

GSO Senate Meeting – March 8, 2011 – Minutes

I. Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Paola Espinosa

- Thirty-eight senators present.

II. Approval of Agenda, and February Senate Meeting Minutes

- Motion to add Conference Report and VP Finance Karol Gray Report. Unanimous consent. Agenda and minutes approved.

III. Fee Increases Report by Dean Lawrence Martin and VP Finance, Karol Gray

- Rationale for proposed fee increases:
 - NY State budget cut in recent years and currently facing another \$30 million cut.
 - Levels of support for technology, infirmary and transportation have decreased significantly.
 - University has absorbed a \$62 million cut over past two years.
 - Administration areas cut 23%, whereas academic areas cut 13%.
 - \$19 million budget gap as of November 2010.
 - No tuition increase reflects additional \$5.7 million deficit to the budget.
 - State support per FTE has gone down over last 5 years, and only a modest increase in revenue.
 - Struggling to manage these cuts, and more expected next year.
 - Fee increases necessary to conduct university operations.
- President's "Budget Working Group" will protect tenured faculty and TA/GA budget.
- Provost budget only cut by 14%.
- President agreed to waive transportation fees for TAs/RAs; GSEU has a technology fee mitigation in 07-09 contract, but yet to be implemented. Once the contract is implemented, there will be technology fee mitigation. President will respect a similar fee mitigation for RAs if the contract is in place in the coming year; all funded students are equally important to the university.
- If RAs implement and ratify contract, there will be parity between TAs/RAs (e.g. transportation fee waiver).
- SUNY Central sets fee cap, cannot exceed 15% this year (not separated by undergrads and grads). No guarantees for the 2012-2013 year.
- Fees not high, relative to other universities; have historically been held down intentionally, but can no longer afford to do so.
- Housing costs not under the purview of Martin, nor Gray. Tax payer money not used for housing subsidies. Housing fees likely to increase due to increased utility costs. Cost of living not a consideration in budget.
- Bain Co. has done a review of university budget and suggested streamlining things to increase efficiency and reduce cost.
- Graduate students with full support are priority. University has no funds to support fee waivers for economically disadvantaged students.
- University continues to advocate for 'rational' tuition policy.
- There may be savings in utility areas that may not be seen at this point.

- Graduate students do not subsidize undergraduate technology and support.

IV. President's Report and Committee Nominations

- Tuition increases are being sought by the university
- TAP has been cut by NY State.
- Proposed fee increases are ongoing.
- Ongoing discussion to impose fees on Interlibrary Loans.
- Rumored plans to increase on-campus housing by 5-6%.
- Plans to cut support for graduate students after four years.
- Has been advocating against Governor Cuomo's proposed budget, and planning to meet with Senator LaValle.
 - President's individual work not enough; everyone must be involved in respective committees.
- Nominated Rachel Tillman and Adam Jacobs to Transportation Fee Advisory Committee and Technology Fee Advisory Committee, respectively. No nominations for Campus Recreation Center Advisory Board.
 - Nominations approved unanimously.
- Need to participate on a larger level – not just discussions with the administrators, but write/communicate with legislators.
 - One way is the upcoming GSO conference on higher education. Attendees include participants from students' movements in Puerto Rico and Berkeley. CUNY TV is sending cameras for the conference.
 - Another: advocacy letter templates are available – from Andres (Senator from History).

V. Vice President's Report

- Recreation fee might be added to our fees when the Recreation Center is built, funding only covers the building., not the operation.
- Board of appeals recommended distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate students by color IDs, but this is not feasible.
 - Compromise is to provide two handheld card readers that will access database from Registrar's office. Will have regulations for borrowing and returning device.
- Visa Immigration Service (formerly International Students Service) office has moved into the 5th floor of the library. There will be an Advisory Advocacy Committee soon.
- Bowling Night: end of March, end of April/beginning of May. Email will be sent out and then 48 hours later online registration will be open.

VI. Distinguished Travel Award

Call for applications send out, due on April 2011.

VII. RA Union Liaison Committee Report

- Planning a SINC site sin-in on March 24th, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Planned a Physics Strike Vote to pressure the RF, and reached a first contract agreement before the strike vote.

- Last Bargaining Session took place on Monday, March 7, 2011.

VIII. GSEU Liaison Committee Report

- Meeting this Thursday at 12:30 p.m., in SAC 304, with lawyer.
- Planning a trip to Albany on March 15th to meet with representatives and push for pay-bill.

IX. Budget Committee Report

- Funding requests:
 - GSO Conference 'Defining the Future of Public Higher Education' on Friday, March 18, all day. Requesting \$700 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover speaker honorarium, food, publicity. . Motion to approve \$500. General consent.
 - Stony Brook Day of Percussion on April 16, 2011. Requesting \$300 from the 'General Cultural and Social Events' line to cover food/drinks, supplies, posters/advertising. General consent.
 - SARA hosting 'Games Night' In Schomburg Commons on March 20th 8:00 p.m. Requesting \$300 from the 'General Cultural and Social Events' line to cover food/drinks. General consent.
 - Dept. of Sociology 8th Annual Ethnography Conference on Friday, April 15th, all day in Manhattan. Requesting \$1080 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover speaker honorarium, speaker lodging, food, publicity. General consent.
 - Linguistic Lecture Series: Richard Sproat on March 31-April 1st. Requesting \$1127 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover transportation, publicity, honorarium, food. General consent.
 - MFA Dept. hosting lecture/performance by Sandra Gibson and Luis Recorder, on Monday, March 28 at 2:00 pm in Staller Building. Requesting \$500 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover speaker honorarium. General consent.
 - SBU Karaoke Club to host contest on April 3rd. Requesting \$600 from the 'General Cultural and Social Events' line to cover food/beverage, advertisements, decorations, prizes. General consent.
 - Stony Brook Piano Project 2011 on Wednesday, March 23rd. Requesting \$425 from the 'General Cultural and Social Events' line to cover food/drinks, supplies, advertising, website/online ads. General consent.
 - Sociology Dept. 'Social Movements Film Series.' Requesting \$280 from the 'General Cultural and Social Events' line to cover food/drinks for four separate events. General consent.
 - Buddhist Study & Practice Group:

- Dharma lecture by Bhikkhu Bodhi on March 17th. Requesting \$300 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover speaker honorarium. Approved, with four 'no' votes.
- Book Talk and meditation workshop with Brad Warner on March 26th. Requesting \$450 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover honorarium, food, advertising. General consent.
- 'Living Chan' Meditation workshop by Abbot Guo-Xing and Nancy Bonardi. Requesting \$700 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover both honorariums, and food. Approved, with five 'no' votes.
- Social Welfare GSG Banquet on Saturday, March 12th. Requesting \$400 from 'Miscellaneous funds' to cover DJ at event. General consent.
- CARA Recycling Project on Thursday, March 17th. Requesting \$150 from the 'General Cultural and Social Events' line to cover ice cream party, supplies, advertising. General consent.
- Computer Science Grad Student Club Conference on April 1st. Requesting \$1275 from 'Speaker Series and Conferences' line to cover honorarium, food, entertainment, prizes for winners, advertising. General consent.
- Creative Writing Program requesting \$250 from 'Miscellaneous funds' to cover expenses related to acquiring kitchen supplies/cookware to provide food for meetings. General consent.

X. Elections Committee Report

- Call for candidates have been distributed, and applications accepted till 5:00 p.m. on March 30th.
- Candidates will present platform at April Senate Meeting.
- Elections will be held on Solar April 11-15th.

XI. Meeting Adjourned

- Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Al Herrera-Alcazar, GSO Secretary.