

# Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting - Graduate Student Council  
Thursday, August 5th, 2004, 12:10 – 1:25 pm  
Winnett Club Room (Above the Red Door Cafe)

**Directors Present:** Deniz Armani, John Bender, Alex Brown, Alexei Dvoretzkii, Jonathan Galownia, Niki Galownia, Sidharth Jaggi, Laurence Loumes, Andrea Martin, Matthew 'Chip' Sumner, Emily Schaller, Graeme Smith, Min Tao Catherine Ward, Jennifer Witman

**Directors Absent:** Justin Boland, Eugene Mahmoud, Karen Smith, Tosin Otitou, Amir Sadjadpour

**Guests:** Steve Pracko (grad student), Lan Yang (grad student) Asa Hopkins (grad student)

## I. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

### A. Call to Order 12:10

There was a quorum of directors present to start the meeting.

### B. Introduction of Guests

Steve Pracko introduced himself. Deniz introduced Asa Hopkins who was attending to discuss plans for voter registration. Deniz also introduced Lan Yang who has volunteered to fill the committee seat for the Foreign Students and Scholars faculty committee.

### C. Modifications to the Agenda

There was one modification to the agenda. Justin Boland decided to become an option representative so no vote was needed to approve him.

### D. Approval of the July meeting minutes

The minutes were approved.

## II. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Steering Committee (Deniz Armani)

#### 1. Approval of New Director

Justin Boland is willing to be the Executive Director (yeah!). Justin will be an option representative so no vote is required to approve him as a director.

**ACTION:** Justin Boland was approved as Executive Director.

#### 2. Lunches with VP Margo Marshak

The BoD (Board of Directors) has lunch with the Vice-President of Student Affairs Margo Marshak once a month. This month's lunch will be Monday, August 23<sup>th</sup> in Parsons-Gate 112. If you are planning to attend, please e-mail Jenny Witman.

**ACTION:** Time of this month's lunch was announced.

#### 3. Voter Registration

Asa Hopkins is hoping to put together a coalition, hopefully to include the GSC and ASCIT as well as assistance from the administration, to help fulfill Caltech's legal obligation to make a good faith effort to register all of its U.S. students to vote. I am just starting in this process, but the institutional expertise of the GSC, including running online surveys, for example, would be very helpful.

Originally this the Caltech Democrats was going to sponsor the registration. However in investigating the options, Asa learned that Caltech has a good faith obligation to register students to vote because they receive federal funds. Asa will be organizing a meeting in two weeks to decide how to help students get registered.

Deniz pointed out that this is a non-partisan movement. Asa agreed that it was non-partisan, even through his own personal views were strongly democratic. He was a candidate to the Democratic Convention.

Sid asked what help was needed. Asa replied that the GSC could help by advertising to the student body, helping to distribute forms and information, administering an on-line survey (ASCIT has volunteered the use of their survey instrument).

Asa pointed out that students need to choose whether to register in California or in their home state. John Bender asked what laws govern who should vote where. Asa replied that while students are given some leeway, registering to vote confers some legal obligations, like having a driver's license from that state. Niki said that married students are required to become California residents. Catherine pointed out that it could have to do with how you are paid and becomes a tricky situation. Graeme asked if international students can help with the registration process. Asa replied that they can get involved and help, but they can't give money. This surprised Sid. Asa said that only permanent residents can give money to a political campaign. Sid asked if there should be a long term committee established. Asa said that would be great. Sid then asked if it was going to be a new GSC responsibility. Asa said that it was the responsibility of the administration. The administration could fulfill this requirement by sending registration forms to new students, but that a committee would be needed to do things like follow up with new students.

Deniz asked Asa what he would like the GSC to do. Asa said that he would like help soliciting volunteers and with the resources he mentioned before. Asa asked if we could send an e-mail to the student body. John Bender said that we could help him get in contact with the right people. Deniz said that we would be happy to send an e-mail asking for volunteers. He mentioned that we could combine it with an e-mail about Gradiators. Chip said that the consensus was that the GSC was behind this committee. Alexei suggested that Caltech republicans should get involved to add credibility. Deniz felt that the committee would already have credibility. Asa said that we needed to keep it non-partisan to be legal.

