

ASG Graduate House of Representatives

Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2011

1. Call to Order (1:07)
2. Roll Call

Present: Representatives Kelly Gondek, Elizabeth Wellings, Gail Nelson, Ricardo Videtta, Joni Schneider, and Christian McArthur

Absent: Representatives Justin Williams, Benjamin Chasin, Christian Cabazos, Linda Wiatrek, and Kevin Burck.  
Others Present: Nominees for Representative JD Hill and Ashley Aikman

NOTE: No quorum was met.

1. Reports
   1. Secretary’s Report

Secretary McArthur updated the House on the Election Code legislation and the Supreme Court decision. The Supreme Court ruled that the Graduate House and the Senate must approve changes to the Election Code in the same academic year. This ruling was upheld on appeal by the Dean of Students. This means that the Senate will have to vote on the Election Code sometime this year. Any differences between the Senate’s version and the House version will have to be dealt with. The process for handling differences is unsure and will require help from the Executive Branch and ASG Advisor.

Secretary McArthur also wanted to discuss the ASG website with the House. Currently, the website has a “menu” option for Records. The options under this menu item include records only for the Senate. To access the House records a person has to first navigate to the Graduate House page to find a link to those records. A discussion occurred which those present felt that the House records should appear under the records menu item on the same pages as the Senate. Representative Schneider says if she were trying to find the House records she would assume there were none. Representative Wellings said that the site should be consistent and have both legislative branch’s records located in similar locations. It was asked that House Leader Videtta discuss this with the ASG Executive Branch to include the House on the records page(s) with the Senate.

As far as the Graduate House page itself, Representative Hill suggested that the Grad House meeting day/times and location should be placed here. He had difficulty finding the meeting last time. Representative Schneider and future Representative Hill agreed to have their e-mail addresses on the Graduate House page similarly to other representatives.

Secretary McArthur then gave an update of the Senate activities. He discussed City Council members and candidates speaking at the Senate as well as the Kristine Toma from the University Archives. He said that President DeGarmo is getting the PR committee started and those on the committee should hopefully have gotten e-mails about it. The Veteran’s Liaison reported that volunteers are needed to help read names of members of the US military branches who have died during Operation Enduring Freedom; the list of names is said to be 202 names and will take several days to read. Secretary McArthur is trying to get the exact days/times this will happen so word can get out for those who want to volunteer. Legislation that the Senate is working on includes GPA Reform (moving to a plus/minus grading system) and having a student advocate/member of the Grades Appeal Committee both by Senator Adam French and work regarding the Honor Code by Senator Eric Kinney.

* 1. Committee Reports

Secretary McArthur says that the Governing Documents committee is meeting twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4pm until 6pm. The committee is currently reviewing all the documents to ensure clarity and cohesion among all the documents. Anyone is welcome to join in and offer feedback. Meeting minutes are also available to anyone who wants them.

1. New Business
   1. ASG Graduate House Budget (1:30pm)

The ASG budget proposal has been released. The budget from the Executive Branch includes $1200 for the Graduate House. The Finance Committee moved things around and is asking the Senate to approve a budget of $1658 for the Graduate House. The ASG Treasurer, at the Finance Committee meeting, explained that ASG was making a request to the Student Services Fee Committee for additional funding. The Graduate House could potentially get more money if that funding is granted. The Treasurer had asked the Graduate House to provide a list of areas it would want to spend that money, particularly for items above the current budget.

House Leader Videtta and Secretary McArthur had met with House Advisor Dr. Paula Williamson earlier in the week to discuss how to possibly spend the money. The members of the House present discussed that proposal and offered an addition:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget** | **$1200 - $1658** | **Running Total** |
| Luncheon with Deans | $ 800.00 | $ 800.00 |
| Commencement Cords | $ 100.00 | $ 900.00 |
| Office Supplies + Misc | $ 258.00 | $ 1,158.00 |
| ASG Social/Mixer | $ 500.00 | $ 1,658.00 |
| Graduate Student Social | $ 2,000.00 | $ 3,658.00 |
| GH Promotions / Mktg | $ 342.00 | $ 4,000.00 |

The items in green are the items that the House would like to fund with the already budgeted numbers. The other two items are what the House would like to spend additional money on if the funds were available.

Representative McArthur expressed that however much money the Graduate House gets, it needs to spend it all before the end of the academic year. The amount of funding in the future will always be determined by how much the group has previously spent.

Representative Nelson asked if there was a treasurer that can keep track of Graduate House expenses. This way the House knows how much money it still has left throughout the year. Representative McArthur says there is no treasurer defined for the Graduate House but may be a temporary position that someone can hold or can be responsibilities one of the Representatives can take on.  
 There was general discussion about the ASG budget and how to ensure that the Graduate House is included (for example the Banquet, ASG t-shirts and marketing, etc). Members of the House agreed that it is their responsibility as a group to ensure that they make themselves a part of ASG and keep the rest of ASG reminded that the Graduate House wants to be part of its overall activities.  
 It was asked that House Leader Videtta forward to the Executive Branch the budget list (above) for their reference when considering future budgets and the possibility of additional money.

