

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

University of Connecticut

Agenda 12 March 2014

- I. Call to Order at 7:05pm.
- II. Recognition of Senators
- III. Special Guest/Speaker
- IV. Approval of Minutes: 19 February 2014 approved
- V. Unfinished Business

VI. New Business

- a. Finance Committee Elections Matt Bowman resigned and we have an opening, cannot come from Psychology, Computer Science Engineering, Business, or Physics. If you want to join, we already agreed on which times we are having, week after spring break
- b. Senator DuPont: I would do it but I can't make those times, I can make it for partial times
- c. Treasurer Beriša: During these times are when lots of things are going to be happening, those are the times we need to meet, partial times won't work
- d. Leland Aldridge: can the finance committee still function if they are down a member?
- e. Parliamentarian Gutierrez : yes
- f. Constitutions and Bylaws
 - i. 13/14-14: That the Graduate Student Senate adopt the proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Graduate Student Senate, as presented by Parliamentarian Gutierrez to the assembled Senate on February 19th, 2014, and that the adopted amendments take effect on May 13th, 2014.
 - 1. Senator DuPont: are we going to divide up each amendment?
 - 2. Parliamentarian Gutierrez : we can if the motion is made to do so, alternatively you can amend an amendment
 - 3. Motion passes
 - ii. 13/14-15: That the Graduate Student Senate adopt the proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Graduate Student Senate, as presented by Parliamentarian Gutierrez to the assembled Senate on February 19th, 2014, and that the adopted amendments take effect on May 13th, 2014.



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- 1. Leland Aldridge: given that at large senators are initially elected by student body, unclear who it is
- 2. Parliamentarian Gutierrez : intention is that active senators in GSS would be active senators, if someone wants to make a motion
- 3. Senator Flaig: how come treasurer gets a pay and no one else does
- 4. Vice President Mollmann: he does a lot of work
- 5. Parliamentarian Gutierrez : it is merited
- 6. Senator DuPont: can I make a motion to amend that the senators will be electing the at large senators
- 7. Leland Aldridge: make sure that it is from the graduate student senators
- 8. Motion passes
- 9. Senator DuPont: motion to accept everything but the thing regarding treasurer to be discussed on separately
 - a. Motion passes
- Senator DuPont: I think we vote it down because I don't agree with this, Motion to remove these motions from it and discuss
 - a. Seconded
- 11. Senator DuPont: I think we need to discuss this as a body, this is changing a bylaws, it is based prestige, this is service and the treasurer should not be making as much as the president
- 12. Senator Flaig: I think I recall increasing the pay for Treasurer, when was the last time that pay increases were made
- 13. Senator Doran: it first was my first semester in the senate, about 3 years ago?
- 14. Senator San Pedro: Constitution is structured, depending on how many hours you invest there is a clause about members who give time above and beyond, treasurer above all has to meet with every student we give money too, it is a lot of time and hours, it is a lot of time to sit through
- 15. Senator Lovelace: maybe it would help to have a clear justification to where the 1200 number comes from, I feel like it is completely justified



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- 16. Parliamentarian Gutierrez : believe that the treasurer does as much if not more than the president, demands a lot of time, not to mention the responsibility of managing GSS' finances, we had a discussion representing a pay increase to be making more than the president, personally don't think this is an outrageous decision
- 17. Secretary Wong: I have personally seen how much I make based on the hours I put in, \$2.05. If you look at Safet he gets pennies if not negative money if you were to break it down
- 18. Senator Tomaszewski : this is not compensation for prestige, we are trying to pay the treasurer money for how much work he does
- 19. Senator Doran: I can attest to how much time Treasurer Berisa, spends in the GSS office, Treasurer Berisa should be getting a raise based on his work and on past treasurers work. It is a demanding position, don't know who is running for treasurer, definitely don't shoot this down this is necessary
- 20. Assistant Dardani: I really just have been in the office for two weeks, obvious from the start how much work he has been doing and it is legitimate,
- 21. Leland Aldridge: Derek covered what I mentioned, Treasurer Berisa is not giving himself a raise, it will going into effect next year, also were starting to bring in 6\$ per graduate student more, in terms of taking away money from Tier II groups, this is a fraction, and a lot more money will be given
- 22. President Charrette: I view it as USG does not pay officers, run for USG want the prestige, clearly all have economic interest in unionizing, not until it was a perceived economic interest, difficult for someone because it is difficult, need to be communicating, dealing with a lot of money, if you mishandle it can get into some degree of trouble, need to get people to do this and an incentive, academic service like faculty do, this is the same



