

November 8, 2005 Senate Meeting Minutes

Meeting starts with 27 senators, 5 executive members.

Changes to the agenda: New committee members nominations is added after child care presentation. Agenda and October 11 minutes are unanimously approved, Kris Baker, GSO speaker, will chair the meeting.

1) Child Care presentation

Rebecca Bonano from the university child care center presented the services of the center to the graduate students. The center is a non-profit organization that provides quality childcare to the whole campus community (faculty, staff, undergrad and grad students, further off-campus community). 30% (35) of the children they have right now have graduate student parents. They offer a sliding fee schedule based on the parents' income, which allows the poorer ones, among them graduate students, to pay very little (about \$20/month). They want to keep this offer, and they request GSO to continue and increase their funding to the center, which they say directly benefits grads. Last year GSO cut its funding and the center had to run on deficit. Kris pointed out that this request should be directed to the Budget Committee, and not the GSO senate. The rest of their funding comes from the USG, provost office and other community organizations. Although sometimes there is a waiting list, university-affiliated parents have priority. They also employ many graduate students as substitutes and part-time and the center is used for studies for education, ESL, etc. Rebecca promised to send an email with more information to the senators, so that they can inform their departments and consider their request for increased funding.

2) New committee members nominations

Steve Boyd was nominated for the Lounge Committee, motion to approve by Dan Woulfin, History senator, second by Ruchi Gupta, Chemistry senator, vote: 26 for, 2 abstain, motion passes.

3) GSEU announcement

Greg Jackson explained the benefits the TAs and GAs are entitled to as members of the Union, see relevant documentation. More specific, the Professional Development Fund is available to all union members for almost any research project and it is about \$1000 a year, but union representatives from the departments and officers from the Stony Brook campus are needed to release these funds and push this forward. Senators should inform their departments of its existence. If there are any concerns and/or grievances, union members are encouraged to contact the union representatives, for the moment Billy Wharton, at SBS N-312. Senators' questions/comments:

- Can we define and put down in writing what kind of legitimate work is exactly included in the 20hours/week? The Union tries not to micromanage this way, so they are reluctant to be so specific, but if any student has the feeling that they work more than 20hours/week, they should contact GSEU.
- RAs are not GSEU members, as they're funded by private resources, and they do not pay any dues.
- Grievances should be filed to the department representative, then to the Chief Steward, then he will forward them up the union ladder.
- A letter sent to GSEU members from CWA about low-interest loans is a scam: CWA sold their logo to a private creditor. If senators are aware of people considering this offer they should warn them and it would be good if GSEU could also follow up.

Now it is the time to organize for the new contract negotiations coming up in 2-3 years. In the previous contract, Stony Brook was undermined by the three other SUNYs and we got a bad deal. Also both our campus officers (Chief Steward and Business Agent) are gone, we need new people for these positions. Senators are encouraged to inform their departments that we need candidates ready to commit to these demanding jobs and fight for our rights, and also get involved themselves if possible. The monthly GSEU general membership meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month during campus life time in SBS N-105.

4) Budget Committee report

Anirban Dutta presented the highlights of expenses made by GSO until November 3rd, see relevant documentation.

Funding requests:

- Graduate Art History and Criticism Lecture Series, request \$450 for an event of 40-50 people. Motion to approve this amount by Monicca Shanthanelson, Neuroscience senator, seconded by Catherine Simpson, Hispanic Literature senator, approved unanimously.
- CARA requests \$1025 to pay the bus for their annual shopping trip to Tanger mall before the holidays. The BC recommends \$800. Motion to approve this amount by Monicca Shanthanelson, seconded by Andrew Farke, Anatomical Sciences senator, approved unanimously.
- The Aladdin Club requests \$160 for a talk. Motion to approve this amount by Dan Woulfin, seconded by Alton Frabetti, Art senator, vote: 24 for, 2 abstain, motion passes.
- The Diagram and Scribble Archive, request \$190. Motion to approve this amount by Dan Woulfin, seconded by Louis Esparza, Sociology senator, vote: 22 for, motion passes.

Anirban Dutta informed the senate that the executive committee will take over the inventory of GSO for items of \$50 or more, as the \$1500 threshold for the FSA inventory was deemed too high. Also the GSO will call for external auditors for next year together with the USG.

5) Lounge Committee report

Chad Bender, the LC chair, presented the final FY 04-05 and the year-to-date FY 05-06 profit & loss summary, see relevant documentation. The 04-05 activity was within budget limits and this year's -\$5k balance is good, given that the slow months of the summer are gone.

There have been complaints about the music being too loud too early in the evening, the LC is trying to move loud events after 9:30pm, for the moment they succeeded, but they cannot guarantee the situation will stay like that, because the café depends on the people that these groups bring.

There was a motion passed in the March meeting for the LC to keep track of where the tips go, but this is impossible to implement, as the senate cannot interfere in the business of the manager. They only can inform the senate that all the employees are paid hourly salaries and tips are not encouraged, and that the tips are used for the food and drinks that employees use during work and the rest is distributed among them. Andrei proposed that this motion be nullified for that reason. Motion by Dan Woulfin to nullify the March senate meeting's motion that the LC has to keep track of the tips and inform the senate, and instead see if it is possible to post a sign in the café saying something like "tips not required". Second by Jada Hamilton, Psychology senator, vote: 25 for, motion passes.

6) SCC report

Paul Fodor presented the preliminary results of the poster board survey, see relevant document. This survey was conducted in order to find out where the GSO can put its event announcements and also encourage clubs to advertise their events there, not only by email. Boards marked as “public” are the ones without signs. The survey is not over yet, Dan Woulfin did most of it and he needs volunteers to cover the remaining departments.

7) Old business

- Andrei informed the senate that the executive committee signed the NYPIRG resolution against automatic tuition hikes, the text will be sent to the senate list.
- The executive committee also approved a maximum of \$100 for the “Graduate” to get some online space. Chad offered to share the bandwidth of the café webserver with the Graduate, they have more than they need. Dan suggested we contact the Statesman or the Independent for their help. We are running a bit late with the paper issues, the September one is out and the October one will be soon. Next semester we should be back on track. In a digression, Monicca pointed out that the start of the semester party was funded from the social events line while it should not have, since this would need senate approval and the senate was not in session. The only line the executive committee can use without senate approval is the miscellaneous line, and this does not have \$900. The executives will look at that. Back to the Graduate discussion, senators suggested the editor asks around for articles and event announcements, in order to get material for the newsletter. Ari Grossman, the GSA, pointed out that the Graduate is now in a better shape than it has been for years, and if senators want to help further, they should write and solicit articles themselves. The Graduate editor will be invited to the December senate meeting.

8) New business: NYPIRG updates

Dan Woulfin outlined the latest and future NYPIRG activities:

- The elections are still going on until 9pm tonight, everybody is encouraged to go vote. The crucial referenda in NY are about Governor veto power and the transportation fund.
- In the higher education hearings of October 6 about the automatic annual tuition increases, the NYPIRG-organized student representation was very good. NYPIRG thanks GSO for signing the related resolution.
- “Pre-budget lobbying” cards to sign and send to US senators are available, GSO senators can sign and take some to distribute after the meeting.
- On November 17 there will be the first of a series of student empowerment workshops, titled “Credit cards 101”.
- On December 7 there will be a big party for the 25th Stony Brook NYPIRG branch anniversary, with speakers and other activities.

A motion to adjourn was made and passed by unanimous consent. The meeting adjourned.