* 1. Discussion about Career Services & graduate student needs (1:52pm)

House Leader Videtta wanted to get feedback from the House about what is provided by Career Services to graduate students.

JD Hill said he had recently met with Career Services and felt that they weren’t prepared to advise someone who had previous work experience, is currently pursuing a graduate degree and will be re-entering the workforce.

House Leader Videtta went to the Job Fair that was held during the week and found it was focused on undergraduate students and entry-level positions.

Representative Gondek believes that individual departments may be of greatest help with handling the needs of individual areas. Perhaps the departments can work with Career Services to provide better information and resources for graduate students.

JD Hill suggested that there be a Job Fair for just Graduate Students which would be more focused on medium-level positions.

House Leader Videtta asked if it would be beneficial to ask someone from Career Services to come speak with the Graduate House and discuss these issues and see what can come from it. Everyone was supportive of this idea.

* 1. Discussion about workshops for graduate students

House Leader Videtta wanted to discuss workshops for graduate students. In particular he thought a workshop on presentations would be useful for many students. At the University he attended for his undergraduate degree there was a big emphasis on public speaking and presenting. All presentations were recorded and reviewed by an advisor so suggestions could be given on how the student can improve.

This lead into a discussion on workshops in general. It was pointed out that the Graduate College offers several workshops on various topics (http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/Thes-Diss\_Info/T-D\_Workshop.html). JD Hill and others pointed out that these workshops are offered sporadically and at inconvenient times.

Representative Schneider says she would like to see more workshops or resources to help with performing research. It is one of the workshops on the Graduate College website but has not been scheduled. Representative Gondek said there are people who work in the library who may be able to help with that outside of a workshop. It was also determined that some academic departments offer research workshops and seminars but not all departments do this.

Representative Wellings suggested we communicate with Dr. Williamson and the Graduate College to find out how they determine when to schedule their workshops and how often. She also wants to talk with the communications department and see if it could offer workshops to the student body as a service beyond the undergraduate level speech class.

* 1. Graduate student alumni surveys (2:07pm)
     1. <http://www.ir.txstate.edu/Reports/survey/grad.html>

The link above is to a set of surveys the Department of Institutional Research has been conducting over the last four years of graduate student alumni. It was brought to our attention by Dr. Williamson. Each survey includes both an executive summary and a link to detailed results. The results require an active Texas State NetID (which all House members have). Results can be seen from the perspective of different genders, ethnicity, and degree program. It contains a lot of information and towards the bottom includes specific comments by those surveyed. This may provide a good resource for seeing what issues alumni were having as graduate students and what areas we need to look at. Skimming through the results for one survey brought up a number of possible issues.

Representative Schneider was interested in knowing about how the library determined their hours. She, along with Ashley Aikman, felt the weekend hours weren’t timed very well. Representative Schneider is going to contact the library to get more information about this issue. It was also mentioned that the library is holding open forums with students to discuss the future of the library and services it offers as part of its remodeling process. An e-mail went out during the week discussing this and giving the times for those sessions.

Representative Wellings had pointed out during this discussion that e-mail quotas are difficult to handle. She is going to contact Technology Resources to see if anything can be done about giving graduate students additional room in their quota to allow students to be able to not delete as much valuable e-mail.

The possibility of having a TRACS site for the Graduate House was raised again. Representative McArthur said he had created a TRACS site for the Graduate House. It can be used to communicate with graduate students, but felt that first it needs to be populated with some information about the Graduate House to be effective. All of the Graduate House members have access to it and should be able to make whatever edits they’d like.

1. Questions

Representative Schneider wanted to talk about the tobacco policy and enforcement. She had recently tried informing students that tobacco and smoking were not allowed on campus on day when walking to her office from a class she had taught. The responses from students varied from being told to mind her own business to almost being physically confronted over it. She asked what else can be done to enforce the policy. Representative Wellings felt there should be some way to better enforce the policy even if it required UPD to write tickets. Representative McArthur pointed out that UPD does not have the resources to do this, even if they were legally able to write tickets. State law makes it illegal to smoke within 20 feet of a building entrance, but elsewhere it is simply university policy which has no teeth, in his opinion. It was discussed that a student could get reported to the Dean of Students and possibly some punishment from that avenue, but would usually require a building administrator to police the policy outside the building. Representative Wellings felt that there should be some way to encourage the University to enforce the policy better or to provide better enforcement requirements in the policy.

JD Hill mentioned that in some parts of campus there are promotional posters from the University promoting a statistic that 70% of students have never missed class or work due to alcohol. He disliked the poster since he reads into it that almost a third of students do miss class or work because of alcohol use. He didn’t think this was a positive image to be promoting. There was some question as to who to contact about this.

1. Adjournment (2:38pm)