GSA General Council Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

I. Approval of Agenda

Agenda for the meeting was not approved. Kathy Meyer moved, and Soomin Chun seconded. Adopted by unanimous consent.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were unavailable at the meeting. They will be submitted for approval at the December 4, 2002, meeting.

III. Introductions

Edward introduced the officers of the Graduate Student Association to the gathered GSA Assembly.

IV. Announcements from Graduate Division

Alex Cook, Graduate Funding Peer Advisor at Graduate Division, explained that an abundance of funding opportunities for graduate students, including fellowships and extramural funding resources, was available online at http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/financial/.

V. Vox Populi!

Karen Blair of Geological Sciences announced that WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) would be holding its monthly meeting on November 14th. Wendy Nishikawa of Human Resources was to speak about "Helping the UCSB Community with the challenge of balancing work, family, and personal lives".

VII. Information Items

A. Constitution, Bylaws, Assembly Meetings

As inadequate time had been devoted to discussing this issue in the October meeting of the GSA Assembly, Edward returned to discussing the purpose and functions of the GSA constitution and how it empowers GSA Assembly members to overturn decisions if it so chooses.

B. Night-Time Parking

Edward alerted graduate students to the fact that they had been improperly charged for night and weekend parking fees on their bills, and that the error has been pointed out to campus authorities.

C. ADA Reception

Edward announced that a reception would be held in the UCEN Harbor room on November 15, 2002, to help students with disabilities get the services and information they need.

D. Tightening Visa and Entrance Requirements

A recent story posted by Reuters noted that Canada and the United States were disagreement over the United States' new policy of photographing and fingerprinting all persons entering the United States who were born in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, or Syria, whatever their citizenship status. Edward used this story to highlight the increasingly strict entrance requirements that the United States is applying to certain foreign-born individuals entering this country, many of which are graduate students. He directed student questions on this topic to information being provided by the office of Rep. Lois Capps.

E. Task Force on Year-Round Enrollment

Edward requested feedback on proposals to implement year-round enrollment and its effect on various graduate programs across the campus.

A student asked whether TAs are to be considered in such year-round enrollment proposals. Edward noted that due to union contracts he was unable to discuss the issue as it pertains to TAs.

F. Constitution and Bylaws

Edward announced that the GSA bylaws would be discussed in the December meeting of the GSA Assembly and requested any proposed revisions to be submitted to him.

Alan Levy asked the GSA Assembly whether it approved of a potential proposal to change the GSA bylaws to allow only GSA Assembly members to vote on GSHIP revisions. A straw poll indicated that the GSA Assembly approved of such a measure.

G. Faculty Review of Non-Academic Funded Projects

Edward noted that the Academic Senate had passed a resolution requiring Senate review all non-State funded capital improvement projects.

H. General Assembly Member Rebate Money

Kathy Meyer announced that those GSA Assembly members with complete petitions must attend two to three meetings of the GSA Assembly in order to receive rebate money at the end of the quarter.

VIII. Discussion Items

A. Proposed Future Summer Officer Stipends

Edward noted that as GSA officers have many duties which cover the entire year, including summer, it should be reasonable that they receive pay commensurate with their responsibilities, although at a rate reduced from that received during the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters.

IX. Action Items

A. GSA Agenda

Edward stated that the GSA must select an issue agenda for the academic year. He declared his preference for a manageable one-page agenda with attainable goals. In addition to requesting additional agenda items from GSA Assembly members that reflect their departmental needs, he presented the following agenda items for discussion and approval:

1) Academic success: Each year, graduate departments strive to inculcate the skills and habits required for graduate success to a new cadre of individuals who bringing unique skills and deficits to their departments. Assessing and satisfying more common graduate student skill needs allows the departments to concentrate more on the unique aspects of their disciplines, supporting graduate students in their academic goals. By providing targeted graduate student support, students and departments can benefit from resources and funds already dedicated to student service provision, which would be carefully targeted on academic goals: increased graduation rate, reduced time to degree, increased quality of degree, better academic experience, improved teaching, improved publication, and improved postgraduate employment. All of these efforts would improve the desirability of the departments and the University as a whole, and would contribute to better research, graduate teaching, and future academicians. To attain these goals, the GSA should advocate for a comprehensive plan which includes better dissemination of knowledge about support services, enhanced skill and motivational support, a regular assessment, and a plan for strategic improvement of the delivery of targeted services.

2) **Fundraising** is one area where the GSA can take a leading role, while serving graduate student interests and those of the greater UCSB community as well. There has been recent initiative on the part of the Graduate Division to work towards targeted fundraising to raise graduate student stipends and support levels. In light of recent trends to decrease public funding for education, we become more and more dependent on private sources. The more active a role the GSA takes in this, the more we will be able to insure that the fundraising and distribution of funds are in line with our own interests and principles.

3) Housing is a prerequisite for graduate education, and is outrageously expensive. Long-term projects for housing provision regularly bog down, and housing policies are often called into question because of bad planning or implementation. Faculty and staff housing costs are also reducing our ability to draw and retain quality faculty and staff. The GSA should consistently advocate for more safe, affordable quality housing for graduate students faculty, and staff.

4) Library: what services can be improved or added to better serve the graduate students' needs. The Library is important to graduate students because it is an essential part of gathering information and resources to complete our degree. As graduate students we should know the specific and general services and resources that are available to us now, on other campuses and what can be provided for in the future. A survey needs to be conducted by the GSA or the University to pinpoint the services being offered or not being offered by the library and what services should be improved or added to decrease time to candidacy.

