

Graduate and Professional Student Council
General Assembly Meeting
10-16-2007 7:00 - 8:30 pm

[Approval of Minutes](#)

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Convene: 7:01 pm

I. Approval of the Minutes from 9/25/07

Move to approve the Minutes from the 9/25/07 meeting.

Motion: Jacqueline Moeller. Second: Xing Zong

Motion Passes Unanimously

II. Announcements

Alethea Duncan – There are many things planned for the next few weeks. First, get NC State Fair tickets. Please encourage your constituents to get FLEX and use FLEX because it makes it much easier to gauge ticket sales. On Thursday, there will be Thirsty Thursdays at La Res on Rosemary Street in Chapel Hill. Speed dating will occur soon, though it has been postponed to November. There will be another financial session on student loans. October 26th, there will be a Halloween Party at Metro 8, where there will be a \$50 prize for the best female/male/couples costume with 2 DJs.

Claire Siburt – She is the GPSC Rep for Chemistry and has been the Rep to the UC Academic Scheduling Committee. After lengthy discussions within this committee, the University is moving toward an academic schedule that no longer requires students to attend classes on Memorial Day or on Fourth of July. They are still negotiating classes on Labor Day, since this is during the normal Fall semester (versus the Summer term).

Christie Eyler – She is putting together a contact page on the gpsc.duke.edu website for easy access to all of the Representatives' pictures and contact information. The purpose of this is to allow constituents to have one other method of identifying and contacting their Representative with any questions or concerns. When she sends out an email asking for this information and a picture, please respond and give her a picture.

III. Approval of the Vice President Nominee

Crystal Brown – Since our former Vice President unfortunately had to resign from her position due to family health issues, the position of Vice President is vacant. According to the bylaws, it is the President's responsibility to find and nominate a replacement for approval by the GA. She interviewed several candidates, but based on their schedules and other issues many could not fulfill the position requirements. However, one was committed to the position and was very excited to participate to, among other things, foster the sense of community in the GA – the current Student Group Liaison, Elizabeth Rach.

Elizabeth Rach – Last year she was the GPSC Rep for her program and she has served this year as the Student Group Liaison. She has had many good experiences with GPSC, so she is very interested in volunteering to serve as VP. She presented several ideas for what she will do with the position:

- To make improvements for GA and Exec meetings by making meetings more transparent (e.g. by emailing agendas earlier) and by getting speakers of interest to the Reps.
- To institute a Representative Care Program to show appreciation, since many Reps and Exec members end up burnt out at the end of the year. She suggested giving small gifts, having a Rep appreciation reception, having a suggestion box.

The VP has a structured set of committees, including the Basketball Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Judicial Committee. She also oversees the Community Service Committee, and she encouraged people to contact Julie Roy or herself if they wish to help with this committee.

The GPSC goals going into this year is to unify the different Professional schools with the Graduate school. To do this, so far the Professional school student Presidents have been meeting monthly with Crystal. Another idea she had was to have one competition event with the schools and possibly against similar schools at UNC to try to build cohesiveness within the GnP community. Contact her with ideas or if you wish to get involved with this. The Project GROW has also been implemented. She will be in charge of the etiquette dinners, which will aim to aid in your professional development.

Elizabeth Rach unanimously approved as the new Vice President.

Crystal Brown – Now the Exec position of Student Group Liaison is vacant. She would very much like to nominate a current Rep for this position, so contact her directly if you are interested in this position, which is in charge of getting groups together to get them interacting, and helping with group funding, among other roles.

IV. Young Trustee Screening Committee Election

Yvonne Ford – She displayed the people running for this position and inquired about their continued interest.

Eric Vance – He respectfully declines his nomination, though he is happy to help in any way with the committee, if needed.

Yvonne Ford – We will now hear from the two candidates interested in serving as Chair: Steve Misuraca and Gautham Pandiyan.

Steve Misuraca – He is a first year Fuqua student. This week they were having final exams, but he rescheduled them to be here to address the GA regarding his interest in serving as Chair for this committee. He was an undergrad here in addition to being a business student so he has contributed many dollars to Duke. The Duke image is very important to him and he received advice from an older student to get involved with the Young Trustee selection process. Gautham is experienced in GPSC and would be a very good Chair as well.

