

Agenda for March 4, 2009

Officers

President—Heather Lee (American Civilization)

VP, Administration—Nitin Jadhav (Engineering)

Treasurer—Anthony Evans (Psychology)

Technology Officer—Stefanie Sevcik (Comparative Literature)

VP, Social—Ratnesh Gupta (Engineering), Sumit Kumar Soni (Engineering)

Secretary—Michael Antosh (Physics)

Attendance: 29 plus officers

I. Approval of the Minutes from the February Meeting

Approved.

II. External Committee Reports and Announcements

- i. *Bethany Ehlmann and Omar Lansari—University Resource Committee*
URC decides funding – want student input to determine priorities. Income (\$551.6 million) is tuition, endowment income (despite stock market – Brown averages over 3 years to determine amount to draw), annual giving, grants, more. Biology and medicine makes up around \$128.7 million in addition to general fund. Financial year planning starts in September each year, and ends with the Corporation approving the budget sometime around December.
This all applies to the grad school. Grad school had hoped to expand and increase summer salaries for some grad students, but economic times made this impossible for now. Total grad student support is currently \$48.9 million. All stipends are staying the same, conference travel funds are going up by about 50%.
Shaping the budget of the grad school always goes directly through Dean Sheila Bonde.
- ii. *GSC Working Group on Funding*
Grad students met to discuss how grad student funding here measured up to similarly well-known universities, and what kind of things the grad students should ask for. They are seeking student input. They are hoping for more effort on the part of the graduate school to reach out to students. In addition, there was a newspaper article about grad students in the BDH that caused a stir.
- iii. *Matthew Gillette—Public Safety Oversight Committee*
Crime and stop statistics for campus are now posted online. Last year 91 laptops were stolen on campus, almost all from undergrad dorm rooms that were left unlocked. 22 cameras are now on and around campus, to provide a watch. Matthew wants input from grad students, especially since most of us live off-campus (with no statistics). Nighttime safety officers on street corners will be continued. One concern is saferide –

some like it, some feel that there could be even more service. Another concern is thefts in Barus and Holley.

- iv. *Election to Student Activities Advisory Board
Tabled until next month*
- v. *Election to Diversity Advisory Board
Tabled until next month*

III. Funding Requests: Amount—Purpose—Group

- i. *\$400—Self-Study of Graduate Funding
Hires one person to research graduate funding at other institutions as compared to Brown. The Dean has agreed to work with the person hired. This is an opportunity to find and present facts about funding to the graduate school. PASS UNANIMOUSLY.*
- ii. *\$100—Pakistani Students at Brown (Ahsan Hussain)
Ahsan is not present, so no vote on funding.*
- iii. *\$400—Masters of Arts in Teaching (Lucy Thompson)
Looking for a speaker in April, Janice Kelsey. Taught and helped during desegregation of schools civil rights movement. Speaker will also speak to a local elementary school. Entire budget is \$800. PASS WITH ONE NO.*
- iv. *\$400 – Speaker Series in April exploring issues of migration in US and Europe. Put together by grad students in several departments, large turnout expected. Migration Policy Institute director will be first speaker. Total budget \$1400, for honoraria and plane fees. PASS UNANIMOUSLY.*
- v. *\$400 – History grad student conference – keynote speech is on genocide. Funded by many sources. GSC funds would go to honoraria and reception (open to all). This should raise Brown’s profile. PASS WITH ONE NO.*

IV. Executive Reports and Announcements

- i. *Department Rebate Update
Process has changed from getting signatures to filling out a short form for the treasurer. Send it to Box 1853, Tony Evans. Rebates will come by end of the semester. Emailed information to follow.*
- ii. *Nominations and election for Wilson-DeBlois Award
For excellence by a staff member.
Nominations: Jennifer Slater Browns – brought a grant getting jobs in federal government for students.
Patricia Figueuroa – Library special studies for Hispanic studies among many, many others. Finds a way to help even graduate students who don’t come with questions. Meets every graduate student in her apartments, especially international students who won’t know library organization as well.
Chelsea Shriver – administration in JNBC for public humanities.
Unflappable. Organizes many events on campus – paperwork, cleanup, much hard work.*

Laura Hess – assoc. director of Sheridan Center for teaching. Goes out of her way to help her students with their portfolios (3 hours per portfolio) – extremely helpful. Keeps students relaxed and stays available to any students.

Pamela McNulty – assistant at Career Development Center. Helps you prepare for the job market. She keeps track of reference letters; many graduate students are in her debt. She does a mechanic job in an efficient, kind, and human way.

Phil Boochi – learns the names of everyone who visits OMAC regularly. Extremely enthusiastic. And once he knows your name, he'll do anything for you. Goes to ALL games, basically a Brown mascot.

Vote: Jennifer-6, Patricia -5, Chelsea-3, Laura-4, Pamela-7, Phil-4

Run-off: Jennifer-4, Patricia-4, Pamela – the rest. Pamela wins.

iii. *Nominations for Graduate Speaker*

Gives a speech at graduation. Nominations taken now, vote next meeting – speech excerpts given next month before the vote. No nominations.

iv. *Vote: Nationals Association for Graduate Students Membership*

\$1000 per year, discount on Geico insurance (around 6% off any type of insurance), 10% off “better world books” – an online used book store.

