GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE  
Public Meeting Minutes  
May 10, 2012

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. WELCOME

President Bonistall welcomed everyone to the last GSS meeting of the year.

Guest Speaker – Gary Stokes, Director of Risk Management

Mr. Stokes informed the Graduate Student Senate about the recent updates to the Student Health Insurance Policy. The biggest change is that it is no longer “accident and sickness” insurance, but rather “health insurance”. Benefit limits have been increased and there is no deductible or co-insurance for routine/preventive care.

Senator Lazo asked about the maximum coverage for physical therapy. Mr. Stokes replied that it is $100,000 with no maximum number of visits. Prescription drug are still covered as a reimbursement process.

Senator Portnoi asked whether under the new preventive care provisions an individual can select a doctor. The answer is yes, and Student Health Services can assist students in finding a physician. Student Health Services does not, however, provide physicals. Services at the Student Health Center are still covered by health services fee.

Senator Bellumori asked whether the cost of the plan will increase. Yes, the cost will increase about $340 for the Blue plan and about $234 for Blue & Gold plan. Since co-pays have been eliminated, many students may recover this cost increase over the course of a year. Vice Provost Riordan added that health coverage for students with assistantships will continue to be subsidized 84% by the university: funded students will continue to pay 16% of the cost of the plan out of pocket to enroll.

Senator Orozco asked whether the system will be administered the same way as it has been. Yes: University Health Plans sells the plan, and Consolidated Health provides the services. Senator Orozco added that he thinks these improvements are “really great”.

Dr. Martin clarified that when students go to the Health Center, there is not a way to get a physical. Under this insurance program, physicals could be obtained on campus at the Managed Health Care unit in McDowell Hall.

Senator Muskavitch asked whether with this improved insurance graduate students will still be paying the student health fee. The answer is yes.

Vice Provost Riordan announced that a UDaily article on this topic should be appearing soon.
Mr. Stokes encouraged graduate students to email him if they have any other questions.

Senator Orozco asked about who can purchase the insurance. Only students who are matriculated at the university (at date of purchase) are eligible to purchase this insurance.

Dr. Martin encouraged students to consider seriously the benefits of the increased coverage of the Blue & Gold plan over the Blue plan.

President Bonistall encouraged Senators to follow up with their constituents about this issue and spread the good news.

### III. INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Communications Committee – Senator Dahl**

The Communications Committee is continuing to update content on the Graduate Student Senate website. The goal is to develop a newer and more functional website over the summer which will provide easier navigation, accessibility to photos of Graduate Student Government events, improved visuals, and a cleaner overall look.

Senators were encourage to contact Denise Mayes at dmayes@udel.edu if they would like photographs taken at end of the year meetings or events. They were also reminded to email Alicia Dahl at dahl@udel.edu if they want their committees to have a page on the website to highlight upcoming and/or past events or initiatives, or if they would like any flyers made to promote events.

**Events Committee – Member Scott and Senator Miller**

Member Scott extended thanks on behalf of the Events Committee for the success of the Graduate Forum on May 4. The presentations were very impressive, and participants enjoyed the keynote speaker, Roger Craig of Jeopardy! fame. In particular, the committee thanked volunteer moderators and event staff, presenters, President Bonistall, Vice President Ralston, and the Office of Graduate and Professional Education, and they extended especial thanks to Dr. Mary Martin and Dr. Charles Riordan for all their help and continued support.

President Bonistall thanked Member Scott for her hard work putting together the Graduate Forum.

Vice President Ralston asked participants to fill out an upcoming survey evaluating the event so that the committee can plan for next year.

**Organization Committee – President Bonistall**

President Bonistall has begun to go through the new constitution and bylaws to create a master list of what needs to be accomplished over the summer in order to ensure the organization’s practices remain compliant with the revised documents. In particular, the name will need to be changed to “Graduate Student Government” on all official documents and on the website, and the new elections process will need to be set up. She and Parliamentarian-elect Thomson will be collaborating over the summer to ensure a smooth transition to the new structure.
Social Committee – Senator Moinolmolki

Senator Moinolmolki announced that the scheduled pub-crawl event will not be happening. However, the committee is interested in hosting informal events during the summer, such as a day trip to the beach, summer picnic, or restaurant excursion around Main Street. She encouraged anyone to contact her with ideas.

