

## **GSA Meeting Minutes 10-13-2015**

All here except for Erik Buchholz, who submitted his update via email previously.

Daniel, Gustavo, Katie, Brian O'Bruba all non-GSA council members. Also two visitors – Kevin Sabo, undergrad at UC Berkeley, and the communications director from UCSA.

Any changes to the agenda?

Danielle – motion to adopt

Lauren – second

Agenda unanimously adopted by all present. Minutes were also sent out internally, should we approve them and post on the website?

Danielle – motion

Katie – second

Minutes adopted unanimously by all present. Motion carries. Minutes will be posted from last meeting as soon as reasonably possible.

Officer reports:

Jason – TAPS deals with our parking, I've had lots of really productive conversations with them and they really do want to solve the problems on campus. I found out with less than a week's notice that 80 people responded to a survey to renew their permit, but there were only 40 available, so we found the most equitable way to allocate the 40 to their 80. Because we had productive relationships with TAPS they expanded our representation on their committee, so we now have three members present rather than two, which is great. New sign out by the bus stop by the gym with the bus schedules, in response to an inquiry from a graduate student. Optimistic, but also realistic. Overall, very positive interactions. Also, two weeks ago Council of Presidents had first meeting in Oakland with Janet Napolitano. Met with both undergraduate

and graduate student body presidents; also invited two UCSA representatives. Napolitano is concerned about the lengthening time to degree completion, especially in the humanities. She was interested in ways to incentivize degree completion. Email Jason if you have any innovative or creative ideas. Any specific questions about these meetings?

Maryam – with TAPS, is there any way they can do the temporary permits with Little Lake Lot for us again?

Jason – reassigned all the permits in Little Lake Lot for faculty only.

Maryam – can they give it back?

Jason – possibly, every year things can change from what the committee in the previous year decides. It is theoretically possible for the committee to say “no undergrad parking.” Will they ever do that? No! But the idea is, the committee is fully capable of making these decisions. It’s governed by consensus of all the relevant parties on campus. We could ask our three representatives to advocate for this.

Maryam – that would be great, it’s really bad to miss your TA class because you can’t find parking.

Jason – they are continually re-evaluating the parking allocation every few weeks by counting empty spaces in each lot.

Lauren – TAPS just had their committee meeting today. Haven’t received their notes yet but there are three representatives whose names are provided on the website and you can contact them. I also know a few people who were pretty far down on the waiting list and even got A or B parking permits. So TAPS really is evaluating the parking situation.

Jason – It’ll get worse before it gets better though. Not going to be a new lot this year but there’ll be lots of new grad students. But everyone is in this together and TAPS is aware of the issues at hand.

Soheil – I should mention some things that came up in the DA meeting. Some students mentioned having more privacy for grads when they go to psychologists. One interesting thing was that some people were also asking for a social space both off-campus and on-campus. As of now we have SSB 150 that you can reserve on Fridays for any multicultural group, presumably even graduate clubs. The music room – it's also being followed.

Charles – Another conversation tomorrow morning!

Dean Zatz – It's a decent space, good light, chairs can be moved, it's a place to start anyway.

Danielle – These are our guests from UCSA who will be giving a presentation on SAGE. I also had a meeting with UCSA and President Napolitano in the fall and that was a great meeting, we discussed housing issues (students who are homeless and living in tents, etc.). Also talked about the budget. UCOP is looking at how to negotiate with the legislature about including grad students in their incentive package. For diversity – UCSA had a meeting with the Vice Provost for Diversity and is working with them to talk about composition and structure. Also talked about international education – why students aren't traveling as much, majority are traveling to Europe and Europe is not the entire world, how can we push international education and how are we incorporating international students here? Still taking a few systemwide committees so check out the UCSA website and apply. Dean Zatz is great about funding for taking students to UC Berkeley.

---- my piece ---

Soheil – who's doing the recording?

Jason – GSS left it all set up in the office and they'll collect it tomorrow and process the file. We'll have just an archive for posterity.

Erik can't be here, he's at a systemwide committee tonight in Oakland.  
**COPY AND PASTE HIS EMAIL INTO THE MINUTES HERE.**

Charles – Erik and I are working on allocating a budget to bring back to you all for approval purposes. 6 of the 12 travel grants have already been processed and the remaining 6 will be processed any day now.

