

Minutes of the GSO Senate meeting on Wednesday May 7th, 2003

Meeting started at 6:30pm with 30 senators present.

Shawn Pottorf made a motion to pass the minutes from April 9th with no changes. Motion passed unanimously

Budget items

The *Invention Club* requested \$1,000 for a series of talks. Kostas Pentikousis made a motion to fund \$300 for the first talk. Tanya made a motion to end discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The senate voted on Kostas' motion and the motion passed (27 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstain).

Approval of Budget

Bryan Field presented an interim Budget valid until November 1st 2003. Maria Squire made a motion to pass the interim budget. Salih made a motion to cut the volunteer ambulance donation. Maria moved to end discussion and vote on Salih's amendment, which passed unanimously. The Senate passed Salih's motion (17 in favor, 6 opposed, 4 abstain). Geng Tian moved to go through the Budget line by line. Maria made a motion to end discussion, which passed unanimously and the Senate voted on Geng's motion, which failed (4 in favor, 23 opposed, 2 abstain). Stefan made a motion to end discussion, motion failed (15 in favor, 11 opposed, 3 abstain). Karl Junhke made a motion to amend the dates of the Budget from July 1st 2003–November 1st 2003 to July 1st 2003–June 30th 2004. Maria made a motion to end discussion, which passed unanimously. The Senate voted on Karl's motion, which failed (5 in favor, 21 opposed, 1 abstain). Victor Rosado made a motion to end discussion, which passed (19 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstain). The motion to pass the interim budget striking the volunteer ambulance donation passed (21 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstain).

Budget Committee Bylaws and Guidelines

Tanya made a motion to pass the bylaws and guidelines presented (see attached) which passed unanimously.

Committee reports

1. *GSO Committees*. The Senate decided unanimously to have committee members stay in the committees they are in, until the first Senate meeting. Students who have graduated are not committee members. Jasmina Sinanovic dropped from all committees since she is graduating. Angeliki was reinstated as the Chair of the Elections Committee. Guofeng Hou is the GSO representative of the Stony Brook Council. Wei Liu and Chris LaBarbera were added to the Lounge Committee. Maria Squire and Smitha Fatima were added to the Survival Guide Committee. All the above were approved unanimously by the Senate. Tanya made a motion not to pay a non-graduate student working on the Survival Guide, which

passed unanimously. The Interim Chair of the Elections Committee, Jasmina Sinanovic presented the results of the online voting and the new elected officers for 2003-04.

2. *Lounge Committee.* Shawn Pottorf, the Chair of the Lounge Committee presented a power-point presentation about the new Graduate Student Cultural Center.

3. *Polity Fact-finding force.* The Chair of the Committee, Bryan Field, presented to the Senate the findings of the Committee (see attached) and recommended on behalf of the Committee the filing of an Amicus Brief. Scott Graves said that an Amicus Brief does not make any effect and we should not do it. Both Tanya Smith and Alex Kolker said that it is not in our best interest to do such an action and that it might come back to us later. They both suggested GSO to be silent on that matter. Maria Squire made a motion not to file an Amicus Brief. Tanya Smith made a motion to end discussion, which passed unanimously. The Senate voted on Maria's motion, which passed (14 in favor, 4 opposed, 8 abstain).

GSO Senate list

Shawn Pottorf made a motion to turn the senate list to a moderated list by the Secretary and create a newsgroup for discussion. The motion failed unanimously. Tanya Smith made a motion to turn the senate list to a moderated list by the Secretary and create a yahoo e-group for discussion. Manuel Boussios made a motion to end discussion, which passed (20 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstain). The Senate voted on Tanya's motion, which passed (18 in favor, 4 opposed, 1 abstain). Karl Junhke made a motion to shut down the anonymous bulletin board at GSO's website which passed (9 in favor, 2 opposed, 5 abstain).

Motion to adjourn failed (10 in favor, 11 opposed, 2 abstain).

