

GSO NOVEMBER REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
MINUTES – 11 NOV. 2006

- I. **Call to Order:** Jason Lewis
- II. **Roll:** Passed
 - A. *Executive Board:* Patrick Wilcox, Jason Lewis, Jane Siow, Stephen Graves.
 - B. *In Attendance:* Christina Graves, Math; Stephen Shafer, Maxwell MPA; John Meyers, ISTGO; Catherine Burke-Plumadore, History; Jacquie Mogle, Psychology; Larne Pekowsky, Physics; Jessica Swan, PA; Rebecca Wienbar, Geography; James Lucas Hepokoski, Architecture; Elizabeth E Tweedale, Architecture; Elizabeth Mercer, PA; Eric Wortman, Math; Nathalie Dadge, Social Work; Bryan Sell, Earth Sciences; Brigitte Fielder-Montero, English; Deke Gould, Philosophy; Marju Purin, Math; Rachel Horlings, Anthropology; Xingyu She, Biology.
- III. **Last Month's Minutes:** Online, passed.
- IV. **Executive Reports:** Pat Wilcox
 - A. *Housing Survey:* Our original draft of a graduate housing survey was passed to the Graduate School, who have added many questions and significantly changed the style of the survey. There are possibilities to some of the questions, specifically those related to cost of living, which may be used later to leverage higher stipends for graduate students as inflation costs have not been met by commensurate increases in stipend. Also, the university is beginning to look at the demographics of where graduate students tend to live. These questions basically boil down to three points: what do we need in terms of housing, where do we want to build it, and in addition to what is needed by the university, what do the graduate students actually want? This could possibly tie in with the SU Connective Corridor project, which would increase the feasibility of the Shuttle-U-Home program for graduate students. Some things that graduate students want are: 9- and 12-month leases, and security deposit waivers.
The question is raised as to why the survey does not query graduate student home-owners; the assumption apparently is that graduate students do not have the capital to afford houses, and the survey is specifically targeting rental properties. The university apparently has some sort of mortgage-assistance program, but employees are only qualified if they work more than 30 hours per week. As an aside, Pat Wilcox mentioned that he has asked Student Legal Services to examine their capability to handle mortgage closings.
The issue is raised that the survey may have too many possible responses, and that when finally delivered we may wish to condense the responses from 1–10 to 1–5, or some similar small range. Pat Wilcox intends to take the full interpreted data report to the Board of Trustees full meeting in May, so Catherine Burke-Plumadore suggested a “reverse timeline” to meet this desire; collect all data by 31 March, so that the data will be processed by 30 April in time for the May meeting. There is some possibility that in addition to an email campaign supporting the survey we may also leverage a direct-mailing.

There is general agreement that an incentive (such as an iPod) would provide for a greater response from the graduate student community. Catherine recommends the Red iPod in support of AIDS relief.

Related to the housing survey, the child care initiative on campus seems to have been put on hold from the University end; the graduate school thus wants to send out another, different survey about the accessibility and quality of University-sponsored and other childcare among graduate students with children. There is some difficulty with this as no aggregate data exists as to who among graduate students even have children; GEMC does not collect the data with enrollment and such changes in family status are not tracked. Pat Wilcox suggests we independently conduct our own quiet survey, as the official stance whenever asked is that there is no waiting list for University-sponsored childcare, but in practice graduate students are always told that there is a several-year waiting list. The survey being planned by the graduate school will be passed along to the GSO so that we may comment on it, much as our housing survey was given to the Graduate School that they could comment.

- B. *UC to Register at Main Campus in 07-08:* We will now collect graduate student activity fees from all graduate students - including UC. As of next year, all graduate students but those registering through ISDP & D.C. campuses of the University College will pay the grad student activity fee.
- C. *Shuttle-U-Home:* In September, the SA President presented to the board of trustees a request to expand the transportation program of the University to the East Neighborhood area of Syracuse. The University, in response, has commissioned a task force on Student Transportation; the group will begin work on 27 November. The task force will be specifically looking into: whether the transportation system currently in place meets the needs of the student body; the capacity and utility of the Shuttle-U-Home program, as it may have been outgrown; and the possibility that SU-Home would be rolled into other transportation solutions. Stephen Shafer volunteered to represent the GSO on the task force.