Lauren – great turnout for committee rally, 60-70 people. Had an orientation. We currently only have a few committees that are missing members – need one more graduate student for SFAC (student fee advisory committee) to make sure that grads aren't paying for services only undergrads use. Graduation committee – it's not one we *have* to sit on, but it's nice to have grad student input (preference for someone in the process of graduating). We currently have two members for travel grants committee and are still looking for one more, preferably in Natural Sciences. We did get one more person for our bylaws committee, which was the amount that we agreed on initially. Ideally, we want as many people as possible in on this; we can start with the two we have, but I'll be sending an email out for the bylaw and travel grants committee requesting more membership.

Charles – Referendum fee committee deals with those extraneous fees – the fees that only the undergrads pay – and that's a whole extra thing from SFAC. They only meet to review proposed referendums. There are fees that the grad students voted down that the undergrads voted in; the athletics fee is one of those. The referendum committee handles those differing fees.

Zatz – Would a new fee for graduate student clubs go there?

Charles – Yeah, that would go up for grad students vote on the referendum committee.

Eddie – We've done this before and it's a good thing for GSA.

Charles – It might be in the referendum committee guidelines.

Jason – Action item, we should recruit internally and force someone to sit in on the meeting.

Paul – Not too much, me and Jason did meet with the Merced Superintendent in charge of city schools to talk about potential for

collaboration on research or service projects. Talked about how, at the grad student level, people have more skills and might be better tapped to collaborate on research projects if they have an overlapping need. Grad students can of course also do service, but it might be more useful to tap into the knowledge and skills that grad students have.

Jason – action item for the both of us is send a follow-up email.

Paul – So if anyone is interested in getting involved in research with K-8 schools, myself or Jason would be a good person to contact to get your name in my email. I might know people anyway.

CM – What kind of projects were we thinking about?

Paul – Few areas, I've spoke to grad students who were interested in different things and am trying to coordinate anything I can. There are also a couple resources on campus (Blum Center, etc.), I can steer people toward someone they might want to partner with.

Jason – Is it limited to program evaluation, etc.?

Paul – No, I don't think so. We're a young campus and everything's not flushed out as much as it might be, but it's definitely easier to get your foot in the door if you have overlap with something the school(s) also want and need.

Maryam – Main thing is temporary housing for international students. Thanks to Zatz and Charles I'm hoping we're getting somewhere with that. Undergrad housing might be empty in a slot around the orientation for international students, so we're planning on working out a way to use that for international students who arrive without a place to go. Talked with Dean Zatz about problems international students face with TAs the first year they get here, since they're not familiar with the educational system and may have language barriers. Hoping to change the system someday so their first semester here will be a chance for them to orient, then TA later.

Zatz – I'm trying to change the funding mechanism so that they can go onto a GSR-ship right away. Temptation was to make them TAs right

away, but this way they can get research experience without it costing extra. But that's going to vary by schools and by advisors. We did follow up on your idea of starting sessions on adjusting to grad school.

Maryam – Hopefully we can advertise this idea to the advisors.

Zatz – They all know, but I ultimately can't control whether they change the TA-ing.

Maryam – last thing, I talked with other international grad students and we're thinking about having some kind of a fair for international students to present their countries, that could help bonding between grad students to know about each other's cultures. Later on when there's a more concrete plan about that I can present it to GSA.

Eddie – Great start to the year, everyone's doing great, I'm excited!

Jason – Now officer reports are spoken. On to new business. First item is appointment of a special advisor on climate, diversity, and equity. Little bit of background on this: It's fair to say that the UC system is facing a lot of attention and focus on climate diversity and equity. This is on everybody's radar and this is something we really need to pay a lot of attention to at a local level. Last year there were some concerns locally on these issues, and as a GSA we need to serve our entire population. In years past, it was noticed that international students were not represented by the GSA – no one was here at the table. So a position was created, the International Liason, to make sure there's a voice at the table. There's this thing with the bylaws, so the Liason is currently a non-voting member, and there's nothing in the bylaws that prevents us appointing as many special advisors as we want. I would envision this position as someone who can be included on our listserv, someone whose input and feedback we will take very seriously. Anyone want to speak about need or lack of need about this position?

Paul: Are we talking about just creating the position, or about appointing a specific person to it?

Jason – Those could be separate positions.

Lauren – position itself is a great idea, but I think it should be open to the body to vote.

Paul – I agree with Lauren as well. The International Liason was something that the graduate student body voted on, and there was a lot of competition for it, so we have a decent idea that we got somebody who people wanted to represent them. If we do create the position, the person should be picked by the graduate student body.

Eddie – I think it's a position we need and I don't think we should wait for the next election.

Jason – If this position exists at a time of an election, I hope we would all be in favor of having this be an elected position by the student body.

