

GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL **UIC** UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

10/20/2009: Official GSC Meeting Minutes

1. **Dr. Barbara Henley, Vice Chancellor Student Affairs (VCSA)**

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As VCSA, my responsibilities include:

- Academic support programs: African American Network, Academic Center for Excellence, Native American Support Program, Federal TRIO programs, Athletics (18 men and women sports)
- Auxiliary services: student housing, dining, meetings conferences, student centers (E/W), UIC Forum, UIC pavilion, campus programs, recreation facilities (E/W)
- Retail operations: bookstores, dining facilities
- Publications
- Children Center
- Professional growth and advocacy: OIS, Career Services, Counseling Center, Student Leadership and Development Services, Financial Aid, Dean of Students Office.
- UIC Experience: officers can get credit - certificates - for service at UIC through co-curricular transcripts. They advertise:
 - o Urban exploration – civically involved
 - o Inquiring minds
 - o Community – promote diversity

Specific Question 1: Last year there was some movement on a Commuter Student Resource Center and some talk that there would be a specific section of that area set aside especially for graduate students. What is the progress on this project?

BH: There is not going to be a dedicated space for graduate students. This is for all students who commute. This would be a fee-funded project so cannot segregate particular populations.

Heather Drummond (Public Health Sciences): What is the commuter center?

BH: It would be an office located in SCE near the Wellness Center on the 2nd floor to handle issues of commuters.

SQ2: Many of us have seen the posters around campus promoting the accolades received by our students and faculty. Many graduate students receive very prestigious awards every year. What is your office doing to recognize those students?

BH: Students are recognized for achievements and service in the Chancellor's newsletter. Nothing particular from her dept.

2. **Dr. Henri Gillet, the Dean of the Graduate College (GC)**

Bio: <http://www.math.uic.edu/~henri/>

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To answer the question: what does the GC @ UIC do?

- I've been in this job for 9 weeks.

- We at the GC don't have that much money.
- We give fellowships – to those we are recruiting and existing students. And for diversifying faculty and graduate students.
- We do substantial recruiting of minority students through a summer research program for undergrads who would go to grad school - in the urban health program.
- Regulatory function:
 - o MS and PhD thesis are checked so all requirements are met and all other requirements for graduating are met as well.
 - o GC sends admission letter as well. That's all they do – send the letter.
 - o Approve new graduate programs or changes to existing graduate programs.

SQ1: Many of us have seen the posters around campus promoting the accolades received by our students and faculty. Many graduate students receive very prestigious awards every year. What is your office doing to recognize those students?

HG: As BH said posters about grad. students achievements are created by the marketing dept. in Vice Chancellor for External Affairs office. One person in the GC handles outside fellowships. Most fellowships go through depts. There's not much coordination b/w GC and depts. So, to know achievements of students we need better flow of info. b/w depts. And the GC. It's something worth pushing.

SQ2: Last year the GSC worked very closely with the GC to develop a graduate student Bill of Rights (BoR). Do you agree with the document and will you help to promote its acceptance across the campus?

HG: Understand that 25% time I'm still a Math dept. Prof. with graduate students so at I first responded to it as a Prof. and not administrator. That said, I have technical issues with the document.

The GC executively has not voted on this document – they still have some questions.

The BoR is a tool you can take to courts and argue for redress.

One thing I don't agree with is a right – point 1.6.2 (*Graduate students have the right to be informed immediately when tuition, fees, tuition differentials, or any costs associated with graduate school are increased. Such information should come from the office or program that initiated the increase, or from the University itself. As with changes to graduation and course requirements, if the cost to a graduate student for a specific program is changed after the student has been admitted, the student shall not have to pay the increased charge.*) That is essentially true for undergrads by state legislature. But not graduate students so one cannot reasonably assert this as a right. It would be nice if it were true but its not right now.

I support most of what's in here but some of it needs to be worked on.

Also, I think the section on Responsibilities of a Graduate Student does not need to be in the BoR.

SQ3: Many graduate students have had issues with fees being paid on time and late paychecks.

What is your office doing to fix these issues?

HG: The GC doesn't have power to do much about payment issues.

