

## April 4, 2006 Senate Meeting Minutes

Meeting starts with 22 senators, 5 executive members.

### 1) Welcome remarks

Andrei Antonenko, GSO president, informs the senate about projects the executive committee is working on:

- Graduate student legal services: the executives interviewed the 4 firms and chose Phil Solages. We will schedule student appointments with him and start the clinic the week after Spring break.
- We contacted the Wo/Men's center about forming a LGBT graduate club. There was a Queer Alliance until 2 years ago, but currently this important part of graduate student life and diversity is missing from campus. If senators know someone who would be interested to start such a club, bring them in contact with the executives.
- Proposal to have a Meet & Greet party at the University Café on April 26.

### 2) Approval of the agenda and minutes

The March 14 minutes are unanimously approved. Agenda unanimously approved with the changes:

- Peter Baigent will speak whenever he shows up.
- USG safety resolution discussion as first item.
- Committee nominations right before Elections Committee report.
- Lounge Committee report right after Budget Committee report.
- No Library Committee report.
- There are 2 sub-items to the RCC report: financial bylaws and changes to the constitution.
- No officer candidate presentations.

### 3) Safety on campus resolution

Dan Woulfin, History senator, says that there is a resolution against administrative silence about events that threaten students' safety that will be presented to the USG today. It was triggered by a recent alleged attack against a student on the way to her dorm. Emily Bottino, an undergraduate student from the victim's dorm, would like to present the same resolution to the GSO senate. The resolution should be reviewed by the executives before presented to the senate, but this is an urgent case, and it would be helpful if the GSO and USG would press the administration together with a common resolution. Emily presents the resolution and some details about the events: Although the details of the police report are not known, the victim had to go to the hospital, following the attack. Quad coordinators did not do anything to inform and protect the rest of the students, who demonstrated and walked people to their dorms all weekend long with their own initiative. The days that followed, the university put a few lights and held a Hendrix building meeting, but the administration is keeping otherwise quiet, in order to "prevent hysteria". This is a wrong course of action, as our safety is at risk. The USG with this resolution would try to get the administration to institute campus-wide information and preventive actions. Dan comments that there were also reports on attacks on a female student in Chapin last week, it may not be an isolated event. We need better security measures on campus. Discussion:

- There is a voluntary student escort service on campus and a police-organized one, but they are severely under-staffed. This is another area to press for improvement.

- There is no formal fast, efficient means of informing the campus community for such events.
- Protest: “Take back the night” in the evening of April 6, at Roth pond.
- With a joint GSO-USG resolution we can inquire for more information and press the administration for money and actions for safety.

Motion by Monicca Shanthanelson, Neuroscience senator, for the executives to take 5 minutes to review the resolution and then make their recommendation to the senate. Seconded by Erin Cassese, Political science senator, vote: 22 for, 0 against, 2 abstain, motion passes.

Executives’ recommendation: change USG to GSO wherever needed, add “in keeping with applicable laws” in the last paragraph, referring to “any information”.

Senators’ changes:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution sentence: “... appropriate response to any incident that compromises the safety of students...”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> resolution sentence: “the University shouldn’t actively withhold information about incidents that...”

Motion to adopt the resolution with the above changes, unanimously approved. The resolution is:

## **S.A.A.S. Students Against Administrative Silence**

Whereas, the campus is leaving its students in the dark when it comes to their safety; and

Whereas, the administration is not implementing enough effective prevention against these crimes such as blue lights, extra lights, security personnel etc;

**Be it resolved, by the Graduate Student Organization assembled in Senate on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2006:**

That the administration shall effectively implement a plan for action of increasing the number of blue lights on campus; and

That there be an appropriate response to any incident that compromises the safety of students as cited in the Stony Brook Student Conduct Code; and

That the University shouldn’t actively withhold information about incidents that are critical and important to student safety and security; and

That any information in keeping with applicable laws should be made publicly aware to the campus, as soon as possible, so that another event of similar character or worse does not occur, since the students are the most important commodity of the University.

### 4) Committee nominations

Andrei nominates new committee members:

- Dan Woulfin, Andreana Leskovjan and Erin Cassese for elections committee. Dan and Andreana were appointed by Andrei as interim committee to get the elections started.
- Andrea Boffa from History, Paul Bourdeau, Sarah Gray and Summer Ostrowski from Ecology and Evolution for library committee.
- Victor Rosado for GSEU liaison committee.

All new members approved unanimously.