Katie – Informal email election?

Paul – open call for nominations, this was a thing that came up at the very end of last meeting and was rushed. I don't think most graduate students come to this meeting, and in the spirit of openness and the very equity we're talking about this position should be getting input from the student body. I would be in favor to create the position but not for us to choose who fills it.

Zatz – I would just caution – this discussion is about the position. I also would caution against an email vote, just for security purposes, et cetera. TAPS survey was not successful.

Lauren – Would nominations be acceptable through the email process?

Jason – We have to have a meeting with the general membership twice a semester. We could do the nominations, then at the general membership meeting vote?

Danielle – We definitely need to have this position, but I'm wondering if it could be an open process like the committees. Maybe be sent out through an email like the committees? Should be something that is advertised widely so interested parties can send in applications or something like that.

CM – So anyone can apply for this position?

Jason – This is specifically for a currently non-GSA member. We need someone to be explicitly at the GSA table.

Soheil – Have we had any type of such position before?

Jason – With the current bylaw situation, I think Maryam’s status is indicative of what this advisor would be. In future, we could certainly talk about permanent role of these positions, et cetera.

Charles – We do have representatives on the committee for Campus Climate, et cetera. Would make sense for there to be a connection between what’s happening institutionally and what’s happening here. You have representation on these different pieces. Could be a formal way to create this liason.

Jason – Could your committee put forth an appropriate name, or could we tap into these existing committees?

Lauren – When you sent me the call for the committee, you wanted two GSA members; do you want actual GSA officers to serve, cause then we could have GSA communicating that way.

Zatz – Committee is now formed, emails going out as we speak, but it does have a lot of overlap with GSA. Maryam is on it, along with some past members. Certainly it could be asked of my council to make some recommendations, but I don’t want to speak for them. We’ll be meeting before the end of the month.

Lauren – Were we to make this an actual voting position, we could assign it to being on Dean Zatz’ committee and unite those, et cetera.

Jason – I would entertain a motion for the creation of a position to be called special advisor to the GSA on climate diversity and equity. Anybody motion that?

Danielle – motion



Lauren – second

Jason – Motion on the floor is the creation of this position. Next question is what sort of duties should we ask this person to fulfill?

Paul – Possibly serve on the committee with the long name and come to the general meetings here.

Jason – Serve on campus-wide committees pertaining to these topics, attend GSA council meetings, read and respond to GSA emails?

Charles – external affairs has this as one of their issues; we want to connect this to the UCSA initiative, so we don't have subpockets of people working on the same issues. Undergraduate ASUCM has a multicultural student council of all of the presidents of the undergraduate committees. I'll be meeting with that rep eventually to have conversations about the campus-wide climate. At least once a semester, this GSA position should check in with undergrad diversity and check in with Danielle and the UCSA initiative.

Jason – any other requests for duties?

Lauren – Nice to have them communicate with other special interest groups throughout the community. Could link it with public relations as well – that would be dependent on them.

Jason – Motion to amend the motion on the floor to read “Duties included but not limited to,” with a bulleted list, first item serving on committees.

Unanimous vote, that first item. Next item?

Jason – Next item, interact and consult with GSA members about issues.

Passes unanimously.

Jason – motion to add a third bullet about any other duties as described.

This is the motion on the floor. All those in favor of creating this position? Passed unanimously.

Jason – Floor is now open. Do we want to establish some sort of appointment procedure, or leave this for now?

Paul – Table this for now, come back to it.

Jason – Do we create this position and have no plan for how to fill it?

Eddie – If we're sending out an email about committees, this may be the perfect time to advertise this position through reasonable means.

Jason – So advertise this position through reasonable means, then select at the next meeting of the general membership?

Lauren – I like the idea of opening the vote to the general meeting.

Danielle – So moved.

Jason – Motion is to recruit applicants, then come to a selection at the next meeting of the general membership which is soon-to-be-scheduled (end of October and early December).

Lauren – Second.

Passed unanimously.

Next is resolution to support the creation of a UC “student advisor” position to the UC Board of Regents. There is currently one voting student regent and a non-voting student regent. To change this, there would be a constitutional amendment in California. This is a more modest but realistic proposal – for the regents to just have another student at the table, which is essentially what we are doing with the climate advisor. WE want to tell the regents this is an important position. Danielle, any insight?

Danielle – The current student regent is working on this proposal. He wants to create a student advisor position. We have a voting and non-

voting student regent, and the advisor position would be another non-voting seat at the table to give comments and be sort of a complementary position (so if the student regent is an undergrad, the student advisor could ideally be a graduate student). Overall, the advisor position would just be having another student voice on the Board of Regents.