**ACTION:** Asa will send an e-mail to the Deniz, Amir and Chip about the meeting time.

#### 4. Open positions on Institute Committees.

Deniz went over the open spots on the Officers of the Faculty Committees and Administrative Committees that needed to be filled. The committees are:

Faculty Committees:

Athletics and Physical Education: Graeme was asked if there was an athletics subcommittee of the social committee who should cover this. Graeme replied that the social committee had a very small number of people and he was not aware of a subcommittee, however someone was organizing softball. Graeme will find out if this subcommittee exists.

Convocations: Chip described this committee as a repository of knowledge of all things of pomp and circumstance. Sid volunteered for the committee amid a round of applause

Foreign Students and Scholars: Lan Yang volunteered for this committee.

Health: No additional members were needed.

Library: Emily Schaller volunteered.

#### Administrative Committees:

Athletic Facilities- Merged with the Faculty Committee on Athletics and Physical Education

Computing Advisory Committee: Jenny Witman volunteered

SURF (reports to the Vice Provost): Andrea Martin volunteered. Catherine volunteered as an alternate.

There are also several committees whose representatives need to be approved. They are:

#### Faculty Committees:

Faculty Board- Deniz Armani

Academic Policies- Graeme Smith and Stephanie Chow

Graduate Studies- Amir Sadjadpour, Deniz Armani, Stephanie Chow, John Bender, Catherine Ward and Chip Sumner (alternate)

Health- Chip Sumner, Emily Schaller, Matt Cook (alternate)

Patents and Industry Relations- Deniz had talked to Stephanie. Stephanie Chow said that the committee never meet but still exists. Stephanie volunteered to be a representative

Student Housing- Karen Smith and Steve Prako (alternate)

#### Post-Doc Association:

Mentoring Program-Mike Fleming was the representative but he graduated. Chip said that this program is now only open to women so GSC can't be involved. It violates their non-discrimination policy. Deniz will check with Heather McBride of the CPA to see what the current status is.

#### WEST Committees:

Quality of Life Survey- Heather Cox and Steve Prako were listed. It has been noted that the committee has grown and changed, but no additions were made at this time.

#### Administrative Committees:

Institute Art (reports to Public Events)-John Bender

Institute Programs Committee-Jeff Bergthorson, Varuntida 'Tomtor'

Varutbangkul, and Kimberly E. Beatty Catherine and Chip mentioned that Jeff was phasing out of his involvement so he might not be interested in this position. Andrea pointed out that he is still active. Deniz felt it was likely that Amir had the correct information.

Performing and Creative Arts- Varuntida 'Tomtor' Varutbangkul

Moore-Hufstedler Fund-Alex Tobias, Graeme Smith, and Andrea Martin-alternate  
Parking Committee- Jon Galownia

Alcohol Policy- Rachel Niemer- This is committee no longer exists.

Moore Gift- Alex Tobias, Graeme Smith- This committee no longer exists.

Commencement Speaker 05- Justin Boland

**ACTION:** The board approved this list of committee representatives.

#### 5. New Student Orientation Committee.

In Justin's absence Deniz lead this discussion. Justin Boland is heading up this year's NSO activities. We would like to form a committee to help coordinate these activities. Natalie needs to reserve rooms for the events ASAP, which relies on GSC finalizing the times and events. That means GSC needs to look at the schedule and make sure it makes sense. Also means we need representatives to handle each of the events. Justin Boland has volunteered to take charge of the coffee breaks and making sure meals get done.

John Bender told us a little of the back ground of NSO. In the past the GSC had organized the whole event. However it was a huge responsibility and last year the graduate office started organizing NSO. However they wanted graduate students to sit on the committee. It was suggested that the GSC social committee take this responsibility over. Chip said that was a lot to ask of the social committee, especially with Gradiators on the horizon. John Bender said that Marissa had a lot of notes from the past. Deniz suggested delaying voting on volunteers, however Jenny said that it sounded like we already had a few. Graeme said that he would be helping. John Bender said that in the past several students unaffiliated with the GSC got involved. Andrea pointed out that it was easier to recruit volunteers for specific events. Siddharth Jaggi, Graeme Smith, Min Tao, Jenny Witman, and Alex Brown volunteered to form the NSO committee.

Min met with Jim about integrating ISO and NSO so there is no disconnect . She said that there are two specific events during ISO (International Student Orientation) that need to be discussed now. September 13<sup>th</sup>: Monday afternoon coffee break: We host a GSC coffee break almost every afternoon during the NSO. Jim suggests we can host or co-host a coffee break with ASCIIT on the very first day of International students orientation, and invite all on-campus new graduate students as a welcome from the student leaders. Min Tao thinks it's a good idea to introduce ourselves as well as to start ice-breaking between domestic students and international students. We can have it before Red Door Cafe, and have someone play guitar or play some music from different nations as background.

