Graduate Students Association (GSA)
Assembly Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Meeting Called to order by President Ben Shockey at 6:06PM.

Meeting

1. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve by Dominique.
Seconded by Alana: Spanish and Portuguese.
Approved without objection.

2. Roll Call and introductions

40 representatives in attendance – Quorum met.
Officers absent: Amber Gonzales, Reggie Archer

3. Approval of Minutes from June

Motion to approve by Alice Levine from EEMB
Seconded by Marci
Approved without objection.

4. Information Items
    a. Officer Reports

Jesse (VP External) – UCSA is looking for whiteliners and public comment speakers for the November Regents meeting at UCLA on November 13, 14, and 15. You should have received an email on how to apply with more specifics. Handouts also available at this meeting with the same information. The deadline is tomorrow, November 7 at noon.

Ben Shockey (President) on behalf of Reggie Archer (VP Communication) – The announce listserv and assembly listserv should be up and running soon. Go to listserv.ucsb.edu to sign up for announce listserv if you are not on it or want to be on it. Encourage people to subscribe themselves. Assembly members will also be on the assembly list.

We are continuing to have problems with website. Will be up and running better by December. If you need forms, etc. that you can't get on the website you should email an Exec officer directly.

If reps are not able to attend an assembly meeting, you will need to fill out a proxy form. You can get those forms online or from Ben.

Amber Gonzalez (VP Student Affairs) – Committee on Supporting Graduate Students Workgroup: they are looking for students in the sciences to give some opinions that are specifically related to science issues. If you are interested in being on the committee or giving feedback, please email vpstudent@gsa.ucsb.edu.

Carolyn – we are looking at ways in which services on campus can better serve graduate students and need the input of science students, that are currently unrepresented.

Ben Shockey (President) – Committees are still open. An email was sent to the listserv that has all the current vacancies. Everyone is encouraged to volunteer for these committees. Assembly members can volunteer and should actively seek out department members who might be interested to serve.

Ben: highlighted the Steering Committee for Western Association of Colleges and Graduate Schools Accreditation. A new committee that would work closely with the Executive Vice Chancellor and other administrators.

Kimberly Dachel (VP Academic) – Sits on the graduate council that meets every other week. Will be handling the Teaching Awards in the Spring. Working with Reggie on Action Agenda Items – Professional Development. Please give Kim input on how this committee can best meet your needs. Some ideas: interview skills, conference papers, but really want to know what the Assembly members want and need.

Dominique Monie (VP Internal) – Need several committee reps for committees she is responsible for. Spread the word to your department.

Jeanette Hagan (VP Budget) – Committee work looks good on resume and in interviews. Remind reps that you get paid for committee work. Committee reps will have to submit a write-up for committee work to Exec assigned to committee.

Ben: Skipped introductions but now introduced Jodi Anderson from Graduate Division.

Jodi: Commencement speaker committee does select but if anyone has any ideas this is done in December. Regarding the Supporting Graduate Students Workgroup, we do have three students working with Grad Div but none from the sciences.

Toni Jimenez – new Diversity Coordinator in the College of Engineering and is open to working with graduate students in other disciplines.

b. Advisor Report

Carolyn Buford: Volunteers to work with GSA because she believes in the effectiveness of the student voice on this campus. Stay involved and get others involved. The student voice is critically important for campus change.

As graduate student mentor, you will receive an email once a month. Wants feedback if you have any. Highlights great resources on Grad Div website.

c. Assembly Representative Training

New and returning representatives are required to attend training in order to get rebates for the Fall quarter. Very short (half an hour to an hour maximum) and very simply. To go over your responsibilities as a rep, what you should be doing with your department and for your department, and how Assembly meetings run. Set two times: Wednesday, November 14 at 11AM right after Bagel Hour or Tuesday, November 27 at 6 PM.

Ben passed around sign-in sheets. If you are not able to attend either time, please email president@gsa.ucsb.edu to work out a third/alternate time.

d. Budget

Ben: We now have a budget. We are dealing with a budget shortfall.
Jeanette: (explained budget handout). The budget re: 2006-2007 is only 90 percent accurate and is still being worked out. Execs created a new 2007-2008 Budget based on what we really think we will spend this year and estimated based income on the number of students who are present in Fall term. When we created our new budget, it does not balance. We are bringing in $80,000 and are spending around $87,000. We will need to go into the budget reserves if we go over (a difference of $6,135). We don't want to go into our reserves more than one year.

Ben: You are able to comment on this budget. Take back to your departments and we will have a discussion at the next meeting. Our reserves have been there for a long time and it has gone down every year for the last year. It can continue to support us if we go over budget but we should stop depleting it. We need to have half of our operating costs in reserve ($40,000) and currently we only have a little more than that. The money we are bringing in from current student fees is not meeting even the operating budget of the association. The budget shortfall can't go on. We will discuss next time on how we plan to do this. The executive committee has proposed a fee increase for the GSA in order to be able to continue providing the current services we provide and to extend services such as travel grants, etc. There has been no increase since 1996 or 1997 not even in line with inflation. We are operating on a shrinking budget.

Jeanette: Discretionary contributions are actually co-sponsorships. For legal services, we pay the A.S. office so that Grad students can take advantage of their services.

Ben: We are currently in the process of renegotiating this agreement.

Carolyn: Services were based on the number of hours not the number of graduate students.

Jeanette: Please let your departments know about the availability of legal services for graduate students.

Assembly member question: You are proposing a budget that spends more than what was actually spent last year.

Ben: We under-budgeted last year. Execs sat down and really looked at the needs of the organization and realized the higher budget was necessary.

