

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA. GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL

General Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Meeting called to order at 6:08pm by Bridget Barker

Present: Stephen Bieda, Boris Glebov, Bridget Barker, Alison Betts, Sanket Unhale, Erica Cirillo-McCarthy, David Lopez-Negrete, David Talenfeld, James Johnson, Tim Chambers, Jim Collins, Sandra Nemeth, Lauren Sekora, Eirin Bareis, A. Quadir Khan, Jennifer Kruse, Stephanie Levitt, Nisural Patel, Jessica Gerlach.

Proxies: Emily Connally, Robert Jacobi, Helena Morrison, Tiffany Goforth, Mabel Crescioni, Chizanya Mpinja, Brittany Perkins.

I. Call to Audience – None

II. Secretary Election

- a. One nominee: David Lopez-Negrete
- b. Any objections? None.
- c. Nomination seconded by David Talenfeld.
- d. Vote: all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

III. Officer Reports

President - Stephen Bieda

We have a large docket of fees to consider. Unfortunately, it is a very large list of fees. In later discussions, it'll be worthwhile to take a position on fees as a whole. These will be sent to ABOR soon. We need to consider what our individual constituencies have said. Some have expressed panic and disdain; others have advocated for no fees. I need to be able to convey GPSC's view to President Shelton.

These fees are out there in the public. [Stephen recited several fees of concern to graduates and undergraduates, listing the amount requested.] There are lots of course fees as well. Basically, we need to take a position on all these fees.

UA Transformation is moving along. Graduate and Professional programs are being scrutinized. If they don't meet minimum requirements, they are subject to elimination by July '09.

Governor called a special session today. She will discuss whether to accept the stimulus package. If the budget cut is beyond the '06 level, then it looks like she won't accept the stimulus. Another possible proposal is increasing the sales tax. Regarding the Fiscal Year '10 budget: Representative Pearce is proposing a drastic cut to the University. UA would face a cut of 1/3 of its operating budget. We should keep a close eye on what happens at the state legislature.

Advocacy efforts are continuing. Stephen and Alison just had a meeting with a legislator. It's important for representatives to have constituency meetings and encourage them to run. Stephen strongly encourages finding replacements if present representatives are not continuing on.

Vice President – Boris Glebov

Bad news from committee: perception in legislature is that given the amount of budget cuts, even if AZ accepts the stimulus education money, it won't be able to bring the State back to the level required to receive stimulus money in the first place. Some legislators' perspective is to not even try for the stimulus money.

Regarding the Focused Excellence effort – Provost Hay said we want to be in the top 10 for the programs we have. In other words, any programs that don't meet this would go. Big time professors are talking about different academic areas pursued here and how they compare nationally. This committee is devising a procedure to evaluate investing in some programs and not in others. Boris is looking into participating in this committee.

Talk more about fees later.

Assembly Chair – Bridget Barker

Looking at Dean's recommendations – all programs are under review. The process was supposed to last a year, but now it's six weeks. Bridget just received new information; for each college there are 5-10 programs considered exceptional. (Not including Optical Sciences, for example.) It's unclear whether only those exceptional programs will be kept. It's not clear to the deans. Not much to report since it's up to the Provost in the end. Many things will go away and there's not a lot of opportunity to defend sub-exceptional programs. Notices coming up daily, weekly. People already in the program get their degree as planned, however.

Rest of report deferred.

Treasurer – Sanket Unhale

Report on fees deferred.

Secretary – David Lopez-Negrete (newly elected)

No report.

Social Chair – David Talenfeld

Two events are planned to coincide w/GPSA week. One is a low-cost movie night. It might be open-air with nice weather. Also, another Wine Tasting. David has been working on improving the congestion experienced at the previous Wine Tasting. They will have multiple wine stations, a fortune teller, two live bands (jazz and rock); it'll be from 8-midnight. There will be food. It will be fun. Please recruit people for events and positions. Only four people have turned in materials.

Stephen Bieda again exhorts all representatives to find replacements if not continuing on.

IV. Representative and Director Reports (10 min)

James Johnson – the Steering Committee is back on. More details after Fri.

Jim Collins – IT Advisory Board met last week. Registrar’s office wants feedback on times when registration is down. Is it enough, too much? This committee is preparing a statement on this so Jim is looking for input.

