

Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting - Graduate Student Council
Thursday, October 7th, 2004, 12:00 – 1:45 pm
Winnett Club Room (Above the Red Door)

Directors Present: Deniz Armani, John Bender, Alex Brown, Alexei Dvoretzkii, Will Ford, Jonathan Galownia, Niki Galownia, Sidharth Jaggi, Marco Latini, Eugene Mahmoud, Andrea Martin, Tosin Otitaju, Emily Schaller, Graeme Smith, Min Tao, Catherine Ward, Jennifer Witman, Laurence Yeung

Directors Absent: Justin Boland, Laurence Loumes, Amir Sadjadpour, Matthew 'Chip' Sumner

Guests: Steve Pracko (grad student), Neena Kadaba (grad student), Amit Kenjale (grad student), Arthur Fitzmaurice (grad student), Jerry Houser (Career Center)

I. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

A. Call to Order

Deniz, who will be facilitating the meeting today, welcomed us and the new board members.

B. Introduction of Guests

Deniz invited each guest and new board members to introduce themselves. Will Ford decided to join the board to help with Gradiators. Marco Latini is joining to help improve the quality of life of graduate students and because his department doesn't have a rep. Laurence Yeung wants to help with gender equity on campus. Neena Kadaba will join to help with the alumni fund.

C. Modifications to the Agenda

None were made at this time.

D. Approval of the August and September Meeting Minutes (See Attached)

The minutes were approved for both months.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Steering Committee (Amir Sadjadpour)

1. Welcome New Board Members

We would like to welcome new board members: Neena S. Kadaba (Chemistry), Marco Latini (ACM), Laurence Yeung (Chemistry), Will Ford (CNS). Neena will join next month when her petition is complete.

ACTION: Ask each member briefly explained before why they are joining the board.

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, October 25th in

Parsons-Gate 112. This month Professor Andy Ingersoll will be joining us to discuss graduate students mentoring undergraduate students in research. If you are planning to attend, please e-mail Jenny Witman.

ACTION: Meeting announced.

3. Approve Representatives to the Search Committee for Director of Athletics

We would like to thank Jiafang Xiao and Geoff Staneff for representing graduate students on the search committee.

ACTION: These representatives were approved.

4. Approve Representatives to the Caltech Alumni Fund Advisory Council

We would like to thank Neena S. Kadaba for representing graduate students on the council. If there is someone else who would like to represent graduate students we can nominate two people to this position.

Amit Kenjale was also interested in this position. He was an undergraduate here and knows alumni. He is interested in finances. Neena was involved with organizations at her undergrad institution, MIT.

Alexei raised the concern that we had just approved members to the athletic committee who were not present at the BoD meeting. John Bender pointed out that there weren't any other volunteers for these positions. Deniz asked how we might change the procedure to insure that we had more confidence the appointed representatives. Marco suggested that we have one board member who knows all our representatives. Jon Galownia pointed out that the sub-committees were responsible for the committee representatives under their area of concern. John Bender said that we should contact the representatives and let them know that they were strongly encouraged to attend the board meeting when they were nominated. He also wanted to make it clear to them that they need to report to a sub-committee.

Will said that he did know Geoff personally but he didn't know Jiafang. Min suggested that we send an e-mail and ask them for feedback and invite them to attend the board meeting. Deniz asked Alexei if he was satisfied with this response. We then turned the conversation back to the representatives to the council.

ACTION: Approved Amit and Neena as representatives to the council.

B. Budget Committee (Alex Brown)

1. Approval of Postdoc/Phd Career Conference Sponsorship

The Career Development Center sent me a club funding proposal to sponsor their Phd/Postdoc career conference. This event is obviously not club funding so I would like to budget it as a co-sponsorship item. They received \$250 from the past from GSC and now want \$500. I suggest giving this to them and sponsoring them at this level indefinitely provided they send us a proposal each year.

John Bender thought that this event should also be included in the budget for the 2004-2005 fiscal year as the event would happen before October 2005 which is the start of the fiscal year. Jerry explained that should not be included because the receipts would not be in until after the start of the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Steve asked Jerry how many graduate students attended the event. Jerry said that graduate students were approximately 40% of the attendees. 250 people registered for the

event. Marco asked how much the Postdoc Association contributes, Jerry replied \$1000.

ACTION: Approved amending the budget to include sponsorship of the Phd/Postdoc Career Conference and approve funding it this year.

