

University Graduate Student Association
Box 7111, D.H. Hill Library
Raleigh, NC 27695-7111

January 29th, 2007

Minutes of UGSA Meeting

Attendees:

Heather Shay (President)
Pratik Mehta (Vice President for Internal Affairs)
Ling Xiang (Vice President for External Affairs)
Carrie Smith (Secretary)
Karl Jicha (Treasurer)
Beth Rueschhoff (ECO)
Brandy Benedict (TTFA)

Chapter Representatives in Attendance: Accounting, Animal Science, Bioinformatics, Biological & Agricultural Engineering, Botany, Business Administration, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Chemistry, College of Textiles, Communication, Communication Rhetoric & Digital Media, Comparative Biomedical Sciences, Computer Science, ECE, Economics, English, Entomology, Functional Genomics, Genetics, Higher Education Administration, History, Horticultural Science, Industrial Engineering, International Studies, Marine Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, Mathematics, Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, Microbiology, Natural Resources, Nuclear Engineering, Operations Research, Physics, Plant Pathology, Public Administration, Sociology, Soil Science, Statistics and Biomath, Toxicology

I. Call to Order 7:04

2 Roll Call

3 Approval of November minutes

4 Discussion of Graduate School Priorities by Michael Carter, Interim Associate Dean of the Graduate School

- Michael Carter oversees graduate education; he works to make programs function more efficiently and to make them better for faculty and students
- The Graduate School is writing its strategic plan for the next 5 to 10 years. Michael Carter is visiting constituencies to figure out what goals the Graduate School will set for itself.
- How can the Graduate School help to make our experience better as graduate students? Comments from the floor:
 - The lines of communication could be improved. Last year when we dealt with the change in our pay schedule it would have been nice to be able to give our input instead of being dictated to.
 - It would be nice if semester fees could be paid over time instead of all at once.
 - More computer access is needed for certain programs like accounting.
 - There is a daycare option for faculty members but not for students

who have families too.

- Technology needs to be improved in more classrooms.
- The Graduate School should pursue additional sources for research funding for graduate students within the University.
- The Undergraduate Research Symposium receives funding support from the University; it would be nice to have some funds for the Graduate Research Symposium.
- Create a forum for journal access in the library when they are deciding which journals to keep or discontinue.

- If you have any other ideas email mpc@ncsu.edu.

5 Presentation on Online Teaching Evaluation System by Karen Helm, Director, University Planning and Analysis

- Individual departments used to be in charge of designing their own evaluations, but then a few years ago the University adopted a universal evaluation. They are now working on putting this evaluation online and a trial was piloted in December.
- Karen Helm is working with a committee composed of faculty, administration, and students to make improvements to the system.
- The evaluations are used to determine tenure and other important things, such as salary increases, promotions, etc.
- A special website was set up and students were given a url to fill out the evaluations. When you log in, it is specific to you with all the classes you are taking and their evaluation forms.
- They hope to scale up this spring and hope that all courses are in the online format.
- Students were able to fill out the evaluation during a 10-day period. The data was sent to a database and reports were created and sent to the department heads.
- The results were better than they had hoped with 60% of 2400 possible surveys returned.
- The student responses are still confidential as dictated by Federal and State law as well as University policy.
- The open-ended comments aren't given to professors until grades are posted so that they cannot affect your grade.
- They hope to automate averages, standard deviations, etc and there should be a faster turn around as they make improvements to the system.
- The only data that is saved are the multiple-choice questions and not the open-ended answers. The open-ended answers get sent to the instructor and then they are destroyed.
- Comments from the floor on how to improve the percentage of evaluations returned:
 - Make sure the instructors are asking the students in class and not just emailing them the information because emails are easy to ignore.
 - Could the instructors give extra credit for turning in evaluations?
Response: Then you couldn't keep the forms confidential.