NYPIRG

The NYPIRG representatives (Melissa Morahan and Helen Ho) made a small presentation of the services that NYPIRG offers.

Interlibrary Loan

Susan Crane discussed the issue of the Interlibrary Loan and the problems that will be caused if the school allows the registration in LGC to lapse. Victor made a motion for a letter to be drafted by the executives and distributed to all senators. The motion passed unanimously.

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!!

Motion to adjourn passed unanimously at 8:35pm.

Submitted by Angeliki Field-Pollatou

GSO Secretary

07/17/03

Budget Committee Bylaws
Revision 04/29/2003

Article I – Purpose

The Budget Committee shall review allocation requests and make recommendations to the Senate in accordance with the Budget Committee Bylaws and shall assist in preparing the budget for the next fiscal year. The Budget Committee shall also make recommendations to the Rules and Constitution Committee (RCC) for improvements in the Budget Committee Bylaws and Budget Committee Guidelines.

Article II – The Budget Committee structure

- A) The Budget Committee shall meet at least once a month with the time and place announced at least one week in advance via the Senate list-serve.
- B) In addition to the Budget Committee members stipulated by the Constitution (regular voting members), the Senate may appoint any number of alternate voting members. For each regular voting member who is absent from a Budget Committee meeting, one alternate voting member who is present shall gain the right to vote at that meeting. The order in which alternate voting members gain the right to vote at each meeting shall be the order in which the Senate appointed them to the Budget Committee.
- C) The Committee's agenda shall include at each meeting:
 - 1) The Treasurer's report, including significant activities, the status of the budget, all funding requests and disbursements under any category.
 - 2) The interested parties shall present all funding proposals. There may be time allowed for questions and answers.
 - 3) Determination of the Budget Committee's recommendation for each proposal. During this time, discussion by non-committee members is out of order. Any determination shall include the budget category from which the funds will be allocated. The Budget Committee may determine to do any one of the following:
 - i. Recommend the proposal to the Senate;
 - ii. Recommend against the proposal;
 - iii. Return the proposal for further work;
 - iv. Refer the proposal to the Senate without further recommendation, but including its comments;
 - v. Table the proposal
 - 4) Proposed budget revisions; and
 - 5) Proposed Budget Committee Guidelines revisions.
- D) The Budget Committee may impose time limits on the presentation and discussion of each funding proposal.
- E) The Treasurer shall include in his/her reports to the Senate, a summary of all Budget Committee recommendations. A representative should present funding requests to the Senate from the requesting group.

Article III – The Budget

- A) The Budget Committee shall prepare a preliminary budget in early spring. This budget shall be presented to the Executive Council. The budget, along with comments from the Executive Council, shall be presented to the GSO Senate in April. After revision by the Budget Committee, the budget shall be returned to the Executive Council and to the Senate, no later than the last week of April. The Senate shall discuss and vote upon the budget at the regularly scheduled May meeting of the Senate. If the Senate does not adopt a budget before the end of classes, the Senate shall meet before the end of the fiscal year to adopt a temporary budget. This temporary budget shall be subject to final approval at the first Senate meeting of the next academic year. The Dean of the Graduate School determines final approval of the budget after approval of the GSO Senate

has been given. The Treasurer will settle any discrepancies between the two budgets over the summer holiday for approval by the GSO Senate at the first meeting of the year.

- B) The GSO fiscal year shall be from July 1 through June 30.
- C) The structure of the budget shall follow that of the previous year with those modifications suggested by the Budget Committee in consultation with the Custodial and Disbursements (C&D) agent.
- D) The budget shall require a two-third vote of the Senate to be passed. After the Senate has adopted the budget. The C&D Agent or any member of the GSO may propose a revision in the budget to the Budget Committee only. Such revisions may include changing amounts in the various budget categories, and creating new budget categories as needed. Such revisions also require a two-thirds vote of the Senate after recommendation of the Budget Committee has been made.
- E) The budget consists of several categories. Each category is assigned a spending ceiling. The total of all categories shall approximate the expected revenues for the budget year. After the budget is adopted and as the Senate approves various expenditures, each category is annotated with approved budget items. Each item represents a commitment on part of the Senate to provide the allocated funds to the indicated group or person. The total of all such encumbrances in each category shall not exceed the total approved in the current, or revised, budget for the given category. This total shall include all funds already disbursed and all those promised, but not yet disbursed. If a particular line item is in jeopardy of running a deficit, the Treasurer shall present this at an appropriate Budget Committee meeting for a recommendation to be made to the Senate.

