

GSO Senate – Minutes – September 9, 2008

The meeting begins with 28 Senators and 4 Executives

1) Approval of the Agenda and the May Minutes

The agenda, the May 6th 2008 and the emergency meeting of May 20th 2008 minutes were approved unanimously.

2) Dean Lawrence Martin Addresses the Senate

Dean Martin highlighted the importance of the graduate student government, thanked everyone for their contribution and noted the value of trying to represent the views of the department as a collective and not the individual senator point of view. Dean Martin also explained the present situation regarding budget cuts from the state and the current search efforts for a SUNY chancellor and a new Stony Brook President.

3) Speaker Nomination

Matthew Engel (Biomedical Engineering) nominated Luigi Longobardi from Physics
Katherine Klein (Genetics) nominated Greg Sabino from Biochemistry.
Luigi Longobardi was elected Speaker of the GSO Senate

6) Committee Nominations

President Naydan presented the different internal GSO committees and university committees, and asked the senators to volunteer. The following grad students volunteered for the different committees:

a. GSO Committees:

- * **Budget Committee:** Chris Young, Luigi Longobardi, Zosia Turek, Matthew Hatkoff, Andrei Antonenko (Alternate)
- * **Rules and Constitution Committee:** Luigi Longobardi, Dylan Selterman, Andrei Antonenko, Gregory Sabino, Victor Rosado
- * **Board of Appeals Committee:** Luigi Longobardi, Juliet Kinney, Clint Young, Kathryn Klein, Andrei Antonenko
- * **Elections Committee:** Jose Colmenares, Matthew Engel, Aylin Celtik, Eboni Jones
- * **Housing Committee:** Zosia Turek, Oladapo Yeku
- * **GSEU Liaison Committee:** Victor Rosado, Kira Schuman, Julianne Gadoury
- * **Social Concerns Committee:** Dylan Selterman, Kathryn Klein, Gregory Sabino, Dante Dilanni, Claire Burrows, Angelo Guainazzi
- * **GSELF Committee:** Susana Huidoboro, Jose Colmenares, Theresa Amendola, Matthew Hatkoff, Clint Young, Levy Lorenzo, Rachel Tillman

b. University wide committees and organizations:

- * **University Senate:** Liliana Naydan, Dylan Selterman, Luigi Longobardi, Chris Young, Jose Colmenares, Andrei Antonenko, Megan Daum, I-Ju Ruby Chen, Rob Gersch, Andrei Antonenko, Christian Walker
- * **Graduate Council:** Juliet Kinney, Gina M. Sorrentino, Gregory Sabino
- * **Graduate Council Grievances & Appeals:** Kathryn Klein
- * **Student Life:** Dylan Selterman
- * **College of Arts and Sciences Senate:** Julianne Gadoury, Arzu Demirergi, Kira Schuman, Lorien Reese, Susana Huidobro
- * **College of Arts and Sciences Academic Judiciary:** Kathryn Klein
- * **College of Arts and Sciences Academic Standing & Appeals Committee:** Kathryn Klein
- * **Stony Brook Council:** Liliana Naydan
- * **FSA Board of Directors / FSA Budget/Finance / FSA Dining/Retail:** Chris Young
- * **Exclusive Beverage Bid:** Dave Roelfs
- * **Child Care:** Lorena Bejarano, Eboni Jones, Catherine Salussolia

A motion to approve the aforementioned composition of the committees was approved unanimously

7) News & Blues/SB Grad Mag – Megan Daum (Assistant Editor) presented the new layout of the publication and the plans for the future such as publishing a departmental blog.

Luigi Longobardi (Physics) Motioned to allow the editors to choose the name of the GSO publication as long as the word magazine should be removed from the name of the GSO publication. The motion was defeated.

8) P.R. Specialist: Arzu Demirergi explained her position as staff for the GSO and asked senators to contribute by reviewing the GSO weekly emails, giving her their comments and forwarding them to their departments

A presentation by the Survival Guide editors was tabled by unanimous consent.