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- 23. Senator DuPont: obviously I am in the big minority, understand but if that is your argument then why don't you pay them by the hour, I don't think the treasurer should be paid as much as the President, Senators do not get paid and have to meet, this is service and contribution to the university, they are not economic positions, should not get paid at all, reward them and give money for their service, personal pride and drive
- 24. Senator Makray: how hard they work, how much they need to be on ball, next treasurer is not going to work as hard, and incentivize it a little more, whichever the next person does, need to incentivize, I'm strongly in favor for increasing that
- 25. Luke Pryor: I would like to propose, if we are going to compensate for time, that we serve, that we consider compensation for Senators and those that serve on the committees , time sink if we are going to
- 26. Treasurer Berisa: compensation for senators, if you don't show up you won't lose anything, however your group will lose funding, incentive your group gets is up to you, if you don't show up your group loses money, how much we work, I can not do anything and if I do then 20,000 dollars will not be paid
- 27. Senator Hutson: move to end discussion
- 28. Motion fails to not give pay raise
- 29. Motion passes to approve bylaws
- g. LANGSA Special Allocation
 - i. Hold alternatives workshop, exec had unanimous decision
 - ii. Senator White: we know that the job market is horrible, advisor said to be more creative, we invited grad counselor from New York, will give overview about what skills to use from the get go, and how to position ourselves from job market, will have two presenters, hear pros and cons of academic and nonacademic jobs, we think it is really interdisciplinary, will send flyer out tonight
 - iii. Vice President Mollmann: how many people do you expect



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- iv. Senator White: we thought 70 but were hoping more
- v. Senator Patelumas: is it going to be lecture, workship, or q&A?
- vi. Senator White: probably all, workshop then panel, then Q&A
- vii. Senator Patelumas: where?
- viii. Senator White: Oak Hall 236, if more people than can move to Conover
- ix. 13/14-16: That the Graduate Student Senate allocate \$700.00 to the Languages
 Graduate Student Association for their event, "Alternative Academic Careers –
 Workshop."
 - 1. Motion passes
- h. Activities Budget
 - i. 13/14-17: That the Graduate Student Senate allocate \$700.00 to the Languages Graduate Student Association for their event, "Alternative Academic Careers – Workshop."
 - ii. Treasurer Berisa: Grad Prom put 2264.00 in the red, add together than there's more, only remaining events, is the writing center workshop, and these would cover the minus, if it fails they will have to do special allocation requests, did not want to take money from everything, end of year easy to estimate rest of the money, right now special allocations have 5000 extra, does not seem likely going to spend
 - iii. Leland Aldridge: just wanted to make sure, calculated all events for July,
 - iv. Treasurer Berisa : yes, what spent is 7-8,000
 - v. Senator Ambroselli: how did it go so much over budget
 - vi. Director Kurian had to increase attendance at almost all events, trying to accommodate as much people, now larger events will be ticketed, was not aware of where the budget stood a couple of weeks ago, did not know I was overspending
 - vii. Senator DuPont: how did you not know you were spending
 - viii. Director Kurian: don't ever see the amounts, or the total, not something that I was personally keeping track of
 - ix. Senator DuPont who does it



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- x. Anish: the treasurer
- xi. Senator Dupont: so we just approved 1200 dollars to the treasurer yet this is an example of someone not being on the ball
- xii. Senator Flaig: how did we make money on the Mohegan sun trip
- xiii. Director Kurian : sold tickets which was able to get money
- xiv. Senator Flaig: is it possible to have final numbers?
- xv. Director Kurian: it is difficult because we don't get our money at once
- xvi. Senator Tomaszewski: the bylaws allow us to adjust the responsibilities of treasurer, opportunity for senate to adjust pay of treasurer, if you think he done something egregious like letting Anish go over budget
- xvii. Treasurer Berisa : before grad prom: we were not over budget, grad prom cost about 13.000 dollars, which part would have prefer to cut it
- xviii. Motions passes
- i. GSS Executive Board Nominations
 - i. President: President Charrette, Parliamentarian Gutierrez
 - ii. Vice President: Erin Eighan
 - iii. Treasurer: Chris Tomaszewski
 - iv. Secretary: Danielle Wong
 - v. Activities Director: Nicole Flaig
 - vi. Parliamentarian: Patrick Butler

