Graduate Student Senate

Senate Meeting

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Campus Center 904-08

Minutes

Present:

**GSS Officers:** Adina Giannelli (GSS President), Daniel Morales (GSS Treasurer), Dani O’Brien (GSS Vice President)

**GSS Staff:** Durryle Brooks (Equity & Access Coordinator), Javier Campos (International Students Coordinator), Canan Cevik (GWN Coordinator) Markeysha Davis (GSO Coordinator).

**Senators:** Danielle Allessio (TECS); Nakul Bende (Polymer Science & Engineering); Alex Bird (Management); Zac Broughton (EPRA); Michael Clauss (Linguistics); Max DILTHY (Environmental Conservation); Chris Edwards (English); Katie Grasha (Astronomy); Cole Fitzpatrick (Civil Engineering); Maureen Gallagher (German & Scandinavian Studies); Philip Geer (Geosciences); Matt Gifford (Philosophy); Cansu Gumus (Food Science); Matthew Herrera (History); Nick Hobbs (Computer Science); Michael Imburgia (Polymer Science & Engineering); Sonji Johnson-Anderson (TECS); Sarah Lang (Environmental Conservation); Modesto Lebron (Public Policy & Administration); Jesse Lingeman (Computer Science); Kelin Loe (English); Ragini Saira Malholtra (Sociology); Janna Mantua (Neuroscience & Behavior); Eliza Mellion (Nutrition); Madalina Meirosu (Comparative Literature); Gary Orr (African American Studies); Jayash Paudel (Resource Economics); Katrina Rieger (Chemical Engineering); Juan Manuel-Ruiz Hau (EPRA); Stacey Sexton (EPRA); Lauren Silber (English); Sean Smeland (History); Emma Strubell (Computer Science); Tim Sacco (Sociology); Tim Sutton (Communication); Berra Topcu (Anthropology); Marjorie Valdivia (Education); Kellen Williams (Sport Management); Alyssa Wells (Music); Xiao Xiao (Food Science);

**Graduate Students:** Andrew Battisti (Astronomy); Peter Huntington (Geosciences); Luis Oliveira (Philosophy); Jenny Krichevsky (English); Masia Solongi (Life Sciences Lab); Sarah Stetson (English).

**Other:** Bette Ellsden (Graduate School/Director of Graduate Student Life); Sarah Freudson (Student Trustee); Anais Surkin (Graduate Student and GEO Co-Chair); Lydia Washington (Student Activities and Involvement).

Minutes: Markeysha Davis

Call to Order:

Adina Giannelli called the meeting to order at 1:04pm.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

UMass Amherst Student Trustee:

Campus Housing

UMass Student Trustee, Sarah Freudson, brought up grad student concern about campus-sponsored housing at meeting, requesting grad students to contact her with questions or issues.

Pepper Spray

Freudson came to rally support for her initiative to allow the use of pepper spray on campus, which is currently banned on campus by university policy. Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows licensed carry of pepper spray, and Trustee Freudson reports demand among students to allow pepper spray on campus, by registry with UMPD. Freudson’s campaign also seeks to increase the number of blue lights on campus to deter attacks.

Student Trustee Vote – Increase to Three Voting Students

Freudson also noted that she is seeking to increase the number of student trustee votes from two (2) to three (3), on a board with 21 votes.

Adina Giannelli clarified that previous and current student-led campaigns to increase the vote have focused on gaining five (5) student votes, one per campus. Giannelli noted that students had two votes initially because there were only two campuses (Amherst and Boston); with the addition of campuses in Dartmouth, Lowell, and Worcester, student vote did not increase accordingly.

Chris Edwards asked for more info. Trustee asked for him to email her for follow-up. Anais Surkin asked whether UMPD carried pepper spray and whether this policy would allow them this power. Trustee stated that the intent is to empower students not police.

Lauren Silber stated that self-defense training rhetoric is ablest, maybe a change in language needed. Sarah Freudson can be reached atumastudenttrustee@umass.edu.

