I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm.

II. WELCOME

President Bonistall wished everyone well for the upcoming break.

III. INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications Committee – Senator Dahl

Vice President Ralston presented the report: Senator Dahl is willing to provide assistance creating flyers and promoting events for events and activities for academic programs and Graduate Student Senate committees. She has also started a Google Doc to identify areas on the GSS website that can be improved. If anyone is interested in assisting with the project, please contact her.

Events Committee – Senators Scott and Miller

The 2nd Annual Graduate Student Forum will take place on Friday, May 4, 2012 in Clayton Hall. The forum was established to foster the professional development of all UD graduate students in a conference setting. This event gives graduate students the opportunity to present their research and receive feedback from other students and faculty, as well as view the work of other departments and attend a presentation from our keynote speaker. The Events Committee is discussing whether there should be a theme for the conference, and whether to have an opening keynote speaker in addition to a closing one. All graduate students are encouraged to attend, and the committee will be soliciting for volunteer assistance as the date draws near.

Organization Committee – President Bonistall

The Organization Committee will be working diligently (weekly) over the January break. If anyone would like to get involved in the process of re-writing the constitution, please contact President Bonistall.
Social Committee – Senator Frederick and Officer Markland

Officer Markland thanked everyone who attended the Graduate Student Ice Skating Event last Friday; there were over 100 attendees. She also thanked everyone who brought items to donate for the canned food drive.

Social events to look for in January include a potential happy hour following January Graduate Student Senate Meeting (if one is held), bowling, and a Super Bowl Party on February 5.

IV. STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEES

Diversity Committee – Senators Hefner and Active Member Ifill

The Diversity Committee is working to incorporate representatives of graduate student organizations, unofficial graduate student groups, and offices/services that graduate students utilize on campus to work in partnership with the Diversity Committee (attend meetings, collaborate, etc). The committee has drafted an e-mail to send out and has compiled a spreadsheet of groups and their contact information, which they will send to President Bonistall for distribution. The email will be sent out before Winter Break and the committee will follow up with each group at the beginning of the Spring semester.

The committee is also researching the establishment of a UD Diversity Day, an event which other universities hold. Each committee member will research which universities are doing this and how, and will report back at the next committee meeting.

Student Life Committee – Senator Jain

The Student Life Committee needs more membership in order to complete the projects it wants to accomplish. Vice President Richard underscored the need for student involvement in the committee, citing last year’s Graduate Services Investigative Committee, which examined potential graduate student fees as an example of being proactive in solving problems.

Senator Jain would like the committee to set up a Shoutbox for graduate students to inform the committee of issues. He also encouraged Senators to reach out to their constituents and contact him if there are any issues they find that the committee can help address.

The committee is working on the survey of Mentorship Programs, and hopes to have the report completed by the end of Winter break.

The committee has discussed possible graduate student fees, specifically how well prepared is the Graduate Student Senate for such a fee, and how can graduate students ensure that they are directly benefitting from money collected by the fee.

Senator Jain, Vice President Richard, and President Bonistall met with the new director of Parking and Transportation Services, Richard Rind. Potential changes that are forthcoming include: Hourly public parking rates around campus would increase, both along the road and in garages. President Bonistall explained that rate changes usually happen on July 1, and that these increases would be made earlier for budgetary reasons; no additional increases would occur on July 1, 2012. The two evening bus routes would be combined into one 50-minute route.
Additionally, changes would be made to the Hen After 10 program on Sunday-Wednesday, where the evening route would be extended to run until 2:15 am with the last stop at the Morris Library. Hen After 10 would continue to run Thursday through Sunday nights as usual. The cost of chartering a university bus would also increase, and bus service from Wilmington to Newark on Sundays would run by reservation only, increasing to $20 per trip. [President Bonistall added more to this discussion during Old Business.]

The next meeting is on January 10 at 5:00 pm in Trabant 205.

**Sustainability Committee – Senators Thomson and Ardini**

The Sustainability Committee has completed its Tree Survey, and the final report will most likely be written over Winter break.

The committee is looking at doing another collection drive for food or clothes during Earth Week. They will likely continue Sneaker Mountain to collect used sneakers, which was done last year. They are brainstorming better methods of advertising and collection.

The Building Efficiency Study is almost completed. The final document will go to the committee in January, and then will be distributed to the graduate student population once it is approved.

The committee is still waiting to hear from facilities how many paper towel dispensers exist on campus.

The next meeting will be in January; please email Senator Thomson with your availability over the Winter break if you are interested in attending.

V. **EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Newark City Council – Senator Adams*

Senator Adams made several suggestions to the Newark City Council at their last meeting. First, he suggested that the City Council and City departments meet on campus sometime in the Spring semester. This series can be offered as a one-credit class and will promote town & gown discussion. He suggested that the City Council sponsor scholarships for university students to show its appreciation of students’ benefit to the City economy. He raised the issue of violence near campus and asked whether the City can make areas near the university a “blue (crime free) zone”. He also suggested that the City involve students more in City events, particularly by inviting students.

*Faculty Senate – Senators Portnoi and Pons*

Provost Tom Apple addressed the Faculty Senate in December. More details on the University's budget will be in President Harker's address to the faculty on February 13.

