

Graduate Student Senate



GSS Meeting | 10/28/2019 | 1:30 – 3 PM | MUB 162

1. Bring the Meeting to Session – POGSS

- a. Meeting called to session at 1:35pm

2. Roll Call – COGSS

- a. GSS Senators and Executive Officers in Attendance: Casey O'Heran (President), Alex Padilla (Financial Affairs), Jacob Koile (Community Coordinator), Jacob Bennett (External Relations), Sarah Widlansky (Communications), Dominic Payne (CEPS), Sumeyra Gok (COLA), Allison Giannotti (COLA), Ben Remillard (COLA), Lauren Breza (COLSA), Jovana Milosavljevic Ardeljan (PAUL), Karen Moran Rivera (International), Michael Fazi (UNH Law), Karla Oñate Melecio (Housing)
- b. GSS Senators and Executive Officers absent: Liz Weidner (VP) – Alex serving as a proxy, Emily Whalen (CHHS) – Lauren serving as a proxy, Martine Grenier-Burtis (COLA) – Sumeyra serving as a proxy, Marie-Josiane (MJ) Ohoueu (GRAD) – Karen serving as a proxy, Kerry Dykens (CEPS) – Alex serving as a proxy, Sanchari Kundu (CHHS), Shantel Palacio (CHHS)
- c. Official note of quorum

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes - POGSS & COGSS

- a. Dominic made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/15/19, Jovana seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

4. Speaker - Zane Thistleford (Member at Large) @ 1:40 PM

- a. Feels that faculty in Chemistry department aren't always acting in students' best interests. Students came together to raise issues to the department chair and faculty. Things have been improving.
- b. Campus-wide outlets (like GSS) never seem like the appropriate outlet for department issues.
- c. Zane advocates for having department liaisons/leaders to act as aides between students and faculty with an ear from GSS. This would allow someone to organize concerns from students at the department level.
- d. **Questions from GSS**: Karla noted that in her undergrad each department had a paid student to act in similar role. Jovana asked whether Zane had a model in mind that could be replicated in other departments. Zane does, and hopes that this semester some time would be spent identifying people in departments that seem to be looked at as leaders and next semester establishing these roles officially. Jovana pointed out that some departments invite grad students into faculty meetings, while others don't, and asked whether the Chemistry

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department has separate meetings for grad students to come to talk about issues. Zane responded that students gathered together and focused on common issues, for example, requesting that the department set and communicate expectations, and brought these issues to the faculty. Casey asked what the best way for GSS to support this would be. Zane noted that it would be important to maintain the grassroots model and wouldn't want these roles to come directly from GSS. But thinks a resolution from GSS recommending it and having the established liaisons check in with GSS senators once a month or so would be good. Dominic thought this sounded like a good idea and may be a better way of reaching out than administrators. Also noting that it may be tough for very small or very isolated departments. Karla knows that the Physics department is interested in this, but it needs to be official otherwise it could be taken as harassment against a professor if there is no previous official formal complaint. Jacob B. agrees that there is a gap between students and GSS representation. Also thinks this could be tied to the current draft resolution on the campus climate survey results. Zane said that of the issues he knows, it's asymmetric. More females and international students seem to be experiencing these issues and are less likely to speak up. Allison mentioned that the English department is in same situation. Students have tried meeting with faculty there who were not receptive. Thinks having a firm recommendation would be best in the resolution.

- e. Dominic made a motion for the Governance Committee to start establishing department liaisons by the end of the semester, seconded by Alex. Motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

- a. Vote on senator appointments - **POGSS**
 - i. CEPS - Kerry Dykens
 - 1. Jacob K. made a motion to approve Kerry Dykens as CEPS Senator, seconded by Dominic. Passed Unanimously.
 - ii. Housing - Karla Oñate Melecio
 - 1. Jovana made a motion to approve Karla Oñate Melecio as Housing Senator, Lauren seconded. Passed unanimously.
 - iii. Update on the status of the roster
- b. Vote on SVPR letter – **POGSS**
 - i. Casey, Alex, Liz, Allison, and Sarah sat in on interviews and compiled recommendations.