VII. Executive Committee Reports

- a. President Jason Charrette
 - Update need someone to volunteer to be on the master planning advisory committee – serve as part of discussion that shapes strategic decision of the university, will have a say on the direction of the university. Provides us information, met once and no grad student
 - ii. Senator Flaig: what is the time span?
 - iii. President Charrette: end of the year and moves forward
 - iv. President Charrette: trying to get all fees pushed on SASFAC which is good because Dean Holsinger is on it and so is a graduate student. Also in regards to



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our loans they are giving 50,000 dollars and increase the amount we give back, but it needs to be advertised, will have 170,000 dollars with this 50,000, also the rumor is that grads will no longer be on campus, that is true, undergrads are more important, needs the beds, for extraordinary circumstances can make exceptions – they are gaining150 beds, the health insurance is going to stay the same with subsidy changes, going to be delayed, will go up single 200-225, family 1800 to 2000 range were talking about for next year, family leave has been decided on

- v. Leland Aldridge: context on racing premiums or share of premiums, said how it would affect the fringe benefit rate
- vi. President Charrette: number right now 30%, to be honest they don't give context how fringe benefit is directly related, family leave, is going to be the same as faculty, but different is that faculty have a pool to pay, but even if Grad School approve, going to fall on faculty or PI
- vii. Leland Aldridge: this is not new it is an unfunded mandate
- viii. President Charrette: going to be in GFC and will make sure to send out, but department or PI
- ix. Leland Aldridge: physics and have grant money and specific rule that grant money from NSF can't be used, this is the two year old problem they fixed
- x. President Charrette: sympathetic to your claims, boils down to get out of here, decision made by grad school, in the future part of the reason, activities budget over because it was remarkably successful
- b. Vice President Vice President Mollmann
 - Health Insurance no change to tax status, Holsinger wrote a letter for new graduate students and it will be sent out, also we allocated money to bring in a CPA, I will work it out with him tomorrow
 - ii. Leland Aldridge: is this a required letter?
 - iii. Parliamentarian Gutierrez a: is it required
 - iv. Vice President Mollmann: it is required
 - v. President Charrette: it is in the acceptance packet



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- vi. Housing met with Gilbert and gave set of reasonable reasons why grad students should not live on campus, stressed that it is not permanent. Next Gen CT will give more housing, Storrs center will be making more apartments, will ease pressure on universities housing situation, apologized for lack of consultation with lack of graduate students and will do in the future, did reiterate that they would have a process and procedure any questions did not ask
- vii. Leland Aldridge: did they apologize for never including they didn't tell anyone this change happened
- viii. Thomas Briggs: a lot of them are international students, and undergraduate students moving toward housing that was supposed to only be grads, how are we going to attract students?
- ix. Vice President Mollmann: I mentioned this at the meeting,
- x. President Charrette: undergrads are money, at least half are drawn out of state, pay more, grads cost money, reason why they didn't consult us
- xi. Senator Behandish: is there any talk or work with university to provide better services, don't have friends no way to do this,
- xii. Vice President Mollmann: gilbert, would step up services of off campus student services
- xiii. Senator Flaig: simple search, comes up with search and can filter, who need housing, still see use other means
- xiv. Vice President Mollmann: will follow up
- xv. Senator Lovelace: also looking at transportation, how do they address that, what about bus, being able to address issue of transportation, how are they going to help accommodate
- xvi. Treasurer Berisa : regarding busses are in a quarter million in debt, asked at SASFAC meeting and it is science fiction for them
- c. Treasurer Treasurer Beriša
 - Finance Committee sent caps to tier II budget at 44,000 dollars, increase of 5580 dollars, activities as 1000 current decrease, current cap 110,000, only 2000 increase, over budget spending down money to get fee increase which we got,