Student Government Association, advised by Senator Pons, made a pleasant presentation of their organization and activities. Senators Portnoi and Pons still await subjects relevant (to the faculty) that they may bring to their own presentation to the Faculty Senate.
Diversity and Equity Commission – President Bonistall

The last meeting focused on recruitment and retention of students of color. Two guest speakers, Lou Hirsch and Maggie Andersen, spoke about these efforts on campus in relation to undergraduate students. President Bonistall explained that the committee is focusing its efforts on undergraduates, but she raised questions about the graduate student population to the discussion.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

President Bonistall complemented committees on all of their work in the past month.

Approval of November Minutes

The minutes were unanimously approved. Minutes from previous Graduate Student Senate meetings will be posted online hopefully by the start of the Spring semester.

Meeting with Parking & Transportation Services Director, Rich Rind

Continuing from the Student Life Committee report, President Bonistall added that the Director is new to his position (having started in October), and that he made a very positive impression on those attending the meeting. He seems very open to input and discussion, and he has been open in stating what will be happening in advance of it happening.

Senator Jain added that Parking Services will be doing a survey soon, and he encouraged all graduate students to fill the survey out when it is distributed.

President Bonistall brought several ideas raised in the November Graduate Student Senate meeting to the Director’s attention. These included the recommendation that evening hours in parking lots start at 4:30 for graduate students and that a parking pass specifically for evenings and weekends be available for purchase.

The Director has been invited to speak at the next Graduate Student Senate meeting.

The Parking and Transportation subcommittee will likely reform in the Spring.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

January Meeting

President Bonistall opened the floor for discussion as to whether there should be a January Graduate Student Senate meeting. Her primary concern was that not meeting over the Winter break can be detrimental to the organization’s momentum.

Senator Adams recommended that the meeting be held, but that attendance not be mandatory.
Senator Jain suggested that the meeting be held, but that no significant motions be voted on. President Bonistall responded that the Organization Committee is hoping to get the ball rolling on constitutional amendments.

A straw poll was taken as to who would attend a January meeting, with the majority of Senators affirming that they could attend. President Bonistall noted that a Senator who could not attend the January meeting would still need to send a proxy.

*Presentation on the Dorm Move-Out Project – Eva Wilson*

Member Wilson is a member of sustainability committee who is organizing the student dorm move-out project. She worked for the University grounds crew over the summer and was amazed at the volume of stuff that students threw away at dorm move-out time. The university is charged for disposal by the ton, and many of the items discarded are re-usable. She is trying to work with the U-Don’t Need It program, an off-campus site that collects items from students; landlords mostly utilize this, and students on campus often do not have transportation to get there.

The idea is that during student move-out, pods would be stationed on the Laird campus and staffed by volunteers to collect and sort items. Trucks would be rented to transport the collected items off-site. The Sustainability Committee will need additional volunteers; they are working to get funding for the project, and have contacted local businesses to help incentivize donations. The committee has already partnered or is looking to partner with Students for the Environment (an undergraduate organization), Residence Life, Grounds, Facilities, University Green Liaisons, U Don’t Need It.

Member Wilson solicited graduate student assistance from anyone with knowledge of UD policies concerning business sponsorship, approved merchants, and liability; advisement on funding sources in case the grant falls through; and assistance with advertisement.

Senator Barclay mentioned that a lot of stuff at U Don’t Need It was of poor quality; she thinks that the donation program for items in re-usable condition will be beneficial.

President Bonistall thinks that this program is “fantastic”. She asked how the items will be re-distributed to those who want them. Member Wilson responded that if the Sustainability Committee does partner with U Don’t Need It, then the project with tag on with their charities; if not, the committee must find charities on its own. Anyone with knowledge of local charities, smaller ones in particular, would be helpful as well.

Senator Jain recommended selling collected furniture/appliances and using the money to dispose of waste items and support next year’s projects. He mentioned that the Public Safety lost & found sale every October is very popular. He also suggested providing transportation to purchased items (furniture and appliances) for a nominal fee.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

Senator Barclay mentioned that some students in her academic program cannot make the Happy Hours on Thursdays, and suggested that they be held on a different day. President Bonistall replied that the goal for the Happy Hours was to encourage participation at the Graduate Student Senate meeting by having the Happy Hour follow it, and that it promotes fellowship among Senators and Members who are working together. Officer Markland mentioned that turnout this
year for Happy Hours has been much higher than in previous years. Senator Thomson noted that having Happy Hours on the same night always excludes the same people. Senator Jain suggested that the Graduate Student Senate have two Happy Hours each month, on different days. Vice President Richard seconded Senator Jain’s suggestion. He also asked what the purpose of the Happy Hours is: for socialization, or for free food. Students can always have informal Happy Hours (without food) if there is interest. President Bonistall reiterated that the Graduate Student Senate can make this happen if individuals are interested. Senator Pons seconded the suggestion.

Senator Adams suggested that it might be worth investigating whether the bar in the old Blue and Gold club can be re-opened to serve the graduate student population. President Bonistall shared that she has had similar experiences at her undergraduate institution.

Senator Markland asked whether Friday nights are best for social activities, in light of the high attendance at the Ice Skating event. Senator Pearson recommended a Happy Hour starting at 5:30 on a Friday, so as to miss the undergraduate rush later in the evening. President Bonistall wondered whether the Graduate Student Senate should also be focusing on events other than Happy Hours. Senator Ardini recommended bowling on Monday nights, since there are inexpensive rentals available then.

Officer Markland welcomed Senator Lu from Statistics and Senator Yetter from Materials Science. Officer Markland announced that over the winter she will be reviewing attendance records so that member resources can be focused toward committees where they are most needed.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Castillo
GSS Secretary