

**GSC Monthly Meeting**  
**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 7:10pm**  
**GSC Room in Miller Hall**  
**Minutes taken by Robert Hilliker, GSC Secretary**

*These minutes are intended to reflect the gist of discussion. Questions and statements have, in general, been paraphrased, though their original meaning has been retained. If you have any questions about or corrections to these minutes, please contact Robert\_Hilliker@brown.edu.*

**Summary:** The GSC voted to raise, for the year 2003-04, the per student per semester fee paid to the Graduate Center Bar to one and a half dollars (\$1.50).

**Present:**

*Officers*

Co-President, Samuel (Sam) Brenner, History  
Co-President, Michael (Mike) Harrison, Bio-Med  
VP-Administration, Joshua (Josh) Sachar, Engineering  
VP-Social, Thomas (Corey) Redd, Applied Math  
Treasurer, Alicia Chung, Bio-Med  
Secretary, Robert (Rob) Hilliker, Comparative Literature  
Technology Officer, Robert (Rob) Hunter, Computer Science

*Representatives and Attendees who signed in*

Total list unavailable; those present included the following: Sarah Noble, Amy Ulfers, Jessica Levai, Jeffrey Reingold, Pilapa Esara, Dondrea Thompson, Erika Lawson, Laura Lurati, Michaela White, Bethany Bradley, John Raiti, Wessyl Kelly, Madhavi Chand, Jason Taylor, Jonna Hamilton, Stephanie Larrieux, Alex Poole, Renée Allen.

**1. Minutes and Minutiae**

Minutes for the March meeting unanimously approved.

**2. Reports and Announcements**

**A. Executive Reports**

**President's Report:**

Mike Harrison: We met with President Simmons in mid-March to explain what the GSC does, cares about, and wants to see done. She was taking ample notes, as was her assistant, David Green. One thing we asked for in particular was more transparency, especially where funding is concerned. A couple of days later, Sam

and I ran into Dean Newman in the Blue Room. She said she had received an e-mail from the president about this, and said the Graduate School is already working on this.

Sam Brenner: And, of course, since then we have all received a message from Dean Newman, reporting on the status of the Graduate School.

Mike: Corey Redd, some of the Department Graduate Representatives and I met with Dean Diffly recently to discuss improvements to graduate student life. Do others who were there want to share their impressions?

Wessyl Kelly: I was happy with the meeting.

Mike: My impression was that the administration wants to include us, and is making an effort to do so: the ball is rolling. There wasn't too much new in this discussion, though. Sam, Corey and I have met with Dean Hansen to talk about orientation next year. It will be more celebratory *and* official. We're going to get the President to commit to being there, which we feel is important for first-years. Also want to have a clear schedule of what happens, so that it is not so fuzzy and disorganized.

Sam: We're going to ask department representatives to be there in order to ensure that the first-years make connections in their departments. This is also very important.

Corey: Yes, people need to take orientation seriously, even though it can seem like 'what has this got to do with me.' Please make sure students in your departments get down to orientation; this is where we begin to build a sense of community. We have to start this somewhere. As for the schedule, the morning is very structured, and afternoon more relaxed with the social and whatnot.

Sam: As part of orientation, there will be a Dean to answer funding questions, as well as a person from risk management, both of whom will be able to provide useful information not only to first-years, but to all graduate students.

Wessyl: About the 'officialness' of orientation, if the department representatives will be there, could they have buttons?

Sam: Yes, I think we could get buttons.

Alex Poole: We could even get T-shirts.

Rob Hunter: That would be a good opportunity to advertise the GSC.

Sam: I like that idea. Okay, we will be meeting about this as it goes forward. In other news, summer funding has gone to departments, and the Graduate School will be sending out e-mails about funding soon. Contact your department grad

uate advisor to ask about this, if you have questions. Beth Burlingame is the person who is dealing with funding issues for the Graduate School. She wants to make things more transparent; she wants to put deadlines and other information on-line. Dissertation fellowships are out now, and travel monies should be soon.

Mike: Was anyone at the master planning meeting?

Rob Hilliker: I was; basically they were talking about the long term development plans for the University, figuring out what buildings to keep, which to move or tear down, where they can build, and how to allocate space. Some of the things they're looking at include creating a walkway from the Lower Green to the Pembroke Campus, moving parking to the outskirts of campus—possibly to the Jewelry District, moving the stadium and some of the sports fields, and developing on the land that opens up as a result of the shift in the position of I-195.

Mike: The University Resources Committee is talking about this, too. The Life Sciences buildings would be moving down to the Jewelry District as well, and there would be a shuttle between there and College Hill.