- Could there be a pop up window when you enter pack tracks as a reminder? Response: They already did this.
- Maybe you could prevent a student from seeing their grades until they had filled out the evaluations? Response: The registrar didn't want to delay the report of grades.
- How many emails were sent out to remind students? Response: 3 were sent out.
- You could advise the faculty to keep informing students to fill out the evaluations.
- If you fill out the evaluation forms, students could be entered into a raffle for a gift certificate or other award as a positive incentive.
- Maybe you could also notify student organizations for them to encourage their constituents to participate.
- Maybe the evaluation forms could be more creative instead of the same questions all the time.
- Is there any way to have the faculty create their own form? Karen Helm: Yes they are working on this for fall 07.
- What was the response rate when a paper survey was used? Response: It is hard to tell.
- Comment from Karen Helm: Some teachers complained that their students had the opportunity to fill out the evaluations after taking the final exam and they feel this affected their evaluations in a negative way.
- Could the time frame for filling out evaluations be dictated by course? Karen Helm: Maybe they could do it next year.
- Email Karen Helm at Karen_helm@ncsu.edu for more suggestions

6 President's Report (Heather Shay)

- 7 The executive board met with Will Quick, the student body president.
- We talked about how to work better with student government.
 - We discussed that at UNC Chapel Hill; the UGSA president is an ex officio vice president of student government. They are elected by the student body like the other positions.
 - Will's suggestions:
 - Graduate students could participate in the department of graduate affairs. This group meets when it needs to and wouldn't be as much of a time commitment as being a student body government senator. Graduate students should still aim to fill the 10 senator seats.
 - The UGSA needs to help spread the word that graduate students can vote for the student body positions.
 - There will be a debate between the candidates for student body president. Will wants us to participate and to voice our opinions.
 - We had suggestions for Will:
 - There needs to more flexible attendance rules for graduate student senators.
 - When an issue comes up through student government that is of

concern to graduate students, the UGSA should have a say too.

- Currently out of 10 senate seats, 6 are still open. We want to try to fill these if possible. Contact Heather Shay if you are interested.
- Zach Adams (President of Student Senate): Remember that graduate students can apply through student body government to receive appropriations. (See more details at <http://students.ncsu.edu/senate/appropriations.php>)

8 University Council Update

- Graduate students were number four on the list of priorities for general administrations.
- Erskin Bowles reflected on his 1st year as the UNC system president. Graduate students were #6 out of 7 on his priority list.
- Dr. Stafford is up for a 5-year review. Dr. Gilligan is up for his first 5 year review.
- The Hillsborough renovation will be voted on soon if it hasn't already. The renovation is designed so that less people get hit and to reduce traffic.
- The 3+1 program with China has 40 applicants already.
- The East wing of the library will be reopened on March 12th and there will be a party to celebrate.
- Dr. Gilligan says that the Federal Government has not passed its budget properly and as a result they are turning down grants/proposals. There is a concern for graduate funding, but Dr. Gilligan has pledged to find gap funding to prevent us from being affected.
- For strategic marketing of NC State, National leaders were asked what they thought of NC State. They basically think of NC State as an Ag school and one of our biggest assets is that we are near UNC.
- A full time position has been created instead of a part time graduate student for the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) organization. There are exercises to improve knowledge and awareness and it is open to students, teachers, and faculty. Project safe (www.ncsu.edu/safe) is done 4 times a semester.

9 Administrative Board Proposed Agenda Items Update

- They will now be enforcing the 6 year deadline for preliminary exams unless your GSSP guidelines are more stringent.
- The idea for an annual progress evaluation for graduate students had support. They want to implement an electronic student activity report system. The system will let your committee know that you have met certain checkpoints.
- The plan of work requirement will be reinstated. It will now require students to submit a plan of work half way through their course work.
- Students will be allowed to transfer PBS credits to graduate study work. 6-9 credits can be transferred for PhD students and 12 credits for masters.
- Participants in the COAT program will have it put on their transcript.

10 NC State Energy Initiative

- Chris Gould, a professor in the Physics Department, heads the initiative.
- The campus wants to increase interdisciplinary discussion of this issue.
- How can we improve our efforts and educate students about the current

problems? If you have suggestions email Heather.

- There will be three events concerning this issue:
 - Global Warming symposium February 26-28
 - North Carolina sustainable energies conference March 7-8th at the McKimmon Center.
 - Energy and Environment in NC, Symposium March 9-10 at the Friday Center at UNC (more academically oriented)
- Comment by Tyler Schweitzer (graduate student senator for student government) He will be voting on whether or not to support the initiative.

11 NCSU Library Endowment Update

- Apparently the UGSA created a library endowment in the past and it has a principle of \$40,000.