Comments

Lauren Sekora: It’s a bad thing that it’s down at midnight.

Boris Glebov: problem that it’s down close to registration.

Bridget Barker: it’s down on Sundays.

Alison Betts – please make sure your attendance record is accurate because it will impact your stipend.

V. Questions for Officer, Representative and Director Reports

Q: Erica Cirillo McCarthy: are grad programs under review rated against each other or nationally?

A: Bridget Barker: Both. There are 3 categories – faculty and student publishing; time to graduate; and diversity of students and faculty. Ratings are supposed to be about the program but it’s difficult to decouple it from the department. Assigned 1-5 score, publishing and how much money brought in matters most.

Q: Boris Glebov: is this based on data from National Research Council?

A: Bridget Barker: the data is supposed to come from the Grad College so we didn’t get that info. We have to rely on what each dean provides.

Q: Boris Glebov: is the list compiled based on graduation rates?

A: Bridget Barker: Programs that made progress in the last two years are not reflected. All programs were allowed to write narrative and those were submitted. So the programs were given an opportunity to advocate for themselves. There is some nuance if some professors died, for example. There was an attempt at least.

VI. Reading and Approval of Minutes

February 18, 2009 – Stephen Bieda moved to approve the minutes. Tim Chambers seconded the motion, which passed with 3 abstentions.

VII. Committee Non-Consent Agenda

IT Fee Endorsement – Sanket Unhale & Boris Glebov

Boris Glebov: we didn’t come to an actual conclusion but formulated some points for judging all the fees. A sunset provision is one of these. Other ideas: if fee increases are related to budget crisis, they should be revised after the crisis subsides; also, an enrollment cap correlating credit hours to the amount of fees paid; some of the fees should have a residency requirement; if you’re not on campus, then you shouldn’t pay. Another point, fees should be used for maintaining current services only. The reasoning being that given economic conditions, it’s time to be financially restrained.

Sanket Unhale: another idea is to have a refund provision if a fee isn’t used by certain students. For example, the rec center already allows this. There is a Health and Wellness fee proposed. Campus Health gets \$4M to maintain services so if they charge a fee they will be immune to

state cuts. This is a good idea to help the budget shortfall. The downside is that they will be getting this money from the students by an additional fee. An idea is to implement fee in steps and increase fee over time to reduce the burden on students. Another idea is to have a cap on all fees; have the Administration allocate their programs according to the max fee amount we'd recommend.

Jim Collins: IT Student Advisory Board believes it's important to have good technology and improve it. Not Jim's personal belief, however. Why don't we go back to Board saying "no new fees, etc."? Feedback?

Lauren Sekora: one idea is electronic textbooks.

Alison Betts: there are areas we do need to improve in terms of technology. This hurts teaching and learning for students. Some classrooms still have blackboards, for example.

Bridget Barker: even some middle schools have high classroom technology.

Alison Betts: one issue is that we may lack the infrastructure to support moving classes online.

David Talenfeld: I'm interested in developing a coherent policy on the fees. I favor committees coming together to working on this.

Alison Betts: keeping just the status quo will hurt us in the long run. We'll get behind very fast.

Lauren Sekora: I agree we need to have a more general position on fees. Costs will increase so we need to ensure those costs are covered.

Q: Bridget Barker: are international students required to purchase insurance and associated fees? I'm concerned that some students will be disproportionately adversely impacted.

A: Sanket Unhale: not really. International students don't have to go through insurance office. A proposal on co-pays: make services independent. Give back any funding they receive from the state and use only fees. Administrators are pushing for fees because they are more transparent and go directly to department. Thus, they are more inclined toward fees. ASU, in contrast, is moving towards increasing the tuition and not fees.

Boris Glebov: we're trying to develop a set of guidelines for the fees. "No new services" and "improvements" is negotiable. Some investments might be worthwhile, for example in energy efficiency. Green technology fee could provide savings. But, solar panels wouldn't be feasible at this point. Perhaps we should err on the side of "no new" fees but allow some exceptions. There's no difference between tuition and fees—the university could be as transparent in both.

Bridget Barker: just to reiterate, the main points we're looking for are a Sunset Provision, tuition remission, enrollment cap (proration), etc.

David Talenfeld: we should consider what percentage of fees go to financial aid.

Bridget Barker: How much does that actually go to Grad students?

