

February 8th 2005 GSO senate meeting minutes

The senate meeting was called to order at 6:00PM with four executives and 22 senators present. The speaker Andrei Antenenko made a request that since the secretary Satprem Reddy Pamadurthy was unable to attend the senate meeting, the Vice President Monica Shanthanelson be recognized as the secretary for the meeting. There was unanimous consent.

The following corrections are made to the agenda:

Committee reports

(d) Social Concerns Committee (Monicca)

New Business

(b) Rap-related fundraising (Jean Cadet)

(c) NYPRIG (Eric)

(d) I-Con Announcement (Greg)

(e) Soccer team announcement (Greg Jackson)

The agenda is approved unanimously. The December 7, 2004 minutes are approved unanimously as well.

Committee Reports

(a) Budget committee Report

The treasurer of GSO, Rong Su presented the budget committee report. She announced that three fourths of the C&D agent's fee has been paid so far. 50% of the RAP allocated money has also been spent. Greg Jackson, senator from history pointed out it is necessary to undertake fundraising efforts for raising money to go to conferences. Rong mentions that the engineering school, for the first time last year, has given GSO \$5000 towards RAP and that she hoped that the support will continue. Rong also presented the financial statements and auditor's reports for the fiscal year July 1, 2003- June 30, 2004. She announced that the GSO has surplus of \$35,890 as per the auditor's report.

The following funding requests were discussed.

- 1) Request to fund \$2900 for the Spring Festival party organized by SBCSSA and CARA. Representatives from the SBCSSA gave an introduction to the history and significance of the spring festival in the Asian calendar. A unanimous decision to approve \$2900 was made on condition that an email announcing the event is sent out to all graduate students through the senate list.
- 2) Request to fund \$749.90 for a lecture by Joan Silk organized by the department of behavioral ecology. A unanimous decision to approve \$749.90 was made.
- 3) Request for Tsunami relief fund donation.

The budget committee recommends donating \$500 towards the tsunami relief operations of either of the following organizations UNICEF, Red Cross International, Save the Children. The \$500 is to come from the surplus from last year.

The senate makes a unanimous decision to move new business item (a) Tsunami relief steering committee report before the third funding request. Prasanna Kumar Thoguluva-Santharam gave the report. The steering committee has been instigated in the university to oversee the contributions made by different groups on campus towards tsunami relief operations. Prasanna mentioned that information on the different ways to help, the events and lectures related to tsunami, the steering

committee etc is available at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/tsunami/index.shtml> In answer to a question about the functioning of the committee from the senate floor, Prasanna clarified that the committee merely oversees and coordinates efforts throughout the campus. The individual groups make a direct contribution to their relief organization of choice. The steering committee does not act as a middleman.

A unanimous decision is made to move committee report item (b) lounge committee report before a decision about the tsunami relief donation is made.

(b) Lounge Committee Report

Chad Bender, the chair of the lounge committee gave the lounge committee report. Chad clarified that the \$5251.65 café loss seen for the month of December does not reflect the loss during December alone but instead simply means that the FSA was billed during December for expenses from the previous months. Rong mentions that the café, if it makes profits, could be used to raise additional funds for RAP. Chad in response said that the Café was a non-profit organization. It was subsidized to make the prices competitive for the graduate students and that it was not realistic to expect the café to make profits. He said that the university rules also prohibit the café from becoming a complete commercial operation liable to making huge profits. Chad also announced that the café is organizing a benefit concert for raising money to contribute to tsunami relief. He therefore suggested that the GSO wait to see how much the café collects before making an additional \$500 donation to the tsunami relief fund.

A motion to table donation of \$500 towards tsunami relief fund until the next senate meeting was made. 8 voted in favor, 12 against and one abstained. The motion failed. Another motion to donate \$500 from the surplus towards tsunami relief fund to Save the Children was made. 19 senators voted in favor, none opposed and 2 abstained. The motion passed.

(c) Graduate Student Advocate report was not presented as the Graduate Student Advocate Smitha Fatima did not attend the senate meeting.

(d) Social Concerns Committee Report

Monicca Shanthanelson, the chair of the Social concerns committee presented the report. Monicca announced the faculty-student relations survey was now complete. SCC designed this survey in response to several concerns students raised to the SCC about graduate student rights, the treatment given to graduate students, and their place in the campus community. The survey is aimed to identify both the positive and negative aspects of graduate student issues related to their advisors, programs, thesis work, contract terms and the like.

The survey has 25 multiple-choice questions related to advisors, issues with basic student rights, thesis work, procedures involved in filing complaints, contract terms and also has 5 demographic questions. The survey is available at <http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/Clubs/gso/#>. The results from the survey will be presented as a

report to all graduate students through the senate list, the graduate council, University Senate (the faculty and staff government), the GSO senate and to President Kenny. The survey will be available online at the GSO website for three weeks, starting February 14 through March 7, 2005. Monicca requested all the senators to make their constituents aware of the survey and to encourage them to complete it.

New Business

(b) Rap related fund raising.

Jean Cadet, senator from the department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics made the announcement. Jean stressed the importance of general campaign in the university about RAP and necessity for increasing funds for it. He suggested that the GSO consider the possibility of setting up an account with the Stony Brook Foundation for the purposes of accepting gifts as well as providing the employees with the option of a bi-weekly deduction from their pay checks towards the GSO RAP fund. There was general consensus in the senate that this was a valid idea and Rong Su promised that the issue will be pursued.

(c) NYPIRG

Representatives from NYPIRG announced that the senate-approved petition to the governor to prevent decreasing funding for higher education was presented in Albany. They announced that students interested in the issue should contact the NYPIRG office to become more involved.

(d) I-Con Announcement

The announcement was not made, as the representative from I-Con did not attend the senate meeting

(e) Soccer team Announcement

Greg Jackson, senator from history made the announcement. Greg announced that a soccer team was being formed on campus. Anybody interested in playing could contact Greg.

Miranda Moore made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.