Ali Saaem – If you are not elected to Chair, would you still be interested in serving on the committee?

Steve – Yes, he initially applied to serve on the committee only, then later decided to run for Chair.

Gautham Pandiyan – He is qualified to serve as Chair because last year he served on the committee and it was very active in making some changes, which worked very well. He also has experience with the BoT Standing Committees and he sits on the Faculty GnP Committee. He has been involved in GPSC, as well as many other groups on campus. He discussed his plans for this position, if he were to be elected: last year there were too few applications and he wishes to increase publicity to improve this aspect. This is probably the single most powerful student position at Duke so he wishes to have good candidates running for it.

Eric Vance – How would you publicize better?

Gautham - He would start publicizing earlier, and would publicize more widely than simply the GPSC-associated listserves. He would use email lists for departments, would use fliers and word of mouth publicity.

VOTE: 56 voting Representatives present

Gautham Pandiyan elected by majority to the role of Chair of the Board of Trustees Screening Committee.

Eric Vance – He nominated Stefan Gary to run for a committee position

Stefan Gary – He respectfully declines.

Slate of Committee Members approved by default (6 people running for 6 positions):

- Pae Wu
- Ali Saaem
- Steve Misuraca
- Patrick Palmieri
- Christine Eyler
- Kat Mitchel

V. Approval of the Proposed Amendment (Bylaw XVII, Section B)

Posted proposed revision (additions in italics, no deletions):

“Items that will not be considered for funding include alcohol, scholarships/*honorarium*, travel expenses to an event, and food for social events. Funding for food that is an integral part of *a cultural or academic* event may be considered *as will be receptions for events academic in nature*. Speakers may be considered if the event is cosponsored. The number of graduate and professional students will always be considered.”

Yvonne Ford – The motion on the floor is to approve the proposed revisions. The floor is open for discussion.

Ashley Manzoor – She is a proxy for Jennifer Seger for Medical Physics. After sending the proposed revisions to their constituents, they received a suggestion that the section that says “scholarships/honorarium” should be changed to “scholarships, honoraria.”

Vote: To approve the proposed revisions (posted on gpsc.duke.edu and presented at the last GA meeting) to Bylaw XVIII, Section B2 with the discussed amendment to change “scholarships/honorarium” to “scholarships, honoraria”.

Proposed revisions unanimously approved.

VI. Career Services Presentation

Heather LaBreche – She is a second year GPSC Rep who has been serving as the Student Life Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) Chair. In this role, she serves as a conduit between student life committees and the GPSC President to distill issues of importance to be passed on to Ali and Crystal. One of her duties is to prepare a White Paper on Career Services, as commissioned by Audrey last year.

The mission of this duty was to gather information about career services into one place, to share this information amongst the various GnP schools and programs, to identify areas for collaboration and/or barriers to improving career services, and to identify ways GPSC can help improve career services.

The sources of information used for this paper were: a poll of GPSC Reps, meetings with Career Services staff from across the University, the 2006 GnP student survey information.

The highlights of the information obtained were several. The current model of career services is that each program and school provides career services for its own students. Cooperation and collaboration between schools/programs is informal and ad hoc; a good deal of collaboration exists between the Graduate School and the Postdoctoral Office, but this is not the case with other, less natural pairings of programs/schools. One proposed improvement on the current model is that it would be advantageous to find a way for schools, regardless of funding and student base, to expand their programs. Ideally, students would be able to get interdisciplinary assistance to suit their needs.

The recommendations in this paper were many. First, to continue the annual meeting of the career services staff from across the University since all too often these offices only get feedback/advice from other similar schools around the country rather than more diverse programs within the University. Second, to collaborate on events of common interest on career options. Third, to introduce a fee structure to allow students to access services provided by other schools within the University. For example, a student in the Graduate School could pay a fee to access Career Service assistance from Fuqua. One confounding factor in improving career services is that the Duke Alumni databases are overlapping and non-streamlined. This is being worked on currently so that all Duke Alumni will be listed together somewhere. Finally, GPSC should play a role in promoting easy access to career services information (e.g. advertise for events, make video/audio from events available online).

