GSA General Council Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

I. Approval of Agenda

Agenda for the meeting was approved. Edward Collins moved, and Mark Schuller seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the February 6, 2002, meeting were approved. Edward moved, and Sarah Battersby seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent.

III. Graduate Division

Mary McMahon, Assistant Dean of Graduate Division, made several announcements and requests. She announced that the Grad News newspaper is on the web at http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/gradnews. She also said that she was seeking a speaker for commencement. Shawn Landres noted that two people were needed for the committee that will make the selection.

McMahon also announced the Louis and Winifred Lancaster Dissertation Competition, which is offering awards to the best dissertation in the Social Science and Mathematical/Physical Sciences/Engineering fields.

McMahon mentioned that partial fee fellowships will be made available to grad students in Summer 2002 for coursework that will assist the timely completion of their degree. For more information, please see http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/financial/summer/docs/Complete_Info.doc.

Lastly, McMahon noted that graduate students will be asked to participate in a national survey, and made a final call for fellowships for continuing graduate students.

IV. Vox Populi

Stu Levenbach of Marine Biology voiced concern over the high proposed cost of renting a room in the San Clemente project, such as $892 per month for a room in a two-bedroom apartment. Shawn noted that the Office of the President was shocked by the figures presented. Although the proposed rates are said to be some fifteen percent below market value, Edward Collins noted that such high costs of living tend to make UCSB less competitive than other universities in attracting and retaining students. Shawn said that during a meeting with the

Chancellor the idea of pegging stipends at three times housing costs was floated in order to increase competitiveness.

V. Campus Resources

Patrick McNulty, Associate Registrar of Systems Operation & Development at the Office of the Registrar, spoke briefly about tax benefits available to graduate students. Although McNulty made it clear that his advice and opinions could not be construed as expert in nature, he outlined the basic features of such legislation as the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 and programs such as the Hope and Lifetime Learning Credits.

Significant questions were raised about the definitions of such concepts as "gift aid" and payments "on your behalf," but McNulty was unable to elaborate further. Several grad students recommended visiting the IRS website at http://www.irs.gov/ for more information and downloadable literature and documents.

VI. Information Items

A. Committee Reports

Alan Levy, mentioned that the next meeting of GSHIP committee will have a menu of program offerings to choose from. He said that Dr. Cynthia Bowers of Student Health Services will keep all services open during the summer, although eye and dental services will be provided during a schedule of reduced hours. No physical therapy or orthotics will be available on site.

B. Officer Reports

Shawn said that the Chancellor's Special Advisory Committee on Parking is making progress, and discussions favor the implementation of night and weekend parking fees starting in Fall 2002. He also noted with concern that the Chancellor's Coordinating Committee on Year Round Enrollment was not demonstrating interest in enrolling grad students for summer quarter except as teaching assistants.

Jonathan Pearl of Music asked about summer incentives for graduate students to teach, to which Shawn responded that the UAW-UC agreement bans any changes to the TA environment during negotiations. Shawn advocated contacting either the UAW or UC, as the GSA was not able to take a position on the matter for legal reasons. Shawn talked about the issue of summer classes affecting teachers with whom TAs work during other quarters, and supported the creation of a department to match grad students with advisors to cover each quarter that grad students attend UCSB. Mary

McMahon encouraged students to find funding during summer if it works to their advantage, a process of "thinking creatively," as she termed it. Shawn noted that the issue of summer classes is another factor affecting the overall competitiveness of UCSB among potential graduate students.

Edward spoke about several items, including systemwide petitions and committees regarding such issues as copyright protection for works produced by graduate students. He also mentioned that IVPAC was holding a weeklong set of meetings to figure out the issues that are most important to Isla Vista - either students or businesses will dominate the agenda.

Sarah mentioned the selection of a new Vice Chancellor for Admininstrative Services, and that the parking committee had rescheduled its meeting for April.

Soomin noted that she had worked with Shawn on finding ways to improve Counseling and Career Services to make it more effective for graduate students. Shawn lamented that graduate students are largely unaware of many of the services that CCS provides.