VII. Executive Officer Reports

12 Vice-President for Internal Affairs' Report (Pratik Mehta)

13 No report.

14 Vice-President for External Affairs' Report (Ling Xiang)

15 No report.

16 Secretary's Report (Carrie Smith)

17 If your rep information has changed, update the tent cards with the new names and write the email addresses on the back.

18 Treasurer's Report (Karl Jicha)

19 Out of our \$74,995 budget we still have \$55,781.

20 Keep in mind that chapter rebates, social events and more travel and thesis requests have not been taken out yet.

21 We are currently waiting on the final count for the spring revenue, which will hopefully bring our total revenue up to around \$71,000.

22 Travel/Thesis Fund Administrator's Report (Brandy Benedict)

23 No report.

24 Electronic Communications Officer's Report (Beth Rueschhoff)

25 Please double-check your chapter info on the website to make sure it is accurate. Email Beth with any corrections or updates.

VIII. UGSA Committee Reports

26 Political Action

- They are considering participating in "Alex's Lemonade Stand," which is an organization that raises money for children's cancer research. They would set up one stand on main campus and one on centennial sometime in the spring. The council was asked if anyone outside of the committee would be willing to volunteer to man the booth for a shift and there were a number of people who would like to participate.

27 Publicity

28 The committee received feedback concerning the Midnight Oil publication and everyone said it should be just electronic without any hard copies. The committee is going towards this idea.

29 The committee would like the council to vote on this, so please ask your constituents if they have any objections. We will need to vote on

- where the money that was used for publications should go.
- 30 The next publication will be put out mid-February.
 - 31 The committee is going to be advertising the UGSA with notepads and luggage tags and maybe even drink covers if there is enough money.
 - 32 For the February issue of the M&O there will be the calendar of events section. Please email the committee with any upcoming events (February through the summer).
- 33 Social
- 34 Please notify the VP of internal affairs if you are supposed to be on the social committee.
 - 35 Arrangements have been made for the 15th of February to hold a bowling tournament at Western lanes starting at 6:30pm. The event should last about 2 hours.
 - 36 They are requesting that people RSVP by February 7th if they want to bowl so that they can estimate how many are interested.
 - 37 There will be a flier sent out shortly, please send it to your constituents and encourage them to come out for the event!
 - 38 The total cost should be between \$1200 and \$1300.
 - 39 They will be planning a tri party mixer for later in the semester.
- 40 Teaching Effectiveness
- 41 The awards ceremony will be held on April 23rd.
 - 42 Dr. Terri Lomax (the Dean of the Graduate School) will be the guest speaker for the event.
 - 43 The nomination forms have been sent out to the DGPs. The deadline is February 21st for nominations. Encourage your DGP to nominate someone from your department!
 - 44 Invitations for the VIPs and the executive board have also been sent out.
 - 45 A flier will be sent out to publicize the event.
 - 46 6 winners instead of 5 will be selected this year; 3 awards for traditional style TAs and 3 for students who teach themselves.
- 47 Academic Policy
- 48 The graduate research symposium will be held on March 21st.
 - 49 The committee will be utilizing University Graphics for materials for the LANGURE conference.
- 50 Financial
- 51 No report.
- g. Judicial & Legislative
- 52 The committee will be reading two bills later in the agenda.
- IX. University Standing Committee Reports**
- a. Student Health
 - 53 The deadline for signing up for the voluntary dental plan is January 31st.
 - 54 There are plans to put another addition on the student health center.
 - b. Registration, Records & Calendar
 - 55 The committee identified the 6 most popular times for classes and is

trying to separate these for final exams to avoid students being scheduled to take 3 exams within a 24 hr period.

56 They are also working to create a less confusing final exam schedule.

X. New Business

57 The bills are read during this meeting, followed by a question and answer type discussion. At the next meeting there will be a second reading of the bills and then we will vote.

- Reading of Bill #1: Budget Revision, Resolution of Removing the 2006-2007 Budget Line Item “NAGPS”
 - Question: Is the money going anywhere else in the budget or is it just be taken out entirely? Answer: We will probably take it out because we might have problems staying under budget with revenues being less than expected.
- Reading of Bill #2: Budget Revision, Resolution of Removing the 2006-2007 Budget Line Item “Special Interest Group Activity Grant”

XI. Open Floor

58 Tyler Schweitzer: Applications for appropriations are due February 3rd. All organizations are eligible.

XII. Adjournment 8:41pm

59

Next Scheduled Meeting, Monday, February 26th, 2007