

GSA Council minutes, sept 17 2006

Meeting called to order 7:03

New officers introduced:

President: Carlos Diuk

Vice President: Naomi Fleming

Treasurer: Ryan Fowler

Secretary: Rafael Greenblatt

Carlos: We will be trying to keep meetings short; so we will be observing the bylaws, which specify time limits for agenda items after which council may vote to continue. We have a new Administrative Assistant, Benjamin Peters.

1. New Business

TA/GA Committee plans for the upcoming year

Scott Bruton, TA/GA committee: About 4 years ago TA/GA membership in the AAUP was about 3%. After the last contract campaign it reached about 20%. Partly as a result of this we got an excellent contract for TAs and GAs, this depended on people getting involved. Stipends went from about \$14k to about \$18k for academic year appointments. The union has also worked on health coverage for fellows, campus housing fees, etc. Presently the state government is threatening to make people pay ~1200 (10%) on premiums, the union will be trying to fight this. People need to join the union in order to achieve this. Being a full member costs \$12 a year, about 50 cents per pay period, strengthens the union and lets you participate more in the decisions. People who want to get involved, eg by transmitting information in your department, also passing communication on to the union are needed and should contact the TA/GA committee.

PTLs are also represented by the AAUP, but are in a separate bargaining unit from TAs/GAs and faculty. This puts PTLs in a weaker position so others need to help them out. Faculty has not always been supportive of other categories, but that has improved as TA/GAs have gotten more active.

Election of new committee chairs

Carlos: Naomi has stepped down as ISAC chair; Tamana has nominated herself. (No other nominations. Tamana elected unanimously.)

Carlos: Tamana will need help, so please get in touch with her. Kristen Gilmore has nominated herself to chair the Student Affairs committee. It involves meeting with other parts of the university. Approved unanimously.

Ryan is the *ex officio* chair of the EAC, Carlos and Naomi are interested in co-

chairing the Social and Cultural committee, and Mike Crockford wishes to continue chairing the Sustainability committee. These will be formalized at future meetings.

Recognition of New/Inactive GSAs: Bioinformatics

Pai Shi, Bioinformatics: Bioinformatics is an interdisciplinary field, therefore we have a GSA to connect people in otherwise separate programs.

Carlos: this is a group which has been active but its official recognition lapsed.
Vote to recognize: passed unanimously.

Carlos: Art of Living, which was not included in the agenda, is also seeking recognition.

Repr.: meets every week for guided meditation etc., intends to conduct community service events:

Scott: Is it true that Art of Living is linked to guru Sri Sri Ravishankar, who tries to get people to sign up for very expensive seminar?

Rep: we will be offering this course cheaply to Rutgers affiliated. We are not limited to the technique developed by Ravishankar.

Scott: Can you assure the GSA that you are not going to recruit people into these other courses?

Rep: Yes, indeed.

(as per bylaws, proposal will be voted on at the next council meeting)

Proposals from the floor

None

Reports

Executive

Carlos: we've been meeting through the summer. GSA held a FunFair for the first time, about 150-200 people and 8-10 groups participated. There will be an LGBT event thursday 5-7 cohosted with Office of Student Affairs, which we hope will bring us a step closer to having an LGBT GSA.

Treasurer

12 members of EAC spent most of last Sunday dealing with the first batch of funding applications. We dealt with 29 groups (65% of the total), allocated an amount equal to 85% of last year's fall external allocation. We don't yet know how much money we will be receiving from the university this year, but we anticipate a similar total to last year. There are 28 groups left who have not submitted applications; the deadline is 9/28 and you must submit your application by then to receive money this fall. There will be another EAC

meeting which will come up with a final budget and Ryan will give the official figures on Oct 8th. We intend to allocate 80% of the estimated available funds in the fall and 20% to further applications in the spring.

Be careful about spending money before the final figures are authorized. You are guaranteed \$200 (no more) for orientation events. Contact Ryan if you have any questions or concerns about your application. Unless you have a publication you shouldn't expect to get more than \$2K.

Q: you can't get reimbursed for anything before you get the final numbers, right?

A: Except orientation. This is not a hard and fast rule – some things can be worked out - but be careful about overspending.

GSA Committees

Social/Cultural (Carlos Diuk and Naomi Fleming)

Films will be starting this Thursday. In general film nights will be 8 pm at the GSL. First film is Zelig with Woody Allen.

Publications/Newsletters (vacant)

Carlos: Julie Evanoff, who helps with publications etc. Is back and can help. We could use help with the GSA website, eg updates

Student Affairs (Kristen Gilmore)

No representative present.

International Student Affairs (Naomi Fleming)

Naomi: next social hour will be in two weeks on Busch.

External Allocations Committee (Ryan Fowler)

Ryan: EAC consists of 12 volunteers who spend 2 Sundays allocating the GSA's money. The applications are passed around until a reasonable figure emerges. Please be tolerant towards the EAC members if you are upset about the results.

Sustainability Committee (Mike Crockford)

Mike: The greening of College Ave seems to be getting going, and some serious environmental advocates are being brought in to give input. Several will be giving talks over the course of the semester. The sustainability committee has not been so active but good things have been done including firing of former VP for development. Sustainability committee is redirecting itself; it will be pushing for best, low-cost, sustainable student housing and student centers (bear in mind that these are paid for by student fees). SC also would like to do much more to improve the situation for bicyclists, and has also managed to accomplish some things with purchasing, eg increased availability of fair trade coffee, and the university is now using low-toxicity cleaning supplies. It would be great if more people got involved, especially if someone wants to chair or co-chair.

External Committees

Carlos: at present the different student centers are under different authorities. This will change with the reorganization of the university, student centers will be brought into a common agency under VP Blimling. Things are going to change, but it's not clear how. Blimling has said that we will not be getting more space but should not expect less space.

RSC Governing Board (temporarily Carlos Diuk)

Carlos plans to continue on board.

Douglass Student Center Governing Board (Ryan Fowler)

Ryan: There is a graduate student lounge in DCC. It's a nice space and we encourage you to use the space for events. We want to keep a foothold for the GSA in this space, and for this we need people to use the space.

Ryan: Ease of reserving the Douglass Graduate Student Lounge depends a lot on who is doing it. If you have trouble dealing with the reservation people contact Ryan or Mike, they will straighten it out.

Carlos: When you are reserving space always identify yourself as a graduate student. If you have trouble let us know, and let us know who you talked to.

Q: What is the policy about alcohol?

Carlos: situation with alcohol is complicated, we are trying to get a better understanding of the rules that apply.

Ryan: many other entities hold events with alcohol (departments, alumni, etc).

University Senate (Meredith Staples, Ryan Fowler, Jess Sanders)

Ryan: there was no business at the last senate meeting; it was devoted to the President's address

EC of the Graduate School (Brian Vancil and Jocilyn Dellava)

Not present. EC has not yet met.

Parking & Transportation (Justin Burton)

Not present.

Administrative Assistant (Mike Crockford, Benjamin Peters)

Contact rugsa_help@yahoo.com if you need help.

Questions and Announcements

None