



GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

University of Connecticut

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes 13 March 2013

- I. Called to Order at 7:02 pm.
- II. Recognition of Attendees
 - a. Present: Chantelle Messier, Leland Aldridge, Safet Berisa, Erin Eighan, Ian Yue. Absent: Anish Kurian. Presiding: Chantelle Messier, Secretary: Erin Eighan.
- III. Approval of Minutes: 27 February 2013
 - a. Approved.
- IV. Officer Reports
 - a. Treasurer – Ian Yue
 - i. SAGE Special Allocation Request
 1. No update.
 2. Recommendation: Postpone discussion and vote until the next meeting.
 - ii. LingClub Special Allocation Request: ECO5
 1. Graduate students will be the only ones presenting.
 2. No registration fee.
 3. At the moment, only linguistics students are presenting but they are sending out another call for proposals. Two of the people from Maryland that will be presenting are doing work in psychology, as well.
 4. Dinner is usually only given for the speakers of the conference. Breakfast will consist of coffee and bagels and is open to everyone. Lunch is open to everyone.
 5. Roughly 15 presenters for the conference.
 6. Will also be advertised on the Grad listserv; the psychology, philosophy, cognitive science listservs; and through fliers.
 7. Leland: My main concern is with the dinner portion because only a very small number of graduate students will benefit from it.
 8. Chantelle: I'm also concerned with the dinner funding. Would we normally fund taking speakers out to dinner?
 9. Ian: Yes, but they have to make sure that whoever wants to come can come.
 10. Recommendation: Increase the funding for breakfast by \$50. Do not fund dinner because we can't guarantee accessibility.
 - iii. Writing Center Special Allocation Request: Graduate Student Writing Retreat



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1. Chantelle: I wonder about when in the past we have funded a unit of the University, not graduate students. So I'm not clear on how consistent this is with our policies. I don't want us to get in the position of stepping in and funding a unit of the University. A co-sponsored event seems more in line with what we do.
 2. Leland: As an executive committee function, it would have to be run like one. We would have to have a hand in the planning.
 3. Ian: If we fund the event, how would it change?
 4. With GSS support, would be able to enroll more graduate students. It would be co-sponsorship with GSS.
 5. The grad school has been pretty receptive to contributing to the event, but they're working to build this relationship further.
 6. Ian: Would you be budgeting for these types of events next year? Or would there be special funding requests again?
 - a. Representative: The Writing Center is funded through the Center for Undergraduate Education (CUE), so funding graduate events is difficult. So we would continue to pursue special funding until we can navigate graduate student demand better.
 7. Recommendation: Fund both the March and April events in full based on the framework of a co-sponsorship.
- iv. Finance Committee
1. Have made two rounds of budget cuts already.
 2. One member of the finance committee has resigned. Therefore we will be holding an election at the next Senate meeting to fill his spot.
- v. Ordered a new printer that should be coming in over spring break.
- b. Parliamentarian – Leland Aldridge
- i. Joint Elections
 1. At-Large elections
 - a. Problem with the voting procedure. Could only choose one on the form when you should have been able to choose up to six.
 - b. Procedures Committee is in the process of certifying the results of the At-Large elections
 2. Grad Activity Fee Increase Referendum
 - a. Results: 45% (192) in favor, 55% (231) against.
 - ii. Constitution, Article V, Section 1



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1. The Executive Committee is elevated above the standing committees, but they are closer to equal to each other than we have mostly been treating them.
 2. In terms of responsibilities, the Executive Committee is charged with recommending a budget to the Senate, preparing an agenda to the senate meetings, appointing committee representatives, and facilitating communication among senators and between constituencies. It can also request reports from committees, appropriate expenditures according to the FPP, etc.
 3. As long as an issue is not about spending money, the other issues should be primarily handled by the appropriate standing committees. The Executive Committee does have the authority to request a report on a certain topic from any of those committees. So in order for this system to work, we need strong standing committees.
 - a. Chantelle: We also would need really wide-spread series time commitment from people who wouldn't be getting any recompense for their work.
 - b. Leland: Would it be consistent to have the standing committees take on more of the roles they are responsible for, yes, but that would require a cultural change.
 4. The Constitution describes the responsibilities/authorities of the officers, while the Bylaws describe the responsibilities/authorities of the standing committees. There is a lot of overlap and Leland doesn't think this is optimal because it makes it unclear who has the proper authority to make the decisions and at what time.
 5. Standing committees do have their own spheres of authority. In those spheres there's no need at all to clear things with the Executive Committee. In practice that's how it works. It's good to come back and get opinions, but there is room for independent action.
 6. A committee doing fact-finding in the pursuit of its mission is absolutely in the scope of their authority. It would be a consideration towards the Executive Committee to share their plans but not necessary.
 7. Chantelle: I'd like to continue this conversation at a future Exec meeting when all of Exec can be present.
- iii. Nominations for next year's Executive Committee will open next GSS meeting.
 - iv. Recommendation about the proposed changes to FPP 3.2.1.