Amy Levant is a strong advocator for students. But the GC doesn't often have access to info. about particular grad. students when it comes to help them. There's restricted access to students' payment info.

So the Chancellor set up a Committee to Review Graduate Appointment Payment Issues to look into why substantial students were paid late.

- My opinion – it happened for a variety of reasons. Also the way the situation was handled. If there are issues with the banner system – we can, as a Committee, make recommendations

As a former foreign student I don't like to hear that so many graduate students weren't paid on time.

Member: Students don't know if/when our appointment info. has been entered and whether it is being processed. There should be a way for students to login to the system and check up on the status to make sure that we are in the system.

HG: I don't know about such a system.

Scott Morgan (Psychology): My constituents want to know what's going on b/w GC and GEO in their negotiations – when will there be a new contract.

HG: I don't know. Given the financial environment, not really sure. Depends on the people at the table.

SM: Who are the people at the table?

HG: Labor Relations, GC, others I'm not sure of right now.

SQ4: Many other large state universities include healthcare insurance as part of the tuition waiver package for graduate students. Why is this not the case here, what can we do to change it?

HG: I don't know. Bottom line: it's about the money. Given the budget situation, this is not something that will change soon. If it were up to me (enough money and control of it), I'd support grad. students with it. It would be nice if there were no hidden/extra payments for graduate students but the situation now seems to be "the dept. can support you but...there are all these fees you have to pay."

3. Dr. Michael Tanner, Provost and Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs,

Bio: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/aaa/provost.html>

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What I don't do:

- Vice Chancellors of External Affairs – deals with government liaisons.
- I'm not in charge of the Hospital
- Vice Chancellor of Research – responsible for managing research endeavors.
- Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services – police, transportation, physical plant.

What I do:

- As Provost: in charge of the budget for UIC. I have 15 deans who say the same thing as HG – under-resourced. Our greatest challenge – how to manage finances in these difficult times.
- I came in 2002 – that 1st year the budget from the state was cut by 15%. One way we can save money is energy. So I'm a big proponent for energy conservation – we are in the process of making changes.
- 2002-9: Purchasing power of state funds has reduced – we've lost 25-30% (adjusted for inflation). Tuition increased by 9% one year and 2.5% this year. Our budget is \$1.7 billion. 2/3-3/4 of that goes to the College of Medicine and the Hospital. The Hospital serves a diverse clientele – 40% are Medicaid or self-pay which means no pay. Tuition \$\$ don't cover that.
- Space is another complex resource.
- I'm Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs – dealing with issues like tenure, promotions, development of dept. heads and awards programs and other faculty support.
- Vice Provost on Enrollment and Admissions – recruitment and our new organized admissions process. We now have a holistic reading of files.
- Academic Computing and Communications Center is under the Provost's office.

- Planning and Programs person is under the Provost – in charge of the strategic plan completed in 2006 –about the long-term future of campus. Diversity planning and discussion – students, staff, faculty. Being in Chicago is an asset.
- Undergrad. College is under the Provost.
- GC Dean and Continuing Studies – official protector of grad. students. There was an instance in 2002 - a grad. student was not being treated well in dept. and afraid to talk to dept. head or College Dean. In such situations, one can go to GC Dean.
- 15 Colleges are under the Provost.
- Library – Univ. Librarian reports to the Provost.
- There was a question about how *shared governance* works – The faculty of a university should have voice in the governance of the university especially in matters of curriculum. For instance, I, as Provost, do not have authority to decree or pass an edict that all undergrads should have compulsory course on sustainability. The faculty decides if a course should be mandatory or a general requirement.
- Also under the Provost is SCEP – Senate Committee on Education Policy – decides on courses that are academic requirements for programs.

SQ2: What efforts are being made to make budgets of the school and colleges accessible to students for the allocation of tuition and fees?

A: You can find out about budgets of schools, colleges, depts. – this is a public school so its available if you request it from GC and Dean of College.

