**MINUTES**

**Graduate and Professional Student Assembly**

**January 27th, 2014**

**Warren Hall Room 401**

**5:30 – 7:00 P.M.**

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
   1. **Introduction of voting members, 1 min.**

Voting members present: D. Bunck, A. Bybee-Finley, M. Carignano, G. Danies Turano, J. De Castro, F. Doerflinger, M. Dumas, S. Hsieh, A. Moore, E. Murnane, E. Newbury, A. Powell, T. Sorg, C Yao, M. Chen, A. M’nebhi, I. Small

Voting members absent: S. Sinha

1. **Approval of the Minutes**
   1. **December 2, 2013, 1 min.**

Approved as printed.

1. **Guests** 
   1. **Gretchen Ritter, The Harold Tanner Dean of Arts and Sciences, 15 min.** 
      1. Thinks College of Arts and Sciences is critical to the success of the University as a whole. Some departments are too small especially the social sciences departments.
      2. Should pay attention to growing recent research areas
         1. Not every area needs to grow but there are certain departments needs to grow
      3. Answered more questions about research funding, land grants, and future of graduate students.
   2. **Cassie Dembosky, Vice President of Student and Academic Services; and Jason Kahabka,  Assistant Dean for Student Service and Admissions, 20 min.**

Monet introduced the guests and announced that they would talk about Ask Ezra. Jason Kahabka started out by talking about how the office wants to develop a roadmap that will allow Student Services integration.

4 departments have joined together to try and improve Student Services. In the fall, a Q and A interface called Ask Ezra was launched. It was suggested to new students since it is a helpful feature and a dynamic source for questions since it delivers only one response and not links to other pages that have potential responses.

They then moved towards what the students desire in terms of integration of Student Services and emphasized that the page will become more personalized for each student. The office that will request the students’ opinions on what they would like to see on Student Center and other such networks will send out a survey.

Nicole Baran commented that there is no physical space to assist graduate students hence graduate students do not know where they can go to ask for assistance. There were other comments about how Faculty Center and Student Center, two interfaces used by graduate and professional students, need integration since graduate students tread the line of student and faculty.

Monet offered that anyone who wants to offer more comments may email the GPSA leadership and the comments will be forwarded to the Office of Student Services and Admissions.

CassieDembosky then talked about final exam scheduling and explained how the University has to consider a lot of concerns when coming up with a schedule. She opened the floor to any suggestions and concerns the students had.

1. **Reports of Officers and Committee Updates, 15 min.**
   1. **Executive Committee (M. Dumas)**

Cristine announced the available committee positions such as the Gorge Safety Committee.

Elizabeth talked about the upcoming issues that were brought up in the survey GPSA members filled out last semester and the issues that the executive committee is working on. These include expanding fitness hours, housing, and making the grant database more accessible. She announced that if anyone has any issues they would like to address before the GPSA or propose a resolution, they could the GPSA leadership at [gpsa@cornell.edu](mailto:gpsa@cornell.edu).

* 1. **Appropriations (I. Small)**

Ian informed the GPSA that the next step is to look at the appendices of the byline funding and he encouraged all voting members to glance at them before the next vote.

* 1. **Communications (G. Choe)**

Since Gary Choe was absent, Elizabeth Newbury talked on behalf of him about some upcoming Communications ideas and programs. One of the new programs for the semester is “Take a Break” which includes coffee hours at the Big Red Barn. G. Choe has requested all members of the GPSA to send pictures of field organizations and representatives that highlight student participation and these will be included under GPSA spotlight on Facebook. The committee is currently working with the Office of the Assemblies to come up with an updated GPSA Buzz system.

* 1. **Finance Commission (D. Kuhlmann)**

D. Kuhlmann was absent.

* 1. **Graduate & Professional Student Programming Board (K. Bybee Finley)** K. Bybee Finely announced an upcoming Interschool Mixer which will be held on Thursday, Januray 20th, 7:00-10:00PM at the Big Red Barn.
  2. **Student Advocacy (F. Doerflinger)**
  3. **Faculty Awards (A. Powell)**

A. Powell informed the GPSA that the committee is currently working on improving nomination plans to ensure that the entire University is aware of the nomination period.

* 1. **Diversity & International Students (C. Carter)**

C. Carter was absent but M. Dumas announced that there will be a “Mini Rivers to Cross: viewing at the Cornell Cinema on February 24th after the committee meeting.

1. **New Business** 
   1. **Divestment and the Faculty Senate Update, Jeffrey Bergfalk, Field Representative from  Mathematics; Prof. David Shalloway, Molecular Biology and Genetics; and Prof. Brian Chabot, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, 20 min.**

Jeffrey Bergfalk started out by talking about the Resolution on Cornell Investment and Divestment Strategies for a Sustainable Future. The resolution was passed in effect by the faculty assembly last December. He then explained that the Divestment timeline is one tied to the carbon neutrality that the University hopes to achieve by 2035. However, Jeffrey said, this goal is attainable by 2025. He called for an organized response to the lethal process of climate change.

Although the resolution does not go nearly far enough, it is a beginning. Professor David Shalloway then took the discussion. He started by stressing that the resolution is designed for minimal financial risk to the University. There will be no constraint on reinvestment since it can be reinvested in alternative energy means. He then went through the finances for the Long Term Investment Pool, which is not affected by this resolution. He announced that it is time that research results of climate change are implemented into real-world situations. A leading Ivy League institution adopting such policies would set a great example. The World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim, called for Fossil Fuel Divestment. According to Professor Shalloway, the faculty vote was 80% in favor of crafting a resolution similar to the one being discussed right now.

* + 1. Answered questions about research funding
       1. There are concerns about how private company research funding will be affected once this resolution will be passed
       2. Want to get every component of the entire Cornell community behind the resolution
          1. President Skorton will be addressing this resolution on February 12th
       3. Hoping that Cornell will become the Green ivy- takes the leadership role amongst the Ivy Leagues
          1. Especially since Cornell is a land grant university, it has a special role in giving back to the community
       4. The final decision on this resolution and its implementation lies with the trustees
          1. A unified University- undergraduates, graduates, faculty, administration- will speak loudly
  1. **R. 7 – A Resolution to Amend the Bylaws Concerning GPSA External Committee Appointments, 5 min.** 
     1. Bylaws is missing some committees
     2. Editing bylaws to exclude obsolete committees

1. **Open Forum, 5 min**

Nicole Baran talked about the National Association of the Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) and her role as the Northeast Regional Chair. She mentioned two upcoming events that are associated with the NAGPS. One of them is the Legislative Action Days where participants will have the opportunity to meet congressional representatives since it will be held in DC at a time when Congress is in session.

The other event is the Northeast Regional Conference that will be held March 14th-16th. It is slightly bigger than the Ivy Summit since it includes all schools from the Northeast Region, not just the Ivies. It is an opportunity to talk to other students about issues they are facing and working on as graduate and professional students and how they are addressing them.

Anyone interested in these two events can email Nicole about more details.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Aastha Wadhwa