

GSO Regular Business Meeting Agenda

November 8, 2008

A. Call to Order

B. Roll Call

- accepted

C. Reading and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Minutes as posted accepted - unanimous

D. Executive Reports:

1. Child Care Updates (John Stegeman)

- Updates on progress of the project toward January disbursements
 - Planning to meet Tuesday with Graduate Committee – recommending that for expediency’s sake we make 10 \$1000 awards, and have Chairs make recommendations for the Deans to then choose
 - Recommends also that the following year we do it on a more competitive process of application, but for now we need to get it out and spread it as broadly across campus as possible to just get information out
 - Q: possible to sub-divide awards at the department level?
 - A: not sure – main concern is making sure that the awards are large enough to be substantial – this may have to be at the department level
 - Patrick: some of the issue is also how the fund was set up – hope is that by involving Grad directors and such to solicit funds from alumni and others; also, we can only spend on an annual basis the amount that the endowment “kicks off” – so amounts may change year by year – whatever helps grow the project
 - Q: where is the \$ invested?
 - A: University endowment committee

2. New Housing

- Brief report of the construction of University Village and potential increase in graduate/professional housing offered on South Campus
 - Developer building on South campus – there will be space for grad students – full service lease (everything included) – looks like it’s going to be \$950/month – potential benefits: if some of the undergrads who have been “forcing” grad students off campus move to U. Village, they may re-designate grad student housing on south
 - Our survey a couple years ago showed that grad students were happy with finding their own places, and it’s hard to find price points that are comparable to what grad students can or are willing to pay
 - Q: do we have any contact with independent landlords in the area?
 - A: no – Office of off campus could help, but it’s problematic to endorse certain landlords
 - Q: what’s problematic about endorsing particular landlords?
 - A: good idea to unofficially do it, but as soon as we do it we’ll get push-back from the University because a) it’s competition, and b) liability
 - Q: why not use it as leverage for competitive pricing against the university housing? maybe we could open an independent dialogue with independent landlords, maybe they might start catering more to grad students as opposed to undergrads
 - A: people have tried this, and there are some ways to do it – if we have enough interest in it, this could be another special interest project for next semester – who the landlords are, standards, etc.

3. Health Care Committee Report

- Review of the committee’s most recent work
 - Last meeting went to Human resources, now working on gathering more data about healthcare at SU and 12 other peer schools

- Split them up and looking at them in terms of public information on health care – availability, premiums, average stipends, etc.
- Also reaching out to SU Grad School to get specific data on student numbers and what insurance they’re getting – trying to move from anecdotal information to more solid data
- Also working on having someone from GSO on the Health care advisory committee – overarching policy people who advise SU on health matters – may or may not help us be recognized as full employees, but it’s a step in the right direction
- Open season – new Health Care administrator coming – medical assistance program coming for lowest-income people (SUMAP - medical aid program) – university just figured out that they’re not paying employees enough for their health insurance, so university is trying to rectify that
 - Go on line through Human resources to this program, and university will potentially reimburse premiums
 - Application process started this week and extends through December 1st
 - This Tuesday is the “Road Show” – HL 500 – informational session
- Stay tuned
- Q: is there any sort of a quantitative study online to use for discussions with university?
- A: looking into it, but it will be later because the committee has the sense the Grad School actually already has most of the data we need, but if we have to we can supplement

E. Special and Ad Hoc Committee Reports

a. Outreach:

- Review of a meeting with the graduate TA Program attended by Evan and Charles
 - Met mostly with Sean Khoeler and Nisha Gupta – they wanted to know how we are working on engaging wider grad student population
 - Going to try to take a more proactive role in TA training - some people are going to go and talk with them about specific projects going on and how it

affects them and how they can be involved
(especially with GSO)

- People come to us to help fund events that they do, we would like to actually do some events **ourselves** to try to spread word about GSO and what we do – i.e.: do a run or something
- Idea: maybe GSO can chip in to provide better prizes for the Trivia night – will help get the name out more and better – take advantage of already existing institution
- Good idea, but also need to reach out to wider range of people – i.e: people with kids
 - Also, Charles going to try to circulate a monthly/bi-monthly newsletter to just let people know what we're working on and how things are going – this will let people in general and administration that we're working on this
 - Q: can we piggy-back on an event already going on instead of having to construct an entire event ourselves – i.e.: Parents Weekend
 - A: we have been doing some of those things lately, concert costs are beyond our capacity, but there are other things we can definitely work with – especially because it reduces our cost
 - Idea: maybe instead of trying to find a single event that targets younger/single people, maybe have something that's specifically directed at families – try to do events in each of the categories
 - Especially good if we can do this piggy-backing
- Still interested in having something that is *specifically* GSO, maybe even philanthropic – i.e.: something like a clothes drive or heart walk, but it would involve a pretty wide range of people and maybe interest more of them

F. Standing Committee Reports

a. Inn Complete: **Don Bunk**

1. We have a juke box that's free to us – we just have to share profits from it with the company giving it to us – have access to 500,000 songs
2. Food service website isn't updated because Inn doesn't even have access to update it, and that's why she's trying to use Facebook/MySpace