September 19<sup>th</sup>: Sunday. It's traditionally the conjunctural part of NSO and ISO in the afternoon, we have this Dean's welcome address, and then sports and games. The design of this afternoon's program is indeed partly intended for ice-breaking between new domestic students and international students. But Jim said that in the past the effect of sports of improving communication was not so obvious, because students from different nations play different sports. So we thought it might be helpful to direct people to some sort of cultural game involving more teamwork and communication after Dean's address and free chat. He recommended a very effective culture& communication director who is a faculty in UC Irvine. Her name is Stella

Ting Toomey. Caltech had her give presentation in ISO in the past. We can spend some money to invite her back, and have her design and lead an ice-breaking game in Sunday afternoon's programs, if the budget allows. I think it will be very helpful.

John Bender and Chip said that the NSO committee should consider these events. Alex Brown pointed out that we have plenty of money so we can go over budget. Sid said that some of the international students would like to help. It was suggested that Jim meet with the NSO committee.

**ACTION:** The board voted to authorize the committee to make the necessary decisions concerning NSO.

#### 6. Topics for discussion with Provost

The new Provost, Dr. Paul Jennings was planning to join us at the next BoD meeting. Chip wondered if the lunch meeting with Margo Marshak would be a better forum for the Provost to meet us. Everyone was in favor of inviting him to a meeting with Margo instead.

**ACTION:** Invite Dr. Jennings to our lunch meeting with Margo Marshak.

#### 7. Lunch meeting with Dean Hoffmann and Dr. Erica O'Neal (Asst. VP for Student Affairs)

We have been invited to join Dean Hoffman and Dr. Erica O'Neal for lunch this next week. The suggested dates are August 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>.

**ACTION:** The 10<sup>th</sup> was chosen. It was decided to discuss topics of conversation via E-mail.

#### 8. Pizza Czar for September Meeting

Andrea Martin will not be at the September meeting so we need to ask someone else to coordinate the pizza.

**ACTION:** Graeme Smith volunteered to be the pizza czar.

### **B. Social Committee (Graeme Smith)**

#### 1. Gradiators

Graeme said that gradiators planning is in full swing. The date has been finalized (Saturday, August 28th) and we've settled on a set of games that includes the classics (Battleship, Shangria), as well as a few new additions. We still need quite a few volunteers, including a head chef, some referees, and people to help set up and clean up. If you're free on the 28th, or know someone who is, please sign up and make this year's event a success!

Graeme said that we specially needed someone who was trained in first aid and new water polo rules. John Bender said that it was assumed that everyone would help with this event. If they weren't going to be in town on Saturday they should help with some of the planning before hand. In response to several questions John also said that the grilling was an easy assignment.

**ACTION:** Graeme sent around a list for people to sign up. Contact Graeme once you know how you can help.

### **C. Budget Committee (Alex Brown)**

### 1. FY Budget Review

While examining the budget, Alex would like to suggest that committees use their discretionary funds more liberally. We have spent \$114 out of \$800. We are on pace for large surpluses this year in other areas of the budget as well. Alex suggested that committees buy food to help encourage meeting attendance. Chip said that in previous years each committee threw in \$15 for a joint celebration in the Rathskeller. **ACTION:** Reminder to consider budgets.

## **D. Quality of Life Committee (Jonathan Galownia)**

### 1. Car Sharing at Caltech

The office of general counsel (OGC) has made requirement of the car sharing company that cannot be met. The car sharing program that George Maltezos worked so hard to introduce to Caltech may no longer be a possibility. We may still be able to have Flexcar park a car on campus, but it would not be Caltech exclusive and it would be approximately \$10/hr. George is looking into other options.

Jon asked if we wanted to push for the program or not. Graeme said that Margo Marshak and David Baltimore were in favor of the program, but that the OGC was blocking by requesting a large amount of indemnity protection. Niki said that it would be sad to see this program disappear after all the work that George put in.

**ACTION:** It was decided to bring this topic up with Dr. Jennings and Dean Hoffman. Other discussion would follow by e-mail.