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1. Based on the idea that it is a messy change to the rules, that it has never come up as an issue before, and that this is coming up so late in the year, Chantelle would support a recommendation against the FPP amendment.
2. As the chair of the Executive Committee, Chantelle should propose this recommendation to the Senate.
3. Leland moves that the Executive Committee recommend against the adoption of GSS 12/13-18. Seconded.
 - a. VOTE: PASSES.
- c. Activities Director – Anish Kurian
- d. Secretary – Erin Eighan
 - i. Orientation to GSS at the beginning of the academic year?
 1. University Senate does have this and holds it the hour before the first meeting
 2. Could have old Exec members help out with the orientation
 - ii. Public Relations Committee
 1. Fee Increase Campaign Update
 - a. Ran into some stumbling blocks in the Grad Listserv email announcement, but was able to send one out on the final day.
 2. University Fee Survey Results – Analysis
 - a.
 3. Survey Client Upgrade
 - a. Have access to 235 responses (before an email reminder sent out), but 175 so far are locked, 43% of the 410 respondents.
 - b. We can access the surplus responses if we upgrade to the Professional service. The upgrade would cost \$180 (with a nonprofit/education discount), and it is an annual fee. The additional services offered include: 5000 survey responses/month; unlimited questions per survey (free version is limited to 10); detailed report services (immensely valuable when working with complex data); ability to export data, share results, create report filters, invite participants directly via email; custom redirect after the survey; SSL support for all content; and custom CSS styles.
 - i. GAIN survey used Survey Monkey.
 - ii. Student Life Survey was done through Student Affairs. Everything is completely free. They put it together and



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send it out. The only drawback is that it is less quick and less analysis.

iii. Google Forms is another option, but it isn't secure.

iv. Ian recommends that PR Committee look for a monthly subscription or other options through Polldaddy.

c. I would recommend upgrading if we have room for it in the budget. This could be a really valuable tool for GSS to gauge the perspective of the graduate community on a variety of issues. This will be especially helpful as we rely on the blog more heavily because these surveys can be integrated into the blog directly.

iii. Rec Center Survey

1. If we thought we could get results quickly, it would be useful thing to do. If implementing it, it would have to be implemented very quickly.
2. Send out a confirmation email to Exec to review in 24 hours.
3. If it isn't hard to do, consider adding a "\$35+" category for
4. Write a new survey using Google forms. Ian will get that on Google forms.

iv. Committee Report Form Update

1. The Developer application on Word does not allow me to change the default setting of the "date" form to today's date.
2. Could change it to be text, not date.

e. Vice President – Safet Berisa

i. LingClub Appeal

1. The Senate can change the amount or not accept the appeal.
2. Exec can make a recommendation to change the amount.
3. Leland: The main concern of the Finance Committee was that this seemed to be a large scale conference that was moving around the Northeast region and we assumed that there was some sort of organization behind it.
 - a. The actual organization is supported only by the hosting institution. All the funding and organization are internal to UConn.
4. Leland: I would then consider that material information that the Finance Committee did not have access to and would support the appeal on those grounds.
5. VOTE: Appeal considered valid by unanimous consent.



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6. Leland: If Safet will speak to this, what will the travel money be used for?
 - a. Travel accommodations for three (possible four, if confirmed) keynote speakers for a three-day long conference.
 - b. Leland: That's about \$1300/person, \$700/night for hotel, etc.?
 - c. It might be useful to be able to speak to the contractual services and service fees when presented to the GSS.
 7. Ian: Based on the idea that this was a professional conference, is it an appropriate use of graduate funds to fly people to the conference? Is it possible to offer free admission to UConn students and charge everyone else?
 8. Leland: Do you know what the anticipated breakdown will be between UConn grads and other grads?
 - a. Entirety of the linguistics department and at least 10 students from the psych department; roughly 40 students from UConn. Total 100 or so graduate students.
 9. Ian: Even offering a very reduced rate for the first 50 people would make me feel more comfortable with the accessibility issue.
 10. Leland: Financial accessibility is part of that.
 11. Leland: My feeling is that this bottom line amount is in line with other requests for UConn grad-student organized conferences that we have been more or less okay with. I would just say that when the representative shows up at the GSS meeting to talk about this appeal, he should plan to be pushed on what these contractual services are and what the plans for registration fees are. But other than that, I don't have any desire to change the bottom line number at this time.
 12. Ian would agree.
- f. President – Chantelle Messier
- i. Send out a poll about the professional development symposium.
 1. Erin will give Chantelle access to the Polldaddy account.
 2. Ian suggests sending the survey out to all those who registered, not just those who signed in.
 - ii. Vice Provost for Student Affairs
 1. Would anyone be willing to represent us on this search committee? They're looking to start soon and are pressing Chantelle about it.
 - iii. Rec Center



