UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES
March 10, 2013 7:00 p.m.
Sarkeys Energy Center, Room A235

Call to Order 7:00 p.m.

Reading and Approval of the Minutes: February 24, 2013  Move to approve Sen. 54, second
Sen. 48. No objection, the minutes are approved.

Officer Reports:
- Chair - NR
- Vice-Chair – GSS officers and three members went to Washington D.C. this past week to
lobby representatives on Capitol Hill on issues of interest to graduate students.
- Secretary NFR

Committee Reports:
- Academic Affairs – Graduate students award nomination awards forms are available on
line. Asking senators to forward to others in their individual
- Development & Philanthropy – thanks to those who participated in Habitat for Humanity
event this past weekend.
- External Affairs - NR
- Human Diversity NR
- Internal Affairs NR
- Problems & Projects NR
- Public Relations NR
- Ways and Means Grant applications have been graded. Letters will be going out this
week. No one is in bad standing but we did have a lot of people not following
instructions. 44 people will be receiving 28 thousand dollars.

New Business
- GS13-16 The Parking Appeals Board Appointment Act –
  - Sen. 34 – moved to move this legislation to the beginning of new business. Second
    Sen. 65.
  - This legislation appoints five new people to the board.
  - Sen. 54 requests that the nominees appear before the senate body and introduce
    themselves.
  - Sen. 54 – how many people applied and how many were interviewed for these
    positions. Around 54 applied, 46 showed up for interviews and 5 were selected.
  - Sen. 34 – have any of you had a parking ticket. Two of the candidates said they have
    had tickets.
  - How were the five selected? They were selected after answering questions.
  - Sen. 84 – do all of you have parking permits? Two do not.
  - 65 move for consent 76 No objection… the bill passes.
GS13-17 Election Board Appointment Act –
  o Cole Jackson – SGA election chair – six applicants for election board member. Holly Loeffler and Avik Mukherjee and Krishna Moanohar have been selected from the six. Krishna Moanohar did not attend.
  o No questions
  o Sen.84 moves to approve appointments. Sen. 75 seconds… no objections… bill passes.

GS13-14 Emergency Allocation #8 Act of 2013
  o Sen. 34 moved to bring to the floor. Second Sen. 76.
  o Emergency allocation number eight for the year.
  o Sen. 39 moves to pass by consent. Second Sen. 75… no objections… legislation passes.

GS13-15 Icing on the Cupcake Act of 2013
  o Sen. 39 moved to bring the bill to the floor for discussion, second Sen. 17.
  o Sean Bender – Author – the name is a metaphor for the role students play at OU. We are students first, academics are the basis of our reason for being here. Participation in all other activities is the icing on the cupcake. Under provisions of this legislation the offices of SGA President, Vice President, Undergraduate Student Congress Chair, Graduate Student Senate Chair, Campus Activities Council Chair and Superior court Chief Justice shall have and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. All other students holding elective office within SGA must have and maintain a GPA of 2.5. We are doing this because these offices are an incredible time commitment. As Congress Chair I am required to spend at least 10 hours per week. Usually I spend 15-20 hours per week at my job and I can tell you that James and Vicky and all the other officers spend just as much time as I do and Joe might just as well live in his office. So what we’re saying with this bill is our academics must come first and not suffer because of the extracurricular activities we participate in. We’re asking that everyone show with this minimum GPA that they are good enough students and can manage their time well enough so they can take on the 10-15-20 hours of work required per week perhaps even more. It is not an underhanded attempt to keep someone off the ballot this spring; this won’t take effect for one year, and with that I yield to questions.
  o Sen. 34 – Is low GPA an issue now with SGA officers and members?
  o SB - Because of FIRPA legislation I do not know who is or is not having troubles academically. I do know in past years we have had SGA participants who have run afoul of this requirement. Again, this is not targeted toward anyone it is just an issue that we think needs to be addressed.
  o Sen. 65 – Is there an equivalent for the College of law which operates on a 12.0 GPA system?
  o SB – So the way this is worded, in the last paragraph, it wouldn’t kick anyone from the College of Law out.
  o Sen.34 – Will this provide for a probation semester for anyone who falls below the minimum?
  o SB - No. The way this works candidates for SGA office must file their GPA with their election filing paperwork, they must file their GPA again at semester, and a third time at the midway point of that person’s term in office.
  o Sen. 34 - Will each candidate be required to meet this GPA before filing for office?
  o SB – Yes, that is the requirement now.
  o Sen. 92 – Do you believe students are not currently able to balance the requirements of academics and extracurricular activities?
This is just looking ahead at the future of student government and it is in the best interest of student government long term to insure that our leaders can balance their responsibilities. We have been lucky in the past to have leaders who can balance their responsibilities, we want to make sure that continues in the future.

