tracy because of graduate student feedback allowing them to recognize and correct various issues. Social Security Numbers are no longer shown on circulation printouts. The library will schedule a bulk renewal date due to handicap non-compliance affecting the ability of borrowers to enter the library. Some borrowers have been fined for books already returned so the library has implemented a double check-in system with two workers independently checking them in. Borrowers should hear the confirmed status of reported missing books. The library plans for more graduate student initiatives. Tracy is trying to get a deal for graduate students and double-sided copies. Borrowers may electronically renew books upon e-mail reminder but must physically return to the library after the third renewal. Courtesy e-mails reminders for interlibrary loan books would be helpful.

c. Secretary – Jeffrey Arbogast

d. Treasurer – Craig Calvert

- Receipts:
 - Itemize
 - Keep copy for your records
 - Complete, legible receipt copy

- Filling out Reimbursement forms completely
 - Budget spent
 - Checks go to person on receipt

Senator Fyler asked if having an account through UConn Student Activities is advantageous for acquiring funds from the Senate. Treasurer Calvert responded that it is not advantageous, but setting up such accounts could prove beneficial by shifting the burden of waiting for reimbursement from individuals to the organization.

e. Parliamentarian – James Bourbeau

f. Activities Director – Andrea Knorr

- Event Update

Activities Director Knorr reported that the bus trip to Boston on Saturday, November 6th went well with a full bus of graduate students participating. The Thanksgiving Dinner on Monday, November 13th went well and was well attended. Senator Appreciation Night will be held on Friday, December 10th from 6 to 8 PM in the Graduate Student Lounge. A Graduate Student Bar Night at Ted's is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 1st. Free massages will be available in the Graduate Student Lounge during a time block without examinations scheduled.

V. Standing Committee Reports

a. Student Life Committee

Chair Tracy reported the schedule of Graduate Student Life Network and Graduate Student Lecture Series activities for the semester has finished.

VI. External Committee Reports

a. University Senate – Kisha Tracy and Adam N. Rabinowitz

b. Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Selection Committee – Craig Calvert

Representative Calvert reported that recipients of the honor will be announced in February. They are chosen based on research, teaching, and service after nomination through the Office of the Provost.

c. University Senate Budget Committee – Craig Calvert

Representative Calvert reported that the committee discussed General Education Oversight Committee funding.

d. Faculty Standards Committee – Carrie Fyler

Representative Fyler reported that the university is considering revoking tuition waiver for graduate research assistants. Economics of such a move could favor post-doctoral researchers or technicians over graduate assistants. Guest Aaron D’Antona said that National Institutes of Health pre-doctoral fellowships cover tuition that is therefore not waived, causing the awarded tuition to be counted as income in financial aid. Many departments do not have enough teaching positions to fund all existing graduate assistants.

- e. Commission on Child Care – Adam N. Rabinowitz
- f. Student Fee Advisory Committee – Adam N. Rabinowitz
- g. Student Union Policy Council – Andrea Knorr

Representative Knorr reported that bulletin boards for the student union arrive next week but organizations may post only after approval through the information desk. Senator Sabadini asked if this included registered student organizations only.

VII. External Committee Representative Appointment

- a. Scholastic Standards – Amy Sopcak

Appointment a approved by unanimous voice vote.

VIII. Issues Forum

- a. Graduate Exploitation (included as moved and approved by the Senate on November 3, 2004) (10 minutes)

Senator Peluso stated that she has noticed a systemic level of graduate assistant exploitation in her department. For example, some graduate assistants work longer hours than generally indicated by the percentage (100% relating to 20 hours/week) of their assistantship. Furthermore, some students have seen their assistantship funding reduced or eliminated without good reason, including poorly communicated language requirements for international graduate students. Senator Sabadini added that the international students affected were given very short notice to complete the requirements.

Senator Sabadini stated that she was never informed that half of her funding came from a fellowship rather than an assistantship. Guest Gordon Gauchat asked what protection graduate assistants have from working more than the time indicated by the percentage of their assistantship. Guest Aaron D’Antona asked if safeguards are needed and noted that it is not mandatory to have thesis or dissertation committee meetings every year. He suggested that requiring these meetings without the major advisor present could act as a safeguard. Vice President Tracy pointed out that some departments have a graduate coordinator for graduate students to go to.

Vice President Tracy announced that the time for discussion of this issue had expired. Senator Peluso moved to extend debate by 5 minutes. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Senator Sabadini mentioned that she is frequently funded by grants not awarded to her major advisor. She also noted the discrepancy between the time and funding for training required to get to the point to produce deliverables and the time and funding actually required to produce deliverables themselves. President Rabinowitz asked if her assistantship duties were related to her thesis and if she could publish her assistantship work.

