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## Minutes of the General Assembly Meeting on Oct. 7, 2009

The second regularly scheduled meeting of GAPSA General Assembly was convened on October 7th, 2009 at 6:00 PM in the Bodek Lounge in Houston Hall.

### Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Present were: Corbett Brown, Lee Solomon, Ashley Goss, David Conklin, Allison Sullivan, Michelle Jacobson, Maher Zamel, David Stein, Emily Joy Rothchild, Henry Friedman, Jade Palomino, Tara Liss-Marino, Suzanne Bratt (Also for Melinda Nelson-Hurst), Gerardo Benitez, Bronwyn Wallace, Scott Ordway, Madeline Boyer, Matthew Closter, Cara Bumgardner, Christie Chavez, Markus Hill, Lisa Jacobson, Alexandria Mathieu, David Pietrocola, Maria Murray, Swathi Madaiah (Also for Majesh Abraham), Russell Aldrich, Joe Friedman, Fernando P. Midence Mantilla, Jacqueline Simonet, Dustin Shilling, Tammer Farid, Will Cho, Danish Nagda, Sarah Abdulla, Sarah Jacoby (for Beth Froh), Margeret Yoho, Tom Byrne, Rachel John, Joanelle Hernandez, Steven Fernandez, Brian Cheyne, David Bard, Shawn Kumar, Carl Lonnberg, Maneesh Nisargand, Sodany Sor, Kerry Kellogg.

Quorum was declared.

### Approval of the Minutes from Prior Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the General Assembly meeting on 9-23-09 was approved by a majority vote.

### Executive Board & Committee Reports

#### •Chair

Mr. Brown reported that the Ivy Summit is next weekend and some members of the Executive Board will be attending the meeting at being held at Cornell.

#### •Vice Chair

Mr. Brown spoke on behalf of Mr. Solomon. He reported that Mr. Solomon had a meeting with Vice Provost for University Life (VPUL) Val Cade and was able to obtain more funding for GradFest.

#### •VC Professional Students / Professional Student Council

Ms. Palomino reported that the Professional Council is in the process of forming sub-committees and organizing a social event (professional student bar crawl).

•*VC Research Students / Research Student Council*

Mr. Friedman reported that the Research Council approved some funding requests and encouraged the Assembly to find out about these events and attend.

•*VC International Affairs / International Student Council*

There was no report from the VC for International Affairs or the International Student Council as this position is to be filled at the special election later in the meeting.

•*VC Equity & Access / Pluralism Student Council*

Ms. Jacobson reported that a special election would be held after the reports. Also, Ms. Jacobson needs to know who the University Council reps from each school are going to be.

•*Acting VC Student Life / Student Life Policy Council*

Ms. Rothchild reported that she attended the Share the Road initiative event. The organizers wanted to let the Assembly know that tickets will now be issued for driving in the bike lane and for “zooming through” stop signs. Ms. Rothchild met with VPUL Val Cade and the VP is very much behind the Family Resource Center. Funding is in place; a suitable space is the only missing piece. Ms. Rothchild also met with the directors of the Penn Women’s Center and has meetings set up with various Penn Parenting groups. Ms. Rothchild also reported that she spoke with the fire department and received information about tenants’ rights and tenant safety. The Student Life committee had a productive meeting and will look into expanding transportation options into center city.

•*VC Finance / Finance Committee*

Ms. Goss reported that her committee has received 23 academic group and 14 additional requests for money. She reports that her committee will be meeting quickly to take care of the outstanding requests.

•*VC Social Activities / Student Activities Committee*

Mr. Conkin reported that 1100-1200 students attended the Moshulu event, more than triple the attendance of previous years. He hopes that it will be a continuing trend. He also reported that 200 people attended the happy hour at the Blockley Pourhouse, that tomorrow is a late night happy hour at Distrito, and the Halloween party is among the upcoming events.

•*VC Student Programs / Student Programs Committee*

Mr. Zamel reported that the third Student Programs event, a dinner at El Vez, was held last week with 45 students attending, spread among the different schools. He also reported that the

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City Tavern was coming up on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and there are only 6 or 7 tickets left. He also reported that his committee has started a weekly bus transport to King of Prussia on the weekends for shopping, and this will continue through the semester.