What are the standards for other SGA’s in the Big XII Conference?

SB - It’s a range. One school has a 3.0 requirement but I can’t remember which one. They’re all over the place. The idea though to have a standard GPA is prevalent throughout the Big XII. Campus Activities Council on the OU campus already has this requirement. It already exists outside of what we are talking about here.

Chair – We are now out of time for questions to the author.

Sen. 34 – move to extend question time by two minutes.

Chair - No objections, time for author questions is extended by two minutes.

Sen. 34 – How would you feel about lowing the 3.0 requirement to 2.75?

SB – Is there a reason you’re picking 2.75?

Sen. 34 – Because of my affiliation with ResLife, they are required to have a 2.7. They have a lot of requirements of their time as well and I think 3.0 is arbitrary

SB – I decline to accept that amendment, but I think we should hold ourselves to higher standards. Students deserve leadership that who can be leaders in and out of the classroom.

Sen. 34 – how would a senator file an amendment?

Chair – If you have a specific amendment you must write your amendment on a piece of paper as clearly as possible and submit it to the secretary before the end of questions to the author.

Sen. 92 – do you think this will limit participation in student government?

SB – No, Campus Activities Council has a requirement similar to this and is turning applicants for participation away. I do not this this bill will limit SGA participation.

Chair – Time has again expired but I have three people waiting. Is there a motion to extend time?

Sen. 71 move to extend time by 2 minutes, second Sen. 92…

Chair – no objection, time is extended by 2 minutes.

Sen. 52 – Would you please give us a justification for the 3.0 benchmark as it appears to be an arbitrary standard that will prohibit a number of students from participating.

SB – The University of Oklahoma defines a grade of a “C” in a class as average and a “B” as above average. I think asking out student leadership have above average grades, as defined by the University. We are student leaders with an emphasis on the student first. We are students before we are anything else and it has to come first or else this university doesn’t stand for anything.

Chair – time has again expired and we still have senators wanting to ask questions.

Sen. 54 – I move to extend time by 5 minutes.

Sen. 34 – on information – To extend time for questions a third time we are required to suspend the rules and it requires a two thirds majority vote to suspend the rules and extend time.

Sen. 54 moves to suspend the rules and extend time for questions.

Sen. 92 second.

Chair – there are objections, since this is a procedural vote we will take a placard vote. Senators wishing to extend time by five minutes raise your placards now. Senators opposed raise your placards. In the opinion of the chair that motion does not have the necessary two thirds majority necessary to suspend the rules and extend time. That motion fails and time for questions of the author has expired.

Sen. 34 – I move amendment 1.
Chair – Sen. 34 has moved amendment 1. The secretary has received the necessary paperwork at the appropriate time for the amendment.

Secretary – Sen. 34 has offered the following amendment to GSS 13-15 which reads as follows: “Amend section 3, point B, to strike 3.0 and insert 2.75.”

Sen. 54 seconds.

Chair – Sen. 34 now has two minutes to explain the amendment.

Sen. 34 – A 3.0 GPA is a little high and I suggest a 2.75 is a proper alternative. Our students at OU are self-regulating and are not going to throw themselves into something that they do not have time to handle. Also, a 3.0 is close to being on the Dean’s List and I personally have never been on the Dean’s List. So, this is something to help encourage students to be involved and be active in the leadership of our student body. I don’t know for sure but I feel that there are a number of students falling into the 2.75 to 3.0 window that will be excluded if we do not approve this amendment.