#### **Technology Officer's Report:**

Rob Hunter: If you have announcements for the calendar, please send them to me at Rob@cs.brown.edu.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Alicia: We need to find out from Dean Diffly exactly how much is in our account. As of 2001, we had approximately fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), and we stuck to our budget for 2002, so we should have the same amount now. Department rebates have been awarded, but we still have money left from what has been allocated to this fund. If you are planning to submit a rebate, please get it to me for the May meeting, otherwise leave it until the fall. In order to get a rebate you need to send me a summary of what the students have agreed to use the money for, the signatures of 50% + 1 of your department's students, and the number of a bank account to transfer the funds into. This year, the rebate is six dollars (\$6) per student, with a minimum of fifty dollars (\$50) per department. In terms of funding outside groups, we've gone over the budget, which was one thousand dollars (\$1000), by seven hundred and forty dollars (\$740). With our surplus, though, we can still fund groups that need money.

Question: Once we apply for the rebate, how long will it take to be deposited?

Alicia: It has to go from my hands, to the Dean, and then to the Controller's Office, so about 3-6 weeks.

#### **VP-Social's Report:**

Corey: The Social Committee has been meeting; the next social is next Friday, and it will be a wine social, starting at 6, running to 8, in the Graduate Student Lounge. There will be salsa lessons in the Graduate Lounge: we have a volunteer instructor to teach us, and that starts at 7:30pm. The first pub event will be Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Wild Colonial at 8:30pm. The idea is to check out new places, and go to a different one each time.

Josh: Has that been cleared with the Wild Colonial?

Corey: No, I don't think there will be a problem there. We'll check, but if it gets big, then we'll be sure to clear it with the bars. The first coffee break will be the Tuesday after the social, the 22<sup>nd</sup>. That will be at 10am in the Graduate Lounge. The first movie night will be next Wednesday, the 16<sup>th</sup> at 9pm, the movie is open for suggestions.

Question: Is there a list of these dates somewhere?

Corey: It will be on the calendar and in an e-mail. Spring Dance is April 26<sup>th</sup>; this year it will be a toga party; it should be a great time. That will be in Andrews Dining Hall. It will probably start at 9pm. The Spring BBQ is still in the works, since we can't go through Wess's BBQ this year, because of Brown First. The options are to push ahead, or put the funds into the dance. Anything I missed?

Jonna Hamilton: We may have a Red Sox event in the summer.

Question: What's the format of the 'pub crawl'?

Corey: This is not a bar to bar thing; it's going to a single bar and hanging out, and trying a new one each time.

Question: Will it be a regular event?

Corey: This one's on a Saturday, but they're not necessarily going to be regularly on that day.

Jonna: If people need rides they can e-mail me and I'll organize carpools.

Sam: Let's get info on this on the website.

## **B. Internal Committees**

## **C. External Committees**

## **Taskforce on Graduate Education:**

Renée: We've had two meetings so far. Basically, the Dean wants to develop general Teaching Assistantship policy that is totally non-prescriptive. She has given us information on the policies and conditions at other schools and information on our departments, which is all over the board. Some schools have no policy, MIT considers TAs employees. We decided to have a survey of TAs and Professors, seeing what they think they're asking us to do, and what we're being asked to do. The idea is to get a Sociology Student, under a Professor's supervision, to generate the survey. Dean Diffly is collecting questions for this. They're very concerned to have this be answered by as many people as possible in order to be legitimate. It should be written this semester, go out to people Sciences over the summer, and others next fall. The original idea was to have results by the end of the semester, but this is obviously not possible now.

Wessyl: Will this go to all graduate students? Or just those who are teaching?

Renée: We didn't cover that yet, we worried more about incentives. The idea was to do all of both groups, it seemed.

Suggestion from person in the middle rows: It might be worthwhile to consider recent Ph.Ds.

### **Graduate Council**

Josh: We met to approve new graduate level courses. There were ten or twelve approved at this last meeting. We try to confirm that the syllabus is complete and well organized; there are restrictions on the number of Undergraduates allowed in these courses.

### **University Resources Committee**

Mike: We continue to meet. We have to cut four or five million dollars from this year's budget to balance it. We asked various departments to project what a 3, 5, and 10% reduction would look like for them. We've heard from all departments and offices now and we're going to make recommendations as to where those cuts should come from.

### **College Curriculum Committee**

Sam: We met and continued to discuss issues. Career services came up, though there was more discussion about undergraduates; we heard that Career Services reports to a Dean of the College. We should perhaps point out that a Graduate Dean should be involved in Graduate Career Services. The +/- issue is dead.

Alicia: Was the decision to remain status quo?

Sam: Yes.