Stephen Bieda: a reason for fees instead of tuition is that state returns 60-65cents per dollar returned to university. If we want to make a statement, we need one by next Wednesday. We might have to do internet vote by next Monday.

Jim Collins: we should consider tuition as we consider fees. Non-degree students aren't eligible for financial aid but will still be paying more in fees. Please email me any more comments on IT fee to take back to IT Advisory Board because their statement will carry a lot of weight. It meets tomorrow at 5pm.

Stephen Bieda: point of order: if we provide statement to Jim, we'd need to vote on it.
David Talenfeld moved for an emergency meeting between Appropriations and IT Fee Committees to formulate position statement. Stephen Bieda seconded the motion, which passed with 2 abstentions.

VIII. Old Business

- a. Club POD funding – Sanket Unhale
 - a. Stephen Bieda moved to approve the funding. David Talenfeld seconded the motion, which passed with 2 abstentions.
- b. GPSC Election 2009 – Stephen Bieda & Bridget Barker
 - a. Bridget Barker: applications are due on Fri. Only four have been submitted: one for President, three for representatives.
 - b. Alison Betts: please get your forms in to me or Bridget. Also, turn in your candidacy statements.
 - c. Stephen Bieda: how many representatives we have will determine how much of a voice we have next year.
- c. UITS Google Gmail Contract – Jim Collins
 - d. Meeting w/Google rep before our next meeting.
Q: Lauren Sekora: is there a set date for the decision?
A: Jim Collins: ASAP.

IX. New Business

- a. President Shelton's visit on April 8 – Stephen Bieda
 - a. Working on getting Provost to attend also. President has agreed to address us for the full meeting; it will be an open agenda about everything University-related. There will be a call to the audience, so please promote this to your constituents. The likely venue is Law College. 30 minutes will be the call to audience, then the officers will have a turn to address the President (both old and new council). Please spread the word. The President is open to hearing our concerns and resolving them (as he did on some from our past meeting with him). Remainder of the meeting will be devoted to representatives' questions.
- b. GPSA awards nominees, GPSA week – Jessica Gerlach & Bridget Barker
 - a. Jessica Gerlach: award nominations are due this Fri. We have only received three so far. Please encourage nominations. GPSA week is from 3/29-4/3. There will be fun activities, including a BBQ open to everyone on 3/29 at Himmel Park. We need volunteers for BBQ on the Mall. We will also need judges for nominations – 3/24 is set for evaluating the nominations—if you can, come help.
 - b. David Talenfeld: social committee is also planning events around this time including a movie night.
Jessica Gerlach: we'll add these events to the calendar and forward emails to pass along to constituents.
 - c. Q: David Lopez-Negrete: is an extension on GPSA nominations possible?
 - i. A: Bridget Barker: yes, it's possible. We have worked in an extra week in case.
- c. Constituency Meetings – Boris Glebov
 - a. Some representatives haven't had constituency meeting but should. Talk to us and we'll help coordinate the meeting to talk about student government and its

- relevance. Some people think student government is only about building up a resume but it's not. Please have a meeting.
- b. Bridget Barker: the meeting is supposed to happen as part of a representative's constitutional duty.
 - c. Q: Sanket Unhale: should there be a record of the constituency meeting?
 - i. Boris Glebov: yes, but I haven't received a request for help on meetings.
 - ii. Bridget Barker: please send an email to Boris.
 - iii. Alison Betts: there might be procedure on this in constitution or bylaws.
 - iv. Bridget Barker: I will look into this and let everyone know through listserv.
 - d. Blood Drive – Bridget Barker
 - a. It looks the blood drive we organized is being advertised by ASUA as theirs. Red Cross was under the impression that ASUA and GPSC were a single student government body. It's important for our representatives to show up. It seems like ASUA is having a hard time finding volunteers to go. We need volunteers for next Tue and Wed. Bridget will send an email reminder.
 - e. GPSC_REP listserv – Bridget Barker
 - a. There was a PDF attached to an email sent on the rep listserv that was inappropriate. It was probably meant as a joke but please be respectful.
 - f. Stephen Bieda moved to enter Executive Session. Alison Betts seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 7:45pm.
 - a. The Council exited Executive Session at 8:01pm.

X. Call to Adjourn

Stephen motioned to adjourn. James Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 8:02pm.