2. Club Funding

The budget committee approved club funding at a total level of \$18,265 well over the budgeted amount of \$14,000. The GSC has more than enough resources to cover this level of spending. We would like BOD to approve this higher level of spending in our budget.

John Bender asked how this affects the budget. Alex replied that we had a significant surplus. We also will not use our retreat allocation because we will get \$2000 for the retreat. Deniz said that the committee was very careful in how it allocated the funds. Deniz asked if this would be considered overspending or should we amend the budget. Niki and Andrea like the idea of overspending. John Bender asked if this would hurt us next year when applying for funds for the GSC next year. Alex said that it shouldn't since we were doing this deliberately not by accident.

ACTION: The board approved overspending the budget by increasing the club funding from \$14,000 to \$18,000.

3. Expediting Quick Funding Procedure

Alexei suggests we change the quickfunding procedure to:

“If during the first 8 hours of the proposal discussion at least three directors have sent in emails with a positive assessment and no objections have been raised the QF czar can suggest approving the proposal by consensus.

If in the next 16 hours of discussion no director requests a formal vote, the proposal is considered approved by consensus. Otherwise, after the end of the discussion period a formal vote is taken during the next 24 hour period.”

Alexei said that we only have two different types of votes, highly unanimous or highly polarized with a large fraction of the votes unanimous. This amendment would reduce work for him and help the clubs get their funding more quickly. Graeme pointed out that even the highly contentious Newman center BBQ was approved within three days. Tosin expressed support for the rules as they stand.

Niki and Andrea would like to add time to vote. Alexei asked that people also send him an e-mail to record an abstention so that he would know who was unable to vote. Andrea would like to be able to vote during the discussion period. Tosin wondered what happened to votes submitted after the deadline. Eugene would also like to be able to vote ahead of time as he was out of town the previous week during the discussion. Alexei said that he would be willing to extend the voting period but thought that we still should approve this proposal for submissions uniformly agreed to be good.

Deniz said that he doesn't necessarily check his e-mail frequently. Jenny said that she was against the changes because it didn't give enough time for people to allow people on various schedules to check their e-mail. Emily asked how long the quickfunding currently tool. Alexei said that it could take 5-6 days. Deniz asked if there was a request from someone to reduce the time this took.

Alex pointed out that supermajorities were used in the voting so that if a late vote was cast it was unlikely to have much influence. If the vote is close the proposal goes to the budget committee anyway.

Alexei called for a vote on what was included above. He thought we should also vote on extending the quickfunding voting period to 48 hours and to ask for abstentions to be cast.

John Bender said that a four day turn around was still good. Deniz said that the issue was really Alexei's time. Min asked what percentage of the proposals would fall under this change. Alexei said so far three out of the four would reflect this change.

ACTION: Deniz closed the discussion and called for a vote on the proposal as it stands. There were two in favor, nine opposed and six abstentions.

3. Tax Proposal from NAGPS (Addition to the Agenda)

NAGPS has proposed a tax bill which would help students by, among other things exempting income used on housing. John Bender was not in favor of this proposal because he felt that we should not be treated differently than a worker at Wendy's. Alex said that nothing was fair in our tax laws and pointed out that a rich person can start an educational IRA and receive this same benefit. Graeme said that NAGPS did this every year and questioned whether anything good would come from supporting this proposal. Alex doubted anything would change. Eugene pointed out that NAGPS wasn't coming to us and asking us what we thought they should use their influence to do. John said that they had never visited Caltech.

ACTION: A vote was taken to decide if we should support this proposal. There were two in favor, nine opposed and six abstentions.

C. Social Committee (Graeme Smith)

1. Gradiators

Will Ford, the rugby team's social director and new BoD member, has offered to be head gradiator this year. In exchange, he has asked that the GSC donate money to provide a computer to an under-funded local high school. For some kind of accounting reason (ask Alex B.) we can't donate the money directly -- we'd have to pay Will, who would then purchase a computer and donate it to the school. The cost would be about \$500. Given the dearth of volunteers for the head gradiator position, this seems like a steal of a deal.

The computer would go to Blair High School. Deniz joked that we should make it standard procedure to ask for help during pub crawls. Graeme asked us to take fliers to advertise Gradiators. Andrea will update the web page.

ACTION: The board approved allocating \$500 to compensate head gradiator.