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1. Daily Campus article claims that there will be town hall meetings in the month of April and that it will be presented before the Board of Trustees on April 24. This was not communicated in any form to graduate students. Though Chantelle can't find any confirmation. Kent was also unable to confirm.
 2. Amy Donahue has yet to answer Chantelle's emails about this topic. We should ALL be looking out for this information. Chantelle is particularly concerned about spring break, when the Administration historically has organized town hall meetings for controversial projects.
 3. We should also strongly organize representation at the Board of Trustees meetings and town hall meetings.
 4. Chantelle's next step will be to ask Rose if she knows more information about any of this.
- iv. Update on Parking
1. The University would have to purchase X lot to build the Rec Center. They have purchased Farmer Brown lot. Starting this past Monday, it has been open to Area II and commuter permit holders. That's expected to take some of the pressure off of parking.
- v. Ombuds Officer
1. Chantelle can't find any information yet that can answer the question about their relationship with graduate students. Chantelle has contacted the Office for Audit, Compliance, and Ethics for this information. Her next step would be to ask Kent to get through the proper channels to get to the President's Office.
- vi. Report of the Special Committee on Professional Development
1. Please see attached proposed constitutional and bylaws amendments in the addendum.
 2. There seems to be a pretty clear mandate coming from our constituents for professional development help through the Senate, the University Fee survey, and the feedback from the Professional Development Symposium.
 3. It requires a full-time officer position to run the kinds of events that Chantelle, herself, has been running the past two years. If we had a full-time person to do this, we could hold more events. A full-time person can do this all year.
 4. Safet: The work here is not complete. The Finance Policies and Procedures would also have to be amended.



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5. Leland: It would be disruptive to change the structure of the budget for next year, but moving forward it's not going to be sustainable to have the new amendments that were proposed at the last GSS meeting.
6. Safet: Finance Policies and Procedures should be amended in addition. First the constitution should be amended, then the bylaws and the finance policies and procedures.
7. Anish: We're in the budgeting process now. Creating a brand new position and filling that position may be an issue this late in the year. My personal opinion would be to take this next year to share some responsibility with organizing the Professional Development events. Trying to get this done by the end of the year might be too fast. There are practical problems like where does the budget come from.
8. Ian: Both Professional Development symposiums were under special allocation. In the "cap" of Anish's activities budget, I've asked Anish to leave room for a professional development category. The second thing is that I want to understand is what you're asking us to assess.
9. Chantelle: The kinds of feedback we're getting here is useful to assessing the obstacles that we're going to face should this position move forward. Does Exec believe in this position, in making professional development a special allocation?
10. Ian: Are you asking us for whether we are in support of going forward with this position?
11. Chantelle: That is one of the things I'm asking, yes.
12. Anish: The impression that I get is that the point of the amendments is to try to make something official by the end of the semester.
13. Chantelle: The first question for Exec, is this a direction GSS should pursue? What is the timeline and procedure? It is sufficient right now to see whether or not this is the direction to move and then start assessing what the timeline should be.
14. Leland: Yes, this is a direction we should go.
15. Anish: Yes, I agree. I am a little concerned exactly what they would do.
16. Chantelle: One of the thoughts was a business etiquette lunch event. Other examples would be more focused workshops.
17. Anish would recommend that we continue the special committee efforts next year while we figure out the technicalities of implementation.



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18. Leland: I just request that any final plans do include an explicit timeline for implementation, considering when elections are, when the Board meets.
 19. Chantelle: Would you all think it wise to take these concerns back to the special committee?
 20. Leland: One additional thing.
 21. Chantelle: The only thing I would say in counter for the concerns about the timeline is that I have been piloting this for two years. So we have been testing out these events and collecting feedback and research. So I don't want us to forget that just because we haven't had a person with a title doing these things, that we haven't been making efforts towards a pilot program. I don't think there's a lack of studying the potentials or results.
 22. Leland: One thing we could possible do is form the position and have it be a zero-budget position for the first year. For that year it can be firmied up and they can fund themselves out of special allocations for the next year.
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- V. Prepare Agenda for the Next Meeting
 - VI. Adjournment at 10:11 pm.