Article IV – The Budget Committee Report

- A) At each Senate meeting, the Treasurer is required to be present and to provide the Senate with a Budget Committee Report.
- B) The essential contents of this report must be approved by the majority vote of the committee at the prior Budget Committee meeting. This report will be circulated between the Budget Committee prior to the next senate meeting.
- C) The Budget Committee Report shall include all of the following items about which there is any new information to report.
 - a) The current budget's status. The status of the budget is a listing, by category, of the spending ceilings, expenditures, encumbrances, and available funds. The idea is that the Senate and the Executive Council need to keep new allocations near or below the available funds. These terms are defined as follows:
 - i) Spending Ceiling (SC) for a category is the current (possibly revised) amount that the budget lists for the category for the year.
 - ii) Expenditures (EX) for a category are the total of all checks actually written whose vouchers list the category.
 - iii) Encumbrances (EN) is the total of all expenses in the category that have been approved by (written into the minutes of) either an Executive Council meeting or a Senate meeting, but for which a check has not yet been written.
 - iv) Available Funds (AF) are calculated as follows:
$$AF = SC - (EX + EN)$$
 - b) The disposition of assets: Assets are funds left over from previous budgets or received through miscellaneous revenues.
 - c) Proposals for use of assets.
 - d) Proposed Budget Committee Guidelines revisions.
 - e) Proposed Budget revisions.
 - f) Proposed Expenditures: A list by category of proposals brought to the Budget Committee or the Treasurer and which need Senate approval. This should be further subdivided into those Budget Committee and/or Executive Council are recommending and those that are not being recommended to the Senate for whatever reason.

- g) The Budget Committee may from time to time make recommendations to the Senate to release encumbered funds that have little to no chance of being spent. The final release is up to the Senate.
- h) Activities of the Treasurer that may be of interest to the Senate.
- i) Time and place of the next Budget Committee meeting.

Article V – Appeals

In the event that the C&D Agent or the Treasurer should refuse to authorize an expenditure, which has been approved by the Senate, the program representative may appeal to the President, who shall convene a meeting of all interested parties. If no settlement is reached, the representative may appeal to the full Senate, which may propose a settlement or appoint a neutral mediator. The Chancellor’s Guidelines provide that no expenditure may be made against the C&D Agent’s objection.

Budget Committee Guidelines

Purpose: This document is to be used by the Treasurer and the Budget Committee in the execution of their job. These guidelines are not binding, but are to be used as a reference.

Article I – Structure of the Budget

What follows is a detailed description of the budget categories and procedures associated with each category. The actual structure of the budget is at the discretion of the Treasurer with approval of the Senate.

A) Operational Expenses

The money allocated for GSO operations is broken down into the following categories: GSO Office, Payroll, Accounting, and Internal GSO Functions. All of the budget lines under these categories are Executive Council items and do not require Senate approval. Senate approval is still necessary for reallocation of funds unless noted.

a. GSO Office

This category is for the purchase of general office equipment and supplies, postage, office rental equipment, telephone service and insurance policies including necessary employee liability and dishonesty insurance in addition to fire and theft insurance for the GSO office. The GSO Executive Council will have the authority to reallocate money in the subcategories as is necessary to perform GSO business, up to the total amount specified under the heading “GSO Office.”

b. Payroll

1. The GSO will pay its officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Speaker of the Senate) stipends for their services. The category Officer Stipends is designed for the purpose of paying the officers stipends. No other category should be used for this purpose.
2. The category Office Manager is to pay the GSO administrative personnel.
3. The last category under Payroll is Payroll Tax/Insurance. This is designed to pay Social Security, Disability, Workers Compensation and Unemployment for any GSO office or executive personnel.

c. Accounting

As mandated in the GSO Constitution, the GSO employs a Custodial and Disbursal (C&D) Agent to manage the GSO bank accounts and disperse funds for payment in accordance with the GSO constitution, Budget Committee Bylaws and the current GSO budget. The C&D agent also maintains financial records for the GSO. The allocation is based on the contract between the FSA and GSO.

