

Minutes of FGSA Executive Committee Meeting

Sunday July 15

Present: Susan Niebur (Chair) [SN], Chad Topaz (Chair Elect) [CT], Louise Parsons (Secretary) [LP], Greg Recine (Treasurer) [GR], Jennifer Rittenhouse West (Member at Large) [JRW], Joshua Patin (Member at Large) [JP], Hsuan-Yeh Chang (Newsletter Editor) [HYC], Xin Chen (Webmaster) [XC], Trish Lettieri (APS Director of Membership) [TL]

9:02 am SN opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
Agenda was summarized.

9:07 am Everyone introduced themselves and stated their goals for the Forum

9:16 am **Strategic Planning #1** - lead by SN

Executive Committee worked on creating a mission statement.

It was decided to use the phrase “graduate students” rather than “physics graduate students” in order to include students in departments other than physics but still involved in physics related science. The word physics is still implied by the fact that we are part of APS.

Ideas for the mission statement included “to meet the needs of graduate students”, “to increase participation in APS activities” (or “in the scientific community” or “in other units”), “to provide a venue for discussion of graduate education issues”, “to provide information exchange”, “to increase communication between graduate students”. Discussion followed about how to define this vision, especially “to meet the needs” and “increase participation” and “communication”.

It was agreed that we were converging on the goals of increasing communication between graduate students and others, understanding the needs of graduate students and meeting these needs, providing models and sharing ideas.

The executive Committee then discussed ways in which we would reach these goals. Ideas included discussion groups and FAQ's, information, programming at conferences, funding to meetings, models of best practices.

The Committee then discussed possible activities of the Forum (listed below for our records):

- Interviews with other physicists
- Conference programming
- Newsletters
- Repository of publications/dissertations/theses
- Bulletin boards
- Career information
- Teaching techniques
- APS OPA updates
- Survey of members
- Numerical methods
- Lab methods
- Book recommendations
- Qualifier tips

- Pedagogical articles and sites - syllabi, calendars, how to
- Advice on faculty student relations
- Link to Dear Ms Mentor website (and similar ones)
- How to choose an advisor
- Funding graduate students to APS meetings
- Departmental information - with AIP
- Link graduate student web pages - APS online directory
- Guest Q&A
- How to give a talk
- Link to other graduate student groups
- Communicate with CAP (Canadian Association of Physics)
- Graduate student and Post-Doc grants
- Prizes - best student talk, best dissertation
- Updates on other forums
- Links to other forums
- Recommending students to leadership positions in other units

10:02 am **Membership** - lead by SN

Membership plan is reviewed and then discussion on ways to increase membership followed.

At the time of the meeting 6600 student members and 1600 lapsed members had been emailed about the FGSA and as of mid-July we had only 284 members. Obviously the emails are not being effective. Kathleen has money in the Membership marketing budget for mailings etc and may be able to help us out with advertising. In addition we discussed the idea of emailing student members who attended APS meetings in the last year.

TL mentioned that the N.E. section would like to increase graduate student participation and that this might be a possible programming opportunity for us. Maybe other sections would be interested as well? She also suggested that we place a PDF file on the web for flyers - students can print and distribute. Give a copy for Trish to place at membership table at March/April meetings. We might also be able to pre-stuff registration bags with this flier. CT will be liaison with Kathleen to get calendar of meetings for pre-stuffing bags.

TL also brought to our attention that packets are sent to department chairs at the beginning of the year to attract new APS student members. However, many of us have not seen these posters. In the future forum members may be contacted to distribute these packets instead of departmental chairs.

It was agreed to send a welcome letter sent to our new members along with the minutes of our meeting.

10:30 am Break

10:42 am **Programming** - lead by CT

Ideas for programming were presented by CT and a discussion followed. We considered sponsoring events at the March 2002, April 2002, and N.E. section meetings along with others. The program deadline for the March meeting is early October. The deadline for the April meeting is mid-September. The types of events that we would sponsor was discussed: in particular whether to have social events, contributed sessions, or late afternoon/evening sessions. A late afternoon/evening session may include speakers such as heads of labs, famous mentors, and award winners. Roman Czojo was recommended as a good speaker who is also interested in graduate student education as well as employment issues.

Judy Franz has done a graduate student reception at the March meeting (last year) and at the April meeting (for the last 5 years). Perhaps we could help, co-sponsor or give input on this event. In order to increase communication and mixing at these events FGSA members would work the room, ask questions and get input.

TL suggested having our own table with a specific topic at "Lunch with the Experts". We also discussed the possibility of having our own lunch to talk about graduate student issues sometime in the future.

Officers agreed to send CT ideas for speakers or topics. CT will develop proposals and approach other units for co-sponsoring. A programming committee will be formed

11:20 am **Elections** - lead by TL

Election procedures were reviewed. The ballot must be sent out by October 1st. We can send either paper or electronic ballots and will work with APS staff on this. Ballots must be in for counting by December 1st. The call for nominations must go out soon. Every year half the MAL positions are open and the Treasurer and Chair-Elect are also open this year. Officers can run for re-election. We will need a nominating committee and LP volunteered as Nominating Committee Chair since we do not have a Past Chair yet. The Committee must have four members plus one APS Council Member (who will be a non-voting guest council member).

