I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm.

II. WELCOME

President Bonistall welcomed new senators, guests, and Connect members in attendance and congratulated the new Social Committee Chair. She reminded Senators to mark May 7 on their calendars as the President’s Reception is scheduled for that afternoon. She thanked members of the Organization Committee for all of their hard work on the Constitution during the Winter session. She announced that the Graduate Forum is on May 4, and encouraged Senators to get share this with their constituents and get them excited. She noted that she recently met with members of the Black Graduate Student Association to discuss how they can become more involved in the Graduate Student Senate. Recently, she presented a check to the United Way from donations collected in December. She is looking forward to working with that organization to provide volunteer opportunities for graduate students.

Next month, the Director of Parking Services will be the guest speaker.

III. GUEST SPEAKER: JAKE OLKKOLA, ATHLETICS

President Bonistall introduced Jake Olkkola, Associate Director of Athletics for Recreation Services to discuss renovations to the Carpenter Sports Building (the “Little Bob”).

Mr. Olkkola began by showing concept pictures of what the renovated entrance will look like. He explained that one of the design goals was to match existing Georgian architecture to help the building “fit in” better with the rest of the campus. Additional features include enhanced lighting and security in and around the building, with a focus on natural light. Inside the addition, there will be three new floors, which will include a jogging/walking track, student lounge, 120 additional pieces of exercise equipment, and additional group exercise rooms. There will be student lockers inside the lobby.

Mr. Olkkola next addressed the scope of Recreation Services’ activities. They operate the Carpenter Sports Building and two smaller satellite fitness centers; oversee tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts, turf fields, and the Fred Rust Ice Arena and Outdoor Pool; and administer recreation and sports programs around campus. They are funded primarily by the Undergraduate Comprehensive Fee. Athletics is proposing a mandatory $50 per semester fee for full-time graduate students ($25 for part-time graduate students). Winter and Summer session use is included in this fee. The fee is being proposed so that all users of the building will share in the cost of the improvements. For perspective, there were over 1900 graduate student visits to the Carpenter Sports Building in the 2010-2011 academic year, and over 400 graduate students...
participated in intramurals. Mr. Olkkola highlighted that the fee will support long-term operation of a state-of-the-art wellness facility, promote a healthier and more physically active lifestyle, and provide diverse social collaboration.

Senator Thomson asked what the undergraduate fee currently is. Mr. Olkkola replied that Athletics receives about $370 per year from the Undergraduate Comprehensive Fee.

Senator Audette noted that he has difficulty supporting a facility that he and others in his program will never use. Mr. Olkkola replied that a mandatory fee is a typical funding model in higher education, and that use often increases when such a fee is instituted. He added that the project also brings “tremendous value” to the campus. Senator Audette emphasized that having an opt-out clause would make more sense so that only those who are using the building support it financially. Mr. Olkkola replied that Student Health Services and the Trabant Center are also supported by student fees, and that they would operate very differently if they were supported by “a la carte fees”.

Senator Barclay noted that a majority of physics students do not have the financial means to pay an extra $100 a year. Mr. Olkkola emphasized that the new facilities provide a value to the campus that is worth the investment.

Senator Skordos asked how the undergraduate fee has escalated over the past five years. Mr. Olkkola replied that there is no intention of raising the fee in the future. Senator Skordos asked how the fee was calculated. Mr. Olkkola replied that Athletics examined the current system (where part-time graduate students pay $50 per semester for use, and full time graduate students do not pay anything) and felt that this number reflected a reasonable amount that met their needs.

Mr. Olkkola noted that the fee would be instituted this Fall so that money is available as the building is being renovated.

Senator Bellumori asked when the building will close for the renovations. Mr. Olkkola replied that the building will not close. There will, however, be alternative entrances as construction progresses.

Senator Muskavitch asked if there will be an option for graduating masters’ students to opt out if they will not be at the university when the renovations are completed.

Member Lanckriet suggested that the Trabant fee could be lowered to offset the new fee, since the bonds to pay for Trabant have been paid off.

Member Orozco asked if there were any room for appeal or for a reduced fee, and how close the fee is from being approved by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Olkkola replied that the Board of Trustees has not yet approved the fee. President Bonistall emphasized that Athletics had approached the Executive Committee over the Winter to solicit graduate student support, and that she is very appreciative that they are going through this process.

