

May 2, 2006 Senate Meeting Minutes

Meeting starts with 25 senators, 5 executive members.

1) Welcome remarks

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

- Meet & Greet party at the Café went very well.
- Graduate student legal services: started 2 weeks ago and all the appointment slots were booked. The students were satisfied, they gave a 4/5 ranking to our lawyer. The last clinic for the semester will be on May 17.
- The calls to fill the positions of the GSA and Survival Guide editor have been sent out, the deadline is May 5. Same for office manager, who will take over July 1.

2) Approval of the agenda and minutes

The agenda and the April 4 minutes are unanimously approved.

3) Election results

Dan Woulfin, History senator and Elections Committee Chair, presents the results, see relevant document. About 483 people voted and all referenda passed by a large margin. The executives for 2006-2007 will be Andrei Antonenko (president), Alton Frabetti (vice-president), Ryan Soule (treasurer) and Louis Esparza (secretary).

4) Budget Committee report

Anirban Dutta, GSO treasurer, presents the funding requests, see relevant documentation. The BC did not have quorum at their meeting last night, therefore they are not making any recommendation to the senate, they are just presenting the requests:

- o Schomburg students request \$330 for an event at the Schomburg Commons titled “Midnight Breakfast”. Miranda Moore, Economics senator and BC member, explains what the event will be about. Motion to approve the amount requested by Lisa Prazak, MCB senator, second by Kristin Ericson, Anthropology senator, vote: 23 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.
- o Chemistry students request \$160 for the “HERA Group Spring Lecture Series”. Someone from the group will show up after 7pm to give details. Motion to table the request until then by Ramona Walls, Ecology and Evolution senator, second by Danielle Royer, Anthropology senator, vote: 23 for, 0 against, 1 abstain, motion passes.

Anirban presents the final 2006-07 budget proposal, see relevant documentation. There is one important change: a new Internal GSO Functions line of \$150 is added for elections expenses, after Dan’s recommendation, which the executives approve. GSELF committee members ask if a small operating budget for the committee might be needed, for letter sending and similar expenses, but they can take this money from the office supplies line. Motion to approve the budget with the new elections line, by Ryan

Soule, Political Science senator, second by Ruchi Gupta, Chemistry senator, vote: 23 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.

5) Housing Committee report

Dan Woulfin, Housing Committee chair, presents the report:

- Reports on the surveys will be out next week. About 80 people replied to the on-campus housing one, the off-campus housing one is currently stuck with NYPIRG, but we will get the report out soon.
- There is a resolution that CARA needs GSO's help to push forward, about the construction of the Chapin Community Center. The executives have looked at it and approved it before the senate meeting. The students have already paid for the Center in the form of rent increase, but the project has not even started yet. Questions:
 - o What will the committee do with the resolution/who will it show it to?
 - It is a position GSO has to take and the HC will present the resolution to appropriate administrators in Campus Residences. How do the residents like the Community Center that already exists in Schomburg?
The proposed new one will not be like the existing Centers (both in Schomburg and Chapin), it will be a much larger facility, a whole building.

Motion to approve the resolution by Ramona, second by Melixa Abad-Izquierdo, History senator, passes unanimously.

Kris Baker, GSO Speaker and RCC chair, asks to move the committee report later, until copies of the documents arrive. Motion to move the RCC report down by Danielle, second by Andrew Farke, Anatomical Sciences senator, passes unanimously.

6) Social Concerns Committee report

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

- o Ramona presents the hotel construction survey results: about 334 people completed it and they seem split on the issue of the construction of a hotel on campus. But they clearly want an environmental study to be done before, and they are concerned about losing parking spaces (the majority wants an underground parking, if the University will not pay for it). A few people care about safety and alcohol consumption issues that a hotel might raise, they do not consider proximity to the hospital important and the opinions are split about traffic problems. From the comments, it can be found that only 5-8 people strongly support the construction, no matter what. Based on these results and the comments, the SCC proposes to the senate to sign a petition with 2 main points: (1) do not build a hotel at this particular site, but look for an alternative one and (2) finish the environmental master plan prior to any construction. There was no specific question about the location, but the comments show that people are concerned with it. Motion to sign the petition as is by Lisa, second by Alton Frabetti, Art History senator, vote: 22 for, 0 against, 2 abstain, motion passes.
- o An incident involving a female student being sexually harassed by a Lindy's taxi driver has been reported to the SCC. A police report was filed and we contacted Doug Little from the campus police for more information, but he could not come today to the senate meeting. The SCC will follow up with him.

7) RCC report

Kris presents the report:

- a) GSEU Liaison committee bylaws – see relevant documentation: changes were proposed by the committee to encourage GSEU involvement and define the responsibilities and actions of the committee a bit better. Dan Woulfin, member of the GSEU liaison committee, commends that the committee never voted on the exact wording. His comments:
 - i. we should expand the acronyms for Business Agent and Chief Steward if they are used at all.
 - ii. how do we define “leader”? Maybe we should also even get rid of the whole parenthesis enumerating the GSEU officers.
 - iii. the whole last sentence is redundant, but we should at least get rid of “monthly”

After discussion, the bylaws read as follows:

“ 2. The committee chair shall make sure that at least one GSEU campus officer is invited to every liaison committee meeting, if he or she is not already a member of the committee. The committee is also expected to follow GSEU activities by attending GSEU meetings, and report back to the Senate about them. “

Motion by Jada Hamilton, Psychology senator, to approve the bylaws as amended, second by Lisa, vote: 24 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.