V. **Special and Ad Hoc Committee Reports:**

- A. Computing Services Committee is looking for input on what computing and technology services the University population desires which are not currently provided. Please contact Steve Graves (sgraves@syr.edu) if you have any constructive input.
- B. Transmedia is organizing a field trip to Mass Mocha, an art museum. Contact Dylan Moore for more information.

VI. **Standing Committee Reports:**

- A. *Finance:*
 - 1. SU Volunteer Organization: asking funding for KidFest, a “chance to bring children from the area up to the campus to interact with student orgs and students.” Very small graduate involvement in the program; this is the 16th annual, and they’re looking for money for food for the kids, to hand out hot dogs/soda/etc. to children. This serves about 600–650 area children, and involves about 150 students. Total cost is \$1930, finance recommends to grant \$735, up to \$1000 if they can actually get grad. student orgs involved

Pat mentions that we would first have to suspend the standing rule about food funding in excess of \$500. Several organizations around provide transportation, Pepsi has in the past donated refreshments, Cathy brings up possibility of Centro transportation. They've not turned anywhere but the SA and the GSO for funding, the SA forbids funding on food. Motion is made to suspend the standing rule, and is seconded. Carries unanimously. Second motion is to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee to give \$735 or \$1000 if they can get more grad student orgs involved. Carries unanimously. Contact David Katz at dnkatz@syr.edu or Rob Magliaro at rjmaglia@syr.edu to get your group involved.

2. Graduate Students of Architecture: Trying to start a new event, an end-of-semester gala with architecture presentation and possible publications; apparently the school of architecture has an event for undergrads in May, but hardly any recognition for graduate students at December commencement, which is apparently when most finish. Publication and presentation is the "heart" of the event, the party is secondary, according to the spokespersons.

Pat brings up that we don't have a Senator from Architecture, and that part of the funding for this event could come from department-allocated funds, if the department had sent a representative. The spokespersons from architecture were unaware of the availability of a Senate seat to their department. Bryan Sell asks whether they have material fit for publication, they say "yes." The Architecture department is not willing to say how much they will fund. Pat mentions that we traditionally do not fund graduation events, which this seems to be.

Steve Shafer motions to grant \$400 (roughly the equivalent of the \$6 per student) in lieu of department funds; they don't have a senator, can't get one this year. Caroline explained the finance committee, and motions \$300; the motion for \$400 is seconded; Caroline withdraws her motion; vote carries with one abstention and one opposed.

VII. **Old Business:**

- A. Cosby: the motion to grant \$3000 to UU for the Cosby event failed with a 12-4 vote against, via email vote earlier this week; the motion was put over email at the discretion of the GSO executive board due to the timing of the event.

Pat comments that we really don't have any procedure to handle events of this type; the only money we have set aside that could go to this is either the roll-over or the base-budget fall adjustment. There aren't procedural problems for events of this magnitude, there just aren't any procedures. Pat proposes that we discuss eliminating the possibility of this type request; perhaps based on a dollar amount, we decline unilaterally.

Money is usually not leftover. This is new. We will probably use the rollover for the May picnic.

VIII. **New Business:**

- A. Dylan Moore: Is the University a sustainable neighbor in the city? Dylan reports that there has been an increase in biking to campus, and there are several concerns respecting bicyclists;

there aren't enough bike racks. Also, a possible free air pump centrally located for bicyclists is suggested, but of course the question is left as to where to put it and who would pay for it. Apparently there have been issues with aggressive drivers and bicyclists. Dylan is in conversation with Public Safety regarding some specific incidents.

- B. Social Workers United have an April event and would like people from the GSO to make recommendations towards the Social Justice Award.

IX. **Remarks for the Record:** None

X. **Announcements:** None

XI. **Adjournment:** Join us for lunch on Marshall St.; Passed.