As is mandated by the Chancellor's Guidelines, New York corporate law and both Federal and State tax law, the GSO will contract an Accountant to provide a year-end audit. The Accountant will also prepare the GSO tax return.

d. Internal GSO Functions

1. Elections

The GSO holds elections every April/May to choose new officers as well as to vote on any referenda or amendments. This category is used to print ballots, pay the Election staff, and cover any incidental expenses that might incur.

2. Meetings

The GSO provides food for appropriate functions necessary to the normal course of running the GSO.

e. GSO Sponsored Advertisements

The GSO also, from time to time, produces informational mailings, poster campaigns, and newspaper inserts, as well as supporting letter-writing campaigns to advance the interests of graduate students. This category may also be used for advertisements for the Graduate Student Lounge and GSO sponsored events.

f. The GSO website

This amount is used to pay the Webmaster.

g. Travel

This category is for the travel expenses of the members of the Executive Council and the GSO Senate, as well as other GSO members, in the course of performing their duties related to the GSO, or for travel expenses incurred during student advocacy.

h. Miscellaneous Expenses

This category is to be used for any unplanned expenses. The expense proposals will be reviewed by the Budget Committee and brought to the Senate for the vote.

B) Program Expenses

The remaining expenses are defined as Program Expenses. These are expenses that are directed at the graduate student population, campus community, and general welfare of graduate students.

a. GSO Publications

This category is to be used for the funding of the annual publication, the Survival Guide and the GSO newspaper.

1. Survival Guide

The GSO Survival Guide provides incoming graduate students with information about the services available on campus and the surrounding area. The line is divided in two subcategories: printing and editor.

In addition, the editorial staff may solicit advertisement for the Survival's Guide with a finder's fee to be determined on a year-to-year basis. They must create an advertising rate structure detailing the costs per advertisement before soliciting advertisements.

2. Newspaper Editorial Staff

The editorial staff will consist of at least one primary editor who will be responsible for the GSO newspaper publication and distribution. Additional personnel may be hired in response to any future changes in the demands of

the job as determined by the Executive Council. The exact breakup of the stipend to the editorial staff will be determined by the Executive Council.

3. Newspaper

The GSO will publish a regular newspaper of 9 issues (4 issues per semester plus a welcome to SBU issue in August). Funding for the newspaper will come from two sources. The GSO will subsidize most of the cost, and the rest will come from advertisement revenue. The Budget Committee will monitor the exact distribution of funds. This category will cover the cost of publishing the paper, the printing costs, distribution costs and the fee for invited articles. In addition, the editorial staff may solicit advertisement for the paper with a finder's fee to be determined on a year-to-year basis.

C) Contributions and Public Service

The GSO provides money and resources to a number of public service organizations and also provides several services specifically for graduate students. All of the money has to be requested by the groups in the current fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

a. Orientation

The GSO contributes funds to the Graduate School for new graduate student orientation. Also, the GSO may organize orientation events for new graduate students.

b. Faculty Staff Retreat

The GSO provides funds to the University to cover the cost of the annual retreat.

c. NYPIRG

The GSO provides funding for the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). This money will be allocated by a referendum every four years, voted on at the time of the general GSO elections. Neither the GSO Senate nor Executive Council can withhold these funds if the referendum leads to an approval for the release of the funds, unless there is a breach of contract.

