

## **GSO Senate – Minutes – September 18, 2007**

The meeting begins with 25 Senators and 4 Executives

### **1) Welcoming Remarks**

Ryan Soule, the new GSO President (MBA), welcomes the Senators to the first meeting of the semester. Says he is happy to see the good attendance by senators. He gets the senate permission to chair the meeting in the absence of an elected speaker, and since the current Vice President is acting Vice President.

### **2) Approval of the Agenda and the May Minutes**

The agenda and the May 2007 minutes were approved unanimously.

### **3) Dean Lawrence Martin Addresses the Senate**

Dean Martin congratulates the GSO for the important work that it is doing. The GSO has great potential to make things better for graduate students in Stony Brook. It has a very important role in almost all the university committees. It is important that the GSO executive committee informs grad students on the many issues pertaining to them and he hopes that the senators will pass it forward to the student body. The role of senators is to open up a line of communication to all graduate students so that everyone feels that their voice is heard. Last year the university president increased the budget for graduate student education by 1.5 million dollars, the largest increase in grad student stipends which he can remember. This allowed them to increase the minimum TA/GA stipend to \$15,145. He urges the senators to bring forward the concerns of the students. There were no questions for the dean.

### **4) Confirmation votes for Vice President and Treasurer of the GSO**

President Soule reported that the elected Treasurer, Miranda Moore (Economics), took a new job in Washington. By the power invested in him by the GSO constitution he appointed a temporary treasurer, Luigi Longobardi (Physics) instead.

A month ago the elected Vice President, Ruchi Gupta (Chemistry) has also taken a new job elsewhere and resigned. President Soule appointed Rob Gersch (Genetics) as VP instead.

President Soule asked the senate support for both nominations.

Both were approved unanimously.

### **5) Speaker Nomination**

President Soule called for nominations for speaker. Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics), the former president of the GSO nominated himself to be a speaker. Andrei explained why he is qualified for the job. He served as both the president and as the speaker before, and he feels he has the appropriate experience and qualifications to do the job well, and contribute in more than just leading the GSO senate meetings. The Senate approved

Andrei as the new GSO speaker unanimously, and he will join the executive committee as the new GSO speaker.

## 6) Committee Nominations

President Soule presented the different internal GSO committees and university committees, and asked the senators to volunteer. Here is the list of grad students that will take part in the different committees:

### a. University Senate:

- \* **University Senate Executive Council:** Rob Gersch (Genetics, president's designee)
- \* **University Senate:** Ryan Soule (MBA), Louis Esparza (Sociology), Luigi Longobardi (Physics), Rob Gersch (Genetics), Eran Shor (Sociology), Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics), Dan Woulfin (History), Lila Naydan (English), Dave Roelfs (Sociology), Devin Camenares
- \* **Administrative Review:** Winni Wang (AMS)
- \* **Campus Environment:** Ramona Walls (Ecology & Evolution)
- \* **CAPRA:** Devin Camenares
- \* **Computing & Communications:** Jeff Starks (English)
- \* **Graduate Council:** Ryan Soule (MBA), Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics)
- \* **Graduate Council Grievances & Appeals:** Kate Klein (Genetics)
- \* **Research Committee:** Devin Camenares
- \* **Student Life:** Jitao Tang (Economics)

### b. Additional University Wide Committees:

- \* **College of Arts and Sciences Academic Judiciary:** Kate Klein (Genetics)
- \* **Stony Brook Council:** Ryan Soule (MBA)
- \* **SUNY Assembly:** Noelle Cutter (Genetics), Dan Woulfin (History), Ryan Soule (MBA)
- \* **FSA Board of Directors / FSA Budget/Finance / FSA Dining/Retail:** Luigi Longobardi (Physics)
- \* **Housing Planning (HPAC):** Dan Woulfin (History)
- \* **Campus Recreation Center Advisory:** Xiaona Li (Marine Sciences)
- \* **Teaching/Learning/Technology:** William Joseph Lahti (Computer Science)
- \* **Smoking Subcommittee of the Campus Environment Committee:** Eran Shor (Sociology), Louis Esparza (Sociology)
- \* **Exclusive Beverage Bid:** Dan Woulfin (History)
- \* **Student Life Advisory Council:** Eran Shor (Sociology)