- *VC Communications / Communications Committee*

Ms. Sullivan reported that she is looking for a Deputy, especially if they are good at web programming.

- *VC Operations*

Mr. Stein had nothing to report at this time.

## **Elections (Conducted by VC Equity & Access)**

Mr. Brown turned the meeting over to Vice Chair for Equity and Access Michelle Jacobson to preside over the 2009-2010 Executive Board Special Election for vacant seats. The results are as follows:

- *Vice Chair for Student Life: Emily Joy Rothchild*
- *Vice Chair for International Affairs:*

Mr. Brown thanked Ms. Jacobson and the Assembly and congratulated the newly elected board members.

## **Budget (Conducted by VC Finance)**

The transcriber of the minutes apologizes that this following section is not going to be in standard format. As attendees will attest, this discussion proceeded rather chaotically, in a manner that strained the collective knowledge of Robert's Rules and proved to be impossible to transcribe accurate. What follows is an attempt to capture the main points of the discussion in a coherent and accurate manner. As always, I invite constructive criticism and amendments.

As the budget is required by the constitution to be approved by the second General Assembly meeting, and the earlier special election ran longer than expected the length of the discussion on the budget was constrained. Therefore, the discussion centered on the following issues:

- 1) Was the Assembly prepared to pass the budget as presented without a full and open discussion?
- 2) If the Assembly was not prepared to pass the budget as presented, what options did it have to fulfill the constitutional requirements while still maintaining the ability to amend the budget at a later date?

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- 3) Regarding the budget itself: what is the ideal percentage of funds to be devoted to the G12 school governments as a proportion of the total budget?

Mr. David Bard and Mr. Carl Lonnberg were among those who expressed concern that the Assembly would not have enough time to properly discuss the budget and feared that amending the budget at a later date would prove difficult because the constitutional requirements are different than the original approval (3/4<sup>th</sup> majority v. simple majority). They favored passing some alternate minimum budget to satisfy the constitutional requirement and then discussing the issue in earnest at the next meeting.

After a lively discussion including the aforementioned Assembly members and Mr. Henry Friedman, Ms. Ashley Goss, and Mr. Corbett Brown regarding Robert's Rules and the constitution, it was determined that the 3/4ths majority requirement for subsequent amendments would still hold whether a minimum budget or the full budget was approved this meeting, so the discussion was ended without a motion.

Mr. Bard, Mr. Lonnberg, Mr. Markus Hill, and others also expressed concern that the percentage of the revenue from student General Fees that was allocated to the G12 school governments had dipped from ~60% to 55%. This concern was based on the dual claims of 60% being the historical/conventional split between the school governments and GAPSA, as well as the marginal dollar being spent at the school government level being more effective than the marginal dollar being spent at the GAPSA level.

Mr. Brown, Mr. Friedman, and Ms. Goss collectively stated that while historically the percentage had been 60%, it was not required by the constitution. Furthermore, the absolute dollar amount going to the G12 governments actually increased by 10%. The decrease in relative percentage going to the G12 schools was the result of the addition of GAPSA budget line items that had been agreed to in the negotiations with the university administration to increase the total general fee revenue going to GAPSA and the G12 schools. They also pointed out the percentage of general fee revenue going to G12 schools from the last academic year isn't a perfect comparison because surplus money was used to supplement the total budget.

Ms. Suzanne Bratt stated that while she did not think that there was a nefarious plot afoot, the Assembly should consider making the budget process more transparent and concrete in nature for the future.

Mr. Gerardo Benitez noted that the debate over the budget has been emotional, but that the money in question is only about \$27,000.

Mr. Danish Nagda reminded the Assembly that from the perspective of running a business, \$27,000 is a significant amount of money.

After this discussion, it was decided to end debate and proceed with a motion to approve the budget with the understanding that a continuation of the discussion with the possibility of amending the budget would occur at the next meeting.



The motion to approve the budget, as proposed, was passed by a majority through a paper ballot vote.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.