Adina also opened GSS officers for the questions and concerns of senators and other attendees.

Bette Elsden, Graduate School (Director of Graduate Student Life)

Introduction

Bette Elsden presented herself in her new position as Director of Graduate Student Life. She opened her services up to advising with confidentiality (unless one is a danger to themselves or others): housing, department issues, etc. Elsden can field questions, issues,
and concerns, unless there is a reason for Dean McCarthy to be involved. Ellsden also serves as a liaison between the GSS and the graduate dean.

Coaching

Ellsden is working on a multi-phase peer coaching program with students in the school counseling program, who she trains and supervises. Ellsden discussed coaching relationship as one in which a coach help student plan the course towards the completion of graduate tenure. Towards the end of fall, Ellsden hopes to set up targeted coaching groups. Ellsden noted a possibility for a variety of coaching groups around identity or interests, in addition to individual sessions. Ellsden also noted use of a handout with a survey of broad areas of concerns and satisfactions of graduate students, intended to determine best coaching plan for students. Bette Ellsden can be contacted at GradLife@grad.umass.edu.

UAW-GEO (Graduate Employee Organization):

Anais Surkin (GEO Co-Chair), noted that the union is bargaining new contract right now. Having a membership meeting on Thursday 10/9 and having election for mobilization coordinator. You can read the candidates statements online. Voting today and tomorrow (10/8 & 10/9). Handed out fliers for posting in departments, noted that the role of the mobilization coordinator is important for representation, getting out information about our contract and bargaining issues. More information at the membership meeting.

Javier Campos asked if Anais could explain why non-GEO graduate students should be involved with GEO. Anais explained that the campaigns that GEO works for impact all university workers, especially grad student employees. Most grads, also, are likely to be GEO employees at one point in their time here. Working on workers’ protections and healthcare concerns for graduate students who do not have assistantships. What GEO is fighting for this year is getting rid of co-insurance (when you go off campus, you have to pay at least 12 percent of co-pay).

Canan Cevik stated that she has had this problem and her expenditures have gone up because of the expense of outside providers and negotiating insurance. Concerns are OB/GYN care, transitional health care, longstanding/long-term ailments, etc., and the lack of specialists with the University network and the forced co-payment (co-insurance) for these services. Anais is open to discussing ways to navigate this system. Students can contribute testimonials about their experiences with health care; they will make a difference in the ways the University perceive our issues. The website also features a list of GEO’s bargaining demands.

Executive Committee: Update from Chair (Adina Giannelli)

EC decided that they will issue a memo to the GSS that outlines the work of the GSS officers, committees and staff. This is our charge to the senators. This will be used as a mechanism
for senators to be informed about what is going prior to the Senate Meeting. All senators should have received one via email, but they are available at this meeting. Dani stated that if there were any issues that senators wanted to see in the memo each month, they should contact the Executive Committee. Adina will be reaching out to senators to talk about issues in their departments, especially to support solo senators.

**Elections Committee: Update from Chair (Dani O’Brien)**

Distributed copies of the elections report, with remarks by Dani, Tim Sutton, and Maureen Gallagher. 61 Senators elected through Campus Pulse and in-department elections. We are charged with reaching out to continually unrepresented departments over the year. Three departments with invalid elections, but they will be holding new elections in order to gain representation. Ratification: Daniel moved to ratify the votes; motion seconded. Vote ensued; no abstentions or nays. New senators ratified.

**Approval of Old Minutes**

**Approval of May 5, 2014 Minutes:** Motion by Phil Geer. 23 in favor, 0 opposed, 6 abstentions.

**Approval of September 10, 2014 Minutes:** Motion by Phil Geer, second Tim Sutton. 29 approve, 0 opposed, 8 abstentions.

