GSA General Council Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 6:13 pm.

I. Approval of Agenda

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

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 9, 2002, meeting were approved. Edward moved, and Kathy seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent.

III. Graduate Division

Shaina Walter, Internal Vice-President of Associated Students, requested that interested graduate students meet the candidates for Executive Director. She mentioned that there will be several public interviews in the AS conference room.

Mary McMahon, Assistant Dean of Graduate Division, announced that a Tax and Loan Consolidated Resources Workshop would be held on Friday, February 8, in order to help direct graduate students to information and resources pertaining to the taxation of fellowships, assistantships, and loan consolidation. She requested that students provide feedback on usefulness of the workshop. McMahon also mentioned that a lottery would be held for on-campus housing for continuing graduate students. She encouraged participation, especially in light of the designation of one of the new Manzanita buildings as being reserved for graduate students. McMahon reminded graduate students that there are still available fellowships for continuing students, and that they are listed on the Graduate Division website at http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic/handbook/financial/continue.shtml. Finally, she observed that with the slowing economy, UCSB expects to see an increase in the number of applications for graduate programs -- perhaps over 6,000 applications for Fall Quarter 2002.

IV. Vox Populi

Jeff Onsted of Geography announced the formation of a running club for all interested graduate students.

Yonie Harris, Dean of Students and interim advisor to the GSA from the Office of Student Life, announced that booklets were to be sent out in about a week's time dealing with issues regarding distressed students. The booklets would deal with

how to handle student problems ranging from depression to victims of hate crimes.

Sarah Thibodeaux, Chair of the Campus Elections Committee, expressed her intentions of working closely with the GSA. She requested graduate students feel free to provide feedback on the elections process.

V. Campus Resources

Gene Lucas, Chair of the Chancellor's Special Advisory Committee on Parking, gave a presentation to the GSA General Council on current and future issues regarding parking on campus. He said the Committee had met eight times to date since November 2001, plus a one-day retreat, in order to comprehensively review campus plans and parking and transportation operations, including the upcoming Lot 10 structure.

As part of his presentation, Lucas explained that the campus needs to add buildings to catch up with past enrollment increases. Expected growth in summer session enrollment will generate the need for new faculty and staff. 500,000 ft^2 of assignable space still remains out of the original 1,200,000 ft^2 approved under the 1989 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). Much of the available space on the main campus is located on the sites of current parking lots.

Lucas outlined three possible locations for new buildings:

1) The remaining open space on campus
2) Current single- or two-story buildings
3) Parking lots

After discussing the relative merits of each of the three choices, Lucas discussed in detail the impact of constructing new buildings on current parking lots. Parking spaces lost to building projects will need to be replaced by the construction of new parking structures. Over the course of five years, nearly 1100 spaces will be lost to projects such as the Student Resources Building, New Academic Building, and the California NanoSystems Institute. Parking structures are not only more expensive than regular surface parking -- they also need to be financially self-supporting. Financing will need to be found, either by increasing fees or finding outside sources of funding.

Lucas discussed several models projecting parking supply and demand into the future. He noted that in addition to parking structures, on-campus B spaces could be converted into A/S spaces to increase supply. On the side of reducing demand, he presented various options, including the extension of San Clemente housing into Storke Field, a more aggressive Transportation Alternatives Program, charging for night/weekend parking, and banning daily permits for students within a two-mile radius of the campus.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Lucas opened the floor to questions.

Several students raised questions about the viability of implementing a proposed bike permit program. Shawn Landres noted that students already pay lock-ins for bus and bike fees.

Edward raised the issue of funding for bus passes. Martha Levy, Director of Capital Development, said that an increasing level of bus ridership would result in an increase in student lock-in fees.

Mark Schuller of Anthropology asked how encompassing the two-mile ban on parking would be. Lucas responded there would not be a revocation of graduate employee parking privileges.

Jeff Onsted of Geography asked about the students who currently drive from Isla Vista. Lucas replied that he didn't believe that a two-mile restriction would make a significant transportation impact, but that it could have an effect on revenues.

Mark queried about the increased emphasis on carpooling and carpool permits, but Lucas noted that current software for implementing a significant carpool program is prohibitively expensive.

Another student asked about satellite parking options. Lucas explained that there is a possibility of utilizing a transit shuttle from potential parking lots near the big-box shopping center in Goleta to campus. He also raised the option of a new east campus bus stop. Lucas conceded that the high cost of operating a shuttle is problematic.

In response to the proposal for nighttime parking fees, Edward raised an objection to nighttime students having to finance daytime demand. Mark suggested that grad student income be raised to pay for the fee increases. Another student brought up concerns about the safety of biking to school at night. Alan commented that excessive parking restrictions could produce the unintended cost of forcing students to remain on campus for an additional quarter before getting their degrees.

VI. Information Items

A. Committee Reports

Alan said that Cynthia Bowers, Director of Student Health Services, will refer students to eye clinics. Such visits will be charged as primary care visits. He requested any feedback on the dental policy proposals.