### 5) Elections committee report

Dan Woulfin, the Elections Committee Chair, presents the report. According to Chancellor’s Guidelines, we have to have a referendum in this year’s elections about the activity fee being mandatory or voluntary. The committee presents the referendum question to the senate for approval, in order to go in the ballot. Senators wonder if we could add a paragraph about how the GSO spends the activity fee on the ballot, as

we do with the candidates' bios. Nobody seems to know if this is allowed, but we have more avenues for advertising our organization. Motion by Juliet Kinney, Marine science senator, to approve the referendum to go in the ballot as is, second by Ramona Walls, Ecology and Evolution senator. Motion amended by Monicca, to add a paragraph in the ballot about what the GSO does, after the Elections Committee finds out if it is allowed by laws and the wording is approved by the executives. Second by Kristin Ericson, Anthropology senator, vote: 19 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.

The committee has made an effort to advertise the elections, with posters, through the webpage, the Graduate and the senate mailing list, but so far only 2 candidates have handed in nomination forms, Andrei for president and Ilektra for vice-president. They decided to extend the nomination period to April 17 to get more candidates, senators are encouraged to run for office. The committee has talked with the SOLAR system administrators and will coordinate with them to put the ballot online as soon as the nominations are finalized.

## 6) Budget Committee report

Anirban Dutta, GSO treasurer, presents the funding requests, see relevant documentation:

- Art department students request \$300 for a speaker series event titled "In the making: creative options for contemporary art". The amount is approved unanimously.
- The SBU Functional Morphology Group requests \$240 for a speaker series event titled "Structure and function in four dimensions: the early evolution of the hind limb in archosaurian reptiles". The amount is approved unanimously.
- The Campus Life Awards committee requests \$500 for the annual awards ceremony and reception. The amount is approved unanimously.
- The ensemble inc. music group requests \$500 for a concert titled "New music from Scandinavia". The BC did not have an itemized budget for this event in their meeting, so they recommend the funding only after the group members present a budget. A group member presents the budget and explains the event to the senate. The amount is approved unanimously.

The BC requests from the senate to reallocate funds to the miscellaneous line from the social-cultural events line, for the following 2 events: \$990 for the Meet & Greet, and \$750 for the first 3 2-hour legal clinics at \$125/hour, that will happen this fiscal year. Motion to approve both reallocations passed unanimously.

Anirban presents the 2006-07 budget proposal, see relevant documentation. The main differences are:

- Procedural details have been removed from the budget text to the financial bylaws, to ensure that they are standardized and do not change every year.
- 3 new lines have been added: Legal clinic, Meet & Greet and WUSB.
- The increase in the insurance line is unavoidable, according to regulations we have to follow.
- The RAP line remains the same, but the annual limit per person will be \$250 this year, we cannot afford more.
- The Lounge line has been merged with the Lounge fringe line.

Monicca asks Ron Willa, the C&D agent, why does the FSA fee go up every year (\$2k last year, \$3k this year), even though their duties are decreasing. Ron says that the time & effort analysis says that their duties have not decreased, but increased this year, due to the audit, the restructuring of the Café etc. The amount they are billing for next year is not based on the fact that they will be relieved from the Café duties, but on the effort they have spent in previous years. There is also the issue of the management of the GSELF loans, that might increase their work time for GSO. He thinks that even this price is lower than what they will actually spend next year (by about \$3k, he estimates).

## 7) Lounge Committee report

Miranda Moore, Economics senator and LC chair, presents the report. The restructuring of the management of the café, with transferring functions (including the manager's employment) from FSA to Chartwells, looks good. We now serve lunch, after hiring a daytime supervisor. We had some expected loss the first month, but now it is working very good. The sales revenue is raising, for the first time we made \$20k this month. Senators should encourage their departments, groups, etc to hold their events and receptions at the Café. Next year we will take the publicity to the department chairs. Although we do not know yet if/when the café will make enough to break even, we are working on getting University permission to serve alcohol during the daytime and extra room for games in the back, and it seems it is getting there.

## 8) Social Concerns Committee report

Paul Fodor, GSO vice president, presents the report, see relevant documentation.

- Hotel construction survey: 334 people completed it, we have not digested the results yet, so there is no recommendation for the letter at this moment.
- Campus security – see report.
- Bus service schedules – see report.
- The “Graduate”: Jen Doebbler, the editor, informs the senate that the newspaper is online and functioning now, there are no more paper issues. Anybody can submit an article, Jen will review and post. There is an op-ed section, where people can post their opinions, and also a forum. Shawn Pottorf, the “Graduate” webmaster, explains some features of the online paper. Users have to register to submit articles etc, there is also a media outlet feature.
- Recycling on campus – see report.