- Budget allocation of campus – MT reviewing it at the moment.
- We created a reflow of tuition back to the Colleges. In 2002 Colleges had budgets; the Provost would review and set their budget for the next year, listening to each college asking for more. Now, state revenue goes to each college, colleges are self-supporting through research dollars (ICR) from grants and tuition dollars.
- Now colleges get a % of tuition dollars - grad (85%), undergrads (75%) - that goes back into their budget. Not if tuitions are waived. This became critical for undergrads so Colleges would have an incentive to provide courses for students that they need. For instance: one Dean wanted to cut a course as no majors were taking it even though 200 students were taking the course but they were not from the major. That would cut the budget coming back to them. So student satisfaction has improved – for more reasons but that is one. Student dollars vote for their courses.

General Question 2: I am a graduate student actively engaged in interdisciplinary research and work at UIC (through Engineers Without Borders[EWB]). It is very difficult for our team of students and faculty from different colleges/disciplines to coordinate due to lack of shared server and office space. In what ways have you or are you addressing the unique needs of interdisciplinary research and work for graduate and undergraduate students at UIC?

MT: My career has had at the focus the question – how do u foster interdisciplinary activity?

- Discipline (a field of knowledge). Over the history of knowledge there's been a dendritic formation of disciplines – all started from philosophy. Universities have to adapt to reflect the organization of knowledge. A lot of times it has to be challenged.
- Discipline will exist if it has Epistemology – it can be proved to exist. Around that you build a Sociology – a group of scholars who agree that it's a field of knowledge. Universities provide resources to support those people.
- How do you address new mixes of disciplines? Simple solution: “We've decided to eliminate all depts...everything will be interdisciplinary!” For instance, when I was in graduate school one could get a PhD in the History of Consciousness. But it would be hard to take it out to get a job as others don't know what it means, where it fits, etc.

BH: We create spaces to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue – to have coffee and talk – in the library, 2nd floor of UH, inside most student unions. We will continue to look into that model.

HG: As a mathematician I can say we are major consumers of coffee so appreciate the many coffee shops on campus.

The GC took money and created interdisciplinary seminars, initially for faculty. Out of those came the Neuroscience programs – it has grown into an academic program recently. It's a multi-college discipline/graduate program. It is administrated through the GC completely for finances and resources.

The GC could be the house for similar interdisciplinary programs like Neuroscience when there's flow of money from the budget.

GQ3/4: Tuition Differentials. How does the university regulate the differentials to ensure departments are not taking advantage of students? Why is there such a large difference in differentials from one department to the next? What is your office doing to help offset the burden of tuition differentials?

Last year the Chancellor spoke to the GSC and discussed one possible way to offset the tuition differential is to adopt an ABD (All But Dissertation) tuition system. What are your feelings on this system?

BH: ABD status is when you are working on a dissertation – you wouldn't have to pay the whole tuition.

HG: we have 0% time tuition so it's like ABD status. Two kinds of 0% time: 1) off-campus so don't pay fees. 2) you still pay fees. All 0% time students still pay some pro-rated differentials.

MT: I wish we didn't use the language of differentials.

For undergrads legislature passed - Truth in Tuition – for 4 consecutive years the tuition would be the same they had when joined. But when you give such a guarantee the tuition charged is higher to cater for the later years. For graduate students it's harder:

- Can't guarantee 4 year completion.
- Different programs have different costs.

Differentials go thru review – MT and GC dean is on Committee. – cannot give assurance that all differentials are proportional to the cost of education.

Stephen Davis (Anthropology): What about keeping an explanation of tuition differentials open?

MT: The Provost would have arguments from the Dean of a College to get more on the differential so that Dean would know why it is imposed and be able to give out those reasons on enquiry.

Tiffany Funk (Art History): Our dept. has unreasonably high tuition differentials. How can we get info. on why that's so?

MT: Go to the Dean of your College and you should be able to get the reasons.

Zoe Hoepfner (GSC President): 0% time - how does it work for assistantships where pay is tied to credit hours?

MT: Why isn't there a way to not be charged if you are not drawing on resources of the university? Well you are usually contacting faculty so you are not completely detached.

Ali Zarafshan (Civil & Materials Eng.): I spend 40 hours on RA-ship when we are supposed to work 20 hours/week.

