GSA General Council Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm.

I. Approval of Agenda

Agenda for the meeting was approved. Edward Collins moved, and Mark Schuller seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent. Mark Schuller moved to add a part (C) (2) to Section VII of the April agenda. Johnathan Pearl seconded.

II. Approval of Minutes

John Corbett moved to strike the last sentence of Section VII (A) of the March 6, 2002, minutes. Johnathan seconded. Minutes from the March 6, 2002, meeting were approved. Edward moved, and Karen Blair of Geology seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent.

III. Graduate Division

Mary McMahon, Assistant Dean of Graduate Division, encouraged students to take the student survey on the Graddiv website at https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/hed/hedauth.cfm, as it went online on the day of the meeting. She noted that graduate student data was desperately needed so that Graddiv could properly advocate on their behalf. She announced that six cash prizes of a value of up to $300 would be randomly given to participants.

McMahon also stressed the need for graduate students to sign-up in order to participate in this year's commencement ceremonies. The deadline is April 15, 2002. She also passed out fliers on the Academic Workshop Series and the Spring 2002 Career Workshop Series. Lastly, she announced that fellowship funding was available to graduate students that sought it out.

IV. Vox Populi

No issues were raised from the floor.

V. Campus Resources

The current proposals for the 2002-03 Graduate Student Health Insurance Program (GSHIP) were presented by Roy Landstrom, President of Renaissance Insurance Agencies, Inc., Alan Levy of Physics, and April Beckett, Director of Clinical Services at Student Health Services.

Alan Levy spoke in detail about the GSHIP plan figures. He noted that the data provided by Renaissance Insurance was proprietary in nature and hence should not be shared with anyone beyond the scope of the meeting. Levy touched upon all seventeen of the items on the GSHIP "menu," explaining pricing and policy aspects of the proposals.

Alan noted that UCSB may wind up providing more in terms of benefits than it spends on insurance premiums. He observed that this was due to the fact that by previous agreement, the insurance company was not allowed to raise its premiums by more than eleven per cent, meaning that students were getting "a good deal."

Cynthia Bowers presented another list responding to each of the seventeen items on the original list. Several students asked clarifying questions about the material. Then more general questions followed from the floor.

Stu Levenbach of Marine Biology raised questions about the exact nature of the "one business day" notification period.

Shawn Landres remarked about the propriety of maintaining a fifty-mile radius rule on certain benefits.

Brooke Vick of Psychology asked about being able to see a non-SHS doctor about a pre-existing condition such as asthma. Alan said coverage would still be at the 50% rate.

Jonathan Pearl raised a concern over what the $10 premium increase would pay for. He suggested that the fifty-mile radius be expanded or eliminated altogether. Shawn observed that it should be encouraged that students visit the SHS, although he said that Roy had agreed to look into the feasibility of one-hundred per cent coverage beyond the fifty-mile radius.

Daisy Lemus of Communication raised the issue over paying for medication outside the fifty-mile radius. Alan explained that she would need to submit a claim.

Sarah Woodward asked about the exclusion of hernias from coverage. April clarified that hernias often result from obesity surgery, which is often cosmetic in nature.

Stacey Shears, Director of the Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, spoke about parts 11 and 12 on the GSHIP menu relating to the need for "gender reassignment," which she said she favored. She said that transsexual students don't always use surgery. Alan responded that the need for such a benefit must be evaluated. Stacey emphasized that it is a high priority among affected students. Jonathan inquired whether the two per cent figure of affected students (equating to roughly 400) was correct. Stacey responded that this was the case.

Kurt Anderson asked what such a surgery could cost, to which Stacey replied about $40,000, although the figure various depending on whether the process was male to female or female to male.

A proposal was made to extend floor discussion by fifteen minutes. Edward moved, and Jonathan seconded.

Shawn inquired about graduate students with dependents. Mary McMahon said that twenty-five per cent of graduate students are married, not including domestic partners. As a result, she observed, the issue of dependents looms large. Mark Schuller of Anthropology stated that he favored increased coverage for dependents. Shawn remarked about the difficulty of securing outside coverage for such dependents.

