

**GSO Regular Business Meeting Agenda
Jan 31, 2009**

A. Call to Order (Patrick Wilcox)

B. Roll Call

- accepted

C. Reading and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Minutes as posted accepted – unanimous

D. Special and Ad Hoc Committee Reports – in lieu of Executive Reports

Long-standing relationships with all these people – now you get to meet them

a) **Bernice Wright** – Daria Webber

- Early childhood center on campus that's received GSO funding for a while
- What they do – serve SU and Syracuse community population
- Important to continue funding because there aren't very many programs that are licensed and available in this area – especially grad students couldn't afford to attend something like this without the grad student discount
- 3 grad student assistantships
- Hire as many grad students as possible to work there (as well as undergrads)
- Currently 53 families, 7 are grad student families (most families with 1 child, but it depends on schedules and there may be families with more)
- Keep spaces open for the grad students because they often enroll later
- Some of these kids might not have this opportunities otherwise
- Q: what's the difference between this and another preschool/early childhood school?
- A: this is a training school for teachers, observers, etc., also unique in the adult/child ratios are so high because they have 1:2/3 vs 1:8
- Q: there is often not enough space in any of the local preschools – are there any plans to expand to accommodate this?
- A: we're working on it, but it depends on funding – we're doing assessments and trying to figure out how to make it happen because there is such a need in the University population in general – looking for a donor
- Q: any numbers for the waiting list?
- A: probably 4 preschoolers and 2 toddlers who we weren't able to let in this year
- Q: are there people not on the waiting list who were turned away?

- A: not that I'm aware
- Q: grad students have flexible schedules and limited income, and the rumor is that you take full-time students only – is that the case?
- A: no, that's probably the day care you're thinking of – we have pretty good flexibility options for both attendance and payment – work with grad students to adjust for payments; also have a parent Advisory council that offers scholarships as well
- Q: Can you address the distinction between Bernice Wright and the SU Day Care center? And also their funding reporting methods?
- A: we serve a larger community than SU Day Care, as well as a different demographic and schedules – the base budget is about \$110K
- Q: you're open very specific hours, and there are grad student requirements that may require different hours – are you able to accommodate that?
- A: not right now, but we're looking at expanding the hours and space – currently share out building with the Art Education department, and if they move out we may have the space we need...
- Q: are you willing to come back if we need you to?
- A: of course

b) **Inn Complete** – Craig Maffiore, Monica Schwarles, Dave George

- Handout for everyone (SCANNED?)
- Long graduate history – important to continue it
- 1987 – formed for grad students
- 2002 was a turning point – the Inn used to report to the Office of Student Affairs, and the Inn really needed an uplift, but the OSA wasn't able to do it, so they partnered with Food Services on campus, when Craig became the Manager
- This is considered a partnership – symbiotic group – need grad students and GSO as customers and fiscal partners
- P. 2 of handout – maintaining the culture – wanted to continue to maintain the historic culture and what grad students have come to expect from the Inn – i.e.: the weird sculpture on the wall
- Have a partnership committee – Patrick Wilcox, Don Bunk, Craig and Monica – don't make major decisions without the permission of the GSO – if you want to join the committee you're more than welcome
- Grad Student benefits – p.4 – discounts (roughly 14% of the student fee goes to the Inn subsidy – even if you only come twice you get back your personal part of the student fee back); premium beer of the month – you're actually allowed to vote on it (go to the Inn and do it); waiver of \$100 fee for all GSO sponsored events – regardless of event size (last year did 91 events, 31 directly related to GSO); grad students can do personal events (parties, weddings, etc.) at the Inn, which isn't allowed in most places, but is here; gathering place for grad student interactions (flexible hours to accommodate that); preferential treatment for scheduling for grad students

(in terms of working there); approval of all changes to hours of operation only with GSO consent

