

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

(CMU Room 303AB)

Present:

Kristen Denzer, President
Mufaddal Baxamusa, Vice President for Finance
Matt Schmit, Vice President for Public Affairs
Mark Torma, Vice President for Administrative Affairs
Kristina Erstad, Vice President for Programming
Zeeshan Syedain, Vice President for Grants
Kristi Kremers, At-Large Director

6:30 Call to Order

- M/S/P to add to agenda: #12, add “Lend a Hand, Hear the Band” and PA assistant.
- M/S/P to approve agenda as amended.

Absences/Excuses

- Kristi Kremers, At-Large Director to arrive at 7:15
- Kevin Wendt, Executive Vice President

Approval of Minutes

- M/S/P to approve the October 10, 2007 minutes as amended.
- M/S/P to approve the November 7, 2007 minutes as amended.
- M/S/P to approve the December _____ minutes as amended.

Officer Updates

- **Mark:** It’s been a quieter, less active month. What we’re looking for in the next few weeks: I’ll be meeting with the group on trademarks, catering around responsible products like not using sweatshop material. They’ve tried to meet for months. I’ll let you know when I know more. I’m also going to a Northrop Auditorium meeting which I will also let you know more about. The board will have a meeting on the 7th and 8th.
- **Zeeshan:** There’s a grant meeting tomorrow, and I’ll be meeting with Kristen about the grant procedure. It’s too early to tell, but it might be slower than the fall. This morning I saw two half-page ads, so obviously they’re trying to market more, which is always risky but something to look for with the strategy this spring.
 - **Mufaddal:** Are you talking about advanced strategy?
 - **Zeeshan:** Yes.

- **Kristina:** Our first social is February 22 at the Varsity, then bowling on March 7, and another event at the Varsity on April 4. Mark down these dates because I want you to come to two of them. The proclamation is about the same, I will email them out to you. I haven't set a program date for this semester yet but I should have a date soon.
- **John:** I meant to set up a committee meeting date on the website. The committee chairs should email Jessie with the date of the meeting to put online.
- **Mufaddal:** It's been a busy winter with finances. I'll discuss a lot of it later in the agenda. We have spent about \$24,000 since the last meeting. As the semester ended, [GCDF Type 2] found out about the network and telephone expense for three months and backfees. Everything else is pretty much self-explanatory, unless there are questions.
- **Matt:** I've been attending committee meetings. Kristen distributed designs for the archway to the student entrance to the stadium. I also went to a second stadium committee, the stadium use committee, which will put together how the most miniscule logistics will work on game day. I will go to the first meeting. I've also been active with support of the U day committee meeting and encourage all of the execs to attend. Other things I will cover later on in the agenda.
- **James:** I've been to two late-night safety meetings. They haven't been able to agree on actions, it's hard to please everybody. So nothing is passed yet. If you have any ideas, let me know and as soon as I have a schedule I'll let you know. There are two more meetings next week. There's an issue at the student level with the course evaluation survey – students are upset about the professor evaluation but it's still pending.
- **Kristen:** I went to the Central Corridor meeting. Tomorrow there's a meeting and a lightrail hearing on February 2. I met with Steve _____ to discuss grants. Another meeting passed resolution on the Central Corridor, and I have a meeting with Jerry again next Friday.

GAPSA Caucus Training

- **Matt:** There are three separate ones: _____ and Wednesday the 30th, from 7pm to 9pm. We're partnering with MPRIG and _____. I'll be teaming with MPRIG for training.
 - **Kristina:** Is it a walk-in?
 - **Matt:** It's a come-and-go. I'm not entirely sure if I'll be helping with the Wednesday training.

Support the U day

- **Matt:** On February 20 is a noon rally. There will be food and an opportunity to meeting with the legislature. Free transportation will be provided from campus. Please intend on coming.
 - **Mufaddal:** Is it possible to make sure our reps know about it and about the free transportation?
 - **Matt:** It's different from Duluth, we will make sure we put the Duluth people in touch with each other.

NAGPS Legislative Action Days

- **Matt:** There's an event in D.C. on February 6 through 8 to build momentum for federal lobby efforts in the spring. We decided not to take part this year. We'll discuss another trip at our next meeting.