Stu said that as only a minority of graduate students utilize services for dependents, it could be difficult to persuade graduates to pass such GSHIP requests without additional information. Jonathan suggested offering reduced prices for those who went through an optional medical exam. Alan noted that the issue on item 14 is effectively having graduate students subsidize dependents. Roy remarked that decisions made on the basis of exams could take something on the order of ninety days, which he observed would not do much good for those who needed services in a timely manner. Kurt reiterated his concern over the lack of information regarding service usage.

A proposal was made to extend floor discussion by five minutes. Edward moved, and John Corbett seconded.

Edward inquired about the method used to compute premium prices. Roy responded that some of the risk assessments are mere guesswork.

Mary McMahon asked about the possibility of computing information based upon Stu and Kurt's concerns. She noted that some international students pay their own GSHIP prices because they aren't eligible for many fellowships.

Sarah noted that many married students waive GSHIP because spouses often have superior plans. Alan responded that the rates offered to spouses in the GSHIP plan "aren't great," but that they represent an improvement over previous rates, something that hasn't transpired "in recent memory."

Jonathan suggested uncovering information on uninsured dependents of graduate students. Mark said he favored anecdotal information from department representatives on the amount of coverage currently utilized.

Alan requested additional feedback via email at alevy@cfi.ucsb.edu.

VI. Information Items

A. Committee Reports

Edward noted that the Campus Election Committee had met. He also gave a brief report on the situation regarding the child care facility of the planned Student Resources Building.

Jonathan spoke about the Library Committee. He said that the library will be undergoing a major renovation during the 2007-08 school year, and that comments and feedback are welcome and important. He noted his email address is jpearl@umail.ucsb.edu. He reminded students that feedback for this project is especially critical because it is unlikely any other major renovation will occur for several decades afterward.

Soomin Chun announced the Margaret T. Getman and the William J. Villa awards through Student Affairs. She noted that nominations will close on April 22nd.

B. Officer Reports

Edward announced that the Isla Vista Project Area Committee (IVPAC) would hold meetings from April 9th through the 16th.

Sarah announced that Environmental Health and Safety is currently seeking someone to fill the position of departmental director. The search committee is looking for students to serve on it. Stu Levenbach observed that most students are unaware of the role and accomplishments of EH&S.

C. CEC Campuswide Election – UCen Fee Reaffirmation

Shawn noted that the Campus Elections Commission (CEC) has requested that the GSA host a Recreation Center Fee Reaffirmation in the amount of $9.00 per quarter per students. A proposal was made to participate in the reaffirmation, provided that:

1) The GSA's turnout count on any referendum item will be the turnout on that item only, and

2) The GSA requires that CEC count referendum ballots separately from AS ballots, such that turnout on any referendum question (but NOT turnout in AS elections only) may be counted toward the total CEC turnout count.

Edward moved, and Sarah Woodward seconded.

VII. Old Business and Action Items

A. Confirmation of Jonathan Pearl as Vice President for Academic Affairs (Spring 2002)

Edward moved, and Karen Blair seconded.

B. Committee Appointments/Confirmations

No appointments or confirmations were made.

C. Budget

1. Confirmation of System Administrator contract for Spring 2002

Shawn and Alan Levy discussed Mark Schuller's concern that the System Administrator could conceivably be paid for incomplete work. A proposal was made to pay the System Administrator only if tasks relating to the successful completion of the Spring 2002 elections were completed. Edward moved, and Jonathan seconded.

2. Raagmala funding proposal

A request for $300 to sponsor an event for Raagmala was discussed. A motion was made to provide funding so long as the GSA funding did not pay for publicity or for a second performance. Edward moved, and Sarah Woodward seconded.

D. Technical amendments to the proposed GSA Constitution

A motion was made by Edward to approve minor grammatical and punctuation changes to the proposed constitution. Jonathan seconded.

E. By-laws to govern nomination, election, and referenda for Spring 2002

A motion was made by John to formally request five-hundred-word pro- and con-statements to be included in the voters' guide for the upcoming election. Edward seconded. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Alan made an omnibus motion to include in the by-laws language permitting a voter guide to be assigned a URL and to be placed on the World Wide Web, set the start date of the election for April 18th and the end date on April 25th, and to authorize the GSA executive committee to hold elections. The move was seconded by Karen Blair. The motion was approved by voice vote.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Corbett
GSA Press Secretary