Sen. 54 – Do you think we as TA’s have students in our classes that we see with leadership qualities but don’t have a high GPA that might be eliminated from SGA participation by the 3.0 requirement?

Sen. 34 – I absolutely agree. Just because you can’t make the Dean’s list does not mean you don’t have leadership qualities.

Sen. 17 – If we are expecting students to be leaders, why can’t we expect them to have a 3.0 GPA?

Sen. 34 – If you are going to be a student leader then academics is a great part of it, but I don’t think if you have a bad semester, especially if that bad semester happens while you are a freshman, you can pull it up to be academically eligible under the 3.0 requirement.

Sen. 71 – Why do you feel anyone who doesn’t maintain a B average should be eligible to be in an SGA leadership role?

Sen. 34 – I don’t think have family issues or other issues that cause you to have a bad semester should affect your ability to serve in SGA as a leader. Sometimes issues away from school can have a terrible effect on your GPA and that has nothing to do with your ability to be a leader on campus.

Sen. 75 – Why do you consider it acceptable for students to be put in a high stress position in SGA if they’re not capable of maintaining a high GPA?

Sen. 34 – I think if you’re happy being involved in something like SGA it can actually help reduce your level of stress as a student.

Sen. 39 – It seems many of these positions affected by the bill are paid positions. I feel students having trouble maintaining their grades will encounter even more trouble fulfilling their responsibilities as students and as leaders of SGA, especially if the job requires 10-20 hours per week commitment.

Sen. 34 – we have a large number of RAs on campus and they are required to have a 2.75 GPA. ResLife is run by people who care about students, the RAs are given extensive training. ResLife understands that there can be extenuating circumstances in a student’s life.

Chair – time for questions for the author have expired on the amendment. We are now in line for debate. To start debate someone must simply say the word debate. There are no calls for debate on the amendment and we are now in line for a vote on the amendment.

Sen. 39 – Do we vote on the amendment first and then the overall bill next?

Chair – Yes. We are now in line to vote on the amendment, Mr. Secretary would you explain the amendment once again.

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Secretary - Sen. 34’s amendment to GSS 13-15 reads as follows: “Amend section 3, point B, to strike 3.0 and insert 2.75.”

Chair – It is my opinion that we should do a roll call vote since it affects the legislation materially. Senators in favor of amending this bill raise your placards and keep them up until we have finished with the count.

Senators voting in favor - 95, 52 47 54 33 92 34 13 22 - 9 total votes
Senators voting opposed - 39 17 23 27 20 19 11 36 40 57 97 98 89 46 56 45 61 48 21 71 2 53 7 76 72 75 79 10 84 80 6 44 43 91 3 14 65 1 – 38 total votes
Abstain 31 32 50 – 3 total abstentions

