

Graduate Student Senate Meeting October 30th, 2006

Present: Aaron Ferguson, Bree Mathon, Amanda Holland, Christian Refsteck, Sara Casten, Rebecca Lynch, Galen Wilkerson, Tom Looby, Nathan Victoria, Benjamin Medz, Travis Reynolds, Erin Sigel, Casey Corcoran, Matt Roper, Laura Hill, Jessica Bentz, Christopher Massa, Jeff Bukowski, Eileen Horn, Ted Hart, Derek Laws, Stacie Grassano, Andrew Korich, Jackie Teriek, Michelle Norton, Andrew Dunn, Sharon Sufert, Matthew Paubinskas, Mark Cannella, Connie Beal, Sreedhar Manchu.

The meeting took place in the John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill. The meeting began at approximately 01:10pm.

1. **President Remarks:**

Report given by Robin Collins, GSS President

Meeting called to order.

1) Directed Galen Wilkerson to elaborate on the concept of Foot-Printing.

- A means to calculate the amount of land somebody would need to support his/her lifestyle with the purpose of adopting a more environmentally friendly lifestyle.
- Establish a website that would aid people to calculate their own footprint as well as share their ideas about how to go about adopting more conservative lifestyle.
- Start a committee to get the idea going.

Robin's response: Best approach to reach people is by sending this idea through emails on listserv.

2) Directed Chris about Technology Transfer Department and their workshops

- Purpose of workshop is to introduce students to ways of putting their research into industry.
- There will be four guest speakers
- Among them is Todd Keller who will present on Wednesday 3:30 to 4:30.
- The dates for the other guest speakers will be announced through email. One of them is on November 8th.
- More about the workshops: The goal is to help students to market their product. Although Vermont is not an industrial area, it has its own potential in the form of biotechnology companies.
- Question that arose: Would it be a problem to market ones own research if the facilities were provided by the university?
- Answer: There would be ways of making a deal with the university so that both parties will profit.

3) Directed to representative of rowing club:

Issue: All UVM clubs are SGA funded which do not cover graduate students, since unlike undergrads they are not required to pay 65 dollars.

Proposed solution: GSS will cover the expenses for certain SGA equipment.

Ted Harts Response: This issue can go through the student affairs committee. Further certain time constraints of grad students will prevent them from pursuing such hobbies.

Remarks:

- Student trustee position currently open for March 1st, 2007- Feb 20th, 2008
- Seth Bowden, president of SGA emailed detailed information to Robin, which can be forwarded to those who are interested.
- Emphasis on the importance of the position was given.

Eileen Horn gave short description of GSS activities for 5 minutes.

- Two kinds of activities, academic and non-academic.
- Social events like Graduate Gala and Bar Crawl
- Held activities like Snow Shoeing and Pot Luck
- Attendance for social events was 60 to 80.

Presentation was ended with a welcome for everyone to Graduate Student Senate.

Reports from External Committees:

Robin Collins:

- Has attended two Faculty Senate meetings since the beginning of the semester.
- People present in the meetings said peoplesoft sucks.
- Asks everyone to bring any issue up to him or Riva so that they would take it to faculty senate meetings.
- Question: What power do they have?
 - 1) Robin's answer: At the meeting Seth Bowden and she spoke about what's been done lately with their respective organizations.
 - 2) Informs that they were allowed to speak before. But now they have changed the structure.
 - 3) Faculty senate can bring issues to the board of trustees
 - 4) These meetings take place for long time.
 - 5) One has to submit document before the meeting presenting their work.
 - 6) The members read it and would ask if they have any doubts.

Ted Hart:

- Has attended Graduate College meeting.
- Tells that meeting was a kind of cheerleading session for Fran Carr.
- Faculty Senate gives presentation.
- Discusses what they have to do for grad students.
- Stipend has been raised from \$13,200 to \$14,500. It happens every 3 years.
- Stipend of \$1500 during summer with \$500 each month.
- Three new scholarships to UCMB.
- Talked about how Graduate students should get paid more as pay is not really competitive. But no one sees it happening.

Robin Collins:

- Has been to Davis Center Advisory Council meeting
- Informs that a committee will be formed with diverse group of people; People from UVM board, R25 and student organizations.
- Tells that Davis Student Center has been scheduled to open next year October.
- GSS has been given 20by20 foot space.
- First priority is given to students. For the next fall one has to book the space before April 1st. After that it would be open to everyone.
- Attendants were talking about whether it is good or not.
- Meeting was ridiculously long.
- Tells that we can use those resources in the Davis Student Center very well.
- Nathan:
 1. Informs that there is a position open in the Board of Trustees.
 2. Can have an application from Grad College.
 3. Applications are due in January.

Health Insurance Committee: Robin

- Bids every 5 years.
- They are setting up a Health Insurance Task Force.
- You can throw anything you want under coverage. Then they come up with what ever they can offer in the coverage.
- Eyes coverage: Covers 30 percent. Needs improved eye coverage.
- Dental: It is expensive. One can have 2 cleanings a year.
- Travel shots are covered.
- One of the attendants informs that a tooth cleaning is done just for 12 bugs at some place in Williston.
- Christian informs that a tooth cleaning is done for cheap price at Dian Medical Center for full time students.
- Ideas: Attendants come up with their ideas on health insurance coverage.
 1. One of the attendants from the chemistry department expresses his idea of having sick coverage for students in the chemistry department from being exposed to chemicals for long time in the laboratories.
 2. Robin thinks of forming a committee on health insurance with four students.
 3. Ted Hart informs that Grad College pays half of the insurance costs.
 4. Galen Wilkinson: It is a good idea to compare with other public universities in terms of cost of living; Cost of living in Burlington is especially high.

Student affairs committee:

Laura Hill: As a ex-secretary of GSS talked about the achievements of GSS in the past one year like space in Davis Student Center, 50 percent waiver in health insurance fee and as an official student organization for graduate students.

Robin Collins:

1. Graduate College has a massive recruitment plan.
2. Committee is going to consist of three students and three faculty members.

3. Interested candidates can email Robin. She would pass it to Dave.
4. Reviews process every 5 years about advising students receive from their advisors and quality of education, etc. It was a large part of the meeting discussion.
5. Informs that Board of Trustee meeting is on Nov 10th. Robin gives presentation.

Internal Committees:

Meetings take place once every two weeks. All the attendants were asked to choose the committee on which they would like to work. All the attendants split into 3 groups headed by Robin Collins, Ted Hart and Eileen Horn. Discussions followed on.

Mini-Grants

Public Relations Director Riva handles mini grant committee.

Student Affairs Committee:

International students visa problems

Met every 2 weeks

Health insurance Committee – Discussion

Higher risk departments.

Stipend issue is a big thing.

Application processing is good.

The meeting minutes from September 19th, 2006 were approved.

Old Business:

- An old problem with paychecks has been sorted out.
- Robins confirmed it by asking attendants whether anyone still has this problem with the taxes on paychecks.

New Business:

- Ted Hart: Election went off well.
- Some students from some departments, especially from Mathematics department, complain that they haven't received any mail to vote through website.
- All those who haven't received an email for voting, send an email to Ted Hart.
- Promise to fix this problem by talking to person concerned in the Graduate College.
-

General Announcements:

- Tuesday – 4:25 pm:
Chris: Engineers with out borders. Guest speakers; College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences. Discussion on break down barriers between departments.

Motion to adjourn at 2:45pm.