Paul – This is a resolution in support of a constitutional change?

Danielle – This doesn't require a constitutional change.

Paul – Would they actually get to go to the meetings?

Jason – This is basically us saying, we want this to happen, and if everyone else says the same thing the regents will ideally say okay and invite the advisor to their meetings. There's no authority in the position, but it is a position of privilege because they can attend, et cetera. Are there any downsides if this is to pass? More money spent on student travel?

CM2 – More student representation is generally always a good thing. But this is an interim solution, the ultimate goal is that we would get a second student regent. But that wouldn't be able to take effect til 2017 so this is more like a stopgap.

Jason – Again, it's atypical for resolutions to be in front of our GSA. Is there a motion on the floor or more discussion?

Danielle – motion. I think more representation is needed.

Paul – seconded motion to approve this resolution.

Jason – I would entertain a motion to amend the resolution so it says UCM GSA instead of [campus]. This amendment passed unanimously. Now motion at hand is to approve the resolution as amended.

Motion passed unanimously. We're now a resolution-passing student government. I don't actually know if that's our first resolution, I just wasn't aware of it.

Charles – I have a feeling it might be.

Jason – Next two agenda items lumped together, I'm going to let UCSA talk about SAGE.

Kevin – I'm an undergrad transfer student at UC Berkeley who's actually from the Merced area. I'm really excited about the economical and political impact of UC Merced on the central valley.

Anise – Hi, UCSA has six professional staff who work full-time to advocate for students through communication, media, social media, I train all of the advocates we send to meet with the regents. Going to pass out our pamphlets.

Kevin – Thanks for giving us time to talk to you. We're very excited about it. We're trying to get students excited about it. UCSA represents almost 250,000 undergraduate and graduate professional students. Our students are elected every year by their peers on each campus. A lot of our work is grounded in things students are pretty excited about and want us to work on. We advocate not just for current UC students but future UC students as well. UCSA is almost 50 years old, we were established during the Free Speech Movement. Students realized we needed a full-time organization that could represent their interests and fight back. We have a pretty good track record of legislative victories in Sacramento and D.C. and we hope that track record is something we can share with students in the next few months during this tour.

SAGE is the Student Advocacy Governance and Engagement. This is a proposal to change how UCSA is funded. It would be an augmentation of current fees that already exist, and it would be democratized as well. Right now, an association who wants to be represented has to pay a small fee. Students don't really have an option there. This is really to give the responsibility to students to figure out how to pay for it, shifting responsibility away from organizations.

Problems – one in ten UC students is not represented on UCSA, so those students can't access the benefits of UCSA. Sometimes, whether or not we do something, someone gets ticked off and all those students can

potentially be withdrawn. Also, UCSA benefits everyone but some students pay different dues. even non-member associations receive the benefits. There's also budget unpredictability; we once had to let go of administrative support and were really set back. Also, we have six professional staff who aren't paid competitive salaries at all and have limited professional development opportunities. We have high turnover. Also, dues stagnate over time and our costs have continued to increase while bumping up against this ceiling.

Why do students support SAGE? We've talked to a lot of students and there's a lot of support. Why? UCSA has 50 years of proven advocacy and activism for students – there's a history there. It's also not a new fee, it's an augmentation to something already existing, and it's an administrative change. Next, students choose to fund UCSA through the opt-out system so no one is being forced to pay into it. This would be funded and appropriated by students and for students. We've also had to let go of many events and things we used to sponsor due to the limitations of budget, so SAGE would create stability and allow us to plan better.

Students want this to improve student representation in state and federal affairs. A lot of the time students have to front the costs to be able to participate. Last year we had to find a woman in STEM who wasn't on our board, and those efforts were hampered because the student had to front the costs and be reimbursed. Lots of federal advocacy we could be doing but can't, so we want to eliminate these barriers of accessibility. We also want to expand the conference schedule – perhaps an annual summit for graduate student issues, reaffirming our support for the women of color conference, bringing more students to our conferences. Also recognizing student accomplishments and increasing student access to UCSA. Bringing our tech presence into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We're planning on introducing this at the January Regents meeting. You can help by joining other associations in passing a resolution in support of the SAGE proposal. You can help build campus and administrator support, educate students on your campus, invite us to have a SAGE townhall.

This is really about giving UCSA the ability to stand up for its constituents. It's very democratic. You'll have plenty of opportunities to be actively involved.

