Graduate Student Senate

Senate Meeting
Thursday October 24 2013
Campus Center 911-15

Minutes

Present:
Officers: Robin Anderson, Ghazah Abbasi, Adina Gianelli
Staff: Craig Bidiman, Srinivas Lankala.
Others: David Vaillancourt (Associate Dean of Students), John McCarthy (Dean of the Graduate School, Anna Waltman (GEO),

Robin Anderson called the meeting to order at 1.05 PM. Ghazah Abbasi moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting, Mike Clauss seconded. The minutes were approved with 19 votes for and 2 abstentions.

Announcements: SGA: Savanna Van Leuvan Smith, chair of the SGA’s Diversity and Student Engagement Committee announced a Lobby Day event at the State House in Boston on November 19. She said they are lobbying for 5 student trustee votes on the Umass Board of Trustees, and that the SGA will organize a bus to the State House. Ian Coupal asked for more explanation about the issue of student trustee votes, and Savannah explained the background to the issue and the context of the demand. Tim Sutton said GSS is also working with the SGA on this issue and will bring a resolution on this to the next meeting of the Senate.
GEO: Anna Waltman announced a Campus Equity Week of events in support of adjunct unions.
Committee updates: Anna Waltman, who is on the Faculty Senate’s Status of Diversity Council presented an update: the council plans to do a report card on diversity, and members also discussed the report of the about the Joint Task Force on Strategic Planning.
Robin announced the formation of student advisory boards to the chancellor and passed around a draft of the document.

Bylaw amendments: Robin moved to approve all proposed amendments to the bylaws that were presented in the last meeting and Dave Brown seconded. Robin pointed out that having a process in place to enable absentee voting is one important change. Ghazah asked the bylaws committee to explain why this is useful. Robin, replying on behalf of the committee, said that in case a senator had to miss a senate meeting, this measure would enable them to exercise voting privileges. He added that this was a recurring
problem last year so that is why the bylaws committee took this up as an amendment. Joe Sapp agreed and said this was a particular problem in his department. Ian Coupal moved to end discussion and Mike Clauss seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 26 votes in favor. Robin moved to vote on the original motion. The motion passed with 27 votes in favor and one abstention. The amendments to bylaws were approved.

Ghazah proposed to move to executive session and Ian Coupal seconded. Robin explained the concept of an executive session. Ghazah added that this executive session is to enable graduate students to discuss issues among themselves and to plan for the open forum. Ian Coupal asked if there was any business remaining that can be done outside the executive session. Ghazah replied that everything else on the agenda only requires the presence of senators, so executive session would not be a hindrance. Kenneth van Tassel moved to end discussion. Ghazah called the question to move to executive session. The motion passed with 24 votes in favor and 4 abstentions.

The Senate moved into executive session.