Tonight: Happy Hour at Kildare’s from 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

IV. Student Affairs Committees

Diversity Committee – Senators Hefner and Member Ifill

Several university and graduate student group representatives attended the Diversity Committee meeting for purposes of collaboration and creating/sustaining partnerships across the university. Attendees included representatives from the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning, the Office of Graduate and Professional Education, the Socratic Club, and the Black Graduate Student Association. The committee members and group representatives brainstormed how they can collaborate to enhance diversity initiatives at the university. The ideas discussed include:

- The Graduate Office will meet with the Center for Teaching and Learning to see what topics associated with teaching and learning could be enhanced by incorporating diverse perspectives, with particular attention paid to the TA Conference.
- The Office of Graduate & Professional Education has made a strong commitment to diversity across campus. A graduate assistant for the Graduate Office for the 2012-2013 academic year will be assigned to serve on the Diversity Committee, as well as work on other diversity initiatives across campus. This will ensure the Diversity Committee will have a consistent representative from the Graduate Office.
- The Center for Teaching and Learning will assist with the Diversity Luncheon series in the fall.
- The Diversity Committee wants to ensure that graduate students are aware of the various resources available to them across campus.
- The Graduate Office is willing to co-sponsor a Graduate Student Welcome Reception before classes start in the fall. Last September, the Graduate Office sponsored a meet-and-greet at Grotto’s Pizza to provide a place for graduate students to meet one another; the proposed event will be similar to this.
- The Diversity Committee seeks a greater presence at the Graduate Student Convocation that is held prior to fall semester.
- The Socratic Club is interested in having consistent representation on the Diversity Committee.
- The Diversity Committee is working to utilize communication outlets more efficiently.

All attendees expressed a commitment to diversity issues across campus.

Senator Hefner expressed hope that the committee will sustain its momentum and relationships next year.
Student Life Committee – Vice President Richard

Vice President Richard began by giving an update on the Recreation Services Fee. As a result of graduate student input and meetings with President Harker and Provost Apple, the original proposal has been modified and will be presented to the Board of Trustees this semester. The following decisions were made regarding graduate student feedback:

- There will be no opt-in/out for full-time students; the fee will be the universal $50 per semester for each fall and spring semester.
- There will be an opt-in for part-time students, similar to the current policy; the fee for them has been reduced to $25 per semester.
- The fee will not be implemented until Fall 2013, and will coincide with opening of the renovation.

Vice President Richard noted that this even though this is not as much as the Student Life committee asked for, these revisions are still significant. Even more important than the changes themselves is that this issue began with a direct dialog between administrators and graduate students, and the graduate student opinion was heard by President Harker; this is a successful model for how to address issues of this nature in the future. Vice President Richard congratulated the committee for its work on this issue.

The Student Life Committee will also begin putting together a list of concerns regarding bus scheduling, and then representatives will meet with Parking and Transportation Director Richard Rind in June to discuss these issues.

Sustainability Committee – Senators Thomson and Ardini

The Dumpster Detour collection will be taking place May 17-23. Senator Ardini reported that ads have been posted in The Review and T-shirts have been ordered for volunteers. Although all volunteer slots have been filled, he encouraged students to double up and keep a friend company. Details for volunteers will follow soon. Senator Ardini thanked all the volunteers in advance. The next meeting of the subcommittee will be on May 14 at 3:00 pm in Trabant 205.

Senator Thomson reported that twenty-three pairs of athletic shoes were collected during the Earth Week sneaker collection and were sent off to PPPFA.

The Sustainability Committee is brainstorming projects for next year. Possibilities include addressing the issue of buses idling for long periods of time and finding more space for bicycles. The committee is open to suggestions.