1. Alcohol Policy

The institute has adopted a new alcohol policy (available at <http://www.studaff.caltech.edu/policies/alcohol%20policy2004.pdf>). I haven't had a chance to go over it closely yet, but I would like to take a few minutes to discuss it with the BoD. It seems like the bartender restrictions are being relaxed a bit.

Graeme would like to interpret the policy to mean that we didn't need bartenders. The last time there was an event the bartender didn't show up. John Bender said that we should follow up with the graduate office and let us know that Margo Marshak was aware of bartender not showing up. Apparently Natalie Gilmore in the graduate office has an understanding worked out with the OGC on whether to hire a bartender or not for an event.

Alexei said that we should contact the graduate office and allow them to decide whether we need a bartender. Deniz stressed that this should happen each time. Marco asked who pays for the bartender. The response was that the graduate office pays. Alex said that quite frankly we do a better job than the bartender does. Steve said that in the past we had student bartenders but that the institute didn't use them anymore.

ACTION: The new alcohol policy was discussed.

D. Academics Committee (Andrea Martin)

1. Course Reviews

After talking with Natalie Gilmore, it turns out that some time ago the GSC asked the Grad Office to hold onto the course reviews (the reviews that students fill out at the end of each quarter) so that we could pick them up. However, no one from the GSC has ever done so. Apparently, she has "boxes" of these and would love for someone from the GSC to come and pick them up.

During NSO, one of the most common questions I got asked was about which courses to take and which professors to take them with. Many of these questions could easily be answered by compiling these surveys and making the results easily available, either through a website (probably the easiest maintain) or through a handbook. I would like to form a committee to go through all of these surveys and put together a kind of "course review survey" in the same theme as the "lab review survey" which is maintained by the Academics Committee.

The reason for the committee, instead of a single person, is the sheer volume which exists currently. After course review is established, it will be a matter of maintenance by a Course Review Survey Editor. If the BOD approves this idea, I will push forward to form a subcommittee under the Academics Committee. I would like to begin the evaluation during the next month.

John Bender thought that we should hire someone to take care of this. Tosin thought that something was already done with the course reviews. Marco asked why we didn't just wait until the course reviews were done on line. Andrea replied that this was some time away. The undergrad core classes are the first to go on-line and this was already running late.

Tosin asked who would see the reviews. Deniz stopped discussion to remind us that we were only to find volunteers to help the academics committee with deciding what to do. Catherine pointed out that there may be significant confidentiality issues.

ACTION: Eugene, Sid, Arthur, Will and Tosin volunteered to look into this.

2 Everhart Lecture Series Committee

The Everhart Lecture Series selection committee meets several times to first review the applicants nomination letters and CV's and finally to hear all the applicants give a 15 minute talk. Because the ELS is dedicated to honoring graduate students who excel both in research and in speaking, every applicant has the chance to give a 15 minute talk. This results in the committee on average hearing over twenty 15 minute talks in an typical year. Usually, the committee hears the nominees in four "power sessions" which typically last several hours. In addition to just hearing all of these talks, they also help the final three speakers chosen prepare the 1 hour long talks, often hearing them several times.

I would like to reward the committee members with either lunch or dinner (depending on the time of day) during the selection process. Since the ELS is under the Academic Committee, I will partially sponsor these meals with funds from the Academic Committee's discretionary funds. But I would like to ask the GSC to partially fund it as well. The ELS Committee has 5 members. Lunch/dinner for 5 people including tax will be able $\$40 \times 4 = \160 . If the Academic Committee picks up half of this, then the GSC would pay \$80.

Alex said that we could approve this by allowing ELS to go over budget. Marco asked what is done by the committee. Andrea explained what was involved including video taping the talks and giving speakers feedback on their presentations. Tosin agreed that this is helpful.

ACTION: The board approved allowing the ELS selection committee to go overbudget by \$80 for lunch/dinner.

3. TA Award

The Academics Committee has been discussing the possibility of creating a new award for TA's in the same style as the current Feynman teaching prize given to professors. This award would replace the current GSC TA award and would be given to only 1 TA per year. Nominations could come from undergraduates, graduates and faculty. Additionally, the committee choosing the recipient would be composed of undergraduates, graduates and faculty. There would be a monetary award associated with the prize in the range of \$500 to \$1000.