- P. 5 – Financial Implications – **we CANNOT operate without the GSO subsidy**
- Up to last year we've increased sales, this year we're definitely not – projected losses
- Grad participation has been approximately flat for the past couple years, we've done approximately the same number of events, but people are just spending less on them
- SuperCard is down currently, but it has been a good thing in the past
- Summer softball used to be really big and a big revenue, but it's substantially less now
- Capital improvements and facility updates/upgrades – in addition to the subsidies you're seeing on these sheets, GSO has put more than \$20K into the Inn in terms of improvements (ping-pong table, etc.)
- Q: you mentioned the deficit this year, and it's pretty much universal – have you considered lessening hours or something to alleviate it?
- A: first we're looking at changes that aren't going to affect the grad students – i.e.: Friday lunch, summer hours, these sorts of things are what we're looking at, but haven't made any decisions on this now
- Q: any plans for targeted marketing? i.e.: coupons, etc.
- A: we've done that in the past and will continue to do so, but we're certainly open to suggestions on this
- Q: right across the street you have the undergrads using their SuperCards to spend money at Goldstein – is there any way to entice the South campus community to spend more at the Inn? What are we allowed to do to make this happen?
- A: we have to be very careful in terms of marketing a bar to undergrads – we may need to limit the time of alcohol service or something, but that will probably be detrimental to the grad students; maybe better to work more with marketing to the grad students
- Q: I love the Inn, but I was surprised about how few people actually know about it – are you able to use grad student listservs to disseminate information to the grad students?
- A: the old model was to have people come to the picnic, but maybe it's better to have access to the information that the Grad School has, we can send out coupons and such, but that information is owned by the University and it's difficult to get it, but that's something that we can actually work on
- Idea: have a presence as a “Bullet Item” on emails that are going out any way
- Q: our department does an end of year picnic, isn't there any way to suggest to the departments that they utilize the Inn more for these things?
- A: we could, but if you have a large group that you need catering for, typically the Inn doesn't actually get much from that
- Q: what's the capacity that the Inn can actually serve?

- A: as it is, about 40 people at a time
- Idea: this sounds like the right size group for these events – you should push it on the departments
- Q: I love trivia night at the Inn, and I've noticed that during that event there are issues with service at the bar – is there a way to think about the efficiency or lack thereof? Rearranging things? Purchase more pitchers, etc.
- A: I tried adding more bartenders and they just run into themselves, so we try to keep the most efficient numbers of bartenders, but they often don't notice that there are more people there – I try to put the best ones I have on Thursday – would table service help?
- Q: why did we drop our support in 2007?
- A: at the time we had a surplus, so we didn't necessarily need it then, but now we're back at a deficit and will have to draw from our reserve that's normally reserved for equipment, etc. – we will take whatever you can give, but it may be time to consider % increases
- Q: with the new dorms being built, do you foresee any competition in terms of food, etc in the future?
- A: right now it looks like there's nothing in there that would compete with us, but it's a bigger marketing area
- Q: what's the reserve line on your balance sheet?
- A: since we went to RCM, we use those funds to pay to ourselves, infrastructure, etc. instead of having to pay rent

c) Student Legal Services – Chris Burke

- I'm one of 2 attorneys on staff there
- for grads, undergrads and ESF people – completely free services, and cover everything you might need legal help with – DUIs, landlord/tenants, marital, tickets, city council meetings, etc.
- We are happy to sit and consult you, will go to court if you need us to
- Q: what's the reserve line on your balance sheet
- Last semester we helped about 300 people, total varies, but is up to 1000 people
- Our services are free, but there are still costs that you will incur, we just make sure you only incur minimal expenses
- They are also in-house counsel for the GSO, so they are our attorneys as well
- Do a lot of things behind the scenes because that's the essence of legal representation
- Q: we have a lot of international students in my school – do you help them differently? Is there anything I can tell them about you?
- A: we have a lot of international students that come in and we help them with the range of issues, but don't need to treat them any differently – often it's people who are very new to the US and Syracuse, and they actually tend to handle things really well

- Q: in the case of a larger scale legal issues, are you able to help students with these?
- A: we certainly advise and consult, but if the situation is one that's clearly going to be very time-intensive and problematic, we refer those matters to other attorneys; for criminal matters we'll make the initial appearances and arraignments, and such, but then we also hand those off to other appointed representatives; we make referrals for things that we don't think we can handle
- Q: do you hire grad students at all?
- A: we have in the past, sometimes temporarily, sometimes longer time; we have usually 3 law students working with us as well
- Q: could you talk about some of the things that would be excluded?
- A: we're not exactly like a legal clinic, so we don't work in money-making situations like personal injury suits, etc., but we'll make them referrals to other attorneys; we don't do real estate; we don't do business/corporation law, but will help with advising on these things; we're restricted geographically as well on things that we represent
- Q: do you do legal documents such as wills?
- A: yes, wills, living wills, health care proxies, pre-nups, etc.; this is where the grad students in particular make use of us
- Comment: when my wife and I started a family, we did all these documents and saved at least \$500 on them
- Q: there are other places that have prepaid services, what do you have in terms of that, or how do you compare?
- A: I know that there are some organizations that have those, but my understanding is that for them there are still fees involved, and that you don't necessarily know what you're getting, and we have a more broad range of what we can work on and are available more often; i.e.: Gary is the #1 attorney in NY on DUIs and traffic tickets; I'm #1 in terms of landlord/tenant issues in Onondaga County; we have available a much higher level of expertise
- Q: are your services available for alumni?
- A: we won't go to court for them, but we can definitely advise or refer them to someone who can

d) **Drumlins** – Ann Fox and Doug Freeman

- Drumlins owned by the university, but we don't draw any funds from the university because we are self-sustaining
- We can do all the events that are talked about for the Inn, have a restaurant, banquet facility, pool, tennis and golf – going to focus most on tennis and golf
- Tennis club has 7 recently resurfaced indoor courts, open 364 days a week – grad students have all the same benefits as paying members; SU tennis team does all their practice and competing there