- Update Facebook/Myspace advertising and score keeping for Trivia night

b. Finance

- Now have enrollment data for all departments, so we should know next time how much each department gets – contingent on participation – departments in good standing
- Q: does this involve on-line people?
- A: yes
- Q: are there departments not in good standing?
- A: yes – people who don't participate
- Q: questions about GSO – didn't know about it when he came, and thinks it would be a good idea to include an information sheet about the GSO with entrance packets and such, just to let people know that this is a body that does represent them
 - Welcoming letter is a good idea to send out to all new students
 - Talking with TA program about doing a presentation during orientation – doesn't mean we're going to get everyone though
 - There isn't a university-side listserv either, so we've just tried to post them online and give some kind of a constructive notice of meeting minutes
- Idea: also thinks minutes should be circulated to everyone, again, just so that people know about this
- Q: wanting accountability for the Drumlins line
- A: we were approached about 6 years ago by Auxillary Services about supporting them – undergrads pay a fee for it, we as grad students don't – we worked out the deal then that we would pay them a certain amount of money and then all grad students and their families could play for free
 - Last year we were told that the gold course maintenance was going up, so we needed to pay more
 - We do have access to numbers of who's using it, and we do have a positive return on it – we don't have numbers yet this year – not for everyone isn't for everyone, like the Inn or childcare or Student Legal, but there are those who make use of it
 - Grad students have access to play in the summer and undergrads don't – especially good for grad students who can't go home during the summer

- Our \$40 student fee doesn't actually go directly to Drumlins
- We're not under any obligation to continue our relationship with anyone, and this is re-visited every year when we do finance stuff
- We're under the Graduate School for reporting
- We strive to keep the fees low, and haven't upped them in the last couple of years, but we function like any other government, so our options are either raise the fee or cut back on services
- Q: has there ever been an audit conducted on GSO, and is it appropriate?
- A: we haven't posted the budget in the past, but that's easily rectified
 - Some of the problem is turnover in the Senate, so people will vote for a budget one year and then graduate, which sometimes makes for issues in continuity
 - We get monthly financial updates from the Grad School, and they are open/available to anyone who wants to see them
- We want to foster collaboration between departments – we have the money to give away, and want to give it to good programs

- *SU Volunteer Organization* – Kimberly Harris from NewHouse – 18th Annual Comstock Kidfest – carnival style event for about 400 kids from the community – try to foster SU students with community - -GSO has contributed for the last 3 years, and we see it as a good way to continue fostering these relations and contributing to the community - requesting 23% of the event (food) - \$1425 - recommendation of the Finance Committee is that we wait and see what funding they get from other places first
 - Q: what foods are you planning to give them – we're concerned about unhealthy food and obesity?
 - A: hot dogs, carrots, PBJs, also trying to get juice for them as opposed to soda
 - Q: no reason not to expect the funding from SA?
 - A: we plan to get it
 - Recommendation from the floor – go ahead and fund
 - Q: no other organizations you've applied to will provide food?
 - A: haven't really applied to any others
 - Idea: recommend not providing peanut butter due to liability costs

- Motion to take Finance Committee's recommendation to defer funding decision to next meeting (December)
- Motion seconded
- Motion carries (1 abstention)

- *Graphic Arts League* – focus of event is a workshop for graphic arts hands-on event – representative couldn't meet with the Finance Committee
 - Committee recommends waiting until we know more about it because they haven't really covered their bases
 - Motion to accept
 - Seconded
 - Motion carries

- Discussion on the 20%/\$500 rule for food

G. University Senator Sub-Committee Reports

Brief reports from University Senators about sub-committee meetings

- Charles Cutshall – Budget and Fiscal Affairs
 - University's budget isn't doing so well
 - i.e.: going green incentives cutting back on things
 - no upper tier people taking pay increases, all others are limited to 3%
 - trying to avoid limiting staff – SU is possible the largest employer in Syracuse
 - looking at relationship with peer institutions – i.e.: looking at ESF relations
 - looking at co-pays for services for people who make over a certain amount
 - Q: how would the co-pay work with some of the other schools?
 - A: right now just looking at whether or not we're even going to continue with some of these relationships at all
- Need to have a realistic perspective on the economy – we'll see most changes in 2009-2010 – i.e.: things getting smaller, fewer positions, jobs, etc.
 - Don't have incoming undergrad number estimates

- Will increase tuition
 - Q: any word on stipends?
 - A: haven't discussed them
- University needs to stay competitive, but the university does look at students, especially grad students, as expenses, not assets, so we need to keep that in mind
- Comment – there's a fairly large number of professors who commute in by air, and this may be something to look at in the future
- Comment – committee on health care is planning to keep on getting info from other schools as well – possibly to use as leverage or comparisons
 - Q: what steps are the university taking right now? i.e.: in terms of hiring
 - A: based school/program by school/program, not at a university-wide level

H. Old Business

- None

I. New Business

- Ben Ware will be coming to talk with us next month (December)
- Would also like to invite the Grad School to come and talk

J. Remarks for the Record

- Women's Caucus is doing a trivia game as a fund raiser for a local group
- Patrick sat in a presentation by Tom Whal of Division of Student Affairs, Health and Wellness – particularly concerned about student wellness due to suicide – encourages everyone to try get involved with this organization and what they're trying to do to prevent this

K. Announcements

Institutional Advancement announcement from Patrick Wilcox

- Patrick talking about how to give back to the university – he and his wife have pledged a tithe to the University – at least 10% of the monies they make back to the university for the programs we try to support that suffer from a lack of support – encourages other people to look into this as well
- Approximately 3 weeks ago Andrew Graves was born.

L. Adjournment