9) GSEU update: Victor Rosado mentioned that the negotiations with the State for a new TA/GA contract are currently stalled and that GSEU is looking to find office space in the university

10) Resolution on the RA union

President Naydan explained the resolution found in appendix 1. A Motion to approve the resolution passed with one vote against and zero abstentions.

11) Improper Procedure Update

Vice President Selterman explained to the senate that the graduate students in the university senate urged the respect to Robert rules of order to avoid problems like the

previous smoking ban dispute¹ and noted that the University Senate has established a committee to reform the rules and functioning of the senate as a response to GSO efforts.

12) Internal Committee reports

a. Budget Committee:

Funding requests

I) The Indian Graduate Student Association gave a presentation on the IGSA fresher's festival to be held Sunday, September 14th, 7 to 11pm in SAC Ballroom A. SBIGSA requested a funding of \$2000 from the GSO. A motion to approve the funds passed with 3 abstentions.

II) Guangtao Li (Stony Brook Chinese Students and Scholars Association) gave a presentation on the SBCSSA request for funding of the full moon festival to be held Sunday, September 14th, 2008 6:30pm-10:00pm in SAC Ballroom B. SBCSSA requested funding of \$2200 from the GSO. The proposal was unanimously approved by the senate.

III) Kevin Young from the Social Justice Alliance explained that the speaker Sgt Kristofer Goldsmith who will come to campus on Tuesday October 7th from 1 to 2:30 pm at old chemistry building room 118. The Global Studies College will contribute with 150\$ of the honorarium cost, and the Social Justice Alliance requested additional 100\$ from GSO. The 100\$ funding was unanimously approved by the senate.

Treasurer Young explained the need to spend additional funds to print sufficient copies of the Survival Guide, as the amount allowed in the budget only printed half of what was needed. He further indicated the need to increase this line for next year to account for this. He also stated that the receipt of advertising revenue from this year's Survival Guide exceeded that of past years. A performance bonus was recommended for the editors to double their salary, effectively paying each editor the full original editor pay line, in light of the salary being split between two people.

Dante Dilianni (Music) Motioned for the GSO to create the position of assistant editor in future budgets, Luigi Longobardi (Physics) Motioned to table the discussion. The motion to table was approved unanimously.

A motion to give the editors a 900\$ (450\$ each) bonus for their work was defeated.

b. Social Concerns Committee:

Vice President Selterman reported that GSO is working on the parking conditions for grad students and that GSO is very actively involved with the get out the vote campaign for voting registration and asked the senators for their support.

¹ See point 4 of GSO 05/20/2008 minutes

8) New/old business

Zosia Turek (Marine Sciences) explained that the RA union organizing committee is looking for RAs to join the union efforts, and that RAs who wish to have a union should sign the union authorization cards distributed on campus by the RA organizing committee.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jose Colmenares-Angulo
Graduate Student Organization Secretary

Appendix I
Resolution on the Stony Brook University Research Assistants' Union
September 9, 2008

Whereas the majority of RAs at Stony Brook have signed a Mission Statement in support of organizing a union; and

Whereas hundreds of RAs and their supporters will formally announce their intention to organize a union at a press conference to be held on Sept 15, 2008 at 11am in the SAC auditorium; and

Whereas the legal precedent set by the National Labor Relations Board indicates that Research Assistants qualify as employees with the right to unionize under the National Labor Relations Act of 1935; and

Whereas disparities in work benefits, specifically on waiving university fees, exist between different graduate student employees; and

Whereas Research Assistants lack a grievance and arbitration procedure to address unfair work and compensation practices commensurate with that of their unionized colleagues at Stony Brook University; and

Whereas such a procedure would allow for the fair and just treatment of RAs; therefore

Be it Resolved that the GSO urges the Stony Brook Administration and the Research Foundation to remain neutral in the organizing process and to respect the rights of Research Assistants to decide whether or not they want a union in a fair, democratic, open, and speedy process; and also

Be it resolved that the GSO supports the Research Assistants' effort to organize into a unionized structure that will benefit their employment conditions.