- Last fall there 425.5 hours of court time used at about \$46/hour - \$19K for those hours, and during that time 118 students used the clinic hours (at no charge), about \$2100 they didn't have to pay for
- Free racket and unlimited tennis balls, also have a campus shuttle that people can utilize; Drumlins is also on the campus bus route
- Golf – range going to be reworked this summer, use of golf range and full rounds on the west course are free based on (student) member fees
- July-November – 1100 students who played golf at a rate of \$18/round (about 19K), free use of clubs,
- Last year 2149 - \$38,682 value
- Q: does that represent individual students or rounds of golf?
- A: students
- Q: so do we have any idea of how many actual students have actually made use of it?
- A: we just have the sign in, so it's talking about rounds, not students
- Q: are you making a distinction between grad students and law students?
- A: the numbers that I gave you don't break those apart, but we are starting to do that for the future
- Q: do law students have a different ID, or something that would enable them to do that?
- A: it depends on what the student is involved with, so this will be tough to track by ID – a swipe or something that tracks ID #s would give exact numbers
- Q: there's been a lot of contention in my department about funding Drumlins, and especially in terms of the economic issues going on right now, why should we continue to give this money to Drumlins when we can use it for more widely and directly applicable things?
- A: I'm also a grad student and so am concerned about this, but the benefit that the students are getting as a whole, maybe not for every department, is exceeding the monies it's being paid, we certainly look forward to that money, because it's used for shuttling the students to Drumlins, and we're not making money on any of it – benefit is probably about double what we're getting as a subsidy from the student population
- Q: if we were to reduce the amount that we give you, what effect would that have on what you can give us?
- A: we could look at that, and we might limit benefits, but will try to not take them away; there may be some kind of restriction (not reduction) in offerings, but we would need to carefully consider this; before this stipend grad students were charged a fee of \$5 for a round of golf, so this was a discount program, not a free benefit; usage since it's been free has almost doubled; it's a stress relief as well – tremendous service; it's next door to campus, so it's close and there are some advantages to that as well
- Q: in terms of usage of the shuttle or van – can we have numbers on how often it's used?
- A: yes, but I don't have them here (apologies) – I can get that to you

- Q: does the senate have any specific forms of recording or reporting they want to see before we make budget decisions?
- Comment: the students that use it are likely the same students using it, so we would like to see actual numbers of DIFFERENT students making use of it, rather than just the plays
- Comment: if there's any way we can make a distinction between the law students and grad students using it so we can discuss this with the grad students
- Comment: could we get a proposal for differing amounts that we give you and the benefits of that would be?
- Comment: it would also be helpful if we could get a layout of the operating costs so we can see what we're giving and how it benefits the entire operation – are common funds actually benefiting a substantial, widespread population, or just a limited number of people?
- Comment: how many people are benefiting and how does that translate into day to day operations
- Q: you're saying we get a 2:1 return on our monies, so who's subsidizing us?
- A: the public fees and memberships; food service operations

E. Standing Committee Reports (Comptroller Jane Siow)

- 1. Finance** – there's a handout for funds for the past 7 semesters so you have a sense of what, and the levels of funding for the past couple years – the Finance Committee has presidents to follow from the last several years, so decisions are not made at random – things that we can and cannot fund, and means of referencing them – contact Jane if you have any questions
- 2. The Finance committee met yesterday also to talk about policy things going on** – in terms of constraints going into next year, particularly to guide our decision-making towards greater conservatism and increasing budget constraints – going to look very seriously at funding undergrad proposals and organizations, but we probably need to clamp down on that – it's not officially voted on, but that's the sense of it
- 3. Also looking at the idea of a travel grant scheme for grad students** – it's still in the discussion stage, and we're not sure where the funds will come from, but if we're conservative now, we may have the funds left over in order to get that scheme going next year
- 4. This is all to say why we're being conservative now, so just keep that in mind as we discuss these funding proposals**

-IR/PA/Maxwell Women's Caucus/Maxwell International Students Networking DC trip (Feb 27-28). Requested \$1500 towards venue costs; Finance Comm recommendation is to grant amount requested

- John Gardener – discussion of job searches for MPA students – i.e.: job fairs

- we need to have a pro-active approach for our grads, but because we have a short program and not much time here to do networking, etc., we've proposed a trip to DC to work with alumni, etc. to help with this
- MAXPAC, IRSA and Maxwell Women's Causaus, and MAXWELIS
- MAXWELIS did this over the last couple of years and have a lot of positive return
- we've actually increased what we're requesting from GSO
- Q: how many grad students?
- A: all – about 80
 - Q: does the school provide money for this?
 - A: right now no, but we're still working on this – the amount we're asking for
 - from the GSO is going to be entirely for the meeting facility – just over 10% of the total event

- make a motion to grant amount recommended by the Finance comm. - \$1859
- second
- **unanimous motion carries**

Comment: congratulations on a job well done – in terms of collaborations and actively seeking funding elsewhere; this could also stand as a test case in creating a test case for the Travel Grant possibility; can consult Student Legal Services about liability and waivers, etc.