## **E. Publications Committee (John Bender)**

### 1. NSO Promos

Steve Pracko has researched and retrieved prices on some GSC promotional items to be distributed to incoming grad students during NSO (orientation). We would like to purchase some. Last year, the GSC handed out bottle openers imprinted with our logo. Steve said that we still had bottle openers, but were looking to order some post-it notes. Five hundred would cost between \$100-200. Andrea pointed out that we still had some from last year that we should use. Alex said that we had already allocated money for this purchase.

**ACTION:** As we already allocated the money for the purchase we don't need to vote to approve.

### 2. Newsletter Bonus

The Newsletter Editor (John Bender) is paid \$50 per month for preparing the *GSC Newsletter*. The BoD has voted to authorize a performance-based bonus of \$50 for the Newsletter Editor. Each month, the BoD must vote to decide whether the Editor deserves this bonus for the most recent edition of the *Newsletter*. Since this bonus has always been approved to date, the Publications Committee recommends that the Newsletter Editor's salary be changed to \$100 monthly with no bonus.

**ACTION:** Voted to approve the change of the Newsletter Editor's salary to \$100 monthly with no bonus.

### 3. Totem

This year's *Totem* has arrived. We have purchased many copies for graduate students, and have brought them to the BoD meeting today. In the past, they have been distributed by the BoD. The easiest way to do this is to have each Director take several copies back to his or her building and leave them in a common area. Directors who share a building with another Director should attempt to find another building.

**ACTION:** Copies of the *Totem* were distributed.

## **F. Academics Committee (Presented by Catherine Ward)**

### 1. REGIS update

Catherine had just been at the REGIS committee meeting. She said that most of the changes this summer were cosmetic or relevant only to the undergrads. One of the next things that would be done would be to put the transcripts on line. She was curious who we think should access them. Niki and Graeme preferred that our advisors not be able to get them as some advisors were against students taking classes. The question of privacy was raised. Catherine said that not all of the faculty should be able to see the transcripts. Deniz felt that advisors should be able to see the transcripts as they were responsible for paying us.

Steve said that restricting the advisors access to transcripts was avoiding the real issue that some advisors pressured their students not to take classes and that is what should be addressed. Niki agreed, pointing out that with the current REGIS system advisors were more aware of the classes their students were taking. Catherine said that she didn't even want to suggest that advisors not see the transcripts as that would hinder her credibility. Andrea asked if we could receive a notice if someone checked our transcript. Chip suggested that the transcript come with a legal notice of policies regarding the privacy of the information. Chip asked if the executive officer and option representative would also be able to check a student's transcript. Catherine said that only the executive officers were brought up at the meeting. Min pointed out that in her option the secretary keeps track of a student's transcript.

Catherine said that on-line drop/add forms would be available in the winter term or spring term. There had been considerable discussion about what the time frame for drop/add without a signature should be. Instructors wanted to speak with students planning to drop a course to determine if that was a good course of action. Advisors needed to meet with students to make certain that they would still be on track for graduation. Jon Galownia felt that graduate students should be able to add or drop whenever they wanted. Alex pointed out that his undergrad institution had increasingly more difficult requirements for drop add as the semester progressed.

Catherine said that they were considering on-line transcript requests but because it involves a different system this is difficult. John Bender asked who was supporting the system. The answer was ATC. Chip asked if TA's would be able to see the class list.

The issue of course evaluations was raised. Andrea said that this was being handled through a completely different system. The evaluations would be rolled out this fall for the core classes. However there was one problem in that the system revealed who had filled out their evaluations.

Catherine said that the last item discussed was on-line degree progress reports or degree audits. Niki asked what would happen to departments where the requirements changed year to year. Catherine said that the system could handle this, but pointed out that this was some time away from being implemented.

**The Meeting adjourned at 1:25.**

### **III. UPDATES AND REPORTS**

#### **A. Graduate Review Board (Catherine Ward)**

##### 1. New Education Initiative

In response to the GSC/WEST survey as well as to the GRB's personal experience, we are planning more extensive education this fall. This will include have option specific discussion of the honor code in option orientation meetings or in first year classes. There may be town hall style meetings beginning in some options. If your option begins to hold meetings about the honor code, let Sid or me (Catherine) know what you think of them. If you want to help out with your option, contact us. The GRB needs members. If you want to join or know of others who might, contact Sid or me. The time commitment is small (average <1 hr/month).

