

# THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA<sup>®</sup>

## GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL

### Meeting Minutes Tuesday, 31 August 2004

#### I. Meeting called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Amanda Brobbel

**Present:** Paul Thorn, James Eddy, Amanda Brobbel, Megan Nielsen, Kristina Betts, Dave Wietecha, Nadia Sylvestry Rodriguez, Jessica Lohff, Tom Dexheimer, Jani Radebaugh, Dawn Hill, Stephanie Golisch, Mark Zubriski, Kevin Lichtenthal, Rachael Neal, Kevin Bates, Pietro Valsecchi, Kathleen Corcoran, Thomas Kinney, Marc Barrow, Kazungu Maitaria, Jim Collins, and Ken Cardell.

**Proxies:** Kale Klumpyan

#### II. Calls to the audience: Ben Graf, Student Regent and ASUA president, introduced himself. Ben expressed his thanks to the GPSC for recommending him for the post of student regent. Ben also said that he would be available to discuss issues of interest to GPSC reps.

#### III. Swearing in of New Representatives: Megan Nielsen, Kristina Betts, and Kathleen Corcoran were sworn in as new GPSC reps.

#### IV. Reading and approval of minutes – A minor revision to minutes for August 11 was agreed to. Pietro made a motion to accept the amended minutes. The motion was seconded by Amanda and the motion carried.

#### V. Officer Reports:

- A. **President** - Amanda Brobbel – Amanda reported that the present UA enrollment was less than had been projected. UA administrators have indicated that the low enrollment may affect the pace of increases in GTA tuition remission. The low enrollment may also affect the Grad College's ability to provide need based aid. Amanda also reported that there may have been a slight change in the intended use of the remaining 4.5 million dollars of Christopher City money. It now appears that the money will be used for projects that will aid needy families. Finally, Amanda mentioned that Graduate Orientation had been attended by approximately 400 new graduate students.
- B. **External Vice President** - James Eddy – James postponed his officer report until part B of the "old business" portion of the meeting.
- C. **Internal Vice President** - Thomas Kinney – Thomas emphasized that GPSC would be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Order; and he circulated copies of the Rules. Thomas reported on a recent meeting of the Committee of Eleven. The committee voted against a \$2000 University wide salary increase for faculty members. It was felt that such an increase would almost certainly produce a shortfall in the University's budget. The committee discussed the possible alternative of some merit based faculty salary increases. The issue will now be passed on for discussion by the Faculty Senate.
- D. **Treasurer** - Paul Thorn – Paul reported that he and Amanda had formed the new budget for the 04/05 academic year. Paul also reported that the paper work for the issuing of rep stipends had been given to the Graduate College on August 24. Paul also asked that reps to take care in ensuring the GPSC minutes accurately represent who was in attendance and who sent his or her proxy for each meeting.
- E. **Questions on Officer reports** - None asked.

#### VI. Representative and Administrative Director Reports:

Jani notified the council that she was contacted by a new group on campus trying to reach out to LGBT students. They were trying to find out if they could send a message to graduate students through the GPSC listserv. After the recent discussion on the GPSC list regarding what should and shouldn't be forwarded, she wasn't certain that the council would want to forward their message. Amanda noted that she too had been contacted by the group's leader and had agreed to forward their message to the GPSC list because their efforts seemed harmonious with the GPSC's mission of improving the quality of life for graduate students.

Jani also reported that she had recently heard concerns from some of her colleagues on NSF fellowships, who have been forced to pay tuition and fees because they are not employees of the university. She indicated that this is in effect a discouragement to people seeking such outside funding. Amanda recalled that we had heard from Tom Dexheimer on this issue at the end of the Spring semester. Jani asked that Amanda write a letter to Dean Hixon and the VP for Research Dick Powell to notify them of this situation. Amanda agreed that she would compose such a letter.

## VII. Old Business:

- A. Update on La Aldea** – After residents of La Aldea attended GPSC's last meeting of the Spring semester, a decision was made for GPSC to write a letter to the administration expressing discontent with the way graduate students had been treated at La Aldea. With the assistance of Marc Barrow, Amanda Brobbel wrote and sent this letter at the end of June and began hearing back from administrators at the end of June. After a number of meetings, Amanda learned that some of the issues that were initially a problem, like parking, were no longer a problem, but that other issues would never be resolved, like a financial settlement for the initial residents. In her meetings with administrators, Amanda's assertions that she couldn't understand why those first residents were not given any compensation when the residences were incomplete, were met with admissions that university administrators would have handled things differently, but that the La Aldea management was in no way beholden to their rules or standards of operation.

In a recent meeting, Saunie Taylor (VP for Campus Life) promised Amanda that GPSC would benefit if La Aldea were to be filled. Those funds would go to support GPSC and GPSC programs, in particular Travel Grants (though Jani noted that GPSC would probably have to push for that). In addition, Saunie mentioned that the prospect of the University taking over La Aldea was almost certain. Amanda wondered if, given these new developments, GPSC would be interested in promoting La Aldea, in order to help bring it up to capacity. Thomas and Dawn asked whether it made a difference that the capacity was currently split between undergrad and grad? Amanda noted that getting GPSC more involved in La Aldea should help with phasing out the undergrads living in the facility. Marc wondered if the funding agreement was in writing? Amanda said that it was a verbal agreement, but that Dr. Velez in the Graduate College was also aware of the agreement.