d. WUSB

The GSO subsidizes the SBU campus radio station WUSB for the subscription to Pacifica News. In return WUSB will provide free advertisement of the GSO sponsored events and programs at the Graduate Student Lounge; also, WUSB will acknowledge GSO support during their broadcasts.

e. Child Care

The Stony Brook Child Care Services, Inc. provides child-care services for graduate students. The GSO provides money to Stony Brook Child Care Services' general fund; without this subsidy, Stony Brook Child Care Services would not be able to provide care on a sliding scale, charging less to lower income students.

f. Volunteer Ambulance Corps

The Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Inc. provides free ambulance service to all persons needing medical transport on all state lands, including the University and the residence halls. The GSO provides a direct subsidy to the Ambulance Corps to help defray the cost of insurance and equipment.

g. NAGPS

The National Association for Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) provides all graduate students with an alternative to the University health insurance, a resume service, as well as various leadership-training seminars. It also acts as a clearinghouse for information on various resources available to graduate students.

h. Campus Life Awards

This category contributes to the Student Activities annual event that celebrates campus wide achievements. The Senate and the Executive Council will propose which students should be recognized at this event.

D) Program Funding

The GSO provides money and support for a wide variety of social organizations and events for the purpose of enhancing graduate students' social interaction and development. In particular, the GSO provides for Student Clubs and Organizations, General Cultural and Social Events, Speaker Series & Conferences and Student Publications.

Program funding is designed to increase social, educational and on-campus directed activities. These funds will be available to groups of graduate students who wish to provide events that are well planned, well advertised and of general interest to the entire graduate student community. Money from these categories will not be allocated for the following:

- Events that do not have a graduate student presence in attendance
- Events not open to all graduate students
- Funding for food except under an amount specified in the current GSO budget.

Funds must be requested during the fiscal year that the event will be held from the current GSO Treasurer.

Events must be advertised in English, this means that the date, time, location, sponsoring group (including the GSO), and title of the event must be in English. Other information included on the advertisement may be in any language.

In each request for funding there must exist a single individual, designated by the group requesting the funds, who will be responsible for dispersing the funds. This person shall be responsible to see that the funds are dispersed in the proper manner as detailed in the request, and that the conditions listed below are carried out as stated.

All requests for funds to be used to pay a specific individual (i.e. performers, speakers, etc.) for their services must be submitted to the GSO Treasurer prior to the event in order to receive funding for that service. Upon the Senate's approval the GSO will pay these individuals directly after the reception of the proper paperwork (a W-9 and a Services Rendered form).

E) Student Clubs and Organizations Funding

Funding will be provided as follows:

- a. Money from this category is available only to graduate student clubs and organizations recognized by the SBU Student Union and Activities Department. To be considered a graduate club 50% of the membership and the Executive council must be graduate students.
- b. The Treasurer will review requests after receipt of a properly completed Funding Request Proposal. A Funding Request Proposal shall consist of:
 1. A signed memo from the club's or organization's president to the GSO Treasurer expressing a brief description of the activity and purpose of the club, and a statement of its benefits to the graduate student community. Included in this memo must be the names of all the officers of the club organization, as well as a means of contacting these officers,
 2. An itemized budget for the current fiscal year,
 3. A current club roster,
 4. The club's constitution, with a meaningful equal opportunity clause.
- c. The maximum amount that can be allocated to any Club or Organization from this category shall not exceed a total amount stated in the current GSO budget.

F) General Cultural and Social Events

The GSO provides funding for events of interest to graduate students. In the interest of fairness these events must be open to all graduate students and widely publicized. This money is available to graduate student clubs and organizations, and graduate student event committees. Money from this category is available only to graduate student clubs and organizations recognized by the SBU Student Union and Activities Department and committees of greater than three graduate students formed for the purpose of planning and organizing an event. Each event must have a chairperson who is responsible for coordinating and running the event. The chairperson must be the person designated to be responsible for the event.

Graduate students cannot be charged to attend the event more than the members of the organizing club. The Treasurer reviews requests for funding provided under this category, after receipt of a completed funding request proposal.