Public Affairs Committee and Legislative Agenda

- **Matt:** I encourage everyone to attend tomorrow's briefing. I'll highlight the major issues. The first big issue is supporting the U.S. Capital Budget request. The U has a good-sized request for the Twin Cities campus and others. But right now, they are talking about a new Science building on campus – this is the main event happening right now on campus.
 - **Mark:** Almost no building renovation is being pushed more by the U than the science building.
- **Matt:** It may interfere with other transportation projects. The U has to be prepared to compete with these other projects. There's a need for more transportation and transit funding, and investment of safer roads and buses. We discussed this at the PA meeting, including how transportation is important for graduate students. Also, debt forgiveness for graduate and professional students typically don't make it far in the legislature, but we will push it.
 - **Kristen:** [described previous similar bill]
 - **Matt:** These efforts level the field for people in not such lucrative fields as others. On a federal level, we're dealing with debt relief, student federal aid, immigration reform, because a lot of students abroad have problems with visas. A lot of these will be discussed at the legislature meeting tomorrow.

Fees Committee Meeting

- **Mufaddal:** I'll give you a brief update of fees advocating. We had a productive meeting in January. We have a budget and spreadsheet. All the execs on time and very nicely edited by Zeeshan, Mark, and Kristi. Sunday, I emailed out to the assembly and I don't have any emails back yet. I'm happy that all the accountants have submitted. On Friday I will be submitting it.
 - **Kristen:** Why can't we send it tonight? It's ok, Friday is fine.
- **Mufaddal:** The next step is that we can make changes. All execs should contribute on February 9, at 11:00 in Coffman. We will be making a presentation.
 - **Kristen:** I'll get donuts and orange juice.
- **Mufaddal:** You should be here by 10.
 - **Krsiten:** We'll meet in the office at 10 am.
- **Mufaddal:** The presentation will be led by Kristen. The making of the PowerPoint will be led by James, Mark, and Kristen.
 - **Kristen:** In the past, we've invited all the assembly members to come to the presentation. We recommend that they come to the hearings because at the presentation they can't speak and give their feedback.
- **Mufaddal:** The assembly members get money for _____. For instance, two years ago they asked why a certain position was needed and we had to explain. GAPSA and [COGS?] used to have two different presentations, but now only one.

Similarly, if you look at the college council board they bring budgets so that they know exactly what's done with the money.

- **Kristen:** I personally don't have a preference, I just know what's being recommended by Bree. Also, at the assembly meeting, maybe we should just have the council presidents attend.
- **Mufaddal:** Good idea, except I want the presidents and treasurers, people who can answer questions. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Cell Phone Policy

- **Kristen:** First of all, I just want to point out that it's more of a cell phone issue than a policy. We discussed this issue at the last meeting. We have several options. In the past, the president, executive VP and VP of finance have been reimbursed. They were allowed \$40 allowance for cell phones in their positions. Should we do it for all the positions or none? We should make the decision effective for the next election.
 - **Kristina:** I disagree. I never knew this was happening, it was not open to the public.
 - **Kristen:** None of us were running for that reason, though.
 - **Matt:** Did anyone know this was a perk? I didn't.
 - **Kristen:** I don't know if \$40 was a rule, people asked for more last year.
 - **Mufaddal:** It used to be a lot more but this year it's been exactly \$40.
 - **Kristina:** It needed to be discussed in the open with the entire board.
 - **Mark:** Something that adds up to thousands of dollars per year shouldn't be tradition, it should be policy.
 - **Kristen:** It should be written down so everyone knows the exact policy.
 - **Mark:** I think we should start next year. We're just about four months until the end of the year now. We should deal with a policy for next year and this year separately.
 - **Matt:** We should table this discussion until Kristi gets here, since she's the one who brought it up.
 - Motion tabled until Kristi arrives.

Lend and Hand Hear the Band

- **Kristen:** Emma wanted to know if we wanted to volunteer or if we wanted to sponsor this event.
 - **Mufaddal:** Volunteering is fine, but we have a limited budget. It should be used for things that will directly benefit graduate students.
- **Kristen:** There are two parts to this: sponsorship and volunteering. Does anyone feel strongly for sponsorship?
 - **Matt:** How was the event last year?
 - **Kristen:** It sounded like it was a success.
 - **Mark:** Last year 3000 students qualified for tickets.

- **Kristen:** Personally, I think we shouldn't sponsor the event. It's late in the year, and there might not be interest.
- **Matt:** Where are they getting their money from?
- **Kristen:** She didn't include it. I know it's super expensive, and it sounds like this year should be someone really good. Sponsorship yes or no, we don't need to make a motion.
- **All:** No.
- **Kristen:** Now we need to decide if we want to be involved.
- **Kristina:** We can do free publicity stuff.
- **Mufaddal:** Why don't you email Kristen exactly what you can do?