Senator Audette emphasized that graduate student support of this fee would mean that many students who pay the fee will never use the new building, and that this is not fair.

Senator Ayers asked whether fitness classes would be included in the fee. Mr. Olkkola replied that currently such programs do have an additional cost, which helps to provide those services. The plan is to keep the model the same.

Senator Lazo asked how many current part-time graduate students pay the opt-in to use the facility. Mr. Olkkola did not know the exact number.
Senator Moinolmolki suggested that Athletics try to engage more graduate students to get them to use the new facility.

Senator Dahl asked whether removal of the front parking lot would remove handicapped parking in front of the building. Mr. Olkkola replied that there will be handicapped parking next to the building. Senator Dahl also mentioned that attending a free session of Zumba class encouraged her to go again, and stated that opportunities like this will help raise awareness of the new facility, especially during the beginning of the semester. Mr. Olkkola noted that during Finals Week there are free fitness classes offered.

The proxy for Senator Racco asked whether any neighboring buildings will be impacted. Mr. Olkkola answered in the negative.

Member Gangloff suggested that students be required to purchase a “meal plan”-style fitness package, where they can choose the amount of use they wish to purchase. This would be fairer than a flat fee since it charges based on usage. He also noted that whether graduate students are funded impacts their abilities to pay.

A member concurred with Senator Dahl, and suggested that a certain number of free fitness classes (at any time during the semester, and not just during the first or last few weeks of class) be offered for graduate students, and that this will promote graduate student use. Mr. Olkkola agreed that he would like to offer graduate student-only fitness classes.

Senator Barclay noted that it is important for Athletics to know graduate students’ income in order to make an informed decision about how much to charge for a “luxury item”. Vice Provost Riordan noted that about 2000 graduate students are fully funded at or above the university’s minimum stipend of $15,000 per nine months (the academic year).

Senator Garcia asked whether alternative funding sources have been studied, such as a cafeteria inside the new building. Mr. Olkkola noted that undergraduates shoulder the majority of the burden of funding, and that he is currently talking to faculty/staff and ELI about usage fees as well. He has also spoken to Aramark, but they are not interested in running a café in the building.

Member Orozco recommended that sponsors be found instead of charging a fee. Mr. Olkkola replied that Athletics is soliciting sponsors and renting to outside events as appropriate.

Senator Skordos noted that people who do not use the facility will be funding the facility. Mr. Olkkola replied that this is a traditional funding model in higher education.

Senator Pearson asked whether there could be an opt-in clause, where everyone would pay, say, $10, and those who actually want to use the facility pay an additional amount.

Senator Skandarikhoe asked whether the fee could be used for a tax deduction. Mr. Olkkola was not sure. Vice Provost Riordan thought that the answer would probably be no. He also emphasized that Athletics has explored alternative funding sources, and noted that a Graduate Student Senate committee investigated student fees last year.

President Bonistall thanked Mr. Olkkola for his presentation, and recommended that this issue continue to be discussed in the Student Life Committee.
IV. **INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Vice President Ralston briefly explained that his role is to assist certain committees and liaise between them and the Executive Committee. He encouraged students to get in touch with committee chairs if they would like to get involved.

*Communications Committee - Senator Dahl*

Senator Dahl is compiling a list of edits for the GSS website, and encouraged everyone to email her at dahl@udel.edu with suggestions. She also offered to create posters or flyers for graduate student events to help them with marketing.

*Events Committee - Member Scott and Senator Miller*

Member Scott stated that Events spent a lot of time over the Winter session included planning the Graduate Forum, which will take place on Friday, May 4 at Clayton Hall. The format has been altered from last year in that the conference will start in the morning and conclude mid-afternoon. The committee is working on finalizing a keynote speaker, developing advertizing, soliciting donations from locations on campus.

*Organization Committee - President Bonistall*

President Bonistall reiterated that Organization had a busy Winter break, which included weekly meetings to reconstruct the Constitution and Bylaws. She thanked committee members for all of their hard work, and invited everyone to attend an open meeting to discuss the revised documents on February 21 at 5:30 pm.

*Social Committee - Senator Moinolmolki*

Senator Moinolmolki announced several upcoming events:

- GSS Happy Hour: tonight 7:30-9:30 pm at Kildare’s Irish Pub on Main Street
- Ice Skating Social: February 24 (time TBA)
- GSS Happy Hour: March 8 7:30-9:30 (location TBA)
- Bowling Madness Day: week of March 11
- GSS Happy Hour: April 12 7:30-9:30 (location TBA)
- Informal Happy Hour and/or Picnic: TBA
- GSS Happy Hour: May 5 7:30-9:30 (location TBA)
V. STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEES

Vice President Richard introduced himself, and noted that he supports committees that deal with advocacy.

