



STONY BROOK GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION
SENATE MEETING
Apr. 10, 2018

Agenda

1. Approval of March senate minutes

- Approved

2. Approval of April meeting agenda

- Approved

3. Vote on Constitutional Amendment

- David Purificato: As part of the constitution committee, we discussed all the potential problems we expected in the past, and how can be potentially solve it for the future. We are proposing these changes
- These changes were emailed to you days before
- The senate has to know at least 10 days before the next Senate meeting, in order to vote the VP
- That way, the senators can look closer, at the different nominees
- Senator 20: Page 6, it's not very explicit
- David: Yes it is. It is just referring to the other document. But that it is a very good point.
- Senator 10: Are you talking about all bylaws?
- David: Yes
- Roger: Let's vote on these constitution changes. Those who approved, please raise your cards. Luigi, please count the numbers
- Roger: Only primary senators please

- Luigi: 0 votes opposed, 0 votes abstain
- Roger: Changes passed

David:

- The next changes are regarding the elections, before, the “write-in” candidates all they had to do was win an election, now, we want to give the power back to the senate
- Senator: Why unofficial transcripts?
- Luigi: The unofficial are the same as the official, except they are free and they are not sealed.
- Roger: Let's vote on this
- Senator 10: Wait, I have a question regarding the “validation” of the official candidates
- David: Yes, the language its all over the place. Eligibility to be confirmed is done by the elections committee. From now on, the write ins need to be confirmed by the senate
- Roger: Ok, let's all thank David

Senate Applause

4. Vote on Bylaws Amendment

- Luigi: Please raise your cards
- Senate: Approved

New Topic on the Agenda (last minute)

- Roger: We are adding something to the agenda. Camila and Irvin.

- Irvin: Hello guys, we are members of a grassroots organization that promotes voting registration. Midterm elections have really poor turnout. Having students involved in policy. Since 2012 voting turnout has increased among students. Especially, undergraduates. Stony Brook had the highest turnout for voting, in the 2016 elections. We need to see if we can expand this success to graduate students
- Irvin: Students that move in August, or anytime in the summer, are eligible to vote. We are a non-partisan group. It will be nice if GSO can be a central organizer. Camillia and I are going to talk everywhere about voting registration training. And to have more organization within the graduate school. Please email me or Mala, who is a fellow senator in the neurobiology program
- Senator: Will this committee start in the fall?
- Irvin: It can start during the summer, or asap
- Camilo: I think the PAC can help in this, and I personally volunteer to help with this
- Camillia: We do have some chairs that are willing to help in this. Many professors want to help.
- Senator: What will the actual organization focus on?
- Irvin: We are non-partisans. We just want to build the momentum that midterm elections are a good time for change. If anybody has suggestions, please do not be bias for one part or the other one
- Roger: Let's thank Camillia and Irvin for coming and speaking

5. President's report

- Ramiro:
- We have a meeting with the Provost and Dean Kaushansky to talk about the TA/GA lines, and to secure that the NY State budget doesn't affect graduate

students. We are working very hard in this. The NY State budget was already approved.

- The second big problem we have is the fees increase. Actually, in May, its the budget cuts season. So far, we had a meeting with the Dean of Students and the Director of Financial services. Everybody knows that an email was sent, and mislead/misinform the graduate community since it suggested that the GSO was extensively consulted in this report. We are going to raise the topic that we are not happy about the email sent. Next year, the proposed increase will be \$88 for the technology fees, and \$56 for the health fee. None of this is confirmed. I cannot tell you this officially. The only way to fight this is to make sure we have a coherent front. Also, next year we are going to be more proactive regarding the fees. Later, we are going to talk about this.
- There are other topics: We are working on setting up standard operating procedures (SOP) to help future EC to perform these procedures.
- We are also in the process of renovating the web page
- With the creation of the PAC position, we have a better and stronger presence in all the committees. We need to increase that and work in advance.
- All the senators that are in the committees must be more involved in proactive.
- Last topic I want to raise is the apathy to run for GSO positions. This year, we only had 1 student running for every position. We must take into account that we have a budget of almost 700K.
- We have to find a way to solve this and increase participation, I propose to arrange this by (1) decreasing the workload for each positions, especially VP and Treasurer, (2) increase the number for EC positions, and finally (3) to seriously consider to increase the payment/stipend/salary for all EC positions, especially the treasurer.
- Senator 27: I will be happy to share the information I have with all the graduate students. I can share this information in a poll to all the senators. And all the

senators can forward this poll to all the students in their departments. It is really easy. Hopefully, by tonight, you can have it send out.