Jeanette: We still haven't finalized the 2006-2007 expenses. So the total number spent is not finalized.

Ben: The budget hadn't been looked at for a few years. Hadn't been looked at decreasing funding due to the wrong grad number enrollments being used. We have expanded some services like bagel hour but this wasn't budgeted for previously.

5. Action Items
    a. Applications for co-sponsorship
        i. La Colectiva

Ben: We have one application for co-sponorship.
Graciella from Colectiva: Interdisciplinary organization for graduate students. Focus on recruitment, retention and professional development and the Latino community. Second annual conference on November 17 that focuses on all three objectives. Main objective is to help students prepare for bigger conferences. Allow students from other campuses. Students from other campuses who presented last year applied to graduate school at UCSB and are now here.

Requesting $300 from GSA. Colectiva budget is $7385 and are $2000 away from meeting the budget. Colectiva has asked several other campus entities for support. Conference is free and dinner and lunch is provided. Over 300 participants last year. Conference held at the UCen. Proposal requests was sent out from various sources and GSA announce.

Ben: (asked sponsoring organization to leave for discussion).

We have $2700 a year budgeted for co-sponsorships and we are allowed to give a maximum of $300 per event and we project three events per quarter. Last year we set a new guiding principle to leave money for more groups to fund at $150. But this is not a strict rule.

The execs do not make a monetary recommendation but do believe Colectiva deserves funding.

Assembly member question: How many people asked for funding last year?

Ben: Over a dozen groups. We gave all the money allotted. Most often people are funded when they come.

Assembly member question: Have you turned people away because you didn't have enough money?

Ben: No. We have decided not to fund people because they don't fit the requirements of the bylaws.

Assembly member question: How many have we sponsored this quarter?

Ben: We have sponsored one event this quarter for $300.

Assembly member question: Reasons used to choose between $150 and $300.

Ben: Exceptional in its service gets more. In the past, if it speaks to action agenda items we give more.

Assembly member question: Are we looking at the scope of the event? The student prom serves the entire community?

Ben: GSU was supported because it was new and exciting. Open to all graduate students.

Assembly member: Everyone is invited to attend the Collectiva.
Assembly member: Increased enrollment in graduate school brings in more graduate students, which helps with fees.
Jeanette: We shouldn't compare with previous events.

Debbie: Motioned $250
Jeremy: Seconded $250

Motion amended to $300
Amy (English) seconded.

Motion passes without objection to fund the Colectiva at $300.

6. Discussion Items
    a. Bagel hour costs

Ben: projected costs for this year is $10,500. There has been some contention in cutting bagel hour. But we really need to look at our expenses. Do we want to continue to hold bagel hour each week or reduce the cost each week and hold it every week or continue to fund it at the current cost?

Dominique went over costs of bagel hour each week at $350.

Assembly member: Can we seek sponsorships for this food?
Assembly member: Can we have a donation box?
Ben: We have done this in the past and no one leaves money.
Assembly member: Check for ideas for graduate students?
Dominique: Maybe individually ask people around you if you are graduate students. Be social.
Assembly member: Coerced fees. Charge at the door.
Assembly member: It wouldn't be the end of the world to do bagel hour every other week.
Ben: It has only been every week for maybe three years.
Assembly member: Shopping around for better deals. Sponsorship is a good idea.
Dominique: The current company delivers to our door.
Assembly member: Spending $10,000 on bagel versus only $2700 on other events is notable.
Assembly member: Cut the bagel hour in half. Give a quarter of the funding to our reserves. Give another quarter of the funds to some coffee hour on another place on campus.
Assembly member: Are donuts cheaper than bagels? Get rid of everything but coffee and bagels and cream cheese.
Ben: End discussion on this. Can we sent a couple of actions based on this discussion?
Straw poll: maintain bagel hour as is? 17 (of 37) cut bagel hour to once every other week? 20 (of 37).
Ben: Talk to you constituents to get their feeling since we are about 50-50. We will make a decision about this next time. Also, this could be an item we could use to call on a student fee increase. Cut bagel hour and say this is because of the budget crisis.
Assembly member: Would like more information on the possible fee increase.
Ben: We are talking about an increase $1.50 each quarter for Fall, Winter, Spring and include summer funding.
Assembly member: Does GSA do anything during the Summer?
Ben: GSA is still available for students over the summer.

b. Enforcing/clarifying reps attendance rebate policy

Ben: According to bylaws, rep attendance gives each department $1 back for the number of graduate students they have if they are represented in GSA. We need to be a little more strict to ensure that people are fulfilling their obligations as reps. Two of three meetings per quarter must be attended to get fees returned. We would like to change the bylaws to clarify this process. The bylaws must state that departments have to send the number of reps they are allowed to have. Change it to "you have to have a rep for every 50+1 students."

Assembly member: You can send a proxy and get your money back.
Ben: Every rep needs to have attended 2 times during the quarter to get that proportion of funding for their departments. The idea is to make sure the maximum number of reps show up each quarter.

Assembly member: What do we gain by having a bunch of people here who don't want to be here?

Ben: Why are we paying departments back for non-participation?

Assembly member: We don't want to give them the money because they aren't representing. What happens with the money that doesn't go to the departments?

Ben: If the execs were to put together language for a change in the by-laws, would there be support?

7. Upcoming Events
    a. GSA Assembly Reps mandatory training – Wed, November 15 at 11AM OR Tues, November 27 at 6PM (sign up on sheets or email president@gsa.ucsb.edu)
    b. Next Assembly Meeting – Tuesday, December 4
    c. GSA RAAD professional development t series, more details to come
8. Vox Populi

Alison motioned to Adjourn.
Seconded by Dave.

No objection.