G) Speaker Series/Conferences

The GSO provides support for speakers and conferences of general interest to the entire graduate student community.

H) Student Publications

The GSO provides support for graduate student run literary or general interest publications.

I) Departmental Allocation

The GSO encourages departmental activities and programming. Each graduate department may use their allocation for whatever purposes their graduate students as a whole may decide, provided that benefits of these funds are available to all members of the department. Funding to each department will be provided up to a maximum rate of \$5.00 per full time student plus \$1.00 per part time student with a "CAP" of a \$1,000 per department. The Treasurer will process these requests.

J) RAP (Resource Access Project)

One of the most important and most accessible sources of funding from the GSO is provided through the Resource Access Project (RAP). The GSO RAP program is meant to provide small support to allow graduate students to attend conferences or workshops that will help them advance their careers.

K) The Graduate Student Lounge

The GSO and the FSA jointly operate the Graduate Student Lounge. The GSL shall be managed as outlined in the Lounge Advisory Committee Guidelines, and shall be overseen by the Lounge Committee and the C&D Agent (from FSA) for the GSO.

L) Graduate Bash

The GSO will sponsor several graduate student events during the academic year. The purpose of these events will be to provide a regular event/occasion when students from different departments can come together and socialize.

M) Spring Fest

The GSO sponsors an outdoor festival during May.

N) Cabaret Club

The Cabaret is an economically independent unit and its expenses should never be greater than its income. Since it is a graduate student group, it will run its finances through the GSO Budget. The Treasurer of the Cabaret will meet with the GSO Treasurer at least once a semester to discuss the Cabaret Budget issues.

O) Other clubs

Any club may run their finances through the GSO.

- 1) The Chancellor's Guidelines require that 'Excessive surpluses in student fees shall not be allowed to accumulate'. Within the Chancellor's Guidelines, we may establish reserves for long-range programs.
- 2) The Chancellor's Guidelines require that funds from part 1) must be invested in such a way as to preserve the principal. Such investments include savings accounts and certificates of deposit.
- 3) The GSO, from time to time, makes capital purchases, and these assets are depreciated in manner specified by its accountant. When a capital asset is sold, the revenue from such a sale is listed as miscellaneous revenue, and funds are administered as with cash surpluses from part 1) and invested as in part 2).
- 4) The GSO may spend any funds covered in this article. A proposal for such expenditure may originate from any member of the GSO or from the C&D Agent. Such a proposal must be brought to the Executive Council and then is referred to the Budget Committee for recommendation. Such a proposal is then included in the Budget Committee Report for consideration by the GSO Senate. Such funds may be used to justify increases in budget categories above the level of expected revenues or may be committed directly to a proposed project.

Article III – Responsibilities of the Treasurer

Other responsibilities of the Treasurer are to apply for RAP grants at the beginning of the Spring semester and to have regular meetings with the C&D agent.

The following is a document that is unfinished. We are proposing that we are allowed to find out how much it will cost and what the procedure is for filing an Amicus Brief. We also would like to contact “the other side” and find out their viewpoint before making our final recommendation. Right now we are just requesting permission to finalize our arrangements before presenting our final report.

The following document highlights the finding of the Polity Fact-Finding Task Force.

Executive Summary: The evidence presented to the Polity Fact-Finding Task Force shows that the Graduate Student Organization on behalf of the Student Polity Association in the New York Supreme Court warrants the filing of an Amicus Brief. It would appear that several illegal infractions occurred against the Student Polity Association over the past year, and our support is needed in this matter.

Details: In essence, there were eight points that were presented to the Task Force that lead us to believe that the actions against the Student Polity Association were illegal. Already one motion has been filed in Supreme Court of New York, Suffolk County (Index Number 0306551) on this matter.

To truly understand the problems involved with Student Polity, it is important to know that Student Polity Association is a corporation under New York State Law (just like the Graduate Student Organization). The elected officers serve as the executives of the corporation and senators act as a Board of Directors for the corporation. As a corporation, the bylaws of Student Polity act as Articles of Corporation and as a corporation Student Polity enjoys several protections under New York State Law beyond the reaches of the Stony Brook administration.