President Rabinowitz suggested inviting Catherine Ross of the International Teaching Assistant Program to come and speak at a future meeting.

b. Off-Campus Services (5 minutes)

Vice President Tracy reported that the developing Off-Campus Housing Office has been renamed as Off-Campus Services to reflect the broad array of services it aims to provide. This should make the office more attractive and valuable than if it were limited to housing only. Senators specifically mentioned child care, transportation ride share, community awareness, rape awareness, alcohol awareness, legal services, medical/dental referrals, distribution of religious information, and travel advice as areas for the office to concentrate its efforts.

c. Ideas for Graduate Student Life Network and Graduate Student Senate Lecture Series (5 minutes)

Senators suggested lectures focused on the following: the Office of Research Compliance Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements for research ethics and protocol approval; the repair and purchase of automobiles; the rental and purchase of housing; and budgeting and finance (originally scheduled this semester with a representative from People's Bank).

Senators suggested a game or casino night, a speed dating night, or a session on time management as Graduate Student Life Network activities related to the academic, social, and psychological aspects of life as a graduate student.

IX. Old Business

a. A health insurance task force be formed (included as moved and tabled by the Senate on November 3, 2004)

Senator Thomson asked what the proposed task force would do. Vice President Tracy responded that she did not know what the committee would do. Thomson asked if the task force would be overly repetitive of existing functions. Senator Sabadini

responded that she and the Organization for Graduate Student Action (OGSA) are willing to work with others but this might be overly repetitive. Vice President Tracy responded to Guest Gordon Gauchat that the task force could not consult with legal experts any better than those currently involved on the issue. Senator Prunier suggested adding an OGSA representative report to the agenda of Senate meetings to ensure communication.

Senator Sabadini asked if the copies of the UConn budget and graduate assistant health insurance request for proposals were available as requested at the Senate meeting on November the 3rd. Vice President Tracy responded that Student Trustee Steve Kuchta is working on getting copies but having some difficulty convincing administrators of our interest and need for them.

Parliamentarian James Bourbeau asked those present if they are in favor of going back within the state employee health plan. Guest Aaron Schultz responded yes because the graduate assistant health plan could otherwise be renegotiated annually subject to changes in state, university, and graduate assistant contributions. Senator Sabadini responded that the state plan could also be up for renegotiation. Bourbeau stated his skepticism of the safety of being in the state plan since we were cut out in 2003. Sabadini replied that the state claimed savings of \$2 million annually by removing graduate assistants from the state plan while the state actually would save \$3.7 million annually by including graduate assistants and their preferred experience rating. Bourbeau questioned how removing 2500 people from the much larger total population of the state employee plan could cost the state money. President Rabinowitz asked if the increased cost to the state is due to regular overall increases rather than the cost of removing graduate assistants and their experience rating. Treasurer Calvert pointed out that it is important to know which account the figures raised come from because an increase in one account could be matched by a corresponding decrease in another. Sabadini responded that State Representative Denise Merrill is trying to confirm these figures with the state comptroller's office including the information on our experience rating.

Senator Scott withdrew his motion.

Senator Sabadini commented that the assistantship survey recently conducted by the Graduate Student Senate should have followed the university's human subject protocol with IRB review. Sabadini expressed that repeated e-mails to those not responding to the university's child care survey were inappropriate.

Senator Jurgilas mentioned that graduate students living on-campus reported receiving notices that they would lose their housing for the 2004-2005 academic year because they will have lived on campus for 6 or more semesters by Spring 2005. Secretary Arbogast responded that he received too received a notice but it did not state that anyone would lose their housing. Rather, the notice informed the recipient of their lottery number from 1 to 2,500 (including undergraduate students) in the event demand for housing should exceed supply once applications are completed. As the

lottery number increases, the likelihood of receiving housing decreases. Because undergraduate and graduate students have entirely separate and distinct housing available, lotteries would be conducted separately for each group (even with the lottery numbers being combined into one large pool). Because the graduate students constitute a very small proportion of the lottery numbers, a graduate student with a lottery number of 100 could have the best lottery number in any graduate lottery. Arbogast agreed to report back to the Senate with more information at the next meeting. Activities Director Knorr expressed the need for co-ed housing options on-campus.

X. New Business

XI. Other Business

XII. Adjournment

Senator Sabadini moved to adjourn the meeting at 9 PM. Motion 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

Kofi Adisa of English (At-Large)	Rachel Prunier of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Malia Bajpai of Political Science	Laura Sabadini of Psychology
Andrea Fuhrel of Psychology	Tsuyoshi Sawada of Linguistics
Carrie Fyler of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	Franklin Scott of Philosophy
Philip Gee of Physics	Alireza Senejani of Molecular and Cell Biology
Marius Jurgilas of Economics	Ila Sivarajah of Physics
Clayton McCook of Animal Science	Amy Sopcak of History
Natalie Peluso of Sociology	Dennis Stupka of History
Kim Petrovic of Family Studies	Julia Thomson of Political Science

Alternate Senators

Aaron D'Antona of Molecular and Cell Biology	Leigh Mackow of Art
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Guests

Gordon Gauchat of Sociology and OGSA	Aaron Schultz of Psychology and OGSA
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