### c. GSO Committees:

- \* **Budget Committee:** Luigi Longobardi (Physics), Dave Roelfs (Sociology), Christopher Young (Materials Science), Melissa Patterson (Chemistry), Winni Wang (AMS), Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics – alternate).

- \* **Rules and Constitution Committee:** Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics), Dan Woulfin (History), Noelle Cutter (Genetics), Mark Rice (History), Devin Camenares
- \* **Board of Appeals Committee:** Louis Edgar Esparza (Sociology), John Christy (English), Helen Jolly (Anthropology)
- \* **Elections Committee:** Eran Shor (Sociology)
- \* **Housing Committee:** Dan Woulfin (History), Jitao Tang (Economics)
- \* **GSEU Representation:** Victor Rosado (Hispanic Languages & Literature), Winni Wang (AMS), Kira Schuman (History)
- \* **Social Concerns Committee:** Rob Gersch (Genetics), Dylan Selterman (Psychology), Xiaona Li (Marine Sciences), Kate Klein (Genetics)
- \* **GSELF Committee:** Jose Colmenares-Angulo (Materials Sciences), Susana Huidbora (Linguistics), Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics), Victor Rosado (Hispanic Languages & Literature), Rebekah Schiller (Physics)
- \* **Ad Hoc Refreshments Committee:** James Pearson (Art), Carrie Fleischer (English)

## 7) Committees reports

### a. Budget Committee:

Treasurer Luigi Longobardi reported: Starting next meeting there will be no approvals to fund initiatives that did not go through the budget committee first. Reported that two requests did go through this channel before the present meeting and were approved by the Budget Committee:

- I) Andrei Antonenko (linguistics) gave a presentation on the **linguistics department** request for funding of the third speaker in the Linguistics Speaker Series on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The department requested a funding of \$660 from the GSO (out of a total budget of \$1100 for the event). The proposal was unanimously approved by the senate.
- II) A representative from the **Hera Group** asked for funding for the lecture series on global warming. He asked for \$1100 from the GSO (out of \$2000 total). Treasurer Longobardi commented that the budget committee actually approved \$1300 before, and the current request was more moderate. The request was approved unanimously by the senate.

Treasurer Longobardi presented two other requests that were not formerly approved by the GSO Budget committee:

- I) The President of the Chinese Association Club asked the support of the GSO for the traditional Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival Party. The Chinese Association asked for \$2050 from the GSO (out of a total of \$2180 for the event). The President of the Association explained that this is the second most important Chinese holiday. Questions were raised about alternative funding sources. The

president replied and said that they have looked for such sources, but so far could not find any. The request was approved by the senate (24 senators supported; 1 abstained), but it was made clear that this is not the proper procedure, and in the future requests for funding MUST go through the Budget Committee first.

II) The President of the Indian Graduate Student Association (IGSA) also gave a presentation on the welcoming event for grad students that the association is organizing. The association asked for \$2650 from the GSO (the full budget for the event). The event includes games, food, music and prizes, and will be open to all Stony Brook grad students. Treasurer Longobardi explained that the GSO cannot fund the full amount, because according to the constitution it may not give more than \$200 for food. Speaker Antonenko commented that the request for funding to pay a fee to the SAC for hosting the event should also not be approved, as we have previously reached an agreement with the SAC that graduate student events will not be charged. Therefore, it was suggested that the GSO should only give \$1100 to the event. This motion was approved by the senate (24 senators supported; 1 abstained).