The eight points that were presented to the Task Force were as follows:

1. Student Polity Association was placed in an illegal receivership on October 10, 2001. Polity is a corporation in the State of New York and can only be placed in receivership by a Judge in a court of law. Any and all spending of the undergraduate student activity fee while Student Polity is in an illegal receivership is in essence an act of fraud under New York State Law and is in direct contradiction to the Chancellor's Guidelines on how student activity fees must be allocated. It appears that all the mechanisms that are in place to keep events like this from happening were sidestepped.
2. After seizing the student activity fee, the signatories on the accounts of the Student Polity Association were changed to allow people other than the elected officers to authorize the release of student activity funds. A police report was filed over this matter (Stony Brook Police Report 02-14058).
3. As Student Polity is a corporation under New York State Law, the removal of elected officials from power amounts to dissolving the board of directors of a corporation without a stockholder vote. It is illegal to interfere with the operations of a corporation.
4. After the dissolution of Polity, open meeting laws were violated when several students were told that they could not attend meetings to revise the old Student Polity constitution. The administration claims that they are protected under one of the eight clauses where open meeting laws do not apply in New York State by declaring themselves in an advisory role. However, the drafting of a new constitution hardly seems to constitute an advisory position.
5. Under the corporate bylaws of Student Polity, all records are to be made as public as legally possible. In a 1996 ruling in the NY Supreme Court (Statesman v. Student Polity) it was ruled that universities are obliged to release information under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) access. The same attorney who fought for this ruling told our petitioners that Stony Brook is not obliged to work under FOIL access. This attorney could possibly have troubles with the New York State bar over this statement.
6. Illegal elections were allowed to occur to elect a Freshman Class Representative against the wishes of the elected officials.
7. Members of the Board of Directors of Student Polity were intimidated by the administration.
8. There was a campaign of disinformation levied to "inform" the undergraduate student population that Polity had been dissolved. Although a \$300 reward was offered to find out who distributed these flyers, no one ever claimed responsibility.

In conclusion, we find that an Amicus brief is warranted in this case.

Submitted respectfully,

Bryan J. Field
Chair
Polity Fact Finding Task Force

Polity Fact Finding Task Force Timeline

May 2001 - Polity Judiciary threw out the elections results (including the Recreation Center Vote). Dr. Preston said that this was illegal, and that this was a "University Referendum" and therefore stood outside the authority of the Polity Judiciary. Several (about 1/3) of the votes that were invalidated by the Judiciary. This numerically made the Recreation Center vote fail. The number of votes thrown out numerically supports the theory that just enough votes were thrown out to make this vote fail. The votes were thrown out due to problems with the legibility of the ballots (hand-writing problems). Dr. Preston said it passed anyways and was used in Albany to let the Recreation Center be built.

Dr. Preston threw out the budget passed during this session, outside the use of a campus review board (which can be used in the event of a line item veto).

Summer 2001 - Illegally installed executive (installed by decree) ran the student government.

Fall 2001 - New elections occurred including a run-off for the President. A total of 154 people voted in the run-off. Dr. Preston said that 154 votes were not enough, and threatened to dissolve Polity. Historically, the last run-off in Polity history had a turnout of 134 votes. A typical full voter turnout (non run-off) for a Polity election is about 1000 people in recent years.

The two people running for President, both declined to take office rather than recognize the authority of Dr. Preston to call for a second run-off election. When this happens, according to the Polity constitution and Robert's Rules, a "Failure to Elect" was declared. This had the effect of making the Vice-President the President (and VP at the same time). The President was Akelia Lawrence. The Treasurer, Nicholas Kilp, stopped performing his duties. After some time, the President put some Judiciary nominees forward.

Dr. Preston only would release one-quarter of the Student Activity Fee.