Motion by Monicca to have the RCC report as the next item, passed unanimously.

## 9) RCC report

Kris Baker, GSO speaker, presents the report:

- a) Financial bylaws – see relevant documentation: These are new bylaws that had to be added due to the irregularities found in the GSO finances by the audit and to remove procedural details from the budget. The committee consulted with a lot of people (administration, FSA, etc), and all agree that we have to set stricter rules. Motion by Dan to approve the bylaws as is, second by Monicca, vote: 21 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.
- b) Amendments to the constitution:
  - Add “inventory keeping” to the secretary’s responsibilities, to agree with the financial bylaws.
  - Allow the executives to hold “closed/executive session” when needed, with only senators and relevant people, after senate approval. Minutes will not be kept for such a session.
  - Create a standing GSELF committee (this committee has to work in a regular basis, so it has to become permanent)

Monicca, Rob Gersch, Genetics senator, and Danielle Royer, Anthropology senator, will write a referendum for these 3 proposed changes and bring it to the senate before the end of this meeting, to vote to put it in the ballot.

## 10) Dr. Peter Baigent (PB)

PB, the VP of student affairs, presents himself and welcomes graduate students to bring their issues to his attention, as his responsibilities have mainly been with undergraduates. The main complaint voiced by the senators is the cost of living compared to TA salaries. PB says he is trying to get more RAs, but there is no easy solution to this problem. He is willing to give his advise and expertise to the Union when they negotiate the contract next year. Victor Rosado, GSEU officer candidate, commends that GSEU needs an office on campus in order to function. Motion to form a task force within the SCC to act as liaison with PB, passed unanimously.

Monicca, Rob and Danielle bring to the senate the text for the constitution amendments referenda:

Article IV C, add 6:

6. Keep and maintain the GSO inventory as recorded in the executive committee minutes.

Article V B, change 4 to:

4. Senate meetings are open to all GSO members. A specific portion of the senate meeting can be held as a " closed" session (meeting is only open to senators, executives and individuals approved by a senate majority vote to attend) for reasons as specified in Board of Appeals Bylaws. A " closed" session will be held following a recommendation from the executive board and approval by the senate majority vote. Minutes will not be recorded for the closed session portion of the meeting. Senate meeting are to be publicly announced at least 1 week in advance. Meeting agenda needs to be publicly announced at least 2 business days in advance.

Article VII B, add 9:

9. The Graduate Student Emergency Loan Fund (GSELF) committee shall consist of five members, of which at least three are GSO senators. The purpose of the fund is to provide short-term loans to graduate students as dictated by the committee bylaws. The purpose of the committee is to oversee the use, distribution, collection and appeal process of this fund.

Motion by Ramona Walls to put in the ballot as is, seconded by Erin Cassese, vote: 18 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.

## 11) Housing committee report

Dan Woulfin, Chair of the Housing Committee, waived his time, he will present the report on the survey over the senate listserv.

A representative from WUSB radio presents their budget and explains what they want some one-time GSO donation for (in addition to the new line in the 06-07 budget). Their main need is for a new \$2.3k five-channel mixer, in total they are asking for \$3.9k. They already got some funds from the USG, they will spend it on a 7-second-delay system. The BC has no recommendation at this moment, as we do not know yet how much the surplus is going to be at the end of the year and the GSELF funds (\$10k) will have to come from that too. Motion by Monicca to decide in the May meeting how much we will give to the WUSB as a donation passed unanimously. A representative from WUSB will not need to attend then.

## 12) GSEU liaison committee report

Victor Rosado presents the latest GSEU news.

- Membership drive is still going on, there is also a prize of \$100 for the person who will get the most cards signed.
- There will be a rank-and-file meeting tomorrow, where the Chief Steward will also be elected.

### 13) GSELF committee report

There is a draft of the Standing Committee Bylaws, they will perfect it and present it for approval if the constitutional amendment creating a standing committee passes.

### 14) New business

- (a) NYPIRG updates: Scott Zotto thanks the GSO for making the benefit concert for the homeless a reality.
- (b) The Wo/Men's center and others are asking for \$239 from the Speaker Series for a talk titled "Transforming identities" on gender and racial identity. The BC has no recommendation, as they did not show up to ask for the funding in the BC meeting, but the senate can decide to give a one-time donation. Motion by Dan to give them a donation of \$239. Amended by Dan, to reallocate this amount from the Clubs line to the miscellaneous, and then make a donation from that line. Seconded by Erin, vote: 17 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, amended motion passes.

A motion to adjourn is made and passed by unanimous consent. The meeting adjourns.