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Tier II groups asking 84,000 dollars, biggest outlier was refreshments and contractual services

- ii. Senator DuPont: Why did you decrease activities budget when we just went over budget?
- iii. Treasurer Berisa : idea that activities budget should not be doing all of the events they should do
- iv. Senator DuPont: what is the purpose of the reserve?
- v. Treasurer Beriša : we don't have any more, reserve fund is for our loan fun,
- vi. Leland Aldridge: on exec last year there was a campaign for additional fee increase, since 94 there had not been a fee increase, most of surplus came from inflation.
- vii. Treasurer Berisa: we don't get the same amount per fees, need cushion because income is exponential because we don't get all the money at once
- d. Secretary Danielle Wong
 - i. Attendance
 - ii. GSS Website Ross and I are working on it and we are looking to update it, we are trying to make it more of a go to place for graduate students
 - iii. Key Chains have extra key chains, will be leaving them in the GSS office but if not, will hand them out at GAIN next year
- e. Activities Director Anish Kurian
 - i. Grad Prom Recap
 - ii. GSS and Grad School cosponsored speaker: Ellen Prager Recap
 - iii. Activities Committee
- f. Parliamentarian Gutierrez Ian Gutierrez
 - i. BOT Representative could have been exciting news, SETC, certifying results on BOT

VIII. External Committee Reports

 a. Student Union Policy Committee – Steve Mollmann – food court should broadcast WHUS, nothing can happen to it, Media Coordinator is not filled



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- b. Student Welfare Committee Riana Pryor please see attached document, brought up the issues with health insurance and brought the numbers to them
- c. Scholastic Standards Chris Tomaszewski brought forth issues with graduate students and they drafted a letter please see it is attached
- d. Senate Diversity Committee Kobby Amponsah Sally Reis proud of the fact that this university has the environment to deal with the issues brought forth
- e. Parking Brandon Benevento sign is back up, two other things, bike lockup will be happening, trying to find GA/TA ship permit, try to let me know after spring break

IX. Issues Forum

- a. Title IX Vanessa Lovelace bring to attention current issues that happen on campus, teach women and violence teach grad students not keyed in to address issue, title IX suit being brought to campus, blame girls from their own action, formed the civility committee, guess not what issue trying to feel like this an issue we haven't addressed, affects us and need to address something of sexual assault or harassment, forming some of teach in and teach out, how can we as grad students be involved
- b. Parliamentarian Gutierrez : I think it's a super important issue that we can get involved in and important and important ac community we can form a committee
- c. Secretary Wong: is this something that Vice President Mollmann's committee can discuss?
- d. Vice President Mollmann: Yes, please come see me after meeting
- e. Dickens Mollo: not sure which committee, how to approach this, and services and easy way to figure out where to go looking for classes , if committee can look at this, if library can run these classes
- f. Treasurer Berisa : committee would be provost library committee and has not met, if want to talk to library talk to Scott Kennedy
- g. Leland Aldridge: moving previous question unneeded antidemocratic moving the question, don't like it, good PR move to come together to look at monetary amount this has caught up
 - i. Vice President Mollmann: something thinking of doing, lays out current sit



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- ii. President Charrette: want to give the number and be public about it, delicious and effective
- h. Senator DuPont over budget: would like us to cut, and responsibility to us to plan ask us for the money, what should we do about this
- X. Adjournment 9:10 pm.



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STUDENT WELFARE COMMITTEE

"At its March 7, 2014 meeting with Dean Kent Holsinger, the Student Welfare Committee expressed grave concern about the implications of the proposed rescission in the University's subsidy for the medical insurance of graduate students. The committee wishes to make the following points to the Senate Executive Committee at its March 28 meeting:

- graduate students, particularly those with dependents and families, will be faced with an overwhelming financial burden;
- it appears that the proposed changes were not communicated to graduate students in a timely fashion that would have lend itself to constructive engagement, and as a consequence graduate students felt blindsided;
- the proposed changes would have a deleterious effect on the University's ability to recruit and retain high quality graduate students;
- the Student Welfare Committee finds the proposed policy not in best interests of graduate students and the University."