11:30 am **Website** - lead by XC

XC gave an overview of the current website and then a discussion was opened. The issue of whether to host the website entirely on the APS server or to have a redirect from www.aps.org/FGSA to our page was discussed. CT also stressed the importance of designing the page carefully with a side list of the main sections and all pages having the same format. HYC pointed out that we need to increase the number of people working on the website and that perhaps we could all write our own pages and submit them. Discussion then moved to how to improve and promote the Bulletin Board. CT suggested that we might want to have special sessions on the BB for specific topics/issues. We also considered promoting the website over the listserve and perhaps setting up an FGSA-talk listserve for members

11:51 am **Newsletter** - lead by HYC

HYC gave an overview of his plans for the Newsletter. He announced his plans for an end of September deadline. (This will coincide with the beginning of the school year. We could also send paper ballots at the same time). Contents will include interviews with Nobel Laureates, book/text reviews, election information, announcements, prospective activities of the FGSA, and reports from each of the officers. The format will be either print or electronic, depending on cost.

TL pointed out that the Special Publications group would take care of templating, mailing etc. We just need to submit text. They will charge the Forum for this service. JRW volunteers to edit the articles. Everyone agrees to write something for the first newsletter:

- CT - Programming
- LP - Elections
- JRW - Policy
- JP - Careers/Future
- GR - Organizations at schools
- XC - Website
- SN - Vision

Articles will be due by the end of August.

12:05 pm Break for lunch

During lunch it was decided that Executive Committee members would send out monthly reports of their activities for the Forum

1:03 pm **Information Exchange/Resources**

1:03pm **Careers** - lead by SN

Ideas for the Careers section of the website were discussed. In addition to articles and links we would create our own content by having an archive where we (and others) could contribute our own career related experiences and perspectives. Pages/links with advice on choosing a career path, two body problem, how to get a post-doc, writing resumes and cover letters, "should I go to graduate school?" etc would be included. The idea of listing resumes and jobs was discussed (although we agreed that we did not want to compete with APS/AIP career services) with the possibility of working with monster.com or other websites. CT agreed to look into this. Statistics on salaries and other information could also be listed, as could links to career pages from other societies (due to a diversity of subfields).

1:20pm **Education** - lead by LP

LP presented her ideas for the Education website. Plans included a qualifying exam question repository, TA tips, coursenotes, graduate school reviews, Bulletin Board discussion on education, book/text reviews and thesis repository. Graduate student webpages could also be listed and cross-referenced by school or department so that prospective graduate students could contact them. Additional suggestions for the education webpage included links to the Archimedean Society (Cambridge) for coursenotes and links to summer schools and conferences (Gordon conferences, Aerochay). TL suggested placing a link on the page for members to submit links to be added.

1:28pm **Science/Education Policy** - lead by JRW

JRW mentioned her plans to meet with APS policy people on Monday. She is planning to create a webpage with policy links, including APS policy. There will also be information about the budget and the message on this from APS OPA with an automatic letter generation site.

1:33pm **Electronic Resources** - lead by HYC

Ways to attract people to the website were discussed. In particular the idea of using a Bulletin Board with special features (such as that at slashdot.com) was mentioned. The source code for this has been released and GR will work on this. GR will also look at and track the statistics of the site. We considered the idea of placing advertisements on the website. JP proposed that we have a link on every page to join the Forum.

1:40pm **Other Resources** - lead by LP

Funding issues were discussed. A webpage with links to conference funding sources, grants.net, how to get funding from your school etc would be set up. We also discussed the idea of offering funding to those contributing in our sessions. Other webpage ideas included a student webpage list (cross-referenced by school and topic), a link of the week, links to pages for APS special divisions or topics ways to get more involved in APS, and our own reports.

We also discussed the idea of creating a T-Shirt or other FGSA “product” (such as a pin etc) that could be given to members. TL informed us that there is money in Membership that could be used for this. We could come up with an idea for a member giveaway for the March and April meetings. The giveaway would have our website and logo on it. We would need to get these ideas to TL by mid-September. Perhaps we could take a turn working at the membership table in return for this. Ideas for our logo were discussed. Several officers were in favor of using the mountain/flag picture from the FGSA article in APS News. Other ideas included a logo competition.

1:57pm **Strategic Planning #2** – lead by SN

We finalized our mission statement:

“The APS FGSA encourages a free exchange of ideas among graduate students and the greater scientific community by providing opportunities for meetings, electronic discussion and access to an archive of member ideas and programs.”