- Q: they can only use the funds for what they have expressly requested them for?
- A: yes, based on records and application, as well as on receipts that they provide to us for reimbursement

- Society of Multicultural Architects and Designers Symposium (Feb 27). Requested \$3849.71 to cover reception, publicity and airfare costs; recommendation to grant \$1500 provisional on outcome of other grants applied for.

- no representative here, but it's supposed to be quite a showcase for their work, focusing on the multi-cultural elements of their work; apparently there are some issues for representing these things, so alumni are coming back to talk about these things
 - they have another grant pending
 - requesting money for honoraria, flights and publicity
 - we are going to ask them to economize on some things
- Q: I am curious to how this connects with the School of Architecture's showcase that's happening just 9 days before this event, also sponsored by the School of Architecture?
 - A: from what they explained, this is less a speaker than a series of workshops and panels for this – interested in doing this because of the diversity aspects – specifically targeting architects from different ethnic backgrounds – it's not something that's traditionally done in the architecture school – not the big-wigs

- Comment: Finance Comm also liked this because of its enrichment and multicultural aspects of it
- Q: are these all grad students?
- A: we're unsure about that, because the Architecture school is different – they're expecting 35 grad students and 125 undergrads, and 40 non-SU people (for networking)
- Motion to accept Finance Comm recommendation
- 1 abstention – **motion carries**
- Caribbean Student Association Caribbean Awareness/Showcase (Feb 20). Requested \$9788 or any part thereof towards honorarium and set-up costs; recommendation to grant up to \$1500.
- Q: is this the grads or undergrads?
- A: this is the undergrads
- Q: the money is for a concert of one performer?
- A: yes
- Comment: we always ask people the worst case scenario, that if we don't fund them, will the event still happen? Their answer was "yes"
- Q: there's a distinction between the grad and undergrad groups – did we give them anything last year (NO), and if we do give them money, can we ask for a hard count of how many grad students are actually there in terms of distinction of the grad/undergrad?
- A: this is a gray area that the Finance committee faces – do we look at proposals based in grad student ratios, or on the content of the proposal?
- Comment: this will keep coming up, and we have a responsibility to our constituents
- Comment: I love Bob Marley, but I don't think this is something that we should be giving our resources to
- motion to deny funding
- 15 in favor, 5 abstentions, opposed – 1 – **motion carries to deny funding**
- Q: do you encourage people to come to the meeting to talk with people about it?
- A: yes, but not this time, because I didn't think it was going to go through and I didn't want to have to justify our decision to them while they were here
- Student African American Society Annual Spring Lecture event (Mar 19). Requested \$13,563 to cover honorarium; recommendation is to decline funding pending extensive re-assessment of program cost elements.
- they do have cheaper alternatives
- motion to accept

- motion carries

F. Old Business:

G. New Business:

- Todd – talking about financial situation with the Graduate Counsel – are grad students being helped by the financial aid package? Answer is “no”, so if you have situations from your program, let me know and then we can see about how we can help; some questions about where grad students should go for financial aid – right now each school is responsible for their own students; right now there isn’t much data out there, but if there are some systemic problems, let me know so that leadership can be made aware of them; they’re also encouraging schools that if grad students are paying tuition, rather than losing the student they’re working on granting more scholarship or stipends for them; also talked about applications, and they’re down for all schools across the university, undergrads are down 5%, but it may equal out because deadlines aren’t until February
- Jane comment about financial aid and GSO using funds to help out the undergrads, and we’re not even allowed to for various tax accounting purposes, and on paper at least, the GSO is not to be seen contributing to this effort, but there are ways around it – transfer funds to the academic departments, but you need the collusion of the departments
- Todd comment – keep the onus on the departments to keep their own students
- Patrick – we’ve kept grad student fees stable for the last couple years – we need to think about if we’re going to increase the fee, what should it be? I.e.: an extra \$5 per head will add another \$40K to the budget

H. Remarks for the Record:

- Chuck Robinson: The economic hardship created by the RCM budget has come up multiple times in this meeting and it needs to be formally noted as a systemic problem.

I. Announcements:

- Anyone who would like to formally announce Candidacy for E-Board positions is welcome to do so now
 - o Evan announcing his candidacy for President

J. Adjournment