Senator Ardini thanked Vice President Richard for his help with Sustainability this year. Vice President Richard in turn thanked the Graduate Student Senate for the opportunity to serve, and expressed pride in the work his committees have done this year.

V. EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Newark City Council – Member Kramer

Guy Kramer is the new representative to the Newark City Council, and he has attended one meeting so far. The City Council just approved buying into a new natural gas-powered electric
plant. This is better environmentally than coal, but still suboptimal since it is still fossil fuel. The City’s Municipal power corporation invested 13% ownership in the plant.

The City will also begin implementing smart meters in homes. Member Kramer is lobbying to make sure that consumers can log in online and access their energy usage in increments as small as fifteen minutes. Senator Thomson asked whether the meters will be installed in apartments as well as residences. Member Kramer does not know yet; the meters have only been installed in businesses thus far.

Member Kramer also solicited issues that students would like to be brought up at the City Council meetings.

*Faculty Senate – Senators Portnoi and Pons*

Senator Portnoi reported that there is no update since the Faculty Senate meeting conflicted with the President’s Reception for the Graduate Student Senate.

*Diversity and Equity Commission – President Bonistall*

James Jones from the Center for Study of Diversity and Margaret Andersen from the President’s Diversity Initiative spoke to the Diversity and Equity Commission on their respective diversity initiatives. It came up that the Center for the Study of Diversity is being relocated to a building that is not handicap accessible. The commission agreed that this was not sending the appropriate message to the university community, and it drafted a memo to bring this issue to the attention of university administrators.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion also presented a new document that describes where to turn for help when experiencing various forms of discrimination; it is available online at udel.edu/stophate.

President Bonistall is excited that the Graduate Student Government will remain represented on the Diversity and Equity Commission next year.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

*Approval of Minutes from April 12, 2012*

Senator Thomson motioned and it was seconded to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2012 meeting of the Graduate Student Senate. The motion passed.

The consensus among Senators is that the new process of sending Senators draft minutes following the meeting, taking two days to review them, and then distributing them to the graduate student body was effective.
VII. **NEW BUSINESS**

*Summer Social Committee – Senator Vanderhoef*

When the pub-crawl event fell through, the Social Committee reconsidered what message it wanted to send though the events it hosted. Senator Vanderhoef suggested a restaurant tour in September and an accompanying ad hoc committee to organize this.

President Bonistall clarified that it would be nice continue social events informally throughout the summer. Planning time during the summer will be very valuable to bridge this year and next and help the committee maintain momentum.

Senator Muskavitch asked how information will be disseminated about these events. President Bonistall recommended that Senators inform their constituents that informal summer events will be marketed through the Facebook group.

*2011-2012 Recognitions and Awards*

President Bonistall mentioned the “highlights” document that was distributed to Senators and asked them to review it and let her know if there is anything that someone did on behalf of the Graduate Student Senate that is not included. She would like the revisions soon so that she can email this document to the graduate student body with the minutes this month.

President Bonistall thanked the Senators for their service this year sitting on committees and liaising with their constituents. She is very impressed how Senators have advocated on behalf of their constituents this year.

Vice President Ralston thanked his committee chairs, presented them certificates, and highlighted their accomplishments this year:

- Alicia Dahl, Communications. Worked on website, produced flyers.
- Jeralynn Miller & Brittany Scott, Events. Graduate Forum, PhD Comics movie
- Neda Moinolmolki, Social. Happy Hours, informal events (bowling, ice skating) with service.
- Emily Bonistall, Organization. Constitutional revisions.

Vice President Richard also thanked his committee chairs:

- Kristen Hefner & Andre Ifill, Diversity. Reached out to other organizations on campus, broadened diversity conversations beyond international students.
- Greg Ardini & Heather Thomson, Sustainability. Continued past events, initiated new projects, Dumpster Detour.
- Abhinav Jain, Student Life. Organized the committee in the fall.

President Bonistall also thanked Vice President Richard and Officer Markland for their service as committee chair as needed this year.

