

Minutes from December 2001 GSO General Meeting

1) Election of New Officers. Re-evaluation of the role of the GSO.

Joe Navitsky agreed to serve as the new GSO President for the 2002 calendar year. Usha Govindarajulu will continue to serve as Treasurer until the end of the Spring 2002 semester, during which she will train her successor. A VP is still needed. Current officers Amanda Serenevy and Masako Yamada will continue to participate in the GSO as department representatives.

In calling for new officers, we re-evaluated the key functions/activities of the GSO:

- 1 general meeting per month
- 2 two meetings with BU administration per semester
- 2 parties per semester
- 1 volunteer event per semester
- maintainance of Web page
- provision of orientation materials for new students

The general feeling at the meeting was that the GSO should strengthen its advocacy power with the administration, voicing the concerns, complaints and requests of the graduate student community in an effective manner.

Suggestions included holding an open forum (with administration invited) to hear the voices of the students.

Request also made that greater effort be expended in trying to recruit department representatives so more graduate students will have access to GSO services and will also be able to contribute to the organization's work. Tapping into "local" department graduate student organizations made.

2) Healthcare

Continuation of discussion from last month. Discussion on the current (critical) state of healthcare at BU, including general student dissatisfaction with regards cost and coverage. Strategizing on how we can convey these grave concerns to the administration. Options including asking administration to pay for health care, asking for stipend increases commensurate with the increase in health care costs, and asking for a installment pay program.

3) Housing

Acknowledgement that this is another issue of concern among graduate students, many of whom spend most of the stipends on rent.

4) Stipends

Discussion on how stipend increases might make BU a more attractive institution, leading to an increase in quality of the student body. Point made that any stipend-increase arguments made to the administration would have to be made differently depending on department, especially since many science departments conduct research-grant driven work that is funded by external sources. Acknowledgement that many graduate students must rely on external income to make ends meet.

5) Travel Grants

Seven applicants applied to be considered for the GSO Travel Grant, and the committee has narrowed down the pool of highly-qualified. However, there is some dispute with regards selection criteria. It has been suggested that the criteria be outlined more clearly in the application.

6) Social Events

Holiday Happy Hour planned for December 13th, 2001 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Dugout Cafe on 718 Comm Ave. A budget of \$600 broken down into \$400 for drinks, \$150 for food and \$50 for miscellaneous expenses. We will distribute 100 free drink tickets and provide free appetizers. We are planning some sort of ice-breaking game (with prize) so that people are encouraged to mingle.