

**Graduate Student Affairs Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday February 2, 2009**

Presiding:

Scott Talpey, GSAC Chair

Present:

Michael Sivak

David Froust

Amanda Reynolds

Miguel Perez-Cabello

Mark Fisher

Leanne McEvoy

Tara Weinberg

Lucien Bouffard

Chief Joseph Dooley (Guest)

Lauren Cincotta

Eli Levy

Dr. Sandra Holley

Mrs. Arlene Lucibello

Dr. Sean Grace

Dr. Mirela Newman

Dr. Misty Ginicola

1) Call to Order:

Scott Talpey called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm.

Scott Talpey welcomed and introduced new GSAC members: David Froust, Psychology; Lucien Bouffard, Biology; Lauren Cincotta, Counseling and School Psychology.

Roll call of members completed at 3:12 pm.

2) Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Sean Grace moved that minutes of the December meeting be approved, Amanda Reynolds seconded. Minutes passed at 3:13 pm.

3) Announcements:

At 3:14 pm, Michael Sivak announced the upcoming English Graduate Conference to be held April 18, 2009 in the Adanti Student Center. Michael Sivak urged GSAC members to consider participating as presenters or attendees, and asked that members help spread the word among fellow students.

Dr. Sandra Holley deferred presenting Dean's Report to follow presentation by University Police Chief Joseph Dooley.

4) **New Business:**

a. Director of Public Safety, Chief Joseph Dooley

At 3:15, Dean Holley introduced Chief Joseph Dooley. Chief Dooley spoke on university policing topics ranging from parking to safety. He stated that there are never less than three university police cars patrolling the campus at any time. He stated that all SCSU police officers are trained by the state of Connecticut, receive training “above and beyond” academy training, and have “full arrest powers.”

Chief Dooley stated that a siren and public address system will be installed on campus in March and/or April 2009; the system will be installed in five locations. He discussed the SCSU alert system, which notifies students and staff of emergencies or inclement weather conditions via text messaging/email/voice mail. He stated that interested parties may sign up through the school webpage.

At 3:19 pm, Chief Dooley spoke on the topic of university parking. He discussed construction of the new parking garage that will begin within the next year. He stated that the parking in the lot on which the garage will be built will be extended from 386 parking spaces to 1,200. He also stated that first-year freshmen residential students will not be allowed to have cars on campus.

Chief Dooley discussed the shuttle situation, and plans to eventually create alternative fuel/”tram-type” shuttle systems on campus.

Chief Dooley presented the committee with some safety tips, including keeping emergency contact information stored in one’s cell phone contact list. Chief Dooley then asked for questions.

Dr. Newman thanked Chief Dooley for help she has received from SCSU police officers. She also expressed concern for what she considers a relative lack of a uniformed police presence in the C-Wing of Engleman Hall between the hours of 7:30-10:00pm.

Michael Sivak stated that some doors along the perimeter of Engleman Hall are never unlocked and do not allow access from the outside. Michael Sivak expressed concern that this could create a safety issue.

Tara Weinberg expressed concern due to the lack of cameras in the parking garage, and the late evening safety issues that presents. Chief Dooley stated “getting cameras into the garage is important to me.”

Dr. Grace suggested professors include a safety statement with their syllabi. Dean Holley asked Chief Dooley if it is possible to have officers visit classes during the initial class period to give safety talks. Chief Dooley stated that it is possible to do so if requested by individual instructors.

Miguel Perez-Cabello Suggested that instructor’s request students divulge medical conditions in case an issue arrives during class period.

Dr. Grace inquired about shuttles to the New Haven train station, stating that certain students have requested increased service. Chief Dooley stated that this may take place during the next fall semester.

Chief Dooley completed his presentation at 3:55 pm.

Reports:

a. Dean's Report

Dr. Sandra Holley delivered the dean's report at 3:57 pm.

