Graduate Student Senate
Senate Meeting
Thursday March 13 2014
Campus Center 904-08

Minutes

Present:
Officers: Robin Anderson, Samantha Sterba
Senators: Chelsea Sams, Alexandra Prince, Kathryn Grasha, Christoph Krumm, Robert Tim Sutton, Dave Brown, Juan Manuel Ruiz-Hau, Joe Sapp, Joy Jansen, Emily Campbell, Matthew Donlevy, Jared Starr, Ian Coupal, Phillip Geer, Maureen Gallagher, Emily Pipes, Mike Jirik, Kimberley Sawyer, Michael Clauss, Travis Salley, Ragini Saira Malhotra, Cassaundra Rodriguez
Others: Markeysha Davis, Srinivas Lankala (Staff), Maggie Neuman(Grad Q&A), Alex Paulsen and Sara Green (ChEGS)

Robin called the meeting to order at 1.02 PM

Maureen Gallagher pointed out a correction in the minutes, and Phillip Geer moved to approve the minutes, Garrett Gowen seconded. The minutes were approved with 17 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

Announcements: Robin asked for a volunteer to serve on an academic grievance subcommittee of the Graduate Council of the Faculty Senate. Juan Manuel added that the committee would deal with such grievances as are not supported under the current Ombuds office framework.

Markeysha Davis asked for volunteers interested in the GSS Professional Development committee and organizing events with the Graduate School’s OPD.

Samantha asked for volunteers for building issues and campus planning decisions. She also announced that the Faculty senate will vote on our 5 trustee resolution today at 3 PM. She asked for more input on what issues to take up in the faculty senate’s healthcare committee.

Discussion: Travis Salley presented a motion to amend the GSS constitution to allow senators to represent departments other than their own.
Maureen asked what would happen if the department chooses not to be represented. Travis replied that the amendment would have to allow for that. Phillip asked the exact language that the motion seeks to amend, and Travis clarified the reason for the amendment. Christoph Krumm asked how the election would work, and if anyone just could just volunteer or have to be elected. Juan Manuel asked about the alternative possibility of ad-hoc senators, where someone from the department comes in to participate in the senate meetings on an observer basis. Kathryn asked how we could rationalize outsiders representing a department that’s not theirs. Garrett asked if we could
think about expanding representation on a college or school basis instead so it is more representative, rather than a random student representing a department. Kathryn added that it doesn’t actually solve the real problem of non-participation. Tim asked where we would find all these people who are waiting to represent other departments. Robin clarified with information about the intention behind the current bylaws and constitution.

Samantha presented the following motions for approval of funding to GSOs:

Grad Q&A: Maggie from Grad Q&A explained the funding requirements: money for meeting off campus, for refreshments for monthly meetings and for end-of-year celebration. The motion was approved with 20 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

Samantha presented a motion from the Chinese Christian Lunch fellowship. Phillip asked for more details. As no one was present from the GSO, Garrett explained the membership numbers of the GSO and the numbers attending the event in question. Tim asked how much funds were left for ad-hoc requests and Samantha clarified that there was enough to last the rest of the semester. The motion was approved with 17 votes in favor and 4 abstentions.

ChEGS: Alex Paulsen and Sara Green presented a funding request for an ice skating event for ChEGS students and families. The funding was for refreshments. The motion passed with 17 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

Samantha presented a funding request from the GSO for the DuBois Department of Afro-American Studies. Markeysha added that its quite impressive how much this new GSO has achieved in the short time since its inception. The motion was approved with 18 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

Robin presented a resolution calling on the university’s Joint Task Force on Resource Allocation (JTFRA) to add diversity as one of its guiding principles.

Juan Manuel spoke for the resolution, and presented its context and need. He said it arose out of Tim Anderson’s presentation of the JTFRA in the last meeting.

Robin added that this will be sent to the chancellor, the BOT and the president and they will have to respond, failing which the resolution would become part of university policy.

Tim added that this should also be sent to the JTFRA co-chairs. He spoke about the JTFRA process so far, in his role as the grad student representative on the committee, and about Huron Consulting and its role in the process.

Maureen said the resolution should be expanded to include age. Kathryn added that marital status is also a significant omission that should be included.

Joe Sapp asked how one could determine that the lack of representation of students of color is a systemic and structural problem. In reply, Juan Manuel explained how systemic
injustice works and why white-male-heteronormative students have an easier time in graduate school.

Travis asked if political affiliation plays a role, and Samantha replied that it is not really a part of the systemic and structural oppression that the resolution seeks to address.

Christoph asked how this resolution would affect the JTFRA’s allocation process.

As a point of information, Tim explained that this is needed because of the decentralization of decisions on diversity being envisaged in the JTFRA, so that diversity does not become a choice but is mandated centrally.

Juan Manuel added that the resolution seeks to make it an expectation rather than a choice.

Samantha, responding to the earlier question about structural and systemic problems, said that such problems can be identified through issues that keep being reproduced every year. Phillip, responding to the same question, said that if data is needed, there is plenty of socio-economic data out there that talks about these systemic issues.

Markeysha, responding to Travis’ question about missing categories, said that the goal is not to make it a ‘broad’ definition, but an inclusive one that is targeted at groups that have been denied access historically and systemically.

Robin summarized the friendly amendments thus far: to expand the JTFSO, add age and marital status as categories and spell out the existing guiding principles. He called the question for a vote. The resolution was approved unanimously with 17 votes.

Samantha announced the GSS officer elections timeline.

Mike moved to adjourn, Phillip seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2.18 PM.