Graduate Student Senate  
Senate Meeting  
Monday March 31 2014  
Campus Center 917

Minutes

Present:
Officers: Robin Anderson, Samantha Sterba
Others: Markeysha Davis, Srinivas Lankala (Staff), David Vaillancourt (Associate Dean of Students), John McCarthy (Dean of the Graduate School), Brian Harvey (Co-chair, Joint Task Force on Strategic Oversight), Tim Anderson, Elizabeth Chilton (Co-chairs, Joint Task Force on Resource Allocation), Mzamo Mangaliso (Task Force on Internationalization).

Robin Anderson called the meeting to order at 4.01 PM. Phillip Geer moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, and Maureen Gallagher seconded. The minutes were approved with 12 votes in favor and 6 abstentions.

Announcements: Childcare: Samantha Sterba said childcare funds had been disbursed and parents should have already received them in their bursar’s accounts.
Elections: Samantha said nominations were still open and encouraged senators to nominate themselves or others.
Stefanie Robles updated the meeting on the CWC workshop, the Crafts Center workshop and the meeting schedules of the Status of Diversity Council and Chancellor’s Diversity Advisory Committee (CDAC). Tim Sutton presented an update on the Joint Task Force on Resource Allocation (JTFRA) and on the progress on the GSS resolution on diversity. He said diversity is now mentioned in the latest draft of the JTFRA report. Craig Bidiman updated the senators on the search for a new Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Provost: he said the finalists would be on campus for an open forum this week. Robin said Student Advisory Boards (SABs) have been set up and now met. He said Samantha and himself had attended the meeting of the Administration and Finance (A&F) SAB, and they will propose new measures to ensure student control over spaces in the Campus Center – Student Union Complex in the next meeting. Robin read out the Chancellor’s email response to our diversity motion that was agreeable and supportive. Juan Manuel Ruiz-Hau reported on the inaugural meeting that Stefanie and he attended with Vice Chancellor Enku Gelaye for the Student Affairs Student Advisory Board. He said that VC Gelaye was also supportive of the diversity resolution in the JTFRA. Stefanie said that they will bring up issues related to teaching and TA support issues in the next meeting. Juan Manuel added that he will also raise issue of shortage of assistantship opportunities.
John McCarthy, Dean of the Graduate School, said that teaching issues should be
brought up separately at the Academic Affairs SAB, and assistantship issues, depending on the kind of assistantship involved, should be brought up either in Student Affairs, Academic Affairs or the A&F advisory boards. Anna Waltman, co-chair of GEO, announced the election of the GEO bargaining committee and the beginning of the bargaining process, including a survey. She added that a strategy workshop would take place tomorrow on race and racism in the workplace. Samantha presented an update on the Faculty Senate meeting: The resolution in support of 5 student trustees was passed in the Faculty Senate as well. Robin added that the measure is now held up at the State House level, and may not go through this year. Jordon Bosse presented an update from the meeting of the Health Council, including news of a psychological resources center and a new policy on exposure to infected fluids. Anna also announced the GEO membership meeting on April 14th.

Funding motions: For the funding request from the Sequential Arts Colloquium for a conference, Tim moved to approve and Dani O’Brien seconded. The request was approved with 20 votes in favor and 4 abstentions. The Stroke Support Group presented their funding request for a bowling event. Dani moved to approve and Colleen Ashley seconded. The request was approved with 20 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

Robin announced a proposed bylaws amendment from Travis Salley. Travis presented the amendment, to ensure representation of hitherto unrepresented departments through the mechanism of students being able to represent departments other than their own. Phillip asked how the process would work, and Travis said an election would still have to take place. Colleen asked how a person would actually approach an unrelated department to represent them and in what circumstances, and Travis replied we would have to work out the details. Faune said it would discourage unrepresented departments from pursuing potential candidacies within their own departments. Juan Manuel said the broader context of this is chronic non-representation of some academic constituencies in the GSS, and maybe we can give this a shot.

The co-chair of the Joint Task Force on Strategic Oversight, Brian Harvey, spoke about the JTFSO process thus far. Co-chairs of the Joint Task Force on Resource Allocation, Elizabeth Chilton and Tim Anderson then presented on the JTFRA exercise, and said they were seeking feedback across the month of April. Mzamo Mangaliso presented the task force on Internationalization. He spoke about how it was related to an initiative of the ACE Internationalization Lab, and grew out of the JTFSO. He said the task force was currently seeking input from campus constituencies and will create a draft report.

Ian Coupal asked about study abroad opportunities and Prof. Mangaliso said it was part of the scope of the task force, and involved expanding both student and faculty research abroad opportunities. Phillip asked Prof. Chilton to explain the model that the chancellor has in mind in terms of resource allocation. Prof. Chilton said no model has been chosen yet but we will make up our own model depending on our specific needs. She added that Huron Consulting is helping us understand the different models that are out there.
Faune, in response to the presentation from the internationalization task force said that the terms are vague and neoliberal and that the humanities are not adequately represented. She asked about the absence of housing issues such as the lack of affordable housing that would attract international students to live on campus. Prof Mangaliso said these were important concerns and would be addressed.

Travis asked the internationalization task force if diversity was considered a domestic issue or international issue. Prof. Mangaliso said it was a complex question, and the task force does not want the issues they raise to displace the important issues of domestic diversity.

Maureen asked why foreign language instruction was not given adequate importance in the task force draft. Prof. Mangaliso agreed that language instruction was being neglected across the board, and invited Maureen to come and speak at a meeting of the task force to work something out.

Tim asked the JTFRA co-chairs to clarify why the tuition and fees allocation numbers in the draft were so unclear, and what the impact of these numbers would be on graduate funding: whether it would change the way that assistantships are funded and graduate student fees are assessed. Prof. Chilton said that no huge changes to grad assistantships are planned. The JTFRA wanted to make it clear how tuition waivers are handled, so that departments are not discouraged from hiring outside grad students, and the fee waivers are paid by the employing department. She said that administrative assistantships will be shared across the campus units since they should be seen as a common good. She said they want to encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-college hiring. Tim Anderson added that cost and resource allocation would be based on a division between departments, and striking a balance between simplicity and transparency. He said the JTFRA also wanted to encourage grad student – specific endowments, scholarships and fellowships.

Anna asked about the difference between internationalization at graduate and undergraduate levels, since they were so different in terms of international diversity, and the effect it would have on existing writing courses, ESL, etc.

Prof. Mangaliso said that the Task Force wanted to increase the undergraduate share of international students and plan accordingly to that end.

Dani said that there have been funding cuts recently to multicultural education initiatives and problems for students of color, and it seems disingenuous to talk about more internationalization, when we have so many existing issues around this to tackle, and even study abroad is now seen as more of a glorified vacation. Prof. Mangaliso acknowledged that there are many problems, that is why we have this strategic planning process and its internationalization task force to tackle these issues and that these bodies are engaged in formulating our values and how these processes relate to our values.

Dani O'Brien moved to adjourn and Kathryn Accurso seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5.37 PM.