Paul – Can you explain the specifics of what's being proposed right now?

Kevin – At the time you pay your other fees, you would pay about four dollars and you would have an option to opt out where you might end up getting a check sent back to you. The UC uses different systems on each campus so you might not be able to just refuse initially.

Jason – Per semester or per year?

Kevin – Per year

Jason – So we would pay 320.50. And this is just a resolution in support of.

Paul – Is this something that GSA has the power to do?

Kevin – There's no policy for fees like this, and that's an ongoing conversation, but we hope to be able to say that all these institutions passed resolutions in support of it. If the regents approve, we'd be bringing back a charter for you all.

Jason – I think in Spring, we might have an item on the election ballot about approval of this.

Paul – It should be open to general public, any time we mess with fees.

Jason – Yeah, we can definitely add this to the election ballot. This doesn't commit us to anything. On the negative, it would appear to the student body that we're in favor of raising student fees.

Kevin – This is of course voluntary. Every single year you will have the option of paying for this or not. UCSA budget goes up before grad and undergrad associations, and if they veto it we have to go back. For right now, the budget would be the primary use.

Eddie – How much more money?

Anise – It's really tough to say, even with 3-5% opt-out we would see a slight increase in our budget but it's nothing huge even after the cost.

Lauren – What is a student losing by opting out?

Kevin – There are only two non-member associations right now. We don't bar you from systemwide committees or bar you from being student regent, we still open up those opportunities, so there really aren't specific punishments for opting out. But you wouldn't be meeting with Janet Napolitano or anything like that, and you do have someone to advocate you; UC Merced graduate students have had a good increase in participation since Danielle has been sitting there and advocating for all of you.

Jason – We can approve the resolution, reject the resolution, or table consideration of the resolution. I would urge that, if we do that, to not table it *again*.

Paul – Is it vital to you guys in hopes of getting this pushed forward to get a resolution? Is it going to be hurt tremendously if we table the resolution?

Kevin – We're visiting 17 associations in 9 weeks, so we just wanted to make sure you had access to us while we're here. The most associations we can get in support before the January Regents meeting, the better.

Paul – Personal preference, I'm pretty sure I'm in support of the thing but I'd prefer to table it for an early agenda item on the next meeting.

Soheil – Students who opt-out have to have a great idea of what they're losing or gaining, right, so probably good to reassure them that their fees are going to a good place. We partly will be responsible to back up our resolution, but have you thought of it?

Kevin – Other student associations use same fee payment system; challenge on our end is that UCs all use different things. We want to make it clear that you have the right to opt out and we don't really

punish you. It's mostly we hope that the four dollars will seem worth it to students, but outside of that we don't really know what that will look like. We do want to make the issue very transparent to students.

Danielle – I think this would be more democratic, where the student themselves can choose; this way it's the student's decision to put money in or not.

Kevin – Chances of enough students dropping out to seriously damage our budget – remember, the UCSA board is not like the regents, you send your representatives to the regents.

Paul – motion to table this agenda item to the first item of new business at the next council meeting.

Soheil – second

Jason – It is imperative that we don't table this again. Let's not be afraid to take action one way or the other. I will implore all of us to do our homework. Can we email you guys with questions? Okay. We need to pass – this is my opinion that we need to pass this either affirmative or negative at the next meeting.

Lauren – Is there a reason to not present it to the general membership?

Jason – As the person conducting the general membership meeting, I will include a mention of this and mention that it will be discussed at the next council meeting so they can show up for public comment if they want.

Danielle – What would be your hesitation?

Paul – Well I haven't read it.

Jason – Resolution itself just links to the agenda itself.

Kevin – The resolution doesn't ask for commitment if that helps.

Soheil – Yeah I faced the asking for permission this afternoon.



Paul – Yeah I couldn't read it.

Jason – Yeah, motion at hand is to table this agenda item. Motion passes with four in favor, Danielle against. Last item – quick blurb on GSA selected works exhibit?

Lauren – There was an exhibit on the fourth floor of the library with a nice event to advertise it. Library's interested in holding it again for spring semester. We need to find graduate students to fill the displays, then it will be up all spring semester. Library is happy with the idea. We need to send out a call for applications, figure out how to decide who presents. Hardest part is trying to visualize your work, but it's great.

Jason – We need three names by Thanksgiving so we're sending out a call for applicants.

Eddie – Last time people graduating and leaving often did it and said visualizing their work really helped.

Jason – Shoutout to Brian O'bruba especially for his support. Motion to adjourn.

Lauren – motion

Paul – second