

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 14th 2007

I. Meeting called to order at 6:00pm by Randi Tanglen

Present: Catherine Neish, Boris Glebov, Randi Tanglen, Paul Thorn, Joshua Scott, Jim Collins, Claudia Benavente, Jennifer Cohen, Shaun Halbert, Kedar Dhane, Gail Bradford, Kathryn Williams, Cory Christenson, Ariel Fisher, Kathleen Corcoran, Nadia Silvestry Rodriguez, Nicholas Fernandez, Aaron Gubi

Proxies: Rob Schumaker, Anne Murdaugh, Melissa Sisco, Laura Gronewold, Sandy Marshall

II. Calls to the audience: None.

III. Reading and approval of minutes – Paul Thorn motions to pass the 01/31/07 minutes, Shaun Halbert seconds, the motion carries with one abstention.

IV. Officer Reports:

President – Paul Thorn – (1) State lobby day is tomorrow. Paul will go to Phoenix to participate. Elaine and Anne are in Washington D.C. for National Lobby Day. (2) A committee has been convened to advise the university on IT issues. The committee recommended a \$21 increase to the tech fee, for a total of \$36 (with the library fee). The committee is still defining its mandate. There is concern that student needs are not being conveyed to the board, and the selection of board members is flawed. (3) The deadline for candidate applications in the next GPSC election is March 2 (for President and Vice President) and March 9 (for representatives). (4) Paul met with Student Union Director Dan Adams about the possibility of creating another Student Union fee. Paul told Dan that any fee must provide services for graduate students as well as undergraduates. (5) There has been an article, an editorial, letters, and a guest column in the Daily WildCat regarding the Academic Bill of Rights resolution the GPSC passed in our last meeting. The Provost and the Chair of the Faculty also sent out a letter. The ASUA is considering a tabled resolution on the Academic Bill of Rights. Last week there was legislation introduced in Phoenix, which would make it illegal for instructors to endorse political candidates, share their views on pending litigation, or their views on social and cultural issues in class. The penalty would include a fine of up to \$500 and the possibility of dismissal. The legislation would also require all instructors to take a three-hour session on legislation. The committees are trying to block it.

Vice President – Anne Murdaugh – In Washington, D.C. at National Lobby Day.

Assembly Chairperson – Randi Tanglen – Nothing to report.

Treasurer – Joshua Scott – Nothing to report.

Secretary – Catherine Neish – At the commencement policy meeting, it was suggested that colored stripes be added to doctoral hoods to indicate the student's college.

V. Representative and Director Reports:

Amanda Brobbel: (1) Aaron and Amanda are working on Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week. Six days of activities are being planned, costing ~\$14,000 for the whole week (with about half of the cost going to the BBQ). Activities include a family BBQ in the park, a BBQ on the mall, a poker night, a breakfast on north campus, a movie night, LGBT speed dating, and a social. (2) The room scheduling staff did not open up the audio-visual equipment for the last movie night, so it didn't happen.

Kedar Dhane: At the last Recreation Advisory Committee meeting, there was talk of increasing the program fee. Their wages are increasing, and they are not getting any assistance from the university. They are thinking of increasing the program fee by \$15, or decreasing program hours.

Jim Collins: There is currently an opening for another non-degree seeking student representative. Jim cannot get contact information for his constituents, so he has not been able to find a replacement.

Kathleen Corcoran: The University Academic Committee wants to require eight hours of training to sit on the committee.

Gail Bradford: Gail sent out an e-mail about the “black” themed party recently held on campus. She is meeting tomorrow with the diversity coalition, and will discuss the issue after a forum on the matter. If you have any comments, please send them to Gail.

VI. New Business

a. Club Funding

Josh Scott proposes POD funding for “Anthropology Graduate Students” \$950. Kathleen Corcoran moves to approve the funding request, Aaron Gubi seconds, the motion passes unanimously.

b. Changes in Commencement

President Shelton is looking to make changes to the commencement ceremony. He wants to cut the length of the main ceremony by half an hour. Suggested ways to cut the length of the ceremony include cutting the length of the honorary degree speeches, cutting the length of the centennial award speeches, and cutting the walk of the PhD students. Faculty didn’t like the idea of cutting the PhD walk. President Shelton also suggested having a separate event for graduate students, with a different speaker. The general consensus amongst the council is that cutting the walk of PhD students is a bad idea, as is a separate graduate student ceremony.

c. Cost of Graduate Assistants

Administrators are concerned about the ERE rates for graduate students. In several meetings, they have voiced concern that graduate students are “too expensive,” and that professors will begin to hire postdocs in place of graduate students. The perception that graduate students “cost too much” is a barrier to improved wages and/or benefits for GAs. The ERE rate has increased from 10% in FY1998 to 31% for FY2007. The concern is that if programs have a fixed amount of money for GAs, and the ERE rate goes up, then graduate student enrollment will go down.

Some questions to look into: Are post-docs really cheaper than graduate students, and would faculty rather hire them? Has central administration subsidized the ERE increases for TAs? Is it unusual to cover GA tuition through ERE?

d. Representative Project Proposal

Kathryn Williams proposed the formation of a graduate student intramural softball league. One league will serve 60 graduate students in four teams, at a cost of \$65/team. To include more people, and separate skilled from unskilled players, Kathryn suggests forming two leagues. It would serve over 100 students for \$520. Kathleen Corcoran motions to approve \$520 for two leagues, Nick Fernandez seconds, the motion passes unanimously.

VII. Call to adjourn – At 7:28pm, Josh Scott made a call to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Ariel Fisher, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Catherine Neish.