Diversity Committee - Senator Hefner and Member Ifill

Senator Hefner discussed an outreach initiative where the committee contacted representatives of Graduate Student Organizations, unofficial graduate student groups, and offices and services that graduate students utilize on campus and invited them to work in partnership with the Diversity Committee. They received two responses (from the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and from the Writing Center), and the committee subsequently reached out to or met with representatives from these offices.

Diversity was initially going to send out a follow-up e-mail to its contacts in the upcoming weeks. However, based on the meeting with the Office of Equity and Inclusion, the committee has decided to formulate a concrete purpose statement for itself in order to show graduate student groups what its goals and purpose are. The committee is currently in the process of formulating this purpose statement.

Last semester, Diversity discussed having a Diversity Day. Instead, a Diversity Luncheon Series co-sponsored by the Office of Graduate and Professional Education and the Diversity Committee will take place beginning this semester. Two seminars have already been planned: one on March 7 focusing on diversity and mentorship, and another on April 12 focusing on diversity in the job market. Senator Hefner solicited input on what other topics students would be interested in.

Next meeting: Monday, February 27 at 1:00 pm in 205 Trabant.

Student Life Committee – Vice President Richard

Vice President Richard mentioned that Senator Jain had to step down as chair, thanked him for his service, and announced that he would take over as chair for the remainder of the semester.

Vice President Richard described a shift in the committee’s focus, whereby the committee agenda will stem from issues raised in prior Graduate Student Senate meetings and topics referred to the committee by the Senate. The goal is to allow the committee to be more of a task-force for handling the immediate issues of the Senate, on behalf of the graduate student body. Each month, Student Life will report on its findings and determine if the issue or topic needs its own sub- or ad-hoc committee for further exploration. Membership in Student Life will be voluntary and members will be allowed to focus on particular tasks. This is intended to be a pilot application of the Student Life Committee. Vice President Richard hopes that if this method is proven successful and efficient, that it will be detailed as the committee’s standing structure.
Sustainability Committee - Senators Thomson and Ardini

Senator Ardini announced that a Google Doc has been created that lists available opportunities and tasks for various committee projects. Sustainability has a variety of tasks, from making phone calls to working on websites to determining university policies.

Sustainability will be hosting a Sneaker Mountain again during Earth Week. This is a project to collect old sneakers and either donate usable ones to Africa or turn unusable ones into playground material.

The UDon’t Need It collection will run from May 21 to May 25 or 26. Graduation is May 25, so it would be good to be done that day, but congestion from graduation may make the 26th more feasible. Senator Wilson will be forming a subcommittee to be able to work out these details apart from the larger Sustainability Committee meetings. Senator Thomson added that Senator Wilson has received the funding that she applied for.

Senator Thomson stated that the fume hood sticker project has also been funded. The committee is currently trying to find a printer who can print the stickers. University Printing can do a cheap version of them that will be functional, but Member Murray is looking around for a printer that can print vinyl stickers relatively inexpensively.

Sustainability has obtained the GIS data needed for the Building Efficiency Study, and they are in the final stages of ensuring that the form is well structured.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 21 at 9:00 am.

VI. EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Bonistall reminded Senators who do not yet participate in a committee to notify Officer Markland of their committee choice.

Newark City Council

President Bonistall announced that a new representative to the Newark City Council is needed. Please contact her at ejb@udel.edu if you are interested. The City Council meets on Monday nights.

Faculty Senate - Senators Portnoi and Pons

He asked whether graduate students have graduate classes during Winter or Summer sessions. The consensus was in the negative. Officer Markland noted that funded students are not funded to take classes in Winter and Summer sessions.

In the last Faculty Senate meeting, there was discussion about the calendar for Winter 2013. Only 20 days of instruction available, which will necessitate increasing class time from 90 minutes to 105 minutes. Some faculty expressed concern over the quality of instruction in a 105-minute class, due to student exhaustion. The increase in class time was approved, and Senator Portnoi feels that the change may be permanent. Senator Barclay noted that she took summer classes at Rutgers, and that they routinely ran two hours without a break.
Diversity and Equity Commission – President Bonistall

There was no update since the next meeting is February 20.