Recommendations/observations specific to the Graduate School Career Development Center (CDC):

- The Graduate School has a discrepancy in the career faculty to student ratio (versus that of other schools).
- Since the survey showed that a low number of students actually utilize these career resources, they need to enhance the knowledge and use of these services with increased advertising.
- They need to provide additional personnel to handle the increased demand for services created by the increased advertisements.
- They need to continue to provide events that focus on alternative career paths (e.g. alternatives to academic tenure track positions).

Wadia Haddaji – He's met with people involved in career services. On average the Graduate School person only meets with 30 people per month. We need to advertise to our constituents so that they increase the use of these services.

Ashley Manzoor – In Medical Physics, two people went to Career Services for help and they were completely unprepared to address any issues specific to this program. Word has spread within the program and now no one is motivated to access these services.

Alethea Duncan – She knows that they are not tuned into each Department's specific needs, but they are very willing to find ways to help if you tell them. They are willing to do what is necessary and to use the resources they have at their disposal to help. Just use them and ask them.

Heather LaBreche – Josh Wilson (in Medical Physics) specifically worked with Virginia in Career Services and her graduate assistant to design a program of advising that would be specific to students from Medical Physics. This is something that people from other schools/programs can do to increase the effectiveness of this office in relation to those specific students.

Steve Misuraca – Even if there are not specific things for each program, there is a lot of information to be gained from the office. For example, there are many personality testing mechanisms that can help students figure out what area they fit into in industry. Therefore, even if there is not a specific infrastructure for a particular program in place, the services can still be useful.

Crystal Brown – She has some information regarding why Heather was doing this investigation. GPSC sat down with Dean Wright and Dean Looney about career services for students and we were to poll our Reps regarding these services. The report will come out this Fall regarding what last year's Reps want, relating to career services.

VII. Think Tank Discussion

Crystal Brown – First, she wanted to talk about the fact that she will be starting a new Social Action Committee as an internal committee to get Reps involved in campus issues. At the Retreat, there were a lot of people who expressed passion about various issues, but there is no avenue for Reps to get involved with them right now. The Exec board is very ambitious, but could use more manpower to advocate GnP concerns with various bodies at the University. The idea is to create a committee with 5-6 members, but if there is more interest, then that is always good and will be accommodated. This committee would report directly to Crystal and would have a Chair to report issues of interest/relevance to the GA. This committee will get together, synthesize and itemize issues and then will divide responsibilities and spread out. Their responsibilities will include drafting proposals to encourage action from the University, attending campus-wide meetings, etc.

She also wanted to reiterate a couple of things that Exec has been working on. This year a focus on the GROWTH of GnP students has been prioritized. In terms of personal growth, we want to nurture thy psychological aspects of students (e.g. through CAPS, the health insurance committee to get more health insurance benefits, working with minority/womens' organizations for new students). In terms of social growth, we will work with increasing funding for club sports, will continue emphasis on student life events, and will continue the community lunches under Ali. Ali has also been sitting down with various student demographic groups (e.g. racial

minorities, international students, LGBT) on interactions on campus. In academic growth we will hopefully be having the new administrator student Ombudsperson at a meeting soon. For professional growth, we will be having etiquette dinners, financial planning sessions and will be working with career services.

Now is time for people to bring any issues of concern up to discuss in a town hall setting.

Yvonne Ford – She is a big fan of Men’s and Women’s Duke sports and is concerned that GnP students may not have access to tickets for the exhibition game against Barton College this year. Furthermore, there is a student group called the Inferno (which is basically a student portion of the Iron Dukes) that doesn’t have a GnP student representative involved.

Heather LaBreche – A lot of people in her program have tax questions and it seems like there is not anyone on campus in payroll who is able to handle this and/or willing to answer questions.

Alethea Duncan – We will be conducting a tax workshop in January/February.