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SENATE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Chair:	Maria Luz-Fernandez		
	Faculty		
	maria.luz-fernandez.uconn.edu	<u>u</u>	
Website:	URL Address		
Representative:	Kobby Amponsah		
	Senator		
	Kwabena.amponsah@uconn.e	edu	
Overview of Report			
Were the details of the meeting confidential? \Box Yes \boxtimes No		🖂 No	
Was anything of relevance to graduate students?		Xes Yes	□ No

- Focus on creating a family-friendly environment for graduate students
- Considering other options for graduate health insurance
- Spousal admission offers

Detailed Report

Vice Provost Sally Reis was the guest speaker at this meeting and she addressed the concerns of the committee including the following with particular concern to graduate students:

FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Considering the family friendly nature of UCONN towards faculty and staff, the university is taking measures to create such an environment for graduate students. The committee raised questions about the outdated maternity policy which only caters to female graduate students tied to pregnancy and ignores men as well adoptive parents. The Vice Provost admitted awareness of the situation and assured that the university is currently working on revising that policy and similar ones to be more inclusive to all graduate students and families.

GRADUATE HEALTH INSURANCE

The committee questioned the university's commitment to creating a family friendly environment for graduate students, due to the demonstrated disposition to have graduate families pay more for health insurance. The Vice



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Provost added that the university is considering alternative options and several people including Dean Holsinger is working diligently to get better options for the Graduate Health Insurance.

SPOUSAL ADMISSION OFFERS

As part of the eliminating institutional barriers to increase diversity in faculty graduate students, the university is promoting spousal hiring for faculty and admissions offers to graduate spouses. To maintain the integrity of the admission process, Vice Provost Reis suggested that maybe early decision notification for such situations could be implemented. In addition, she is in talks with Dean Holsinger about other options to consider for spousal admission offers.

Action Items for the Senate

• I welcome any suggestions concerning diversity that I can take to the committee's next meeting



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GENERAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Chair: Michael Young General Education Oversight Committee <u>Michael.f.young@uconn.edu</u> Michelle San Pedro Graduate Student Senator michelle.sanpedro@uconn.edu

http://geoc.uconn.edu/

Overview of Report			
Were the details of the meeting confidential?	Yes	X No	
Was anything of relevance to graduate students?	Yes	X No	

• 1-Credit W Courses in the School of Business and the Provost Competition were discussed, but these topics carry more relevance for faculty than graduate students.

Detailed Report

- ONE CREDIT W-COURSES. There is interest in finding out if 1-credit Ws are successful or differently successful than other Ws. No grades will be collected this time, however, and a selection of essays will be examined closely in a "deep audit." It was suggested that this audit include a revision history of select essays. The School of Business has opted out of the review of 1-credit Ws, but there is no recourse for their action. GEOC chair may speak with SEC or Provost regarding noncompliance.
- COURSES FROM PROVOST COMPETITION UNDER REVIEW. Received many submissions for CA3 (Science & Technology) and 2000-level courses. Travel for the purpose of course development and improvement was questioned. One member added that it brought authenticity to the material.



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SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS

Gerald Gianutsos Associate Professor of Pharmacology & Toxicology <u>Gerald.gianutsos@uconn.edu</u> http://senate.uconn.edu/scholastic.html Christopher Tomaszewski Senator from Philosophy Christopher.tomaszewski@uconn.edu

Overview of Report

Were the details of the meeting confidential?	Yes	🖂 No
Was anything of relevance to graduate students?	🔀 Yes	No No

• The Committee discussed and drafted a letter to Provost Choi and Dean Holsinger outlining and emphasing the concerns of the committee regarding graduate student fees and health insurance.

Detailed Report

• See above and the attached full letter for more information.

Action Items for the Senate

• No action needed. This is simply for the information of the Executive Committee and the Senate at large.

Attachments*

Do you have an attachment?	🛛 Yes	No No
What is the file name?	SSSC Letter.doc	:
Should it be displayed during your report?	Yes	🛛 No



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To: Provost Choi and Dean HolsingerFrom: The University Prof. Felicia Pratto, Chair of the Senate Scholastic Standards CommitteeDate: TBARe: Changes in graduate student classification and support

Members of the Senate Scholastic Standards Committee are deeply concerned about recent changes to graduate student support and classification. It does not seem to us that these changes were adopted with due consideration of their scholastic impact, and so we draw your attention to that.