After talking with the Provost, he was in support of the award for many reasons. The most important being that there are many awards given at the June Faculty Board meeting that often they get lost in the noise. However, the Feynman manages to stand out. Having a single award for TA's would help eliminate this problem. He agreed to fund this award and help us get it endowed if we could get the undergraduates on board – i.e. convince them to reduce their ASCIT TA awards.

This would create a single TA award. However, in order to move forward, we need to talk with the ASCIT board. They wanted to meet with us about other, unrelated issues, so I would like to have this brought up at that meeting.

Marco thought that it was better to award more awards even if it was less prestigious. Tosin agreed. Jenny asked if the prestige of the award mattered when it was put on one's CV because people outside the Caltech community might not appreciate the significance. John Bender said that this would improve the motivation for TA's to seek the prize. Steve said that the TA awards were not promoted so it

didn't make much of an impact. Andrea said that the monetary award would help hype up the event.

Alexei asked what we were voting on. John Bender said that we would be allowing the academics committee to pursue this option with the intent to dissolve the existing TA awards if the new award was created.

ACTION: Alex called for a vote to approve Andrea and the academics committee to pursue this. The motion was approved with three abstentions.

E. Social Committee (Graeme Smith)

1. Gradiators volunteers (Addition to the Agenda)

Graeme called for volunteers for gradiators- to do the cooking, to referee and to help clean-up. Graeme will contact the Alumni association and the public relations office.

ACTION: Tosin, Alex and Arthur volunteered to be referees for this event. Jenny, Andrea and Min volunteered to help with clean-up. John Bender volunteered to cook.

F. The Committee With No Name (Steve Pracko)

1. Campus Educational Program for Gender Issues and Bias

In response to the report of the Institute Task Force on Gender and the Academic Climate, which was itself formed in response to the GSC/WEST survey report on Gender Harassment in the Caltech Graduate Student Experience, Caltech is planning to create an educational program for the entire campus (not just graduate students) to address gender issues and bias. As the Task Force recommendation explicitly called for the "input and support" of the GSC and WEST in the establishment of such a program, we should decide how the GSC wishes to proceed and at what level we would like to be involved.

Steve has contacted the campus offices involved to learn their plans for working with graduate students in this process. They have just begun to meet themselves, but they expressed interest and willingness to work with us cooperatively. The offices have been asked to present their plans to ACODAMA by November 30.

Tosin said that the Women's Center and the Minority Student's Office were good resources for this. Min asked what the expectations for the task force were. Steve said that since they hadn't contacted us he wasn't sure. Andrea wondered if we should go through our student representatives on ACODAMA. Steve wondered if we should write a newsletter article and send a general e-mail to the students.

ACTION: Laurence and Min Volunteered to help out.

G. Underrepresented Students Committee (Min Tao)

1. Recruit new graduate students in helping Dependent Health Insurance Plan and Sexual Harassment Issue

Sera Linardi and Laurence Leung are new graduate students who are interested in helping improve the life of graduate students with dependents and campaigning for graduate students encountering sexual harassment on campus, respectively.

Underrepresented Students committee is recruiting them to improve those two aspects of underrepresented students' life.

John Bender suggested that Min go to the Quality of Life committee about this. They knew the cheapest way to get insurance. Alexei said that things like this were secretive. Min suggested that we have a workshop on health insurance for dependants. John suggested we get it in the newsletter for next week.

ACTION: Min will pursue an insurance workshop for students with dependents, with QoL committee.

H. Publications Committee (John Bender)

1. GSC column in the *Tech*

It was suggested in the past that the GSC should write or solicit a monthly column in the *California Tech*, the undergrad-published weekly newspaper. The *Tech* has a wide readership base and could be a good forum for the GSC to communicate with the campus community. We feel that the Publications Committee could assign a person (or perhaps another GSC Committee) to write the monthly article, and assign or suggest a topic, based on the current GSC activities and issues. These assignments would occur only with the blessing of the GSC Chair. We will be in communication with the editors of the *Tech* to get the necessary information to make this happen. We suggest that the first article be written about Gradiators, possibly to explain its status or to commemorate it if it has already occurred, and that the writing of this article be assigned to the Social Committee Chair or his designee.

Min felt that this would be a good idea. Alexei said that this was a good lobbying avenue. It was suggested that this first one be about gradicators. Marco asked why we don't promote and print our own newsletter. Steve said that it was too expensive and John Bender pointed out that the *Tech* has a wider readership.