- Senator Abraham: How much money will you increase each EC position?
- President Ramiro: I think the Treasurer should be the priority position to receive the increase. The objective is to reduce the workload, reduce responsibilities, and increase the stipend of all positions
- Senator: It would be good if we could mandate a stronger and more clarification regarding the fees situation. We could collect student's signatures
- Ramiro: Yes, we can show that the day of the meeting to them. And say, this is what the students are thinking. We could also demand a detailed explanation of why you would want to increase the technology and health fees. We are happy to represent whatever students feel and think (as long as it's not something crazy) to the administrators
- Senator Bertus: So, fees again, I am very skeptical that the administration listens or cares, we had the same issue last year.
- Ramiro: This year, we are going to push for to stop the fee increase, but if not, we are going to demand ways that these paid services can better utilized by the graduate population. My hope is that we can come up with a fair agreement
- Senator Bertus: I think we can make mandatory that everybody that wants to run for an EC position, should come to the fees meeting, that way we can have consistency between the current and the new E-board.
- Ramiro: That is a good idea. But, there are things we cannot do by election processes, such as hiring a new person for the website.
- Senator Amanda: There was a technology fees poll that was sent out last meeting
- Ramiro: Please, can you send to Luigi, so he can send to the senators
- Senator Amanda: I have been seating in those technology meetings, and I have advocated that graduate students do not use the technology services the same

way undergraduates do. I am not sure they are happy to listen to graduate students

- Senator: What is the alternate plan if they increase fees?
- Ramiro: We can propose some kind of mobilization
- Roger: I would propose to encourage to not pay the fees, but that's just an idea
- Ramiro: Honestly, my hope is that we can get something reasonable.
- Senator Mariola: Every year, since 2012 the fees have increased. In 2012 I used to pay \$300 for the fees. Over the last 6 years they increased that. We are paying now \$900. This goes against SUNY guidelines. There has not been any opposition. We need to petition to SUNY to not do this. We have to present that this is a consistent strategy executed by the administration. I think we should go our boss's boss. They are not going to listen if we scream and shout. We need to go above them
- Ramiro: I personally spoke with the chairperson of the SUNY system about this.
- Camilo: We can 2 strategies; we can say (1) we do not want to pay for the fees, or (2) we can demand that the services to be better utilized by everyone. I think we need to decide on one specific strategy. I am happy to discuss alternative to policy
- Senator: Each senator should speak for what each of our department needs to do
- Senator Mariola: We need to stop supporting the administration and the President
- Senator from Philosophy: My understanding is that administration has put us on a whole in the last 2 years. So, we should write a letter saying we will not pay fees until our requests are demanded.
- Senator Mariola: I am graduating in December, I cannot choose to not pay fees
- Senator Abraham: The administration does not know this information (itemized services of the fees), and in order to get that information it will take too much work so they will not do it.

- Ramiro: I think this year they have no choice but to tell us this information
- Senator Abraham: Can we hire an outside law company to lawsuit for that? And demand to get it?
- Roger: I do not think anything will come out of that meeting
- Senator Mariola: Thank you for that positive spin
- Ramiro: We need to try to get first the itemized distribution of the fee services. Without that, we cannot move forward.
- Roger: Ok, too much time, we need to move on

6. Vice President's report

- Talbot: There is an GSEU meeting tomorrow, and they will be discussing the professional development funds and the elections. Next Friday there will be a paint night. We will not be competing against undergraduates. There is also going to be a BBQ on May 2nd. And, I wanted to draw your attention to a nice updated website. Please check it out, the information is really important.
- Roger: Please go and support your peers at the 3 Minute Thesis this Friday at the Wang Center. There will be many graduate students that were trained by the Alan Alda Center.

7. Treasurer's report

- Roger: This report will be explained by Talbot, not Karen.
- Talbot: Great, I am now Karen Wishnia talking about this. The budget committee approved many things. Here is the information about these things. We have several social/cultural events. Many programs ask for different things. We approved most of the events.
- Roger: does the PA program actually pay for the fees?