VII. Old Business and Action Items

A. Election of New Vice President for Academic Affairs

Due to the need to fill the position of Vice President for Academic Affairs with all expediency, and as no students were nominated, Shawn requested to the General Council that the Executive Council be empowered to appoint someone. Roger Roybal of Mathematics moved, and John Corbett seconded. An amendment declaring failure to appoint a VP for Academic Affairs was moved by Shawn and seconded by John.

B. Committee Appointments/Confirmations

No appointments or confirmations were made.

C. Budget

1. Spanish & Lusophone Graduate Student Conference

Approval for funding the Spanish & Lusophone Conference was moved by Edward and seconded by Sarah.

2. Conversion of System Administrator Position to work-study and removal of graduate student preferential hiring.

   Shawn spoke about the possibility of having the roommate of Joseph Maher (the current System Administrator) manage the online election of GSA officers at a rate of $40 per hour for ten hours. Edward moved for such an arrangement and Sarah seconded.

   Jonathan Pearl noted that he was concerned about the total number of hours that the prospective hire would be allotted. Shawn remarked that it would be tied to the job description.

   John suggested that the hire should be required to complete the job along the stipulated guidelines or not be eligible for pay. John moved and Edward seconded.

D. Proposal to Amend the GSA Constitution

Mark Schuller asked about the meaning of Article IX, Section (a). Shawn explained that it was desired to be required to request approval from the General Council for every interpretation of the proposed Constitution. Alan Levy motioned to approve a change from "3/4" to "2/3" in Article IX, Section (a). Edward seconded.

Benjamin Wolkow of Classics asked about the meaning of Article II, Section (g), in which the GSA Assembly would be empowered to remove a GSA officer or assembly member. Alan Levy of the Constitution Committee replied that it was retained from the current constitution to prevent gridlock by assembly members or officers that attempted to tie up proceedings.

Shawn and Alan spoke briefly about the merits of the proposed constitution, especially with regard to how it will result in more stringent procedures for passing items in general elections.

Alan proposed a series of changes to the proposed constitution to smooth out its language. He requested that the word "be" be deleted from Article 3, Section (e)(1); that "an" be substituted for "a" in Article 3, Section (e)(4); and that the language in Article II, Section (d)(3) be changed to read "serve a term of one year." The proposed language was passed by a vote of 19 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

Alan motioned to change the bylaws of the current constitution at the next meeting of the General Council (April 3) so that an election over the adoption of the proposed constitution can be held. Edward seconded.

E. Proposals for GSA Lock-in Fee Ballot Questions

1. Night & Weekend Parking: $3.33/student/quarter (FWS only) 2002-03 and 2003-04; $4.00/student/quarter (FWS only) 2004-05 and 2005-06

Shawn discussed the Gene Lucas letter included in the packet distributed to the General Council. He then referred students to the proposed language for the ballot issue. He proposed that Night and Weekend Parking should be handled in a matter similar to GSHIP -- namely that it should be applicable to all students regardless of who uses it, making it acceptable to the Chancellor. He then walked the Council through the potential charges associated with a Night and Weekend Parking program, along with the need for increased security from non-parking sources. He noted that some members of the Chancellor's Committee were opposed to such a buyout and favored instead the implementation of a system charging fees on demand.

Karen Blair of Geology asked about how a Night and Weekend Parking program would be enforced. Shawn and Martha Levy, Director of Capital Development, indicated that permits would be necessary but at no additional charge should the program be bought out.

Jonathan Pearl of Music asked about how useful existing data was in predicting the impact of such a program. Shawn noted that there is some data available on permit types and times at which certain parking facilities are utilized. He also mentioned the possibility of separate stickers for graduate and undergraduate students.

Martha observed that it was not yet clear that there had been a recommendation regarding Night and Weekend Parking. Having said that, she mentioned that it was important to make the program work for students. Shawn responded that the buyout was the best option on the table, saying that "it doesn't get any better than this."

Kurt Anderson asked about what sort of prices would be charged to non-permit holders. Martha said that $1 per night could be charged for event parking, and that weekend rates had not yet even been determined. Shawn added that he felt there was "a ton of money" to be had from event parking.