Alexei said that this was easier. Andrea would like to write an article about the Everhart Lecture Series. Andrea asked if anyone had pictures of NSO. Catherine said that Justin had a camera. Andrea asked people to send her pictures for the webpage.

ACTION: John Bender will contact the editors of the *Tech* and Will Ford will write the first article about Gradiators.

III. UPDATES AND REPORTS

A. Budget Committee (Alex Brown)

1. SASS

The Social Activism Speaker Series was approved for \$1500 sponsorship as budgeted.

2. Club Funding Guidelines and Forms

The budget committee has designed and approved shorter, more succinct guidelines and applications for the website for club funding.

B. Publications Committee (John Bender)

1. GSC Display Case

The Caltech Architecture/Engineering group is finally ready to cut an access panel under the staircase outside the Red Door in order to finalize the design of the GSC display case which will later be installed there at Campus Life's expense. Yes, this is the access panel that the building blueprints show is already there. So, as far as this project is concerned, we've progressed almost to where we started.

2. Advertising for DVD Library

Since it looks like grad students will be able to use the ASCIT DVD library again, we're thinking of ways to advertise it and the Coffeehouse to them. This will include having the SAC combination posted on an IP-restricted website and providing that URL in the Newsletter along with directions, along with printing flyers and perhaps sending an email.

3. Political Items in the GSC Newsletter

We decided that it is probably good policy not to print politically charged items in the *GSC Newsletter*, including letters to the editor. Since the GSC is an apolitical organization and our newsletter is aimed at student/campus life and news, our decision was that the *GSC Newsletter* is not an appropriate forum for political activism.

4. Supreme Overachiever

At the last committee meeting, Steve Pracko was voted Official Pubs Committee Supreme Overachiever.

C. Social Committee (Graeme Smith)

1. NSO

The Social Committee recently helped out with some of the events at NSO. Thanks to everyone who attended or helped organize.

D. Quality of Life (Jonathan Galownia)

1. Health Center

We have been meeting with Kevin Austin of the Health Center, and he is very close to releasing a feedback form on the web which will be used to help improve the service of the health center. The feedback will be administered as a survey. A random group of students will be invited to take the survey about once a month. Only those students who have used the health center in the last month will be counted. This insures that responders remain anonymous.

The sign in procedure for walk-ups has also been updated and now is much more anonymous than it was previously. A computer and URL is used to sign in and other students cannot read the list.

2. Halaal Food

Tom and Andre were very busy with NSO, so no progress has been made for Halaal food. We have recruited a new student to help.

3. CCAP

There is no provision for graduate students with foreign wives who cannot work to access the CCAP program. We've visited this issue last year, but it was brought up again this year. As with last year, there is unfortunately nothing we can do to help this group of constituents.

4. Car Sharing

We will have a FlexCar on campus, but it will not be Caltech exclusive. Nor will we have lowered rates. There is no hope of resurrecting the original Moore Fund Proposal idea. The proposal had the support of VP Margo Marshak, the Provost, the Dean, and President Baltimore. The Institute was not able to accept the risk involved with the program.

5. Health Insurance

We met with Angelica Santana and several representatives from the San Diego Office of Aetna/Chickering last month. They would like to continue meeting once/month to discuss graduate student issues and to fine tune the insurance program. They also expressed interest in having an "open door" session once a month. They would be available and on campus for students to visit and solve problems face-to-face. We feel this would be extremely useful in helping graduate students become comfortable using the insurance and understanding how it works.

I. Underrepresented Students Committee (Min Tao)

1 Update on Administrative Committee on Diversity and Minority Affairs

- President Baltimore addressed the committee outlining his hopes that we broaden the purview of ACODAMA to include the following:

- (1) To serve as one of the primary conduits for discussions and administrative policy recommendations directed at advancing diversity, minority affairs and gender issues on campus at all levels.
- (2) To track and assess the progress of diversity initiatives and programs on campus, including issues related to gender and climate on campus
- (3) To serve as a campus liaison for the Office of Minority Student Education.
- (4) To evaluate proposals made to the President's Diversity Initiative Fund.
- (5) To suggest speakers for the Lecture Series on Achieving Diversity in the Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering.

- Debriefing on Irvine Foundation Visit

- Discussions on the Strategic Plan for ACODAMA: we plan to focus on recruiting/hiring and programs/data).