Next President Bonistall explained that three members stood out to the Executive Committee by going well above and beyond the call of duty. She presented a certificate of recognition to Cesar Caro for his service as a key member of the Organization Committee. Serving as an active member, he asked the tough questions that kept the committee on track.
Senator Hefner presented a certificate of recognition to Andre Ifill for his service as co-chair of the Diversity Committee. He was instrumental in the committee’s work, putting forth a productive and sustainable agenda for the committee.

Vice President Ralston presented a certificate of recognition to Brittany Scott for her service as co-chair of the Events Committee. She provided leadership by which the committee put on successful events all year.

President Bonistall thanked Dr. Martin and Vice Provost Riordan for their long-standing and continued support of the Graduate Student Senate. She explained the work they did behind the scenes as mentors, giving guidance on the organization’s activities and advocating for graduate students.

Vice Provost Riordan thanked everyone for their work throughout the year. He noted that he hears positive comments across campus about the work the Graduate Student Senate does and it makes him proud. Dr. Martin added her thanks to the Executive Committee for meeting at 8:00 am on Tuesdays and for their thoughtfulness and dedication to their work. Vice Provost Riordan and Dr. Martin presented certificates and gifts to the officers.

Swearing-in of New Officers

Officer Markland, as Elections Chair, swore in the 2012-2013 Graduate Student Government officers:

President: Emily Bonistall
Vice President of Internal Affairs: Kevin Ralston
Vice President of Student Affairs: Cesar Caro
Parliamentarian: Heather Thomson
Membership Officer: Alicia Dahl
Secretary: Chris Castillo

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Senator Lazo asked on behalf of a constituent whether graduate students who also attended the University of Delaware for the undergraduate work can request that only their graduate transcripts be sent to prospective employers, scholarship applications, etc. Dr. Martin replied that university policy is that all transcripts are released. She suggested bringing the question to the university registrar.

Senator Thomson asked on behalf of constituents at the Lewes campus whether it would be possible to ITV future meetings. Officer Markland suggested using UD Capture. Vice Provost Riordan does not know that there is a room on campus that is large enough. There was consensus that the idea should be explored further, in particular because there was interest in the meeting among students in Lewes.

Vice President Ralston asked how the May minutes would be approved. Vice Provost Riordan noted the Faculty Senate approves their May minutes at their September meeting. President Bonistall replied that the May meeting minutes will be approved in September, and encouraged Senators to send feedback before they are distributed publicly.
Senator Pearson announced that an ultimate Frisbee league is in need of female players. Visit pada.org for details.

Member Kramer asked how the Graduate Student Senate solicits the opinions of the graduate student body. President Bonistall replied that Senators liaise with their constituents and bring concerns to the group. Graduate students have been surveyed in the past, but not in the past couple of years. The post-event survey for the Graduate Forum includes general Graduate Student Senate questions in addition to event-specific questions, but there is nothing formal in place now. Vice President-elect Caro mentioned that he wants to use Student Life to reach graduate students more effectively, and solicited involvement in the committee.

Senator Portnoi suggested that Student Life look into use of childcare facilities. He noted that there is currently a two to three year waiting list, and that it would be very beneficial for graduate students to have priority access.

Senator Vanderhoef asked whether it would be a good idea to send an email in September about which programs were unrepresented this year. President Bonistall has already been talking with Officer-elect Dahl about this; they will be working on it over the summer.

Senator Cariso asked for clarification as to what Senators need to be aware of now with respect to news Senators joining the Graduate Student Government in the fall. President Bonistall replied that the new elections cycle would officially start next spring; Senator transition should occur this fall as it has occurred in the past. Outgoing Senators should email Officer-elect Dahl as soon as a new Senator is identified. The New Senator Orientation will occur this fall, probably during the last week in August; it will be helpful for all new Senators to be identified by that time.

President Bonistall thanked the group once more for everyone’s service this year.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Senator Pearson motioned and it was seconded to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Castillo
GSS Secretary