#### Budget Committee Report:

Treasurer Longobardi presented the budget for the coming year. The GSO enjoys quite a large surplus (about \$100,000) from previous years. The Budget Committee suggestions:

1. Reinvest some of the money (about \$30,000) in a saving plan.
2. Following former president Andrei Antonenko's suggestion from last year, use some of the money to bring over a well known speaker.
3. Increase RAP funding from \$250 to \$300 for the 2007-08 academic year.

Rebekah Schiller (Physics & Astronomy) suggested that some of the money should also go into helping new graduate students who have their first pay check delayed.

Vice President Gersch explained that the GSELF has actually already started working in this direction.

There was a motion to table the discussion on these proposals in the meanwhile.

Treasurer Longobardi will send an email asking senators for additional ideas, and the Budget Committee will discuss these ideas. This motion was unanimously approved by the senate.

#### **b. Housing committee:**

Dan Woulfin (History), GSO Housing Chair since 2005, introduced himself and reported on the advances for graduate housing over the course of the last year including the implementation of new maintenance policies regarding work orders and the inclusion of a date listed in the listings on FSA's Off Campus Housing website making it easier for grad students to find off campus housing. He's also been attending meetings about building new high end (and cost) apartments for graduate and medical students and their families. Dan has been in touch with the Schomburg Apartment Residence Association (SARA) and the Chapin Apartment Resident Association (CARA) about new funding rules to

make sure they are aware that they need to send a representative to the Housing Committee to receive their GSO allocation. Dan also has in his possession approximately 200 Tenants Rights Guides from the NYS Attorney General's office and will email the listserve to distribute them. Carrie, the GSO Office Manager, asked for ten copies of the Guides and Dan will drop them off

**c. Social Concerns Committee:**

Vice President Gersch reported: The committee has not met so far, so there is nothing to report at this point.

**d. Elections Committee:**

Secretary Shor reported that he will chair the committee in the spring. He also asked that senators who did not yet submit the necessary documentation showing that they are the legitimate representatives of their department do so ASAP.

**e. GSA (Graduate Student Advocate):**

Susana, the Graduate Student Advocate explained about her position. She is there for various issues that concern graduate students and will help with any individual issues and problems.

**f. GSEU:**

Victor Rosado (GSEU Business Agent) stressed the role of the GSEU as the representative of graduate TAs and GAs. He explained that the GSEU fights for larger stipends and better conditions for Stony Brook TAs and GAs. The GSEU is here to help grad students. The minimum rate for GAs and TAs for 2007-08 should be over \$15,145, which is a nice increase from last year, one of the largest increases in the history of the university. The GSEU will try in the future to improve conditions for RAs as well. The next meeting of the GSEU will be on October 4th, and Victor urged GSO senators to come to the meetings and be involved. This is the only way for us to keep improving our stipends and other conditions. There were questions about RA salaries. Some of the RAs get less than the minimum salary. Victor explained that RAs currently have no union and therefore cannot be legally represented by the GSEU at this point. However, he hopes that RAs will come together and form an organizing committee for RAs to form a union with GSEU's help.

**g. NYPIRG:**

The NYPIRG representative presented NYPIRG on Stony Brook. They have an important internship program, and Next week they will have their opening event. They are working on environmental issues and voter's registration and representation. The NYPIRG is located at the basement of the Student Union, room 079.

**h. GradMag:**

Eileen Chanza (GradMag Editor) presented the Graduate Student Magazine. She reported that lately she had some disagreements with GSO President Ryan Soule, and said that she feels that she cannot do her job properly because of that. She asked that the issue would be discussed in the senate. President Soule made a point of order that the GradMag issue

was already delegated to the Social Concerns Committee. Andrei Antonenko (Linguistics) motioned to give Eileen back her privileges on the site and to move the dispute to the Social Concerns Committee, which should also come up with a mission statement for the GradMag. This motion passed unanimously.

**8) New/old business**

No new or old issues were put forward. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eran Shor