Financial Aid Task Force – Vice President Ralston

Vice President Ralston forwarded a list of students’ names to the task force, but he has not received a reply.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Approval of December Minutes

Senator Pearson motioned and it was seconded to approve the minutes from the December meeting of the Graduate Student Senate. The motion passed.

Organization Committee Presentation – Senators Pearson and Ayers and Member Caro

President Bonistall begin by again thanking members of the Organization Committee for their hard work in trying to improve the organization’s structure, and noted that she appreciates everyone’s patience with these changes.

Organization will host a special meeting on February 21 at 5:00 pm to solicit feedback; location will be determined.

Member Caro explained that Organization has been updating the Constitution based on input from the November Graduate Student Senate meeting, and he hopes that the changes can be voted on in March. At present, the Graduate Student Senate has only a Constitution, with the Member Handbook serving as de facto Bylaws. The revisions have split the Constitution into two documents: the Constitution, which explains the fundamental principles of the organization and the roles of the government, and the Bylaws, which address more routine, day-to-day matters. A preamble, describing the purpose of the Graduate Student Senate, and nondiscrimination statements have been added as well.

Article I addresses membership. The new Constitution now states that every graduate student is a member of the government and has the power to elect a representative (Senator). Members at Large are students who actively participate in meetings, can speak during open discussion, and may serve on committees, but may not speak or vote on the senate floor. Senators are the elected representatives from each academic plan, must serve on at least one committee, and have the right to speak and vote on the senate floor. Officers are elected by the Senate. Committee members are graduate students who participate in committees and may speak during open committee sessions, but cannot vote on Senate matters unless they also serve as a Senator. Committee Chairs are the appointed leaders of committees, and are held to the active standing requirements of a Senator. They can be drawn from Senators or Members at Large, and cannot vote on Senate matters unless they also serve as a Senator; this provision allows non-Senators to chair committees. Organizational Delegates represent Graduate Student Organizations to the Senate and may speak during open discussion; they cannot speak or vote on the senate floor. Proxies are members acting on behalf of an absent Senator or Committee Chair, and in that capacity they
Senator Pearson presented Article II, which addresses organizational structure. The Graduate Student Senate has not been operating as a proper Senate for a long time; the constitutional revisions bring the document into line with the organization’s current practices. He explained that the organization would have an Executive Branch, with very similar structure to what it is now, and a Legislative Branch. Within the Executive Branch, the Student Affairs and Internal Affairs Boards will coordinate the committees that fall under the respective Vice Presidents. The Legislative Branch is comprised of the Senate (as it is now) and the Governance Committee (which is currently the Organization Committee). The Executive Branch will run day-to-day functions of the organization. The Legislative Branch will appoint the members of the Executive Branch, be the voting body of the government, manage governmental structure, and express the needs of the graduate body it represents. The Senate will be run by a Parliamentarian, who will serve as an unbiased facilitator of the Senate function. The Parliamentarian will run the Senate floor, chair the Governance Committee, will not vote on Senate matters, and will not sit on the Executive Council. Senator Pearson emphasized that this structure is very similar to the way the Graduate Student Senate is presently organized.

The monthly meetings, however, will be run differently. Meetings will be open to the public, but there will be separate times for open floor (public discussion) and senate floor (where only Senators may speak). Open floor will be run by the Executive Council, and senate floor will be run by the Parliamentarian. These changes allow greater inclusion of the graduate student body without detracting from the importance of Senate business.

Senator Ayers addressed Article III, which focuses on elections. He emphasized the importance of a strong election process for ensuring accurate representation of academic plans. The revisions propose a standardized online election process. New Senators will be elected in April, and results from the elections will be announced to the graduate student body in May.

The new Executive Board will be elected earlier in the Spring semester in order to make a smoother transition of power; the Membership Officer will organize elections. Officers will be nominated in February, speeches will occur at a special meeting in March, and polls will be open for a week after that meeting. This will allow Senators to consult constituents in their academic plans before they vote. Victors will be announced at the April meeting, which will be co-run by the old and new Executive Councils.

Article IV on removal has been updated to allow for Committee Chairs to be removed from their position just as Senators and Officers can be. This provides accountability for Committee Chairs.