HG: The GC is here to advocate for students – are those 20 extra hrs being spent towards your research? The question is if u r just in a research lab -- should u be paying a differential?

Harish Kanchi (GSC Treasurer): My adviser wants to pay the differential but cannot. Why is that?

MT: Maybe under his grant he cannot put it out as tuition costs as it's called a differential. That's why I think it's unfortunate it is separated out from tuition.

HG: I heard that is exactly why one cannot pay differentials from grant money.

John Russell (Chemistry): We're obligated for 16 hrs for supervised research – if u r 25% TA, GA then u need 10 hrs, if u r 50% and then need 20 hrs. What recourse do we have if adviser requires 60 hrs of work to be his/her graduate student? This is a common occurrence in certain labs. We're happy to work 5 days a week, etc. but don't want to put in > 40 hr work-week because we have other community obligations – family etc. need to be physically in the lab.

HG: Being a grad student isn't simply like being in a job in terms of spending so many hours.

MT: It would be abusive if a professor stated that you need to be in his/her lab 60 hours/week to be his/her grad. student.

JR: There should be info. on a min. standard (these are your obligations as a grad. student) in grad. handbook.

MT: There should be guidelines for faculty – demanding 60 hrs a week to be a grad student – should be unacceptable. I will talk to Deans. We need to create a climate where these guidelines are known.

BH: What about mediation?

MT: Sometimes maybe mediation would be eye opening to faculty. Some people get swept up by power, so, we need to spread out avenues so you, as a grad student, are not fingered and put in this tender position.

JR: Students could use those guidelines as a way to end discussion.

HG: It would be important to know how widespread this issue of working over required hours goes.

Gurpreetsingh Saini (Mechanical & Industrial Eng.): For a 25% RA one works 10 hours/week to get paid. Since the other 30 hrs I would continue working, as the research is my thesis work, I think all RAs should get a 50% appointment.

HG: The issue there is how much money does the PI have. Maybe he cannot give all 50% RA-ships for all students. It's a question of the number of students and amount of money to support.

4. Call for project awards proposals - Zoe

Tell your constituency about them – any graduate student can apply for the \$500 award to fund any event. The condition is that the event should be open to all grad students and should acknowledge GSC support in its promotional materials.

5. Update on current travel award funding – Zoe

- Next month we are discussing non-first author travel award applications.
- Reps tell your constituents that if they work in dept where they get reimbursed in full they cannot get GSC travel awards – it's fraud to use the same receipts to claim money twice. They could be prosecuted.
- You can get half paid by dept and \$300 paid from us.

- If you promise to pay your dept back after getting a GSC travel award, make sure you have \$0 balance in your student account or else the money will pay that balance as our travel awards get paid there first.
- Also, remind your students to check their SPAM. All reps get email about travel awards approved to students in your depts. Please forward that to the student who received the award.

Alberto Tretti (Computer Science): You want us to double that email?

Harish Kanchi (GSC Treasurer): Yes. Last year there were many cases where the student applying for the award didn't see the approval email as it went to SPAM. I as the GSC rep. forwarded them the GSC email so they could know about it. GSC travel awards expire if not collected a month from approval.

John Russell (Chemistry): Can you put application IDs on a webpage so students can check their status?

HK: Students can login and check award status with their UIN.

Elizabeth Cambray (Special Education): do u have info. on project awards on website?

Anushka Anand (GSC Secretary): Yes.

http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/gsc/projectAwards.html

Deana Lewis (GSC Vice President): We want to know what you guys are doing in terms of involvement with other student groups or external groups, so we can help support you if we have overlapping interests.

This is also helpful to show administrators that UIC graduate students do lots of extra-curricular work and need recognition.

6. Promote upcoming GSC events:

- Reminder of service project on 10/24 at House of Mary and Joseph Shelter
- Dissertation Workshop by Alison Miller on 11/10

Zoe Hoepner: Don't forget next month is our diversity meeting. We'll have all the Chancellor's Committees on the Status of __ present to you.

For more information about the GSC:

Website: http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/gsc/

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Upcoming FALL 2009 Official (mandatory) GSC Meetings:

Tuesday, November 17th – 5-7pm