- Chair – by a vote of 9 in the affirmative, 38 opposed with 3 abstentions, the amendment fails…we are now in line for debate on the amendment as a whole.
- Sen. 92 calls for debate.
- Chair – those wishing to debate in favor of the bill as a whole raise your placard. Senators 39, 17, 40 wish to debate in favor of the bill. Those wishing to debate against the bill as a whole please raise your placards. 54, 92. Senator 98 actually has raised the question, do we have the right to limit debate. Yes we do or you can move the previous question.
- Sen. 98 – I move the previous question. There are lots of seconds.
- Sen. 34 – point of order – once debate has been called I don’t believe you can cancel debate that point.
- Sen. 54 – Point of Information - This is an issue that can affect a number of students on this campus and we have been elected to deal with such issues. If it takes us another 30 minutes of meeting time to deal with this I think that is what we are elected to do.
- Chair – Sen. 34 is correct, once the debate has been called we can’t move the previous question. We can limit debate. We now continue with naming the field of senators to debate against the bill. Sen, 54, 92, 34 are on the list for opponents of the bill. Each person will have one minute each and we will alternate between proponent and opponent.
- Chair – we will now begin debate, does any person on the debate list wish to yield their time to allow one of the other debater’s additional time. Sen. 34 has yielded her time to Sen. 54 who will now have two minutes.
- Sen. 39 – I understand your objections for this bill, yes it might be difficult to maintain a 3.0 GPA but it is not impossible and it might encourage students to achieve that goal. I have worked 15-20 hours per week and carried 15 hours each semester and been involved in social organizations and carried a GPA of 3.2 or so. It is doable and forces students to make sacrifices in order to do what they want to do.
- Sen. 92 – I believe there is no excuse for limiting participation in a democracy. I yield the rest of my time to Sen. 54.
- Sen. 17 – I just want to point that we’re not saying a student has to have a 3.0 to be in student government, but just to be an elected official. There are lots of students with less than a 3.0 who can still be involved and be leaders in other organizations, so I really don’t think we are limiting involvement in any meaningful way with passage of this legislation.
- Sen. 40 – I think if you are a T.A. or G.A. you already have the 3.0 GPA needed to hold one of the offices listed in this bill. I think this bill attempts to insure that we have the cream of the crop holding leadership positions or to go with the metaphor of the “icing on the cupcake”, this provides that officers elected to SGA will be the “cherry” on top of said icing. We really should set an example for what we believe the leadership of our university should be.
- Sen. 54 – I think we are all looking at this from a graduate student’s perspective but this does not affect only graduate students. We can as a graduate student senate set our own by-laws to

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insure the higher standard for this body to have a higher GPA. But this sets the rules for undergraduates as well who make up a much larger portion of the student body. I understand how important high standards are, but I work with undergrads who don’t have this GPA. Having a buy-in from SGA will help those students raise their GPAs or give them something to work toward. We should allow a lower standard for undergraduates to allow them an opportunity to overcome a bad semester and learn how to be an adult before they get out into the real world. RAs are in charge of as many as 70 residents and they only have to have a 2.75 GPA. If we can give them this kind of responsibility with a 2.75 GPA that’s a bit more responsibility than holding office in SGA.

- Sen. 84 – You’re saying setting the level at 2.75 would give students something to work for. Would setting the level at 3.0 also not give them something to work toward?
- Sen. 54 – yes it would but it will exclude a large number of students.
- Chair – time has expired on debate, we are now in line for a summation argument from author Sean Bender.
- SB – This question of whether we have the right to limit participation has already been decided. Everyone seems to agree there should be some floor whether it’s a 2.5 or 2.75 or 3.0. Nationally there are all sorts of arbitrary rules for participation in leadership. Who’s to say a 34 year old wouldn’t make a great president, who’s to say you have to be 21 to run for Congress. Who’s to say that someone who immigrates to the United States would not make a great president? Second, we are not a democracy here at OU in the sense that the U.S. elects its leaders. We are students with emphasis on students. Do we want leaders that meet only the minimum standards? People who are good enough?
- Chair – time is up and we are now in line for a final vote on the legislation.
- Sen. 39 moves to pass the legislation by consent. Second Sen. 17.
- Chair – there is an objection to passing the legislation by consent. We are now in line for a roll call vote on GS 13-15, the Icing on the Cupcake Act. Those wishing to vote in favor of GS 13-15 please raise your placards and keep them up until the count is complete.

Senators voting in favor - 39 17 23 27 20 19 36 11 40 57 97 98 89 46 56 45 61 48 21 71 2 53 50 7 76 72 75 79 10 84 80 6 44 43 91 3 14 1- 38 total in favor
Senators voting against – 52 95 47 31 32 54 33 92 34 13 22 -11 total opposed
Abstain – 65 -1
Chair – By a vote of 38 in favor, 11 opposed with 1 abstention, the measure passes.

Announcements:
- Next GSS Meeting April 7, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment – Move to adjourn Sen. 84. Second Sen. 92. No objections and the meeting is adjourned @ 8:06 p.m.

Recorded by Jerry Overton, GSS Secretary.