**Committee Formations**

**GSS Executive Committee:** Consists of GSS President, Vice President, Treasurer, and two elected senators. Historically it meets weekly, and serves as the face of the GSS to university administration. Dani stated that she served last year, and the great thing about having two senator members was alternating although they both tried to attend or participate in events. It was a way to amplify the voice of senators to the administration. Great opportunity. Tim Sutton asked how many positions they were looking for; Adina answered two. Juan Manuel Ruiz asked how senators could nominate themselves. Adina stated that it has typically been informal. So much interest was expressed that Adina suggested that interested parties email Dani (as Chair of Elections) by the end of the week about their interest in running and they would set up an election on Campus Pulse, to be held next week.

**GSS Finance Committee:** Daniel is the chair. Adina stated that it works like the EC, but responsible for managing GSS finances. Committee consists of GSS Treasurer as Chair, Vice President as Vice Chair, and three senators. Does not meet weekly, but when budgets are submitted, ad hoc funding is requested, etc., it can be pressing in a very short time. According to GSS bylaws, Senate needs three senators to serve. Four senators were interested. Finance Committee Elections will also be up for a vote, as well. Email nominations to Dani O’Brien by Friday.
**Motions:**

I. Formation of an Ad Hoc committee on UMPD policies and interactions

Stems from the student concerns about police dating back to Spring 2014 semester and the current concern with the informant program and broader (local national) concerns with police activity.

Chancellor is announcing a committee to evaluate the role and work of UMPD on campus, within the confidential informant policy. Adina is on this committee. The recommendations of this formed GSS committee will inform her position within the Chancellor's committee. Because the committee is ad hoc, membership parameters were not necessary. The name of the committee and the scope are open to change. Adina prefers broad feedback. Dani said that we will be holding an open forum next week.

Chris Edwards asked what the committees (advisory boards) would be within the organization. Adina stated that each of the staff positions would have committees. One senator not sure what the Ad Hoc committee would do. Javier explained that the Ed Davis report lays out a critique of the campus, community and law enforcement within the Blarney Blowout incident. Committee looks at the relations between students and police within our community. Durryle stated, as Access and Equity coordinator, that the goal of bringing in student voices is to have their perspectives in the conversation. Juan Manuel stated that just because there may be a small group meeting does not mean that the larger group would not have a voice. You can influence policy by the process of these larger meetings.

Motion to approve rendered; seconded by Chris Edwards. 37 votes in favor. 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Dani said if senators were interested, they should speak with her or email her.

**DISCUSSION OF ADVISORY BOARDS:**

Equity and Access: Durryle Brooks (Equity and Access Coordinator)

International Students: Javier Campos (International Students Coordinator)

GSO: Markeysha Davis (GSO Coordinator)

GWN: Canan Cevik (GWN Coordinator)

Meetings will begin later this month.

**Upcoming Events**

Balancing Life Love and School: Durryle: Meet on Mondays at this building to support each other around issues we are facing in the context of this academy. 6:30-8 pm. Welcome at any point of the semester to those who need support. If you have any questions, contact Durryle directly, or join our Facebook group.
GSS Writing Group: Tues and Weds 4-9 pm Grad writing group. We are trying to recognize each other and be in support of each other and know that you have a space to get work done. If there are any other programmatic things that senators would like to see, contact us.

Crossroads conference: Madalina Meirosu announced the Comp Lit conference, to be held this weekend. Talking about translation, identity, etc. International scope. Weekend activities, barbecue, party with a live band. Opportunity to connect. Open to all. Has website with additional information and program.

SACL/GEO/GSS Reception: Next Friday, GSS is co sponsoring a reception for SACL and GSS and GEO in Massachusetts Room of Mullins Center on 10/17/14.

Ice Skating Party: Family-friendly, at Mullins Center 11/1/14 from 6-7:50. Food provided; entrance and skating rentals are free.

GSS Goes to the Theater: New GSS initiative offering free theater tickets for events at the FAC/Fine Arts Center for graduate students. For additional information, contact Daniel Morales.

Motion to Conclude.

Motion to end the meeting by Juan Manuel Ruiz. Seconded by Corey Hodges. Approved by body. Meeting concluded at 2:13pm