5) Office Space: Perhaps the single most fundamental need of any graduate student pursuing his or her degree is a place where computers and materials can be located and research can be conducted. Yet frequently the university falls short of providing reasonable facilities for many of its students. In a survey conducted early in 2002, over half of responding graduate students identified themselves as either "somewhat or very dissatisfied" with the provided office space on campus. The Graduate Student Association should target those departments with the highest level of dissatisfaction and encourage the conversion of additional space for graduate uses and the upgrading of current facilities. In addition, the GSA should advocate for the inclusion of additional graduate student office space in building projects either in their planning stages or currently under construction.

6) Safety: With the advent of night and weekend parking, we have the opportunity to expect greater support for on-campus safety. Past efforts this summer have yielded commitments of $50,000 from the Chancellor, but more effort in education and support services are required to provide meaningful changes in public safety on and off campus for students. The GSA should focus efforts at enhancing communications between functional units working on safety issues, staffing for safety program generation and implementation, and delivery of programs that positively impact campus safety.

After allowing GSA Assembly members the chance to review the above proposed agenda items, Edward requested any motions to change the contents of any of the items or to add new items.

A student raised a question about whether the issue of child care should be highlighted under Academic Success (1). Edward expressed concern that such an issue would become lost in the overall item for Academic Success. Instead, he recommended that child care be considered as a seventh, separate issue.

A student raised the concern about providing for more transparency in the process of funding awards under Fundraising (2).

Several students raised the issue of office equipment under Office Space (5). The question over whether office equipment should be considered a department or a university issue was raised. A voice vote indicated that enough departments did not have adequate office equipment to the extent that it could be considered a university issue.

A student asked whether the GSA had enough influence over an issue like Office Space that would warrant a large expenditure of effort directed toward it. Discussion centered on the office space situation in the Graduate Tower and potential space in Ellison Hall.

One student suggested that the discussion may be improperly focusing on issues that are the responsibility of the union, but Edward responded that as long as the issue was directed toward graduate students as a whole and not from a TA perspective, the discussion was fully permissible.

With the addition of child care, Edward asked the GSA Assembly how many issues it preferred out of the seven presented before it. The response was inconclusive, and discussion continued.

A student asked in reference to the Library (4) what impact the GSA could have on it. Edward and Karen Blair of Geological Sciences explained how the GSA could contribute immensely to the library renovation plans and discussions currently taking place. Edward asked for volunteers to serve on the design review committee.

George Fujii of History moved to consider only items one through five (Academic Success, Fundraising, Housing, Library, and Office Space). Matthew Armstrong of Anthropology seconded. Before consent could be ascertained, additional discussion ensued.

A student suggested that the Library issue and the Office Space issue be combined. During the resultant discussion several students pointed out that the humanities have had the biggest difficulties with the library. Edward declared himself opposed to combining the Library and Office Space issues, asserting that they were two separate issues.

Another student raised the question of what exactly is Academic Success. Edward explained that it had developed out of an amalgam of different issues and ideas.

Housing was then raised as an important issue worth keeping. One student suggested that UCSB is having trouble retaining professors, and that graduate students may be losing out on housing from competition with assistant professors.

One student thought the GSA was spreading itself too thin by tackling issues like Housing that it does not have the power to solve. Edward replied that the influence of the GSA is only as strong as the effort put into it by graduate students.

Finally, the motion as seconded for issues (1) through (5) was once again considered for approval. It was approved by unanimous consent.

B. GSA Budget

Kathy requested that the GSA Assembly review the proposed GSA budget. If passed, it could be amended at each subsequent monthly meeting as necessary. Among some of the highlights were additional funds for social events and a Work Study expense which has yet to be billed from last year. Karen Blair moved to approve the budget, with Daniel Mandell seconding. The budget was approved by unanimous consent.

C. Funding

No requests were presented nor discussed.

D. UCSA Budget

Edward explained that the UCSA budget, which is not currently balanced, must be voted on, either for or against passage. An against vote would send the budget back to UCSA for review and regeneration.

Edward noted that additional funding has been requested for a new staffer to travel to Washington to lobby.

Matt Andrews explained about the UCSA. He noted that the recent initiative for racial privacy has been a major issue for the UCSA in that it affects its ability to monitor diversity on campuses. In addition, he noted that the UCSA was instrumental in educating students and getting them out to vote in the recently concluded elections.

Matt moved not to approve the UCSA budget in its current form, with Kathy seconding. The motion not to approve the UCSA budget was passed with unanimous consent.

E. GSHIP

Edward noted that proposals for improvement to GSHIP were being requested.

Alan Levy noted that the current GSHIP provider's contract is up in 2003, and rather than merely renewing the contract, a competitive bidding process has been established. The specific process by which bid will be selected has not yet been worked out by the GSHIP committee.

Judy Fecho moved to authorize the GSA executive committee to appoint members to the GSHIP committee, with Elizabeth Grace seconding. The motion was passed with unanimous consent.

F. Committee Representatives

Edward explained that stipend mechanism for GSA members who sit on committees as amended for the 2002-03 academic year. He presented a list of proposed committee members to the GSA Assembly. Daniel Mandell moved to approve the list of committee members, with Karen Blair seconding. The motion was passed with unanimous consent.

X. Officer Reports

President: Edward noted that the California Nanosystems Institute Building Committee and the Design Review Committee needed representatives.

Sarah Battersby spoke on behalf of proposed artificial turf surface for Robb Field and parts of Storke Field. She suggested that graduate students could support it through of user fee. Alan Levy noted that it was not too late for graduate students to be added to such a fee initiative.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Corbett
GSA Press Secretary