Graduate Student Senate
Senate Meeting
Thursday October 4 2012
Campus Center 917

Minutes

Present:

Officers: Hongmei Sun, Garth Schwellenbach, Robin Anderson.
Senators: Una Tanovic, Juan Montecino, Anders Fremstad, Joe Sapp, Bradley Bolin, Veronica Golden, Danny Feldman, Travis Gagen, Daniel Vahaba, Tim Sutton, Maria Fernanda Gandara, Tiffany Parisi, Ashley Sherry, Faune Albert, Emily Campbell, Zhongjin Li, Chia-Ying Wu, Misun Lim, Xueting Jiang, Juyeon Park, Michael Schoettle, David Vacchi
GSS Staff: Ghazah Abbasi, Matt Ferrari, Adina Giannelli, Srinivas Lankala.
Others: David Vaillancourt (Associate Dean of Students).

The meeting was called to order at 12.00 PM.

Travis proposed to approve the minutes of the last meeting, Faune seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

Garth informed the meeting about the elections committee, and holding another round of senator elections at the end of October.
  - Ghazah said they have tried to make sure that the Science departments are informed about these elections, because they are currently underrepresented in the Senate.

Executive committee: Hongmei presented the EC, its duties and role, and its activities in September: meeting with John Sheehan, continuing work on healthcare, meeting with the new Chancellor and working towards more graduate student representation on the Board of Trustees.
  - Robin added that David’s presentation of professional development for graduate students, and Ghazah’s work on the funding and progress committee, are also things that the EC has been involved with. He said the Senate meetings should be driven by Senators and encouraged all present to bring departmental and other issues to the meeting and the agenda.
  - Bradley and Faune asked whether this would include both academic issues and work issues
  - Robin replied that they would be any issues that related to graduate student life, both academic and otherwise.
  - David explained that this helps the EC to bring issues to the university wide committees and to other decision-making bodies.
Garth presented an update on the childcare committee: all applications have been submitted (57), and the committee will meet soon to allocate funding.

Robin presented the Budget of the GSS for 2012-13.
- Travis asked why there was a decrease in ad-hoc funding this year.
- Robin replied that it was because of a decrease in requests.
- Travis said that funding proposals should be made in person much ahead of time instead of after the fact, such as at a conference last year that went over budget.
- Veronica asked if the senate votes on ad-hoc funding, and how far ahead.
- Robin replied that it does and said he will lay out the policies in a future workshop next week (Thu, Fri). He also pointed out the jump in SLSO funding and explained the new funding arrangement with the SGA.
- Bradley asked what exactly is included under GSS operations.
- Robin replied this included labor costs and office expenditure.

Ghazah introduced the Funding and Progress Committee and the need for more research on funding and recruitment and its relationship with progress.
- Anders spoke about the policy and process in the Economics department, but said this year there has been a big shortfall in funding.
- Ghazah said that the Economics dept. process works very well, but pointed out that the money available is still shrinking.
- Ashley asked about tuition waivers in the Economics dept. system.
- Chia Ying asked about fit between TAs and courses in such a system.
- Una asked how the sections in this system would be organized and said that it may not work in departments where there are only large classes.
- Matt asked about the statute of limitations and its effect on funding in such a system.
- Ghazah asked for nominations to this committee: Anders, Chia Ying and Xueting volunteered.

The discussion on Roberts Rules was tabled due to lack of time.

David Vaillancourt presented a survey on professional development for graduate students.

Travis said that participation was great in the meeting and said he EC should identify and make a list of non-participative departments and send that list to active senators who can then recruit more senators.
- Ghazah said this was a great idea she’ll follow up on that.

Announcements: Hongmei announced the Halloween costume skating party on October 21; Adina announced Not Bread Alone event on October 6; Dan Feldman introduced Get Active Umass and spoke about sending consultants to each department.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.30 PM.