PA Assistant

Duluth – Tuesday, February 12th at 7pm

- **Kristen:** I want at least half of us if not all of us to go to this, it is extremely important. It's on a Tuesday. Right now I need to know who can go.
 - **Mark:** Probably yes.
 - **Mufaddal:** Maybe, I'll get back on that.
 - **Kristina:** I need to check.
 - **Zeeshan:** I can go.

Exec Retreat

- **Kristen:** I want 90% of execs there for the retreat, I want to pick a date that all of us ideally can go.
 - **Matt:** Does dinner and a movie work?
 - **Mark:** I would shy away from it since people get around it by saying they will come to one part, but not another.
 - **Kristina:** It can get expensive, too, maybe we should do a game night or something at someone's house, or a group training workshop.
 - **Kristen:** One thing we all noticed is there's a lot of conflict this year and not last year, and I think it's because we did an exec retreat every month last year. I think avoiding conflict is worthwhile.
 - **Kristina:** Well, part of the conflict was the cost of the retreats.
 - **Kristen:** But we could order pizzas and it would be \$50 for all of us. So do weeknights or weekends work better for everyone? How about, Kristina pick ten dates in February or March and send them to me. I can pick up food. Kristina will email out dates. Everyone reply within a week, seriously, I know we're all busy but please go to the retreat.

Graduate and Professional Student Conference

- **Kristi:** The planning session fell through, but I can put something together. Luckily, I got a professor of finance to come in. What I need help with is: four people on registration, one person doing photography for documentation, one time keeper for the presenters, a reception coordinator, and a poster session liaison. People presenting their research can put posters in the Mississippi room.
 - **Kristen:** So basically you need everyone to help out on February 2.

- **Kristi:** Yes. Currently there are 40 people registered but I'm hoping for a minimum of 100. Please talk about it in your classes. There will also be a spectacular, real-life Big Band band there.
- **Kristina:** Is it still \$5?
- **Kristi:** Yes, it's still \$5.
- **Mufaddal:** If it's over \$200 it needs to be approved by the finance committee after submitting a budget.
- **Kristi:** I would say it will be a maximum of \$7000.
 - M/S/P to approve the ballpark figure of \$7000. 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained.

Cell Phone Policy (continued)

- **Kristen:** [recap of what was previously discussed on this issue]
 - **James:** If you get a cell phone from GAPSA, it should be turned off except when doing GAPSA business.
 - **Matt:** Where is it in the financial statement?
 - **Mufaddal:** In the telephone budget.
 - **Kevin [via cell phone]:** Should start next year, shouldn't penalize people.
 - **Kristi:** I don't think it's penalizing unless it's retroactive.
 - **Kristen:** I think what Kevin means by penalizing is, for example, if Mufaddal changed his plan to have more minutes because he thought he would get an allowance, and then we take that away, that's not fair to him.
 - **Mark:** May I suggest we revisit what should have been done is: look at reimbursing people. I agree with the example given by Kristen, that's not fair.
 - **Kristina:** I think someone should submit their entire minute use instead of just the amount due on the bill to sort out personal calls, texts, et cetera.
 - **Matt:** I think I hear a movement toward people who have been collecting can continue as long as they show proof, and also people can be retroactively reimbursed, and I think it should be dropped in May.
 - **Kristina:** It should be brought up at the first meeting next year.
 - **Kristen:** So to clarify: People can get up to \$40 reimbursement with proof on their bill of the minutes used. This includes the same people who have been getting reimbursed as well as retroactively for people who haven't been reimbursed in the past. And we won't decide on what should be done next year, but we'll tell the next group to decide on this issue.
 - **Kristina:** I don't remember which calls I made last summer were for GAPSA, so there's no need to go back and get reimbursed retroactively for those. It should be starting right now, January 2008. The cell phone bills should be marked with which calls are for GAPSA.
 - **Kristen:** Should we just have it in the minutes or make it policy?
 - **Kristina:** Just have it in the minutes.
- **Kristen:** From here out everyone is required to do their office hour, but they can do them whenever they want, except for the VP of grants, _____. As a reminder, all execs are required to attend two of the three socials. One last thing: next Wednesday we will discuss how we will do the election of the president. I

suggest you come with a motion. I encourage everyone who will be here next year to run for president.

New Business/Announcements

- M/S/P to excuse Kevin's absence due to him being delayed at the airport in Philadelphia.
- **Kristi:** Keep in mind Halloween weekend next year.

Adjournment (8:10 pm)

- M/S/P to adjourn the meeting.