#### **B. Quality of Life (Jonathan Galownia)**

##### 1. Safety

We met with Paul Carroad, division administrator for Chemistry and Chemical engineering to discuss how the safety plan for CCE works. There are many features and a well-organized system in place. The failing seems to be communication of the system and how it works to student. Paul was receptive to some ideas, such as a workshop in graduate "core" classes to introduce some of the safety programs CCE has to offer and who to speak with. Hopefully other division administrators will be as receptive to these and other ideas.

##### 1. Halaal Food

At our last meeting, we discussed Halaal food at Caltech. We are in the process of discussing with Food Services about bringing an outside restaurant to cater Halaal food, at least to begin with.

#### **C. Social Committee (Graeme Smith)**

##### 1. Wine Tour

This year's wine tour to the Santa Ynez valley was a smashing success. One bus, forty five techers, eleven and a half hours and over thirty wines added up to a damn good time. Well, we hit quite a bit of traffic on the way back, but at that point the entire bus was asleep.

#### **D. Housing Committee (Chair: Karen Smith)**

##### 1. New Committee Members

A big welcome goes out to Brian Schroeder and Sarah Hill, new members on the Housing Committee!

## 2. Changes to Lease Property System

Recently, the Housing Office decided that changes needed to be made to how the off-campus lease property system is run. The old rules gave priority to international married couples in which the spouse could not work, and there were concerns that this might constitute discrimination on the basis of national origin.

Members of the Housing Committee, along with a number of international students, met with Housing and with ISP to develop a new set of rules. Recognizing that the real issue is financial need, the priority groups were revised to treat all individuals with children, partners, or dependent adult family members equally, regardless of national origin or marital status.

Housing is also going to be more vigilant about making sure that those living in the lease properties are eligible to be there. At the time an apartment offer is made, Housing will check the appropriate documents to confirm the status of both students and family members/dependents. Students who graduate will be given 30 days to move out, as is stipulated in the contract.

At the committee's suggestion, Housing is consulting OGC to confirm that the proposed new system is in compliance with the law. The final version of the new documents should be ready soon.

## 3. Braun House

After the Housing Committee's e-mail to all graduate students last month, we received a number of responses from present and former residents of Braun House. They are upset that they were not consulted as part of the undergrad housing renovation discussion even after Braun was added to those plans, and they are also concerned that Caltech may be seeking to eliminate Braun as a housing option in the future. We invited these students to the most recent committee meeting and had a good conversation. Caltech should strive to maintain a diverse choice of housing choices for students, and Braun is the only remaining dorm-style option. The committee will approach the Housing Office to learn more about what the future may hold for Braun.

## 4. On-Campus Furniture Moving Policy

The Housing Office recently decided to stop removing furniture from on-campus housing for those residents who wanted to bring in their own furniture. Several students complained about this change, with some noting they would not have entered the lottery at all if they had known they would not be allowed to bring in their own items. The CHCCs negotiated with Housing to extend the present service through this fall, so that those who had expected they would be able to bring in their own furniture this year will be able to do so.

## 5. New On-Campus Furniture

Housing is looking to replace some of the couches in its on-campus housing. Michael Raven from Housing and Sarah Miller from the CHCCs recently visited the

supplier's showroom to look at prospective models and colors. The new units are expected to be purchased during this fiscal year, so this should happen soon.

## **E. Publications Committee (John Bender)**

### 1. GSC Website

Jon Galownia has collaborated with Caltech PR to add a calendar to our website. It will display whatever items we have entered or co-sponsored on the Caltech Today calendar site. This means that we should be more active in entering our events on the Caltech Today site. Anyone who is organizing or knows of GSC events that should be advertised to the campus community should email Jon or John at galownia@caltech.edu, jbender@caltech.edu, or gscnews@caltech.edu.

### 2. *Technique* and *little t*

We have initiated discussions with ASCIT regarding combining our efforts in producing a campus-wide yearly guide to Caltech and L.A. Currently we produce the *Technique* and ASCIT produces the *little t*. Some preliminary discussions within the Publications Committee have suggested that this could provide some advantages to both us and ASCIT. The undergrads do a better job of including Caltech and its culture, while the grad students tend to get out more. Additionally, the combined audience and group of contributors will make the publication more desirable for sponsors and more likely to have something for everyone. Also, the restaurant reviews, etc., will draw from a wider reviewer pool.

If you have comments, suggestions or concerns, contact the Publications Committee at gscpubs@caltech.edu.