Spring 2002 - A Judiciary, nominated by the council, and elected by the senate was installed. All three branches were there and functioning. All the problems were addressable at this point. The feeling was that although there were problems between the groups, things were working for instance and budgets were passed.

Dr. Preston insisted that the bylaws be changed and he placed the Student Activity Fee under Receivership. This is not in this power to demand. This is supported by the legal opinion of Steven de Castro (Exhibit ??). The legal status of Receivership can only be given by a Judge and is clearly outside the bounds of the Dean of Students of a University.

Summer 2002 - In order to get the Activity Fee out of Receivership, a group of students and administrators formed a committee to revise the constitution. This process went on all summer. The document was given to President Lawrence. The document presented to the Senate in the Fall was a different document than was prepared in the summer.

September 2002 - Full senate met and the issue of the constitution was taken up. Various members of the Executive Council continuously disrupted the meetings. It is of the opinion that these interruptions were intentional. Very little progress was made in correcting the constitution due to problems with the chair of the senate. There was a vote of remove the VP as the chair of the senate thus making the revisions to the constitution progress rapidly. This document was given to the executive council a week and a half before Dr. Preston's deadline.

October 3 2002 - President Lawrence writes a letter to President Kenny saying there were certain negative influences in Polity (the Senate) and asked President Kenny to dissolve the student government. This is a legal problem, because Polity is a corporation.

October 10 2002 - Letter from Kenny was received stating that Polity will be dissolved (Exhibit ??). It is in her power to decertify the student government, but not to dissolve the student government. This is a problem for spending the Student Activity Fee (as per the bylaws), and all the funds should have been frozen. The minute action was taken on this letter; any spending is fraudulent until a new student government was elected.

Vice-President's report

1. HOUSING UPDATE - Schomburg and Chapin Rent Reviews

The rent will increase 5% across the board.

In Schomburg the increase will cover the inflation in utilities & state mandated costs, debt service payment and one additional resident assistant.

In Chapin, the increase will cover the inflation in utilities & state mandated costs, the 3rd and the last phase of renovations as agreed 2 years ago and the stipend for 4 CARA officers in the amount of \$1500 each (amounts to under \$0.60 per payin resident per month). While supporting the stipends for CARA officers who will have expanded duties in helping out during the new student check-in/orientation and programming, the residents present at the final meeting of 04/30 expressed a lot of discontent with the renovations.

Residents main contention was in relation to the quality of the renovations work completed during phases I and II, specially work that has been done by the hired contractors in the bathroom areas. Although all residents present understood that the 5% increase was agreed upon over three years, and was necessary in order to complete the remaining four buildings, they would accept the increase Under Protest. Some of the work that has already been completed needed to be fixed and corrected. In addition they felt that the quality of work in phase III must be improved dramatically or that cost for certain aspects of renovations would need to be justified in order for them to feel confident that their money was used properly to improve their living conditions.

2. SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE - Quality of Life Survey

The results will be made available as soon as obtained (by the end of the week).

3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FEE - University Senate Executives conclusion

As reported at previous GSO senate meetings, the implementation of the new international student fee had been discussed at Graduate Council and Student Life standing committees of the University Senate with the last amount mentioned as \$50 per semester per international student. University Senate Executives discussed the issue it on 04/21 and gave a formal response to the Administration as follows:

- * The Senate Exec. is particularly mindful of using student fees to cover unfunded Federal mandates, but they concurred that a number of circumstances (budget, time scale, and consequences to foreign students) have contributed both to the proposing and the approval of this extraordinary fee.
- * The fee collected should cover the two positions (a full time SL-2 SEVIS compliance officer, a full time intl student advisor) ONLY.
- * No part of the fee can be used to cover parts of the recent budget reduction and/or office expenses.
- * The fee should be reexamined in Fall'05 by Student Life Committee.

The final amount of the fee will be approved by the President most probably by the end of May.

Sincerely,
Masa Prodanovic
GSO Housing Committee Chair
GSO Social Concerns Chair
GSO University Senate Executives Representative
GSO Vice President 2002-03