



Reminders

- Last meeting of the year on April 30th at Baker 432, 3:30pm
- End of the year Reports due by April 30th

General meeting

1. President call to order
2. Roll call by Secretary
 - o Quorum - Yes
3. Review and approval of meeting minutes from
 - o Motion to Approve Minutes: Becky Meissner
 - o Second: John Wiley
 - o Unanimously approved

New Business

1. Access to SU Health Services
 - o Craig: ESF Grads should have access to SU Health Services
 - o Eileen: Is this as ESF Grads, TAs (employed by the School), RAs (employed by the Research Foundation)? Because one thing is being received at SU Health Services and another thing is having your Insurance to cover it. I would not recommend a student to go to SU Health Services unless there are covered for sure, as they have the faculty to withhold your registration if you have any outstanding bill (including one from the Health Services)

- Craig: SU Health Services should take your Insurance if you are employed by ESF
- Allison: It could be a good idea to inform students about primary providers available in the area for RAs (students employed by the Research Foundation), I have this information and it's always good to know who will take their insurance.
- John: It's useful to have this information available, we should discuss whether this is part of our job and if a Committee should compile this kind of information and make it available
- Ely: this will probably be my responsibility, as it should be posted on the GSA Website
- Silvia: maybe add this type of information to be passed on during orientation
- Ely: Maybe we could compile information from students' experience about health, housing, landlords, etc. and make it available
- John: I am not sure if we should say things such as where you should live, but maybe we could have special Committee to compile information
- Rigo: I would definitely be helpful if we put something together, such as sheets with summarized info, maybe available at the Office or online.
- Craig: we could try to do this now or at the end of the year to pass it on to the next year's Senate.

Old Business

1. Graduate Student Bill of Rights (Dean Scott Shannon)
 - The idea of creating a Bill of Rights has the intention of protecting students' rights, this document could help situation where students are being taken advantage of, when they are RAs or not and expected to act as such. The main goal of stating each part's responsibilities is to recognize that everyone has something to gain and no one is taking advantage.
 - This document will be taken to the Faculty Governance. I expect that by next year every incoming student will sign a relatively short document, stating their responsibilities and terms of the student/professor relationship, in an agreement to protect everyone's rights. Ex: The Max Planck Institute in Germany has every student to sign a contract upon the beginning of their program. Important elements to be included in the document would be whether funding is warranted and for how long, whether there is a necessity to look or apply for funding and what part will the student be taking on that, among others.
 - Enforcement and timing

1. Eileen: There were concerns about whether the practices stated in the Bill of Rights can be enforced and about the feasibility of complying with established timing, for course completion, as an example. In practice, students rarely have their Steering Committee formed by their first semester, and once new Committee members are incorporated, they generally request for additional courses to be taken, which makes difficult for the student to have the courses completed within the stated deadlines.
 2. Scott S: The intent is to provide support for the students to form their Committee as early as possible, so that they can promptly find individuals that the student can effectively work with and also have the expertise. Students would have a study plan as early as possible, possibly provided upon arrival at ESF, with at least all the required courses for completion of their degree. This should make easier for students to move forward with their studies. This is not an attempt to have fixed programs, we want for the students to have freedom about their courses, but a provided plan can help as a guideline for a final study plan.
 3. John: During my previous program, MSc, we had two Committees, a Curricular Committee (established previous to arrival) and a Research Committee (selected by the student later on). Perhaps this practice can help to have student fulfill course requirements promptly, without sacrificing liberties in term of their research choices.
 4. Rigo: In some Interdisciplinary majors, where many varied classes are taken throughout the program, it is difficult to work with a pre-set plan.
 5. Scott S: The idea of this is not to bind or enforce, but merely to encourage having a plan at an early stage, this plan can be adjusted as necessary later on.
 6. Craig: due to the adverse power relationship between Major Professors and their advisees, or between Department Heads and RAs/GAs, that we would be interested in seeing an explicitly defined and well-publicized, confidential, structured and well-protected avenue for formal grievance for Grads to resort to should it be necessary due to possible negative developments in these relationships.
- Duties of the Students (as RAs)
 1. Craig: This practice of having students to work as RAs when they are not appointed as which, is it common or rare?
 2. Scott S: The most common case is having students who are not appointed as RAs, but are expected to work as if they were, these students are not

funded but requested to work as if they were, for which they are being held and unable to graduate promptly. This is the kind of practice that we would like to eradicate, by having professor and students to commit to a certain arrangement in terms of workload and funding, so that everyone is clear about their circumstances from the beginning.