- Luigi: Yes, they do
- Senator Chikako: Has the information of these programs available online?
- Talbot: Yes, we will put this information on our websites. Any notifications of this event please email it to Luigi and Luigi will pass it down to all senators
- Luigi: I will do it, just like I did with the music department events that I forwarded to everyone

8. Secretary's Report

- Thanks for maximum assistance today, I am sure sending the email about cutting temporarily the funds of some departments, actually worked.

9. Policy Action Committee report

- Camilo: I would like to confirm and corroborate that we do not take participation on an extensive consultation with the administration, like it was wrongly stated in the email. Therefore, I would like to let you know that there was no communication between the GSO and Dean Gatteau. This was put in the agenda for the meeting with President Stanley. These fee proposals did not go through the student life committee of the senate, which was also wrong doing
- Camilo: The dean of the library has requested a meeting with us. They are chopping their budget. They are looking on reducing the number of journal requests the library has. Also, they are trying to promote the development of open source materials. They are inviting faculty to help develop teaching source materials. We mention that many graduate students are interested in helping to developing these online teaching programs.
- Senator Mariola: They are cutting the only thing that graduate students use and need
- Camilo: That is correct

- Ramiro: This topic is very particular; they have an inflation of 50 to 55% a year
- Senator Mariola: We need access to these journals as students and employees. This allocation is shameful
- Roger: I think the goal of the library is to supplement the technology fees. I think some of the fees goes to other services we do use. We can invite Patricia from DoIT to come here. We can also invite Melissa Woo which is from IT. \
- Senator Mariola: We should include on our resolution too
- Roger: Show up next month if you guys want to voice your opinions regarding what we are paying for
- Luigi: Please talk to your students, figure out what you want GSO to spend their money and then email me your requests
- Senator 16: I sent an email asking for a committee to decide what we should do with the Speaker Series event. It will be great if we send surveys, we gather data, and we email to students our data-driven decision of what we are going to do with the money.
- Roger: We do need to talk about the elections.
- Ramiro: David, can you please talk about what we are doing next year?

10. New Business (Elections)

- David: Please, all the candidates come to the front and present your platform

Introductions

- David: For Treasurer, Qing.
- Qing: I am a senator from health and rehabilitation sciences. I want to revisit all the policies regarding finances. As the chair of the budget committee, I will be involved in certain initiatives and programs that will help the majority of the students. I will really appreciate your support.
- David: For Secretary, Luigi

- Luigi: Since I am competing for the same position that I am doing now, since I know what triggers you and what affects you. I am going to get rid off the entire garbage of the committees. I am just going to summarize all the committee work into 6 committees:
 - Voting committee
 - Safety committee
 - International committee
 - Technology committee
 - Health committee
 - Social issues committee
- I will also fight to not get the speaker series, and record attendance every meeting

- David: For VP, James
- James: I will make sure the rooms for the senate meetings will be closer, such as the SAC. I will continue to work with the programs, make them better and more exciting

- David: For President, Karen
- Karen: I think we need to increase our advocacy in general. I think there are very good initiatives. I think if we have 8 meetings a year, we should be passing 8 strong resolutions. I think we need to have more records, better organization of both in house and how to we approach our administration relations.

- David: Any questions?
- Senator: To Qing, how do you feel about the underpaid position of GSO?
- Qing: I know about the workload, and as long as I decided to do it, then it will be ok.

- Bertus: To James, what are you going to do about the attrition of the VP position?
- James: I definitely do know what I am putting myself up for. I think I have good time management skills and I will work very hard to deliver and maintain the position for the year.
- David: Any other questions:
- David: I would like everyone to thank our official candidates

11. Adjourn

- Ramiro: One more thing, one more issue. Every 2 years, there must be a vote regarding if we make the fee mandatory or voluntary. So, please encourage all your students to vote. It is very important. We need to have the winning vote to be “yes” so we can even have a GSO next year.
- Roger: Please, keep in mind that DTA applications are due soon
- Roger: Next meeting is May 8th
- Roger: Motion to end the meeting

- Senate: Approved
- Roger: Meeting adjourned