Amanda introduced Dave Wietecha, a representative for Residence Life in charge of programming for La Aldea. He invited GPSC to hold meetings at La Aldea (in the common room) and indicated that he could provide food for such functions. He thought that this interest on the part of GPSC would encourage more Graduate student residents to live there and he agreed that the change to university control seemed inevitable. Pietro asked about the current conditions for residents of La Aldea. Marc Barrow reported that they are all right for the most part, but that residents who stayed on did not get the same rent incentives that new residents, including the undergrads, received. He thought this was wrong given what those residents went through. James Eddy thought this was lousy, but admitted that he had experienced the same kind of disincentive to re-sign a lease at other apartment complexes before and had moved to get the incentives elsewhere. The representative from Residence Life was surprised by Marc's information, but mentioned that he has no say in such policies.

Thomas Kinney indicated that he thought GPSC's support should be contingent on University control, since we have no say until then. Amanda mentioned that Jim VanArsdel thought that GPSC should form an Advisory Board with residents, but that it wouldn't be useful until the University takes over. Marc agreed with Thomas. Ken made a motion that GPSC not endorse La Aldea until the University takes over. Marc seconded the motion. The motion carried with 12 in favor and 7 abstentions.

- B. Update on ASUA petition and ASA \$1**– James Eddy pointed out that the ASUA constitution does not reflect reality – though they claim to represent all students, they have not helped graduate students make any of the gains they have made in recent years. He asserted that the ASUA president is a *de facto* undergraduate president, as he is president of a body whose representatives are all undergraduates. James continued by highlighting the fact that UA is now the only Arizona University without a seat permanently dedicated to the needs and interests of graduate students on ASA. Currently all graduate students at UA pay \$1 to support the Arizona Student Association, but until there is a permanent seat for graduate students appointed by GPSC, we assert that this amounts to taxation without representation. As a result, James is organizing a campaign to help students request their \$1 back from ASA, which ASA allows for by providing a form. The tactic is to draw attention and will take place in a tent on the mall. James sent around a sign up sheet asking GPSC representatives to volunteer an hour of their time. We will supplement this event by putting forms in our constituents' mail boxes where available.

Megan Nielsen, new representative for the college of law, requested info on ASA and the number of graduate students at the U of A and asked whether GPSC had exhausted all negotiations with ASA. Amanda responded that there are approximately 9,000 graduate students at UA, including those enrolled in

professional school, which is about 22% of the student body. Jani Radebaugh added that as last year's GPSC president, she was in regular negotiations with J. P. Benedict, last year's ASUA president, regarding GPSC wanting to appoint a representative to a grad student specific seat on ASA, which were unsuccessful. Other GPSC presidents have had the same experience. Thomas mentioned that the council voted on going ahead with the ASA refund drive over the summer. Jim mentioned that the big issue is that of the lack of a guarantee that there will be grad student representation on ASA in the future.

### **VIII. New Business:**

- A. Commencement Policy** – Amanda reports that the administration has decided to cancel the university-wide commencement for undergraduates, but have decided to have one specifically for graduate students. Undergrads will instead have their degrees conferred in college specific ceremonies. VP Auslander assured the Commencement Policy Committee that there was no final decision made about Spring commencement, so graduate student input now might help influence a final decision. A few reps asked if this was really a graduate student issue and added that the undergrads should worry about this. Amanda indicated that she needed to know if grads actually preferred a united commencement or a separate one. Stephanie thought that the separate commencement was a good idea because grad students were sometimes heckled at the college specific commencement in Fine Arts (by students who had resentments about grades). Amanda had heard that grad students at the last commencement felt that their work had not been sufficiently honored. Jani thought that the unity of grad and undergrad commencement was good because of the issue of speakers and some colleges not having strong ceremonies. James Eddy thought the administration should do a survey. Ken Cardell thought that undergrads should have a chance to have fun (as part of the university experience). Dawn agreed as did Amanda. Thomas proposed that Amanda suggest a survey to the administration since there seemed to be no consensus among the council. Amanda agreed.
- B. Resolution Regarding Graduate Scholars, Fellows, Trainees, and Assistants** – Paul said that this item comes from the Graduate Council where Dean Hixon is looking for feedback about whether he should sign onto the Resolution again (it's essentially about not forcing grad students make up their minds about what school to attend until they've heard back from all their options). Since Dean Hixon's own unit recruits new grad students quite differently from the recommendations in the "Resolution", he wanted to make sure that other units agreed with whatever decision is made. Thomas Kinney wondered if other schools were also considering dropping off the list? James Eddy indicated that as he is applying to graduate schools, he is discovering that the dates indicated in the Resolution seem to be standard. Paul made a motion to ask Dean Hixon to sign onto the Resolution again. Jani seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- C. GPSC Social Event** – Tom Dexheimer asked the council if they would like to have a tailgate party sometime this fall. James indicated that the Business college does these events pretty regularly so they might want to join forces with GPSC. Tom indicated that he would contact their reps. A motion was made and seconded for Tom to go ahead and organize a tailgate social event. The motion passed with two abstentions.
- D. Internal Committee Assignments** – This topic was tabled for the next meeting.

- IX. Call to adjourn** – Dawn made a motion to adjourn. Nadia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Thorn