B. Officer Reports

Shawn noted that although there has been a lack of progress with the Campus Elections Committee on reforms, relations with the GSA are not bad. He also said that the Chancellor's Coordinating Committee on Year Round Enrollment has told him that there are no plans for year-round enrollment for graduate students.

Soomin Chun requested information on what services each department is offering to its graduate students.

Edward encouraged graduate students to vote in this spring's elections.

Kathy sought reports from stipended committee members and solicited funding requests for organizational activities.

John Corbett requested email addresses from all departmental representatives that currently are not receiving email announcements from the GSA.

VII. Action Items

A. Committee Appointments/Confirmations

Edward announced Brian Brown as the GSA representative on IVPAC. Alan moved, and Kathy seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent.

B. Budget

No items were voted on.

VIII. Discussion Items

A. Proposals for GSA Lock-in Fee Ballot Questions

1. Student Health Service -- $4.00/student/quarter

No formal presentation given. Shawn noted that the proposed $4.00 fee will buy out summer fees at Student Health Services. He went on to discuss at length the background of the lock-in fee vote as it related to the dispute with the Campus Elections Committee, and that the Multicultural Center and Women's Center were most responsive in consultations. Sports and Recreation was unresponsive in coming to the GSA in requesting funds, Shawn continued, and hence there is no graduate vote concerning their lock-in fee proposal for Spring 2002.

2. Women's Center -- $1.75/student/quarter

Presentation given in January 9, 2002, meeting.

3. Multicultural Center -- $1.75/student/quarter

Zaveeni Khan-Marcus, Director, and Viviana Marsano, Associate Director of the Multicultural Center, spoke to the General Council in favor of the proposed $1.75 lock-in fee increase. They outlined the current services that the Multicultural Center provides, including a program assisting students in setting up multicultural events, a place of socialization, and co-sponsorship of graduate events. They explained that the lock-in fee increase will enable the Multicultural Center to expand its services to graduate students.

Shawn briefly explained the split ballot situation occurring this spring due to the ongoing difficulties with the Campus Election Commission.

Alan observed that a lock-in fee of $0.75 already exists, while another student asked what impact a failure to pass the fee would have on the Center. Khan-Marcus and Marsano explained that a negative vote would prevent the Center from expanding its services. Soomin thought that graduate students might wind up voting against a fee that they could benefit from. Shawn proposed that the GSA could actively endorse a lock-in fee increase to avoid the impression that graduate students were tagging on to benefit from undergraduate support.

In a related point, Yonie noted that only the Sports and Recreation lock-in fee will be for undergraduates only this spring.

4. Disabled Students Program -- $1.75/student/quarter

   Jeremy Johansen of Mechanical Engineering spoke on behalf of the Disabled Students Program and a proposed lock-in fee increase. Johansen noted that although graduate students receive a disproportionate amount of services from the DSP, currently only undergraduate students pay fees for the program.

   Alan asked how the proposed lock-in fee would offset the DSP's operating deficits. Shawn noted that while undergraduate students pay $1.75/student/quarter, graduate students currently pay no fees to the DSP. He feels that the DSP could benefit from a $1.00 graduate lock-in fee, but encouraged consideration of the $1.75 fee as well to achieve parity with undergraduate contributions.

   Yonie noted that the DSP's financial problems stem from the fact that it cannot refuse service to students, regardless of who is paying lock-in fees, which can result in significant operating deficits.

5. Night/Weekend Parking Buyout

   Shawn explained some of the background of the night and weekend parking issue. He noted that if any one group receives parking benefits, union requirements guarantee equal benefits for all groups. He felt that $8 to $15/student/quarter was the probable range of lock-in fees that could buy out imposed night and weekend parking fees, and would be far more attractive that have to purchase permits for the same.

   Mark brought up the issue of fair use of parking facilities, and whether differential permit charges would be viable. Shawn and Edward expressed their opposition to the concept.

   An informal poll of the students present showed opposition to the fee proposal as offered.

   Shawn asked the representatives to go to their departments and find out what comments come up with regard to the night and weekend parking issue. Mark supported a formal survey of opinions, but Shawn responded that such a survey may act to constrict the range of responses to the fee proposal.

B. Resignation of Kelly T. Pollock, Vice President for Academic Affairs, effective 8 February 2002

Kelly briefly spoke to the General Council, thanking the GSA for her experience with the organization. Shawn proposed paying Kelly a pro-rated stipend for her services this quarter amounting to half the normal stipend. No objections were raised.

C. Election of new Vice President for Academic Affairs

Shawn briefly announced that he would be issuing a call for a new Vice President for Academic Affairs, especially to run the Teaching Assistant Awards program. He encouraged students to run for the open position.

D. Upcoming Vacancy in System Administrator Position

Shawn noted that Joseph Maher, the current System Administrator, was one of the best employees for the dollar the GSA has ever had. Shawn proposed that the position be converted into a work-study position, and was unwilling to restrict the position to graduate students only.

E. GSA Constitution Revision

Shawn observed that, as the proposed constitutional changes will be on the ballot in March, it was important that any comments, recommendations, or suggestions for changes be made promptly so that they can be properly considered.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Corbett
GSA Press Secretary