A measured and thoughtful assessment of these changes suggests that they are having a negative impact on the morale and effectiveness of graduate students as teaching assistants in classes across the University. The fact that, across departments, our teaching assistants are stressed and distracted means the undergraduates' instructional experiences may also be suffering.

As you are aware, the university has recently leveled a barrage of financial blows to graduate students. Reclassifying graduate assistants as students rather than employees means that their taxable income has increased but their take home salary has shrunk. That has happened because the money the university uses to subsidize medical benefits is now classified for tax purposes as grant money and is thus taxable as graduate assistant income. So if a graduate student has a family and that graduate student earns about \$17,600 in income, that student will be taxed on nearly \$30,000 since the university subsidy for family health coverage is currently \$12,356. (These figures come from the university website.) How that occurred of such a change is difficult for us to imagine. It is clear that the reclassification of graduate assistants was made with little input from faculty or from the University Senate or from the students themselves. Just as clearly, it has justifiably and dramatically decreased graduate student morale, which, of course, has an impact on their effectiveness as teaching assistants and as students.

The proposed changes to the graduate assistants' health plan does not provide any actual relief. While the shifting of the structure from a university subsidy to a direct cost to the graduate student may eliminate the unfair tax penalty, it wildly increases direct family costs to purchase coverage from \$683.00 to \$8,568.00. That would effectively reduce the \$20,000.00 typical pay package to \$9.032. (\$20,000 minus \$2,400 in fees, minus \$8,568 for health coverage), which is clearly not enough to support even one person. Further, our graduate student fees are among the highest among our peer institutions, and their parking fees have also increased substantially. Going without a car in this rural area is nearly not an option for them. Under the university's rules, and regarding what is best for them as students, seeking outside employment is also not an option.

It has quickly come to the point that these changes will negatively impact scholastic missions in the future, even imminently. Some of our current students have told us that in all honesty, they cannot recommend to prospective students that those students should accept admission here because the University's compensation does not provide a living wage. Their morale and sense of loyalty stem from practical financial problems as well as perceived disrespect. As our aid packages become even lower than our peer institutions, the best potential applicants and admitted students will hesitate to come here since they would be hard pressed to support themselves, much less support a partner or a family.



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Regardless of the exact figures, there has been a dramatic decrease in real compensation due to changes in classification, increases in fees, and changes in health coverage payments, compensation that is lower that what most of our competitors offer. Current students should not have experienced the effective reduction in what income they were promised with their admissions, and these substandard packages will keep us from being competitive in our ability to recruit high-quality graduate students, who comprise an essential part of our academic mission and efforts. Therefore, we encourage the University to reconsider these changes in ways that show greater consideration to the critical contributions graduate students make in the university's academic mission. We will never become the great university we aspire to if we nickel and dime our most vulnerable colleagues, who are instrumental in providing instruction for undergraduates and anchor the work of our scholarly mission.

Respectfully yours,

Members of the University Scholastic Standards Committee (OR THOSE WHO WANT TO SIGN— ELSE I CAN RECORD THE VOTE HERE OR NUMBER ENDORSING) Members:



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PARKING COMMITTEE

Mark Westa Faculty Brandon Benevento Parking Rep jbbenevento@gmail.com

Overview of Report

Were the details of the meeting confidential?	Yes	x No
Was anything of relevance to graduate students?	X Yes	No No

- List, in brief, the major issues/topics of relevance to graduate students addressed in the meeting
- This should be used as a "Quick Glance" reference for Senators
- The detailed report will be given below

Detailed Report

Please report in full on the issues relevant to graduate students. The detailed report should be presented in paragraph form with topic headers for each paragraph. See the example below.

EXAMPLE SUBJECT HEADING

This is a description of the subject at issue. I might include any of the following information in this paragraph: context for the issue, explanation for the committee's decision on the issue, rationale for that decision, an action plan for the committee, etc.

Action Items for the Senate

- List any action items that you would like to present to the Senate or another Committee
- Include any points for discussion to be raised during the Issues Forum
- Ask for Senate feedback on particular issues

Attachments*

Do you have an attachment?	Yes X No
What is the file name?	File name here.