- Allison: This is difficult to accomplish, since the students tend to be in a powerless position. For instance, there was writing class, where every student was requested to have their professors to read their proposal draft to be submitted as the final assignment. Students were unable to get a grade for the class because their professors did not read the Proposal. When the professor is the Chair of the Department, there is no one to go about this.
- Craig: There can be severe power situations involved in the student-professor relationship
- Scott B: You mentioned that this agreement will be discussed and approved with faculty governments. About the document, there are some discrepancies in the wording between the duties of the students and those of the faculty, mainly in terms of the tone, for instance: *must* as opposed to *may*. Scott S: this can be reviewed as necessary.
- Intellectual Property
 1. Doug: An important element is intellectual property of research, the rights of the students over their own research is jeopardized very often.
 2. Scott S: Intellectual property is much dictated by SUNY and the Research Foundation, this document can facilitate an agreement, you could protect your right to use it in the future, if a change in MP or any other complicated situation shall occur.
 3. Rigo: So in terms of ownership, I can keep my data, only if I'm not part of the Research Foundation.
 4. Scott S: In general, students continue to have some bound with publications, but it is not clear, this pre-arranged document could help with that, by establishing an arrangement in terms of the ownership of the data and the right to be further credited in any publications.
- Curricular modifications
 1. Ely: We were recently informed of a change in the curriculum of LSA, a studio was added this year and we are required to take it, while it wasn't included in our program before.

2. Scott S: you do not have to take this additional course, you have to comply with requirements stated at the beginning of the program, if there are changes in the Curricula, you are free to take advantage of additions, but not forced to.
 3. Rigo: There was also an addition of a seminar in ES, is it the same case?
 4. Scott S: Curricular changes are a faculty each department, there is no questioning from the Grad School in that aspect. The requirement to comply with recent changes depends on whether such modification was introduced before the beginning of the program.
 5. Craig: About the requirements for MSc compared to MPS students, is there a way to have MSc students satisfy requirements, to avoid for them to be unable to graduate when they have work on their research but there haven't obtained the expected results.
 6. Scott S: When it comes to research, you are required to have a hypothesis, results, perform an analysis and defense. There isn't much to do to avoid delays, even when there is a bad field season; we acknowledge that this is beyond control, but there is no solution for such a case.
 7. Craig: It seems like MSc at ESF are required to conduct individual research while in other schools, MSc are required to take part of a larger project.
 8. Scott S: In fact, MSc are supposed to be shorter and with lower requirements and publication expectations than PhDs, research should not necessarily be original work and should be leading to learn the research process. This aspect should probably be controlled Department by Department.
- Faculty members with a large number of students
 1. John: in terms of the student/faculty relationship, some faculty members have too many students and they pay very little attention to them, would it be possible to limit the number of students per faculty member?
 2. Scott S: This is more of a Department Management issue. Some of these faculty members are very good grant writers. In EFB, there are attempts to not fund their extra students.
 3. Allison: This practice is worst for the students
 4. John: a good idea could be having TA appointments limited to those professors who are better advisors.

- Procedure to state the Bill of Rights
 1. Scott: I will be meeting the Faculty Governance to review and have the document approved. Then we can implement a process where the students and their professors can sign an agreement at the beginning of their program.
 2. John: It would be a good idea to have a pre-set document that is binding about processes as a basis for the agreement to be made between students and professors. For example: a professor could be required to meet the student 4 times a semester. It is difficult for students to make specific requests, but if they come from the Graduate School, professors will be encouraged to comply.
- 2. Review of the GSA Bylaws (Eileen)
 - Participation in Committees mandatory for all Senators
 1. Add participation in at least one Committee per semester to Duties of all Executives and General Representatives, Sections I and III (Duties of the Executives and of the General Representatives)
 2. This requirement is included in the Section Committees, but not in the sections described above. Generally, Senators pay closer attention to their own responsibilities when reading the Bylaws, so having this stated under such section will help avoid confusion.
 3. No comments
 - Add preparation and submission of an Officer Report at the end of the year to Duties of all Executives, Department Representatives and General Representatives, Sections I, II and III (Duties of the Senate)
 1. As we talked during the last meeting, we will all be submitting an Officer report at the end of the year, which has the purpose of being passed on to the person who's taking our positions next year. This will be helpful for them and will also make us aware of the duties that representatives have outside of GSA. We have already received some reports.
 2. John: Are there other important responsibilities for Department representatives, as far as it concerns to GSA, they should be responsible only for attending Faculty meetings in their own Departments, when allowed.
 3. Several Senators commented on their ability to attend Faculty Meetings in their departments (Not allowed in FNRM or ERE)

