

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA. GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 13th 2006

I. Meeting called to order at 6:02pm by Anne Murdaugh

Present: Catherine Neish, Josh Wright, Claudia Benavente, Elaine Ulrich, Paul Thorn, Nadia Silvestry Rodriguez, Gail Bradford, Jennifer Cohen, Joshua Scott, Joe VanOpdorp, Kedar Dhane, Jim Collins, Sarah Mosher, Anne Murdaugh, Amanda Brobbel, Nick Fernandez, Boris Glebov, Aaron Gubi

Proxies: Tom LaGatta, Melissa Sisco, Kathleen Corcoran, Shaun Halbert, Randi Tanglen, Christina Vasquez, Kathryn Williams

II. Calls to the audience: None.

III. Reading and approval of minutes – Paul Thorn motions to pass the 5/23/06 minutes, Elaine Ulrich seconds, the motion carries.

IV. Officer Reports:

President – Paul Thorn – (1) Last year, the Graduate College suggested changing the graduate student pay period from ten months to nine months (for a nine month contract). The GPSC sent a letter requesting that the Graduate College not change the pay period. However, Human Resources recently indicated that they are thinking of changing over to a nine-month pay period anyway. (2) A university committee's recommendations on student government have been passed on to the president. President Likins and the VP for Campus Life, Sandra Taylor, will decide what happens now, and will likely take some action before they retire. (3) Meeting dates for the fall. We previously decided to keep GPSC meetings on Tuesday evenings, but due to some conflicts, we will poll council to find the best date. (4) The executive council will meet to decide on committee placements soon. (5) Paul will be attending the last ABOR meeting of year in Flagstaff next week. (6) Paul has arranged to meet with the President, Provost and Dean of Graduate College every three weeks during the upcoming school year. (7) Our advisor, Maria Teresa Velez, recommended giving retirement acknowledgments to President Likins and Sandra Taylor. We will give them a plaque.

Vice President – Anne Murdaugh – Encouraged reps to set up a meeting with the Dean of their College in the fall.

Assembly Chairperson – Randi Tanglen – Not present.

Treasurer – Joshua Scott – Nothing to report.

Secretary – Catherine Neish – Fall meetings will start the week of August 21st.

V. Representative and Director Reports:

Jim Collins: Wrote a letter regarding the non-degree seeking student probation policy and plans to talk to Diane Horgan about it. Jim would appreciate feedback on the letter.

VI. New Business

a. Confirmation of GPSC Directors

Three director positions needed to be filled for the following year. The GPSC executive board interviewed ten people, and chose the following:

Events Director: Amanda Brobbel

Programs Director: Aaron Gubi

Research and Policy Director: Sarah Mosher

Paul Thorn motions to confirm the three directors, Joseph VanOpDorp seconds. 1 against, motion carries.

b. Graduate Orientation 2006

Amanda asked the council to think of ideas for this year's Graduate Orientation. Interested parties were asked to contact Amanda, and will meet next week to brainstorm in more detail.

Amanda also informed the council that all the rooms surrounding the Grand Ballroom have been booked, allowing for several breakout sessions during the orientation. Discussion about what sessions we've had in the past and what we'd like to do in the future ensued.

c. Strategy for Improving the Student Health Insurance Plan

Paul led the council in a discussion about strategies for improving the student health insurance plan, which is coming up for its five-year renewal next year.

Background information:

- Demographics of plan: 5500 students enrolled - 3600 grad students, 1900 undergraduates
- Request for proposal will be formulated in late fall 2006. A tri-university committee will accept a bid in early to mid spring 2007.
- GPSC held a survey of graduate students last year to assess interest in supplemental coverage. Found that 70% were interested in prescription coverage, 75% in optical, and 94% in dental.

Issues at stake:

- High premiums, especially for spouse and dependents
- Addition of supplemental benefits (dental/optical/prescription)
- Possibility of having a separate plan for graduates and undergraduates
- Possibility of having a partially voluntary plan

Obstacles:

- Attrition with an increase in premiums (if benefits make the plan too expensive, people may opt out)
- Resistance to a voluntary plan for supplemental coverage (not viewed as economically viable, as only those who need the supplemental coverage will opt in)
- Employment related expenses for graduate students (increasing the cost of health insurance may make it more attractive to hire postdocs and lab technicians than graduate students)

Strategy:

- Continue to speak to administrators. Good health insurance encourages recruitment and retention.
- Work with grad students at ASU and NAU to formulate a state-wide plan.

VII. Call to adjourn – At 7:20pm, Joseph VanOpDorp made a call to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Nick Fernandez, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Catherine Neish