Mark Schuller inquired as to whether event fees and Night and Weekend Parking were being considered as separate charges from one another. Shawn and Martha responded that they were indeed being considered as separate charges.

Alan Levy asked whether daytime rates would change; Martha replied that they would not under the proposed plan.

Shawn noted that graduate students would have little grounds for complaint if a buyout were voted down in the upcoming election.

Edward expressed concern about charging Night and Weekend Parking fees, pointing out that there exists the possibility that such fees could drive away undergraduate students and undercut the profitability of the program. Shawn later noted that undergraduates were prevented from participating in a buyout due to a self-imposed moratorium on lock-in fees.

Brook Vick of Psychology inquired about the possible rates per quarter if permits were sold individually, with Shawn and Martha expressing doubt that they would be less than $10.

John asked whether parking enforcement would continue for the duration of the night, and if not, when it would cease. Shawn responded that enforcement would cease after 10 pm.

Jonathan suggested the possibility of a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) "ten-pack" for the quarter to encourage occasional use of parking facilities during the night and weekend.

Alan moved to place the question on the ballot, with John seconding.

The proposal was passed by a vote of 18 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

2. Disabled Students Program: $1.00/student/quarter

   Shawn outlined recommendations for DSP along with several minor changes in language.

   John moved to place the question on the ballot, with Sabrina from Political Science seconding.

   The proposal was passed by a vote of 20 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

3. Multicultural Center: $1.75/student/quarter ($1.00 summer?)

   Shawn briefly outlined the lock-in fee proposal, and noted that he has letters of intent for services to be provided by the Multicultural Center as result of fees ensuing from approval of this proposal.

Mark questioned who would be paying the $1.00 fee during the summer. Shawn explained that the fee would only be paid by those registering for summer classes, and that the fee would be no more than $1.00.

Several students raised questions about what services were actually being promised, such as an "additional coffee hour" and additional programs for children. Alan noted that the MCC is attempting to become more "child-friendly."

Mark felt that the concerns raised by the General Council over the MCC lock-in provisions would be best addressed with the generation of a voter guide at the April meeting of the General Council.

Mark moved to place the question on the ballot, with Edward seconding.

The proposal was passed by a vote of 20 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

4. Women's Center: $1.75/student/quarter ($1.00 summer)

   Shawn spoke briefly in favor of the proposal.

   Edward moved to place the question on the ballot, with Mark seconding.

   The proposal was passed by a vote of 20 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

5. Student Health Service: $4.00/student/quarter (FWS only)

   Shawn briefly revisited this proposal's merits.

   Edward moved to place the question on the ballot, with Jonathan seconding.

   The proposal was passed by a vote of 19 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

VIII. New Business and Discussion Items

A. Parking Committee recommendation to suspend planning on SRB

Shawn explained the situation to the General Council. He explained that the expansion of the Student Resources Building (SRB) would lead to even more consumption of parking spaces than was originally envisioned. As a result, the Chancellor's Committee has suspended planning on the SRB until this situation can be worked out.

Martha Levy noted that the proposed bike fee had been dropped as unpopular and unworkable, and state funding has also been rejected. She explained that an "infrastructure tax" might be implemented at UCSB to pay for additional parking facilities.

Shawn took the time to explain the concept of "parking replacement" and how the infrastructure tax would apply to all campus projects.

Edward and John both asked how could such a charge be applied if the state doesn't want to pay for it. Martha noted that such a tax could be hidden in such a way as to not be a direct linkage to parking.

Mark requested clarification on the financing aspect, and then moved to take the position that the proposed childcare portion of the SRB be removed from current parking lots. Jeff Onsted of Geography seconded.

The question was passed by a vote of 16 yeas, 0 nays, and 4 abstentions.

B. Nominations and Elections for 2002-03 GSA Officer positions

Shawn briefly noted that it was necessary to start the nominations process for the 2002-03 year.

C. GSA Accounting and Payroll System: Proposal to transfer accounts out of OSL

No discussion was held on this matter.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Corbett
GSA Press Secretary