GSO Meeting Minutes, November 23, 2009 (Ashurst, Rm 109)

a) Introductions (officers, reps, attendees)

b) Updates

   a. University Graduate Committee (UGC) – Lindsey Passenger
      i. During their last meeting, Linsey brought up the main professor/advisor evaluation recommendation from GSO, and there were many questions brought up by the UGC. Mainly, they’re concerned about the possible negative implications for students in case that there is a negative evaluation—recommendations, referrals, etc. But they liked the idea of having some kind of mechanism to receive input from students about the advisor’s performance.
      ii. NAU is about to transition from Vista to Blackboard or Moodle (?).
      iii. Class size caps and possible conflicts with required courses in various graduate and undergraduate programs were also discussed.

   b. NAU Strategic Planning – Jean Gillaume Lonjaret (BIO)
      i. More serious budget shortages are likely. Tuition fees going up at U of A and ASU more than expected. Vertical cuts at NAU are not being actively considered officially, but they seem inevitable, as part of a reorganization of curricula. A factor in deciding which programs get terminated will be the distribution of retirements caused by the incentive (estimates so far: 2 in math, 6 in CEFNS, 6 in CAL). According to Pres. Haeger, the two professors that the math department is likely to lose are among those the chair would most want to retain. Seems like the randomness of the retirement incentive is regrettable; if it were selective, we could skew the distribution away from the programs we wish most to develop and the faculty which teaches best.
      ii. Despite the grim immediate future, federal funding for higher education seems likely to improve to compensate for the stinginess of states such as our great one. However, this funding is likely to be used mostly for undergraduate education.
      iii. U of A and ASU, "very high research institutions", are trying to pull most of the funding* and might make it more difficult for N.A.U., "high research institution", to fight for itself. Unclear what funding was referred to at the meeting, this was just a vague and short subject.
      iv. Contradictory (unnecessary?) expenditures give the impression that NAU's saving strategy is, well, contradictory. One example: the land that was used as the city bus depot near the forestry department has been vacated, and the university insists on buying for future plans.

   c. ASA – Troy Campbell
     i. ASA Interns working with lowering price of textbooks.
     ii. ASA is still working to have NAU be a early polling site location.
     iii. October 30th ASA Board Meeting in Phoenix
         1. Discussed Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the Ballot Initiative
         2. Sent out 7 RFPs and 4 responded, selection was made based on previous results. The process to be followed is #1: Conduct a Poll #2: Interpret the results #3: Identify Coalitions #4: Produce Results
     iv. Signed on to support Solutions Campaign
     v. Executive Director Interviews supposed to be this week but Board members stopped the progress
     vi. U of A holding their Student Regent Process
d. GSO Committees
   - Sustainability – There’s composting in various locations throughout campus and there’s talk to increase these; Tom Zegler (FOR) may be willing to revive this committee.
   - Travel awards – Samantha Acevedo & Lindsey Passenger
     i. Evaluation Committee – Ken Mwamgi, Lindsay Passenger, Samantha Acevedo, Sheena Kauppila, Ramona Mellott
     ii. 27 applications received, 19 or 20 funded (range $75 to $250); most rejections due to incomplete/incorrect formats.
   - Fundraising – Alex Perry
     i. Parking pass raffle will work through an MCE deposit for an amount equivalent to the price of a yearly parking pass to the winner’s student ID. We will market this in the Spring research fair (see GSO strategic planning).

c) Officer reports
   a. Citlali Cortés, President
   b. Alex Perry, Vice President/Treasurer
   c. Shona Granillo, Secretary
     i. Leadership Conference was mostly workshops that didn’t provide a lot of new information. We will try to wrap up our meetings by going over a list of pending activities and people in charge of these.
   d. Jessica Gist, Communications Officer

d) GSO Strategic Planning-Samantha Acevedo (see attached power point for detailed information)
   a. GSO Short Term Objectives: increase visibility, gain membership, start working towards becoming independent from the undergraduate senate. In order to do this, we agreed on having a Graduate Research Fair where the work of graduate students’ work can be displayed and linked to our role in the academic community at NAU. The fair will be held in March, we formed a committee that will be in charge of organizing this. Committee members are Samantha Acevedo (MBA), Jessica Gist (ESP) and will meet in January to start organizing, working very closely with the graduate college. We will also have to arrange a meeting with Pres. Haeger to discuss our independence plan.
   b. GSO Mid Term Objective: gain independence from the undergraduate senate.

e) Next meeting: January 20, 2009, Erin Stam from parking services will be our guest. Please invite students from your department or bring their questions and suggestions.

f) Social activities- December 10, end of the year party at the Wine Loft. We agreed on spending $40 from our budget to pay for cheese platters.