Runs regional conferences, legislative action days (drive to DC and petition Congress). UNANIMOUS VOTE TO LEAVE. Money will be reallocated.

v. *Vote: Legal Services: \$4,000*

Currently undergrads pay for it - \$10,000. Services are for all students, however, and contract is up for debate. Weekly hours at Sarah Doyle, gives advice up to actually filing. Grad students are the overwhelming users of this, especially international students. Undergrads refuse to continue paying for entire service. GSC officers want more hours near lease renegotiation times. Comments: lawyer has helped several grad students in the room. \$100-\$200/hr service now “free” to grad students. A new lawyer will be taking over – a Brown alum. Lawyer will be around over the summer, for reduced hours. Roughly 120 total students used the service last year. Available 4 hours per week. PASS UNANIMOUSLY.

vi. *Tax workshop: International Students*

FYI: workshops for free, GSC will help sponsor it. More information to come.

vii. *Vote: Constitutional Amendment: Article VII, External Committees (see below)*

Limits terms on external committees, and asks them to report back each month to the GSC VP Administration. Vote: section 4- pass with 4 no. section 7 – pass unanimously. These must pass again next month to become official changes.

viii. *Vote: By-Law Addition: Article XXV, Conference Funding (see below)*

Debated this last year, but economy is very different.

GSC President – sees this as a symbolic gesture to non-funded groups

that have a need (master's students, 1st and 6th year plus PhD students), unifying the grad students. GSC can re-envision its role in Brown – no longer talking heads. Less money than grad school gives, and funds would be divided proportionally into 4 areas (see amendment below).

GSC representatives' comments: projected total budget \$3000, for the 2/3 of the grad school that isn't funded for conferences. Even non-presenting 2nd-5th year PhD students are not funded. This could be done on a provisional basis. Would go into effect in the fall.

Vote section by section – 1 pass 3 no, 2 pass 3 no, 3 pass 1 no, 4 pass unanimous, 5 pass 1 no, 6 pass unan., 7 pass unan., 8 pass, 9 pass 1 no, 10 pass 1 no.

Comment: some departments fund 1st year PhD students. Perhaps a limit on discussion time should be put in.

V. Invited Speakers

None scheduled

VI Group Recognition

i. Graduate Women in Science and Engineering

GWISE would be a graduate student extension of similar group for undergrads. Hosted prospective grad students last year. Hosted two faculty panels last year – pursuing academic jobs, and other opportunities.

Women from several departments participated. Hosted a conference of women in science/engineering groups from several schools. Would like to split from undergrad WISE program. Dean Valerie Wilson supports this fully. Vote: Pass unanimously.

ii. Taubman Policy Forum – discuss public policy. Want to reserve rooms and request money for faculty speakers. Vote: Pass unanimously.

V. Other News

i. Open floor

ii. Monthly GSC expense report available upon request (email Tony Evans)

*iii. Next GSC General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 8, at 7 p.m.** in the Graduate Student Lounge.*

Proposed Additions and Amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws

Constitution:

Article VII: External Committees

Section 4:

- Current: The term of service on external committees shall be determined by that committee's charge or at the preference of the representative.
- Amendment: Representatives to external committees are elected for 1-year terms. After 1 year, the positions as representatives to external committees are open for general election at the next GSC meeting. Veteran representatives may run for reelection.

Section 7 (Addition): Representatives who fail to report to the GSC are considered delinquent and forfeit their positions as representatives to their respective external committees. A representative is “delinquent” if he or she does not respond to an email from the GSC Vice President regarding their respective committees within one month. Once a representative is deemed “delinquent,” his or her position as representative is open for general election at the next GSC meeting.

By-Laws:

Article XXV: Conference Funding

Section 1: In light of the prohibitive cost of conferences, individuals who are ineligible for financial support from the Graduate School of Brown University may request conference funding from the GSC.

Section 2: Requests for funding must be made 1 week prior to a GSC meeting to be considered at that meeting. The grant request shall include:

1. Amount of money requested
2. Description of conference and how your participation advances your education at Brown
3. A complete budget

Section 3: The individual requesting money from the GSC must be a currently enrolled graduate student and make a brief presentation at a meeting of the GSC regarding their request.

Section 4: Voting on a funding request shall take place at the GSC meeting at which the initial proposal was heard. The individual making the request shall be present at that meeting to answer questions before voting takes place.

Section 6: If the funding request is denied, the individual may not repetition the GSC until the next school year.

Section 7: If the funding request is approved, the individual shall submit a “Travel Expense Report” to the GSC treasurer with appropriate documentation for expenses for reimbursement.

Section 8: Individuals may make one funding request per school year for up to \$200.

Section 9: Money for conference funding shall come from the approved budget for “Group and Event Funding.”

Section 10: Money allocated for conference funding shall be distributed proportionally among students in the humanities, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences. These amounts shall be based upon the percentage of graduate students enrolled in each area, according to records kept by the Graduate School.