

GSO Senate Meeting – September 7, 2010 – Minutes

I. Meeting called to order at 5:45 p.m. by Kai Wu.

- Forty-eight senators, Dean Lawrence Martin, and Diana Nisito (Graduate Student Advocate) present.

II. Approval of Agenda and May 2010 Meeting Minutes

- Jose Colmenares motions to add constitutional amendment (Conflict of Interest clause) to agenda, as first item after President's Report. Motion passes.
- Motion to approve May 2010 Senate Meeting Minutes at October Senate Meeting, on grounds that they were not distributed to the senate listserv. Motion passes.

III. Dean Lawrence Martin addresses Senate

- Dean thanked all senators for their participation in GSO. Stressed the need for students to be involved in the decision making process (e.g. serving on committees) of the university. GSO has direct access to the administration, and should take advantage of this.
- There was a tuition increase this semester for out of state students. However, this will not affect tuition waivers in any way (i.e. tuition scholarships will cover any tuition increases incurred this semester).
- The Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act (PHEEIA) did not pass as part of the NY State's budget.
- Graduate Student Advocate term has been extended from an academic-year term to a full 12-month appointment, in order to serve students during the summer as well. It will continue to be advertised in the future as a 12-month appointment.
- Provost Kaler has asked Dean to create program/scholarship to fund graduate student travel to invited/prestigious conferences. Many details remain to be worked out (e.g. GSO's financial commitment to such a program, what would constitute a 'prestigious conference,' etc.)
- National rankings of Ph.D. programs will be released September 28, 2010.

IV. Graduate Student Advocate's Report

- As GSA, Diana helps graduate students navigate issues that graduate students may encounter throughout their academic careers (e.g. grade changes, advisor conflicts, administrative issues).
- Diana also plans one interdisciplinary colloquium per semester, which reflects the interests of graduate students (also open to suggestions/ideas).
- For more info., visit: <http://www.grad.sunysb.edu/students/advocate.shtml> or contact Diana via e-mail (dnisito@notes.cc.sunysb.edu).

V. President's Report

- One of the issues that the GSO Executive Council has worked on over the summer has been the cancellation of services to international students (more info below in VP's report). Froylán would like to incorporate this point into a broader conversation this year that focuses on, and examines the use of, our graduate student fees.

VI. Constitutional amendments

- Constitutional amendments were introduced in the May GSO Senate meeting. However, the senate lacked quorum, and the issue was tabled until a time when the GSO Senate reached quorum. Most senators had not seen the proposed amendments since the May meeting, and new senators were unfamiliar with the proposed amendments. It was proposed to have the Rules and Constitution Committee (RCC) review the amendments and introduce them at the following senate meeting.
- Jose Colmenares motions to discuss constitutional amendments at current meeting. Motion fails.

VII. Elect Senate Speaker

- Paola Espinosa (Senator from Ecology & Evolution) self-nominates for the position. Paola is elected as Senate Speaker.

VIII. GSO Committee Nominations

- President introduced nominations for committees (call for nominations was advertised in the August 30, 2010 GSO Newsletter, and nominations accepted via e-mail correspondences with President). Nominations taken from the floor to fill any vacancies. All nominations confirmed.
- List of committees will be distributed via the senate listserv, and vacancies will be announced in the following GSO Newsletter.

IX. Vice President's Report

- International Student Services, once a part of the Graduate School, is now a separate entity under the guidance of Dean Arens.
- International student service fees have increased almost 200% since Fall 2009, from \$35 to \$100 per semester. Nonetheless, international students have not seen any significant improvements in services provided, and many complaints have been voiced (e.g. 2-week turnover for one signature). Further, International Student Services cancelled the bus-pickup up new graduate students from JFK.
- VP introduces 'Resolution Supporting Bus Pickup Service for New International Graduate Students.' Motion made to pass resolution. Motion passes unanimously.

X. Secretary's Report

- Welcome all new and returning senators! GSO Senate now includes some departments not previously represented. Please ensure that GSO's official communications (e.g. GSO Newsletter and other announcements) reach all graduate students in your department.

XI. Treasurer's Report

- Budget Committee—additional revenue was generated via ads sold and printed in the GSO Survival Guide (great work, editors!). Motion made to amend budget to reflect the

additional income (ads sold) and expenses (commission paid to editors) generated by the surplus revenue. Motion passes.

- Funding Requests—
 - Chinese Student & Scholar Association: requesting funds for welcome party (\$500) for new graduate students held over summer (received prior approval from GSO EC). General consent.
 - Mid-autumn festival celebration. Date TBA.; requesting funded for \$2250. General consent.
 - Indian Graduate Student Association: requesting funds for welcome party (\$500) for new graduate students on October 3, 2010. General consent.
 - Ecology & Evolution: requesting funds from the ‘Speaker Series and Conferences’ line to host an invited speaker (Dr. Marie-Josée Fortin) for a two-day conference. Funding requested for travel (\$500) and food for the event (\$250). Request for \$750 total. General consent.
 - Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies Student Conference: requesting funds from the ‘Speaker Series and Conferences’ line to hold an interdisciplinary conference on recycling. Funding requested for speaker honorarium (\$250), food for the event (\$250), room rental (\$235), and posters/advertising (\$150). Request for \$885 total. General consent.
 - Hispanic Languages Mini Film Festival: requesting funds from the ‘General Cultural and Social Events’ line to fund a multi-day, mini film festival. Funding requested for food (\$300, multi-day request), posters/advertising (\$150), and film acquisition (\$125). Request for \$575 total. General consent.
 - School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences: requesting funds from the ‘Speaker Series and Conferences’ line to host an invited speaker. Funds requested for speaker-travel (\$365.80), speaker honorarium (\$600), food for the event (\$250), speaker travel and advertising (\$50). Request for \$1266 total. General consent.

XII. Graduate Student Employees Union Liaison’s Report

- Good news: pay-bill for back pay has passed the assembly and currently waiting on approval from the state senate.
- New website launched: <http://www.cwa1104gseu.com/>. Can update your mailing address here to ensure you receive back pay and correspondences from GSEU.
- In order to apply pressure on the state senate, GSEU plans to utilize October 7th (National Day of Action to Defend Public Education) at noon in front of administration building. We need to take advantage of the fact that it is an election year and pressure our elected officials to pass this bill (\$8477).
- Update for RA Union: though the contract has not been passed, dental benefits are now available for RAs.

XIII. New Business

- Senator Bill Wenzel would like to officially recognize the Lounge Committee for graduate students to revive the utilization and participation in UCafe. The RCC will propose such recognition at the following senate meeting.

- NYPIRG currently conducting voter registration drive. For more info., or to receive voter registration materials, NYPIRG at (631) 632-6457, stonybrook@nypirg.org, or in person at Stony Brook Union, Rm. 079

XIV. Meeting Adjourned

- Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Al Herrera-Alcazar, GSO Secretary.