Article V on amendments will now require a 3/4 vote for approval of Constitutional amendments, and a 2/3 vote for Bylaws amendments. Amendments should be submitted to the Parliamentarian two weeks before the meeting; the Parliamentarian will then notify Senators of bills at least a week before the meeting. Senators will vote on the bill at the meeting, and the bill will include the timeline on which the amendments will take effect.

Senator Ayers notes that there are still unresolved issues. For example, should officer positions have term limits? He encouraged everyone to attend the meeting on February 21 to discuss these issues. The revised documents will be distributed to Senators within a week. There will also be extra time before the March Graduate Student Senate meeting for more discussion.
Member Lanckriet noted that last year much time was spent tweaking the constitution, and that an inordinate amount of time has been spent on these same issues this year, to the detriment of student issues. As a proxy for Senator Tehranirad, he motioned to suspend the Organization Committee for a year.

Senator Bellumori explained that a support structure for an organization is critical to legitimize the organization.

Senator Ayers added that in light of the international student fee, the Graduate Student Senate needs to be organized well in order to legitimize itself to other university offices and give graduate students a stronger voice.

President Bonistall reminded the group that the present discussion was for questions only.

Senator Thomson asked how the Graduate Student Senate will hold a special elections meeting only a week after these amendments are approval. President Bonistall replied that the revised elections timeline will not be fully implemented until academic year 2012-2013.

Senator Ardini asked for clarification on what distinction is given to a Member at Large. Member Caro noted that it is an honorary distinction, and that it recognizes members of committees (who actively participate in the organization). Senator Ardini suggested that Proxies should be Members at Large.

Senator Barclay asked whether a member can only chair a committee if s/he is a Member at Large. The answer is yes.

A member recommended that Members at Large should have speaking privileges during the senate floor; particularly, a Senator should be allowed to yield the floor to a Member at Large. Senator Pearson noted that this is legitimate practice based on Robert’s Rules. Member Caro explained that Members at Large are encouraged to sit with their Senators for this very purpose.

President Bonistall again encouraged everyone to attend the meeting on February 21 to continue discussing these issues.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

President Bonistall stated that these constitutional revisions will not take place in time for elections this Spring. Nominations should be submitted to President Bonistall before the March meeting; anyone may email her at ejb@udel.edu with a nomination for oneself or for another qualified individual. She encouraged potential candidates to contact the current officers to discuss their positions and responsibilities. Elections will take place in April, and the May meeting will be co-run by the outgoing and incoming Executive Councils.

President Bonistall announced that the undergraduate Student Government Association is interested in soliciting support from the Graduate Student Senate on a Smoke Free Campus Proposal. She shared a proposed 8-question survey and solicited feedback. Senator Lazo suggested a question asking whether the respondent is domestic or international.

Senator Muskavitch asked what the smoking policy currently is. Associate Provost Martin replied that there are rules published. President Bonistall noted that these rules are often disregarded, and questioned how a smoking ban would be enforced.
Member Gangloff asked whether faculty and staff will also be polled. President Bonistall replied that they want to see what students think first. Senator Gangloff mentioned that if campus is smoke-free, many smokers may cluster on the boundaries of campus and cause issues in the community.

Senator Dahl asked how much of the campus this proposal includes, e.g. whether it will apply to Main Street or tailgating.

Senator Barclay suggested adding a question asking for the respondent’s age.

President Bonistall stated that she will share this feedback with the Student Government Association.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Senator Portnoi asked about the proposed Town Hall meeting regarding the international student fee. Vice Provost Riordan stated that he welcomes the conversation, but that it has not yet been scheduled. He suggested early March as a good time since the working group is making a presentation to President Harker at the end of February. He also noted that the fee only applies during the Fall and Spring semesters (and not during the Summer or Winter).

Senator Thomson asked for clarification on information dissemination. President Bonistall stated that Associate Provost Martin will email every graduate student with these minutes. She asked that Senators follow up these emails with their constituents. Officer Markland clarified that the Executive Committee wants to make sure that Senators are touching base with their constituents. Senator Skandarikhoe noted that names of Senators are not up to date on the website.

Member Gangloff mentioned that the Mechanical Engineering graduate students formed their own student organization and asked whether the Graduate Student Senate could issue guidelines about how student organizations within departments should be organized. President Bonistall recommended that this is a good topic to be taken up by the Organization Committee.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Senator Pearson motioned and it was seconded to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Castillo
GSS Secretary