Dr. Holley stated that full time graduate student enrollment is up to 956 students. She stated that her goal for Fall Semester 2009 is for full-time graduate enrollment to reach 1,000 students. Dr. Holley stated that part-time enrollment is down, and that the university has formed a committee to address this issue. Dr. Holley informed the committee that SCSU receives an allocation from the state for every full-time student enrolled. She stated that she believes full-time enrollment also represents a "pedagogically richer experience" for the students.

Dr. Holley reported that Assistant Dean Lisa Galvin is reviewing graduate student records, concerning students with GPAs below the required 3.0. Dr. Holley explained the probation process. She stated that it is important for departments to take the responsibility of notifying particular students of GPA issues as well as the Graduate School office

Dr. Holley informed the committee of the Ad Hoc Special Project Capstone Experience Committee. She explained that the committee's goal is to develop guidelines and practices that will assure equal rigor in all capstone projects, be they theses, special projects or comprehensive examinations.

Dr. Holley stated that the deadline for submitting Graduate School Graduate Assistant and Graduate Research Fellowship applications is Monday, February 9, 2009 at 1:00 pm. Dr. Newman stated that in the past, she has given informative talks on these opportunities to her students outside of class with "one-hundred percent turnout."

Dean Holley informed the committee that the thesis guidelines had been revised. The new guidelines are on blue paper, not green. She stated that the greatest thesis errors are generally not content issues, but formatting issues.

Dean Holley concluded her report at 4:15 pm.

5) Other

Scott Talpey announced the part-time student task force focus group. He invited interested parties to contact him at talpeys1@southernct.edu.

At 4: 18 pm, Michael Sivak expressed his support for GSAC and its practice of funding student conference attendance and research. He mentioned the issue raised by Dr. Newman prior to the December meeting concerning conference funding for students who had missed the initial request deadline. Michael Sivak inquired about GSAC funds, what happens to surplus budget lines, et cetera. Mrs. Lucibello stated that funds from the Fall semester roll over to the Spring budget lines. Any unspent funds from the spring semester then go into an account. Michael Sivak requested that the GSAC committee be presented with a report of funds in this account. Mrs. Lucibello stated that she will present the information during the March GSAC meeting.

Michael Sivak then inquired about the mechanism that controls the disbursement of full and part-time graduate student activities funds to GSAC and elsewhere. Dr. Holley stated that control ultimately lies in the hands of the university administration. Dr. Holley stated that it is possible to request more funds along appropriate channels.

Dr. Holley stated that currently SCSU funding for Graduate Assistants is half the amount approved by the Connecticut State University Board of Trustees (BOT). She stated that a recommendation to fund Graduate Assistants at the full level approved by the BOT has been made.

At 4:20, Miguel Perez-Cabello suggested GSAC generate a letter of endorsement for increasing graduate assistant funds to be delivered to the university president's office. Miguel made a motion to generate such a letter of endorsement. Michael Sivak seconded the motion. No vote was held on this issue.

At 4:22, Miguel Perez-Cabello began discussion about creating a school-wide interdisciplinary graduate professional conference. Dr. Holley suggested Miguel present a proposal for such a conference during the March GSAC meeting.

At 4:30, Michael Sivak inquired about the existence of a GSAC website subcommittee. Scott Talpey stated that he would send out an email inquiring about this issue. Michael Sivak agreed to email the URL of existing sites for accessing prior GSAC websites to Dr. Holley and Mark Fisher. Dr. Holley informed the group that Assistant Dean Lisa Galvin maintains the Graduate School website and there is a GSAC webpage on the site. Any materials to be posted to the site should be forwarded electronically to Ms. Galvin in the Graduate School office. Mrs. Lucibello stated that she would forward copies of GSAC minutes to Ms. Galvin.

Leanne McEvoy inquired about GSAC funding for "program specific events." Mrs. Lucibello explained policy and procedure rules that state no program may receive more than 20 % of budgeted funds.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:31 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,
Michael G. Sivak, GSAC Vice-Chair**