Heather – This could help figure out how to file taxes, but the problem occurs when graduate students get put on the PI’s funding source and a lot of money is lost due to tuition reporting that is not reclaimed. There may be some other solution for this.

David Kahler – There is a \$2000 maximum deduction for qualified education expenses. GPSC started approaching the University in 2000 to get these tax problems fixed and it would be nice to see that lobbying continue.

Claire Siburt – She emphasized the magnitude of this problem. The Chemistry department’s solution to this problem is to write a letter that students may send to the IRS that says they shouldn’t be taxed. She has received the excuse that since the stipends come from grants, fees can’t be paid by them (though tuitions can); this has not seemed to be an issue for other similar things though.

Ashley Manzoor – There are always a ton of tax workshops for Medical Physics students in the Spring that many people attend. Advice on how to deal with these problems is often given.

Peggy St. Jacques – In her program, they get a stipend to work over the summer (when they don’t attend classes). This year, their program is no longer able to pay them in this way so they are planning to pay each student slightly more every month rather than over the summer, which may make it difficult to budget.

Crystal Brown – Has it not been successful for students to try to save money year round in preparation for the summer?

Peggy – This is the first year this has been an issue and the students are concerned that this will be an issue over the summer. One problem is that they are supposed to be working full time over the summer and are not permitted to hold other jobs. Before, they got around this problem by paying them in a lump sum at the beginning of the summer but for some reason they cannot do this anymore.

Crystal Brown – We will try to keep tabs on this over this next year to see if students end up in a deficit.

Patrick Palmieri – He thinks this must be a liability because if they are not paid throughout the summer, what happens if they are hurt or something. This has been a problem with other residency and fellowship programs before

Crystal – She thinks that the liability issue is covered since they are under contract as students to work over the summer.

Elizabeth Rach – Do we have a financial planner associated with the GnP schools/programs? Because perhaps there's some way to put this extra money throughout the year directly into an interest-earning bank account throughout the year, to be drawn out when it's needed during the summer.

Eric Vance – He thinks that there should be a student bar on campus.

Crystal Brown – We definitely do want a GnP student social space. There used to be a student bar, but even if we can't get the bar, it would be good to have some sort of space.

Catherine Brewer – She feels like there's not good communication between GPSC and students with many email addresses, who may not always receive/read all of the communications. Perhaps posting fliers could be a way to deal with this.

Ali Saaem – Reps should have the onus on them to get the word out to their constituents, for example by putting up posters. The mechanism of dispersing this information may be dependent on the particular program.

Lisa Nowell – Perhaps it would work well if we have somebody make fliers that can be sent to and printed out by the Reps to put up in their areas of study.

Michelle Tougas – Fliers work very well in her department, but the problem is to make sure that all areas receive fliers.

Supriya Munshaw - One of the main problems is that GPSC emails are very long so many people don't read them through. She doesn't know what the solution is, but filling inboxes with separate emails is also probably not optimal.

Luke Riservato – He likes the summary that is at the beginning of GPSCNews. He also tries to forward relevant emails to his constituency.

Brandon Little – Perhaps the website can be set up so you can see in a fluid calendar form what is going on each week.

Claire Gordy – There is a calendar portion that does just this. A short list of events can be found in the upper left-hand corner, and you can go to the calendar place.

Will Wittels – The calendar portion can also be downloaded to iCal for easy reference.

Laura Johnson – Perhaps if GPSCNews could be stratified so that it is clear which portions relate to social events, business/academic events, etc.

Liza McClellan – Many people she knows in GnP schools do not see dentists. She wondered whether it would be possible to get a couple of dentists in student health, perhaps covered under the student health fee or even an extra dental health fee.

Wadia Haddaji – Even if we do have to pay for this service, if it was done as a large group of GnP students, it would be cheaper than it is right now.

Eric Vance – We do have a dental discount program included in the student health insurance plan this year.

Crystal Brown – Please contact the exec board with any issues or further questions. Also, if you're interested in serving on the Social Action Committee, please contact her directly.

Adjourn: 8:30 pm