### 3. GCB Membership Cost

Josh: The GCB is the Graduate Center Bar; it's been around since 1969 and acted as a meeting place for graduate students, though undergraduates have been accused of over-running the place. This year there seem to be more graduate students than before. Three years ago the fee for membership was four dollars (\$4) per student per year.

Sam: Let's be clear: the GSC has paid in the past for all graduate students to be members and the question of cost has come up.

Josh: Yes. So three years ago the President of the GSC told the GCB that they didn't have enough money to pay, and had the fee lowered to one dollar (\$1) per semester, but then it came out that there was a fifteen thousand dollar (\$15,000) surplus. What the bar has proposed, and I propose, is that it be raised to a dollar and a half (\$1.50) a semester, which is what was charged in 1993. The membership for non-graduates is twenty dollars (\$20) per year. 50% of grads visit once a year, to give you an idea of the level of use, and it would be twenty dollars (\$20) each, if the GSC didn't pay. So, say if there were seven hundred (700) students who needed memberships, it would be fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000) to pay for them, while paying for all fourteen hundred (1400) graduate students costs four thousand two hundred dollars (\$4200). So I propose that, for next year, the payment go up to one dollar and a half (\$1.50) per semester and that we fund that. We want to decide this now so the bar knows where it stands.

Sam: So, we have a suggested motion that, for 2003-4, the GSC pay one dollar and a half (\$1.50) per student per semester.

Don Carney: I'm just looking at the rules here, but can GSC executives make motions?

Sam: This is a suggested motion, we can suggest motions, but non-exec members have to move them.

*Motion to raise, for the year 2003-04, the perstudent per semester membership fee paid to the GCB to one and a half dollars (\$1.50).*

Don: I've been a graduate student for a long time, and there's a history that goes with this; I can't remember it all, but Miguel knows the spiel. Basically, graduate students started the thing, and there was a deal that they would have a reduced rate if they turned it over.

Josh: It's a non-profit, and was founded as such in 1969. So the profits go to charity, and the costs are kept low. This means that there's a board of directors, with ten members, six of whom are graduate students.

Don: My questions are: how do we pay for it? And do they need it?

Josh: The short answer is yes they do, because their costs are going up; it depends on the year how well they do. Its always very close to break even, the profit margin is very small.

Corey: How many undergraduate members are there?

Josh: I don't recall exactly, but it's a few hundred more than graduate students.

Question: Are the GCB giving us an ultimatum?

Josh: No.

Question: Are you proposing this as a board member?

Josh: Yes, I am a board member, but I don't get any financial gain from this.

Sam: There was no ultimatum, but we didn't pay when we had the money, and given the increase in costs, it makes sense to pay more.

Question: How would this effect the budget?

Corey: Before Alicia talks, I want to point out that we wanted to use the surplus to make one time deals, but not to dip into it on a regular basis.

Alicia: Based on our current activity fees we will have three thousand seven hundred dollars (\$3700) as a surplus at the end of the fiscal year, but that doesn't include our overruns of about one thousand dollars (\$1000).

Question: How are we overbudget if we have a surplus?

Alicia: We're overbudget on particular items.

Person in back: The GCB has obviously worked with us before, so it seems silly to say 'no, we don't have the money.'

Rob Hunter: It seems strange to just give them money, when we ask student groups to propose and present a budget. I'd be more inclined to say yes if they could come and present their budget.

Josh: The reason why they haven't is because they are already a budget line of long standing. As a private club, I'm not sure they'd be willing to present their budgets; but, as treasurer for the GCB, I can say that this would help.

Stephanine Larrieux: What kind of charities does the money go to?

Josh: A number of good ones: World Wildlife Foundation, a battered women's shelter, they also sponsor a t-ball team; there's a list on the wall of the bar.

Don: So it all comes down to whether it fits into the budget, and since its an ongoing cost, it shouldn't come down to the surplus, and it amounts to \$1500, so it amounts to a social or two.

Person in the front: Or the department rebates, which have been underspent anyways.

Alicia: It wouldn't necessarily come out of there.

Sam: Is there a seconder for this motion?

Corey: Don't the GCB decide their budget in September?

Josh: They need to know before next year.

Don: Where would this money come from?

Alicia: Based on the status quo, it would fit into the yearly budget, since we have a surplus as it stands, budgeted at \$1400 last year, and at \$3700 this year since we eliminated one social activity.

Sam: Is there a seconder?

*Motion seconded. Motion passes: 12-3.*

#### **4. Miscellaneous**

Sam: Apparently some e-mails have not been getting through to the GSC officers, so please check our e-mail addresses in the EAB.

Mike: Dick Spies is looking for two or three graduate students to serve on the housing committee. He really wants input from us. Would anybody here like to serve on it?

Kate Fishbaugh: Do you have to live in Brown housing to be on it?

Mike: I don't think so.