Action items were then reviewed:

- Interviews for newsletter - JRW - 9/1
- Programming - CT
- Newsletter - HYC - mid Sept
- Education and Teaching webpage - LP - mid Aug
- Bulletin board - mid Aug
- APS OPA information exchange - JRW - mid Aug
- Career webpage - SN - mid Aug
- Graduate Student funding sources - CT - Oct
- Links to other graduate student groups and graduate student webpages - XC
- Science resources - JP
- Survival guide - GR- mid Aug
- Links to divisions who give travel grants - CT - Oct
- Information about graduate departments - JP - mid Aug
- Promotional toys - mid Sept
- Fliers – mid Sept

It was suggested that we get students to provide URL to their webpage when they sign up. This will be listed within the APS member directory but also on our own page. We can get a list from APS to start.

We then spent some time designing the layout of our webpage. We could get APS to help with the design so that it is more like an APS website.

On the front page we will have a list of sections of the website listed on the left hand side (menu):

- Join
- Governance
- Bulletin Board
- FGSA Events
- Newsletters
- Graduate Student Resources
- APS Home
- FGSA Home

In the middle of our main page will be our mission statement, benefits of membership, hot topics, link of the week. The Graduate Student Resources section will include separate pages on:

- Careers (SN)
- Education (LP)
- Public Policy (JRW)
- Research (JP)
- Funding (CT)
- Member List (XC)
- Survival Guide (GR)
- Other organizations

2:50pm **Finance** - lead by GR

GR would find out on Monday how much money we have and where it comes from. We will work on a calendar year budget. GR will keep the records of the FGSA (which will not be released for the public) and he will write reports on our financial activity. Our main sources of spending will most likely be the newsletter and programming. Members will get a paper newsletter and an electronic one will be posted for others. Newsletters will be sent to chairs of physics departments and will be taken to meetings by TL for the membership table. In terms of programming, our expenses may include paying for speakers. If we co-sponsor an event we may be able to provide graduate student participation and labor instead of money.

Monday July 16

8:35 pm **Meeting with Judy Franz** [JF]

SN presented our mission statement along with our planned activities and goals emphasizing that information exchange is our big push this year along with the newsletter and programming.

JF then offered the committee advice on various aspects of the Forum.

The council advisor is not an official position of the APS Council. However, we can have someone attend in an unofficial capacity (they would sit at another table and could speak at the chair's discretion). It may become an official position at some point in the future. There is no need for the position to go on the ballot and we could have a different person attend each time. We would need to fund the travel expenses for this person to attend the meeting.

When positions change over in January it is a good idea to adopt the new person for a month or two and help them get started. This will retain some history in the Forum and will especially help with the Chair-Elect and the Program Committee.

If we sponsor a contributed session at an APS meeting we would need to have a sorter present at the sorters meeting. JF did not think we should have a table at "Lunch with the Experts" as it is best not to mix ideas. We could have a tutorial/workshop before the March meeting (other tutorials/workshops are held then). Afternoon/evening sessions are a good idea. Forums don't generally do a lot of contributed sessions; they do more invited sessions. Maybe we could include a panel discussion on a particular issue. We could also co-sponsor an invited talk in which case we may not need to attend the sorters meeting.

APS will help design and host our webpage. The turnaround for posting a webpage after receiving it is typically about 2 days.

APS is a little thin on career related matters. JF would appreciate our help in developing this. For example, what fields are actively recruiting? As for resume posting, this is generally a good idea but it can hurt a candidate if they post a "general" resume, which is really not the "best" resume for any particular job.

APS has a graduate student working in media (US News and World Report) who may be a good person to have write an article for our newsletter.

9:10am **Meeting with Alan Chodos** [AC] (Prizes and Awards and Editor APS News)

AC asked us to inform APS News of our events/programs so the entire membership is aware of our activities. He also told us about physicscentral.com which is a high school level physics website maintained by APS but it may be of interest to graduate students (especially if the subject is out of your field). If we have ideas for this website we can contact AC or Jessica Clark (who is also a graduate student).

Discussion then moved to prizes and awards with prizes being more prestigious than awards. Prizes are for research in an area of physics and usually carry more monetary value. Awards are for service to APS, international physics etc. We can nominate people for awards; in fact there are often not enough nominations.

In particular, the Valley Prize, for a physicist under 30 may be of interest to us. It is worth

\$20000 and is awarded every other year. It may go to a graduate student but more likely to a post-doc.

APS members may be elected to Fellowship in the Society, which is an honor and does not carry any monetary value. Forums can recommend fellows who are usually mid-career types. However, JF pointed out that we probably would not do much of this, as one would usually seek to be nominated by the most senior, prestigious people available.

9:35pm **APS Staff**

Sessions then took place where various APS staff members discussed their jobs with the FGSA and provided information on how we can interact with them. Representatives from Education and Outreach, Special Publications, Meetings, Unit Funds and Accounting and Information Systems were present.

In particular the Women and Minority Speaker list was brought to our attention as well as information about the Committee for Professional Development School Liaison Program and we may want to provide information about these on our website. We may also choose to send a guest to be present at Education and Outreach Committee meetings.