Graduate Student Senate

Senate Meeting
Friday February 1 2013
Campus Center 162-75

Minutes

Present:
Officers: Garth Schwellenbach, Robin Anderson.
Senators: Alexandra Prince, Sara Green, Una Tanovic, Anders Fremstad, Bradley Bolin, Maria Fernanda Gandara, Kathryn Accurso, Daniel Morales, Brenda Muzeta, Gesine Hinterwalder, Gina Occasion, Faune Albert, Emily Campbell, Veronica Golden, Karen Sause, Rebecca Maillet, Joy Jansen, Jennie Steshenko, Xueting Jiang, Matthew Ryder, Andrew Kennedy Lapre, Daniel Vahaba, Sereres Johnston, Travis Gagen, Misun Lim.
Staff: Ghazah Abbasi, Matt Ferrari, Adina Giannelli, Srinivas Lankala.
Others: Garnett Gowen, Zac Broughton, Alex Ponomareff, Mike Clauss, David Vaillancourt, Ludmilla Pavlova.

Garth Schwellenbach called the meeting to order.
Bradley Bolin moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting and Travis Gagen seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes were approved.
Garth reminded the senators that the deadline for GSS childcare assistance applications is on February 4.
Garth introduced Ludmilla Pavlova from Campus Planning to present the Campus Masterplan.
Ludmilla presented the history of planning at UMass campus, the background to the current plan and the need for planning, the role of the planning committee, purpose of the plan, the planning process, the campus planning website, evolution of the plan, its main themes including pedestrianisation, traffic management, sustainability, the renovations of South College, Hills, the replacement of Bartlett, the additions to ISOM and Whitmore, the revival of Ellis Drive and the redesign of Mass Ave and Hicks Way.
Jennie Steshenko said the numerous crosswalks on N Pleasant St led to delays for transit passengers during times of heavy pedestrian use such as the intervals between classes and asked about the possibility of tunnels for pedestrians.
Ludmilla said the planners’ larger goal is to reduce vehicular traffic and prioritise pedestrians. She added that on N. Pleasant St., it was found that 80% of traffic is university related so the problem can be addressed to a large extent by finding alternative ways for service vehicles to cross the campus and service entrances to buildings, and time the deliveries and service traffic to avoid break times between classes.
Matthew Ryder asked who makes up the focus group that supplies the ideas used in the planning process.
Ludmilla said it included P-TAB, which has graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and staff.
Daniel Vahaba asked about the process of planning for research facilities.
Ludmilla replied that the last long-range science facility plan was in 2008, but that research needs change often and planning has to change quickly based on grants, changes in the field, etc.

Matt Ferrari mentioned the Graduate Housing Task Force and asked if the planning process makes room for the housing needs of graduate students on campus. Ludmilla replied that specific plans would have to be made by Housing and Res Life, but that Campus Planning was in favor of increased graduate housing on campus and proposed the redesigned Mass Ave as an ideal location since it would be between the town properties and the main entrance to campus, close to existing family housing, and it would bring a more lively atmosphere to an important campus location that now consists only of surface parking.

Garth asked if there were any specific plans about the future of existing family housing in North Village. Ludmilla replied that North Village is tired and needs to be overhauled or replaced. She repeated that Mass Ave would be a good place for grad and family housing, that it would provide a more family-friendly atmosphere encourage a 24/7 use pattern for an important location, and that the town would also support more family housing and on-campus grad housing.

Garth introduced the idea of an ad-hoc committee for planning social events and asked all present to come up with ideas to be discussed later in the meeting.

Robin Anderson said the finance committee had received one ad-hoc funding request for $500 from the Organisation of Graduate Students in Comparative for the UMass Graduate Conference in Translation Studies and recommended that it be approved by the senate.

Sereres Johnston moved to approve the funding request, and Una Tanovic seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the funding request was approved.

Garth asked for nominees for a graduate student seat on the search committee for a new UMass CIO.

Jennie Steshenko from Computer Science nominated herself.

Garth presented a committee report from the Grad Housing Task Force and asked for more volunteers to sit on the committee.

Garth asked if anyone had had ideas for the social events ad-hoc committee. Matthew Ryder suggested bowling; other suggestions included a soccer tournament, a movie night on the lawn, and bands and a barbecue and a writing group / party. David Vaillancourt said that Masters and PhD students have different social needs and conceptions about social time and any social events planning should keep that in mind.

Matt Ferrari spoke about a new Faculty Senate ad-hoc committee to evaluate e-dissertations. He said there was a suggestion to consider eliminating the requirement to use Proquest, a private corporation, and enable the use of the community-oriented Scholarworks instead.

Garth mentioned that the meeting schedules for this semester have been set and venues were marked in the agenda.
Robin announced that an elections committee would have to be set up in the next meeting to prepare for officer elections and asked all present to think about serving or nominating others who would want to be on it.
Garth added that it was also time to think about running for leadership positions or nominating anyone else interested.
Garth moved to adjourn the meeting, and Xueting Jiang seconded.
The meeting was adjourned at 3.30 PM.