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- ii. Jovana made a motion to approve the recommendation letter, seconded by Jacob B. Passed unanimously.
- iii. The letter with GSS's recommendations will be sent to provost Jones and the search committee.
- c. Resolutions: Gender question on teaching evaluations - ***D & I Committee***
 - i. Sumeyra leading discussion. Presented two options for a resolution.
 - ii. Option 1: Adding non-binary gender option
 - 1. This option discusses the campus climate survey results and notes that many students identify as something other than male or female.
 - 2. Requests having a list of gender options from the Consortium for Higher Education.
 - 3. Also urges that this information is kept from the instructor.
 - iii. Option 2: Omitting the gender question
 - 1. Similar background information to Option 1.
 - 2. Urges that this question is omitted entirely.
 - iv. Casey suggests we only pass one resolution and get feedback from the university.
 - v. Lauren will be meeting with the SAC right after this meeting and can discuss our options there. Jovana asked what will be required to make this change on the teaching evaluations. Lauren pointed out that SAC is requesting moving back to paper evaluations, so it may be difficult to hide gender responses from the professor. Jovana pointed out that 2 years ago, the wording changes required a major amount of time. Jacob B. commented that he doesn't like the second option because it doesn't offer the ability to determine if there is bias, but thinks the first option has too many options. Points out that the main things to address are 1) the binary nature and 2) requirement to respond on the current evaluations. He suggests that choices could just be to write in whatever you want or indicate that you prefer not to answer. Karla noted that she always fills out male to stop from being identified in all male classes, so the statistics may be off anyway.
 - vi. Casey observed that we seem to be leaning towards option 1, emphasizing the not sharing with professor aspect.
 - vii. Tabling this resolution until next week so that we can get input from the SAC meeting with Lu Ferrell today.
- d. Amendment to the constitution regarding communication - ***EAO GSS (Jacob B.)***

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- i. Proposes to amend constitution regarding our expectations of university notifications. Connected to Dominic's work with the transportation notice.
- ii. Amendment would replace 3 articles that already do speak to this issue to say that we shall be notified of any proposal to change policies that affect grad students including degree and non-degree and online students with adequate time to review and respond to changes. Unsure what "adequate" would be but should be >2 weeks since we only meet every 2 weeks.
- iii. Dominic thinks 2 full senate meetings (~one month) seems like it should be reasonable. Jovana supports this change but wants to know how we enforce it. Thinks we need to send this Dean Moorhead and ask her to send it along to the President and Provost, requesting cooperation. Also suggested having ExComm meet with the Provost to discuss this in depth. Jacob K. asked whether the president has to approve this change. Answer: yes.
- iv. GSS strongly supports this resolution.
- v. Voting on this next week, with the edit: 2 full senate meetings.
- e. Discussion of updated draft transportation resolution – **Dominic**
 - i. Added a whereas section about the sustainability tracking and ranking system that is set to expire next year and added that grad students are relatively cheap and valuable for maintaining the R1 status.
 - ii. Ben wondered about adding a comment on transparency in their planning. Dominic added this in. Karen asked for clarification on "timely manner". The timeline for this notice might be longer than the amendment because it deals with people needing to find housing, etc. Keeping as is.
 - iii. Jacob B. made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Dominic. Passes with one abstention.
 - iv. The resolution will be sent off to the Transportation Committee but looking into whether others should receive it too. Jacob B. suggested the Sustainability Institute.
- f. Resolution concerning the campus climate survey results - **EAO GSS (Jacob B.)**
 - i. Some comments from Emily in the online doc.
 - ii. Jacob B. asked whether we think having all the data here was helpful or too much. Jacob K. thought including the data from the survey was helpful, but that it should reference where they can be found.

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- iii. Jacob. B. also asked whether to add retention and recruiting faculty/staff too or just students (as it was originally written) and whether we should add other identity markers in addition to race/ethnicity. Karla thought faculty should be included, and wording changed to “underrepresented minorities”.
- iv. We will discuss this again at the next meeting.

6. Committee Updates – *Committee Chairs*

- a. Casey noted not many external committee meeting minutes have been posted to MyCourses and archived in Drive.
- b. External Updates
 - i. BoT- met last week and Jacob B. noted an amendment to the board’s bylaws to include grad students as a voting voice on board. Looks like it will go though in January and grad students should be able to run for that position.
- c. Internal
 - i. MLK tribute week planning for February (Sumeyra) – ACLU tables that we could sponsor. Speaker for “Own it” event – Do we want to have a grad student speaker? Service day we could promote. Sumeyra asking whether GSS wants to be involved in promoting. Casey thinks we should get involved.

7. Open Forum – *POGSS*

- a. uSS passed an E-scooter resolution. Durham is placing a 6 month temporary ban. We may want to weigh in on this matter within the next couple of meetings.
- b. Casey got email from someone about uSafeUS and wants senators to send to constituents.
- c. Reminder that there will be a GSS meeting next week.
- d. Karla will be meeting with someone in physics to discuss implementing a mandatory diversity course.
- e. GSS newsletter coming out Friday, looking for input.
- f. Casey and Liz went on Podcats and the episode will be out soon.

8. Adjournment

- a. Alex made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jacob. K. Meeting adjourned at 3:03pm.

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