Alex Poole: I'll volunteer.

Josh: Me, too.

Sam: A female member would be good, too; hopefully. We can find someone.

Mike: I've sent out a request for a graduate commencement speaker, and there have been no responses. If you are receiving an advanced degree you're eligible to speak, so I'd encourage you to submit a bio, and encourage grad reps to encourage people to do so. The deadline to have them to me is next Wednesday and then we'll hear short speeches by people on the following Monday. There's an alumni commencement speaker, Jim Garvin, who will be speaking for us. His specialization was geomorphology. He was voted for by us. Also, regarding travel funds: Mark Armstrong sent us an e-mail saying that people believe that there they will be reimbursed for five hundred dollars (\$500), that is actually the maximum, but they've had a lot of requests this year and so there's a shortage of funds; till the end of the semester the limit will be now be three hundred dollars (\$300). Dean Diffly said that, for now, if the money does run out, they may have to take from next year's budget, and carry over the three hundred dollar (\$300) limit into next year. The reimbursement policy may have some changes made, too.

Question: What about reimbursements for travel over the summer?

Sam: The financial year runs July to June, so it depends.

Josh: You get the five hundred dollars (\$500) if you give a paper at a conference, it's not just for going to the conference. Previously, you had to apply at the beginning of the semester, submitting proof that you had been accepted to speak at a conference. Now, you end up playing a waiting game; the previous method was better. That way there isn't differential treatment of people based on when they apply for reimbursement.

Person at the back: I don't understand why they should change midway through the semester. Also, we brought this up a while ago, and they said they wouldn't cut the travel money, so why this now?

Sam: There has been no cut in the total amount, they just are running out of what they had allocated; there is no money elsewhere to get.

Kate: I just talked to Dean Diffly's secretary, and the process she explained for now is that you e-mail Dean Diffly and he will tell you how much money you might get.

Person at the back: The way it works now is you go expecting a maximum of five hundred dollars (\$500), you come back, fill out the reimbursement form, and give in your receipts.

Kate: She told me to e-mail Diffly first.

Mike: So maybe we should put this in the recommendations for them; that we should get some sense of what's possible, first. Also, there is a two week grace period to file for reimbursement.

Sam: They have now put up the handbook for all graduate advisors and it has lots of this information in it.

Person in the middle row: We should recommend that they go back to the old system.

Sam: Or else divide the money up and have a couple of deadlines.

Person at the back: I'm confused about the old system, when did you apply?

Josh: At the beginning of the year, like when you got back in February. In my department we present on our research, so it's not like you have in the Humanities.

Person in the back: And you only present research? This kind of system could be a problem if you have a summer conference.

Alicia: For a close call you might need to look for other sources of funding.

Sam: What about this notion that you have to complete an outline form and have clear, written guidelines of how much you can apply for, etc..

Person in the middle row: It should be straightforward.

Sam: Anything else?

Pilapa: Career Services. There will a graduate student career conference on May 13<sup>th</sup>, save the date. There will be a series of panels, invitations will go out soon. The idea for the conference is to have people with jobs outside academia come back and share their experiences. This will be useful for people who want to network, who are going on the job market. It will be also be useful for younger students who want an idea of what options are there, and what skills they will need. Right now we're funded by the Office of President and the Graduate School, the Alumni groups, and the GSC, so we need a big turnout to show how important this is to us.

Alicia: Will there be company representatives at tables?

Pilapa: It's not representatives, it's alumni coming back to talk about their experiences.

Dondrea: We're looking for volunteers to serve as panel advisors; if you're planning to go to the conference, it would be a minimal time commitment. Of eleven panels, have only five advisors, so we need people. It's a good networking opportunity, so volunteer or pass the word onto those who might be interested. We also need panel moderators.

Wessyl: What do these people do?

Dondrea: Advisors contact people through e-mail and answer their questions, and set up for the panel, getting water, etc. The moderator makes sure people keep to their times.

Don: Is there a list of the panel members?

Pilapa: This information will be available online.

Sam: We'll send an e-mail out about this. We had a conversation after the last meeting about whether the GSC should be funding the Career Services; we decided that doesn't make sense, but that we should be heavily involved in it because it's very important to graduate students.

Kate: I know you're having dinners and meals, will there be a charge?

Dondrea: Most of it will be free, expect there is an etiquette dinner that will have a nominal charge. It will be a three course meal at the Faculty Club, training people on how to act at job dinners.

Kate: I'm not on any GSC committees, and I was interested in joining, but the information is not on the website anymore. How do I find out what's out there?

Sam: That's a good point. They're appointed every fall, but some are empty now. We'll email about what's open and try to fill those.

*Motion to end meeting. Motion approved unanimously.*