- b) GSELF committee bylaws - see relevant documentation: Rob Gersch, Genetics senator and GSELF committee chair, presents the bylaws. The payback period for the loans will be 3 months, but it can be appealed. It is going to be enforced by blocking students’ accounts and other administrative measures. When the GSA is not available, the chair of the committee will approve loans, preferably by email, in order to be fast and have records. The committee meeting schedule and contact info will be promptly online. The applicants will be contacted via phone or email, and they can pick up their checks from the C&D agent. If the fund runs out, subsequent applications will be denied, it will be a first-come first-serve service. But there is a \$2k cap to any individual application to prevent this, and if applications come simultaneously, the GSA and the committee chair will have to handle the situation. Hopefully we will get matching donations from other offices on campus, to increase the fund to \$30k. Motion to approve bylaws as is by Ramona, second by Ruchi, vote: 24 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.
- c) The Standing Committee Bylaws have to be amended to include the GSELF committee. Motion by Andrew, second by Kristin, vote: 24 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.

8) New GSELF standing committee members nominations

Andrei nominates the current committee members after their request, and nobody else volunteers (the committee can have one more member): Ramona, Rob, Ruchi and Dumaine Williams, Pharmacology senator. Motion to approve members by Danielle, second by Andrew, vote: 24 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, motion passes.

9) GSEU liaison committee report

Ilektra Christidi, GSO secretary and GSEU committee chair, presents the report:

- The GSEU now has official campus officers: Victor Rosado is Stony Brook’s Business Agent and Mike Murphy is the Chief Steward.
- The Professional Development Funds checks are already late and are said to be released in June or so. The new officers are working on it with the administration, if someone is expecting a check they should contact them and arrange to file grievances if needed.

- The on-campus pharmacy is not covering prescriptions for NYSHIP members due a mix-up with the insurance company. The GSEU people are working on the case and they should have an answer by Friday. Until then TAs and GAs should be encouraged to fill their prescriptions off campus to avoid costs. Kristin will send a NYSHIP contact phone number to the senate list for people to use.

Isaac Pflaum the representative from HERA Group explains what the “HERA Group Spring Lecture Series” is and requests \$160 for it (see item (4) – funding requests). Motion to approve this amount by Dumaine, second by Kristin, passes unanimously.

10) Lounge Committee report

Miranda Moore, the LC chair, presents the report. The restructuring of the management and finances of the café is now in place. There is a lot of recognition for the café, and hopefully we can get the back room to expand in the Fall. It is not clear what exactly we will use that room for, but we could have a bar, hold catering events, games (we have a pool table but no place to put it for the moment), a sound room. There is administrative support to get this room. The lounge will close for about 2 weeks in the summer for renovations, and also most likely the week of July 4, but otherwise it will be open for the rest of the time. The LC is also working on getting permission to serve alcohol during the daytime and for that we have to show that the GSO/LC can have sufficient oversight for alcohol consumption during the summer.

11) New business

(a) Executive annual reports:

Andrei, outgoing president: it has been a good year for the GSO, it finally started working again after many years. All the committees were active and did a good job. We also got a number of new initiatives, the GSELF and the legal clinic.

Paul, outgoing vice-president: he was involved with the other executives in issues on campus (transportation, security), he thanks all the people in the committees he worked with.

Anirban, outgoing treasurer: a functional budget for the GSO has been drafted, he has worked closely with the FSA and LC, we changed our external auditor, started communication with the USG and other GSO’s treasurers. He participated in the GSELF and legal clinic initiatives and, together with Andrei, initiated the internal audit and drafted financial bylaws to make financial irregularities more difficult to happen in the future.

Ilektra, outgoing secretary: the basic responsibilities, taking the senate meeting minutes and keeping an updated senate list, have been taken care of. The senate has been promptly informed about issues through the list and we got an election committee that took care of the elections properly and on time. She participated with the other executives in all the initiatives that have been taken and started the communication with the GSEU through the liaison committee.

Kris, outgoing speaker: the senate meetings he has chaired have gone pretty well, the RCC has also worked well, especially drafting the financial bylaws. He thanks everybody for the cooperation.

(b) NYPIRG updates: Scott Zotto congratulates the newly elected GSO executives. Updates:

- Food drive during the next 2 Sundays off campus for local charities. People have been very generous up to now. It is a good opportunity to spend the last meal plan money by May 20.
- There has been a huge victory for higher education in Albany, the governor’s veto was overwritten, so negative measures will not go into effect for this year.
- Board elections for NYPIRG are going on today.

- Released the results of a survey on Long Island's playgrounds. The one in Chapin is excellent, but the SBS one is in very poor condition.
- (c) Ramona, the graduate student representative in the Campus Environment Committee, presents a report on the committee's activities.
- The campus environment cannot stand more parking spaces, the university is working on encouraging carpooling. A very good initiative is NURIDE, see relevant brochure or on the web.
 - They have been considering to change the current campus smoking policy (10ft away from buildings, 15ft away from hospital), as the committee's recommendations for educating the community more on the issue, did not satisfy the administration. They propose a campus-wide smoking ban, apart from designated places as a transition. There is a strong sentiment in favor of the ban in the committee, especially because it is already enforced in Albany medical school and there are plans to make it SUNY-wide, but if graduate students are strongly against it, she will vote against in the committee. The committee has not checked yet the legality of such a ban.

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