4. Scott B: About the officer report, should I include tasks performed for the Committee I have served in my Officer Report or should those go in the Committee's report.
 5. Eileen: Your report should refer to your responsibilities as Chemistry Representative, you could include in the Time Management section the time you dedicated to your activities serving in a certain Committee. Details about these activities should be included in the Committee's Executive Report.
- Replace timing for Minutes' draft to be sent out from by Friday to within (_?_) days from the Meeting in Section V.A.C (Meetings/General Structure/Minutes)
 1. It is stated in the Bylaws that the Minutes for editing should be sent out to the Senate by Friday after the Meeting. This works well now, because the meetings scheduled on Wednesdays, but wouldn't make much sense if the meetings were on Friday. Normally, preparing Minutes from notes taken during the Meeting takes a couple of hours. It can take longer to get responses from Senators or other attendees when additional information (details, names, contact info, etc) is needed to complete the Minutes, but the Minutes for editing can be sent out before obtaining further details, which I normally do.
 2. Craig: maybe within 3-5 days
 3. John: 3 days is probably enough, after 5 days, people may not remember much from the Meeting
 4. Amendment in the Bylaws will replace *by Friday* with *within 3 days*.
 - Add preparation and application of a Survey to Duties of the President, Section I (Duties of the Executives)
 1. It is indicated in the Bylaws, under the section Assessment, that a Survey should be prepared and applied at the end and/or beginning of the Academic year. This Survey can be very useful to get feedback about the work done by GSA and retrieve ideas to plan future events. However, there is no indication of who should take care of this. Last year, the President took care of it, so I propose to state that it is under the President's duties. Maybe the Secretary could help with this? We should also think of a timeline for this, so that the future senate can plan accordingly.
 2. Craig: Maybe this could be the responsibility of the President and the VP with the first place in succession

3. John: The elaboration and application of the Survey requires several steps
 1. Request questions from VPs to be included in the Survey
 2. Compile questions and create the Survey
 3. Get the Survey approved by the Office of Communications. It is not allowed to survey students in the school without the approval
 4. Apply the Survey
 5. Compile the responses and elaborate a report
 6. The whole process may take about two months. Last year, Whitney (former GSA President) only requested information (questions) from us and took care of the rest of the procedure.
 7. I could be a good idea to work on this during the winter/beginning of the spring
4. 2013-14 Survey
 1. Ely: Are we having a Survey this year?
 2. Craig: Maybe we could have the questions, let's say, by Friday.
 3. Natalia: what type of question is allowed, yes/no, comment?
 4. Eileen: Any type of question has been used in the past, yes/no, multiple choice, comment, etc
 5. Emily: It does not make much sense, it may be too late to have it at the end of the semester, or start of the next year
 6. Ely: Maybe we should put our efforts in writing good reports.
- Add actions to be taken by the incoming Senate during the final meeting of the semester in Section V.I (Meetings/ Final Meeting of the Academic Year). These actions consist of voting and approval of positions not included on the ballot and budget for Orientation Week Activities.
 1. We previously discussed that funds for orientation week activities at the beginning of the fall should be allocated at the end of the spring, since these activities occur before the First GSA Meeting of the Fall. Additionally, positions not included on the ballot, could be voted and appointed by the Incoming senate in a procedure that we would need to define

2. Allison: We (the outgoing Senate) could approve a certain amount (let's say \$500) to be rolled-over yearly for Orientation week.
3. John: We discussed to have the Incoming Senate to vote to allocate an amount of their incoming budget for these activities. For which, a quorum of the New Senate would be required, etc
4. Eileen: We need to decide between
 1. The outgoing senate to approve and roll-over funds for Orientation Week
 2. The incoming Senate to approve funds from Orientation Week from their own budget
5. Allison: it is stated by the School's regulation that no club can roll-over funds, as a general practice. If any funds are available at the end of the year, those should be returned to the school. However, this is not the case of GSA; we are allowed to roll-over funds, mainly because of the Grants payment procedure.
6. Rigo: I think we should be able to save funds that we did not spend for next year by allocating them for orientation and other activities. I would like to propose a motion to create a GSA savings account for future activities.
7. John: Isn't it included in the Bylaws that we are required to have a zeroed account at the end of the year?
8. Eileen: I don't think so, but we will have to double-check
9. Ely: This is something that we shouldn't take lightly and we should double-check to make sure whether we are allowed to do it or not.

2. Adjourn the Meeting

- Craig: We have gone way overtime, so I'm not sure if I can request a motion to adjourn the meeting
- Motion to Adjourn the Meeting: John Wiley
- Second: Eileen Leon
- Unanimously Approved

Attendance

GSA Senate

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| 1. Craig Lazzar | President |
| 2. John Wiley | VP Grants and Awards |
| 3. Matt Regan | VP of Speakers and Presentations |
| 4. Natalia Cagide | VP of International Activities |
| 5. Eileen Leon | Secretary |
| 6. Allison Oakes | Treasurer |
| 7. Ely Margolis | Webmaster / Communications |
| 8. Melisa Keskin | Syracuse GSO Representative |
| 9. Jonathan Masih Das | Syracuse GSO Representative |
| 10. Hope Ansanelli | Syracuse GSO Representative |
| 11. Emily Handelman | Landscape Architecture Representative |
| 12. Becky Meissner | Environmental Resource Engineering Representative |
| 13. Stacey Mack | FNRM Representative (I) |
| 14. Silvia Saldivar | Environmental Forest Biology Representative (I) |
| 15. Rigoberto Melgar | Environmental Science Representative (II) |
| 16. N. Scott Bergey | Chemistry Representative |
| 17. Doug Morrison | Faculty Advisor |

Guests

Scott Shannon (Dean of the Graduate School)