

UC Merced Graduate Student Organization
gsa@ucmerced.edu

Executive Council Meeting

March 08, 2019

Grad Pad (SSB 350) 12:00-01:30 PST

Agenda:

1. Call to Order, Approval of meeting agenda (<3 min)
2. Announcements from Basic Needs Coordinator
3. Public Comment Period (Aim for 3-min-per-person)
4. Round-table updates from Executive Council representatives (>10 min)
5. Discussion of GSA 2018-2019 budget
6. Gather ideas on things to do moving forward

Minutes:

Minutes recorded by Lorenzo

1. Call to Order, Approval of meeting agenda
Present: Lorenzo (IVP), Lauren (Treasurer)
Not enough members present for quorum.
2. Opening Remarks - Internal Vice President
- Thank you everyone for attending, a goal of this meeting will be to gather ideas on topics that graduate students think are important and to hear some announcements from the basic needs coordinator.
3. Announcements by Cassie Gunter cgunter@ucmerced.edu (GRC Coordinator) on behalf of Bavneet Kaur bkaur23@ucmerced.edu (Basic Needs Coordinator)
- Food security is among the most important basic needs and UC Merced has a variety of resources available to help students (including graduate students!) We don't want our students to suffer if they can't afford enough to buy food.
- There are 3 notable food security programs: Bobcat Pantry, CalFresh, and the Tri-College Food Distribution
 - Bobcat Pantry
 - In 2019 to date, there have been 212 graduate student visits to the pantry, which is proportional to the undergraduate utilization (if not a bit higher.)
 - The pantry is open from 1:30-4:30, Mon-Turs. It is recommended to go early in the week, as the pantry is re-stocked at the beginning of each week.
 - Bring a re-usable bag and your cat card.
 - Every student is given points to spend (each week). Different food items have different point costs (meats cost more, produce costs less).
 - (Remark from student in audience: Students are given 5 points each week. Sometimes, food is given freely if it is reaching its expiration date.)
 - CalFresh Signups
 - As March is National Nutrition Month, there are many events going on regarding food security on campus.

- One of these is signups for CalFresh (SNAP aka food stamps).
 - This is a state program that is only available to US and CA residents. Most graduate students should qualify income-wise.
 - Produce-on-the-go accepts CalFresh
- Tri-College Food Distribution
 - All students are eligible to use the Tri-College Food Distribution, held MONTHLY (3rd Friday of every month) from 10-2 at the Merced College Tri-College Center (off of G-Street).
 - It is also open to the public.
 - They have large food items including whole chickens, cheeses, etc.
 - Bring your ID
 - If you have a transportation issue, Cassie G. can serve as a designated pickup person (contact her).
- Please reach out to graduate division/Cassie/Basic Needs if you have any comments.
 - Please share with your colleagues!
 - Also, the Basic Needs committee needs a graduate student representative!
4. Public Comment Period
- Public comment regarding general sentiment of dissatisfaction with GSA from CIS students. The students feel like the GSA is a joke.
 - Comment from EECS student who wishes to learn how to establish a graduate student club.
5. Round table updates from EC members
- IVP - From DA (Lorenzo)

From the first and last DA meeting shortly before the close of the semester:

 - Passed a motion for the EC to draft a letter condemning the proposed Title IX rule changes.
 - 2018 budget was not passed due requests for clarification in the “incidentals” category.
 - Motion for expansion of the travel awards budget was not passed
 - Motion for expanding of the sponsored events fund to match GSO was passed.
 - GSO and Sponsored Events were evaluated for eligibility and passed along for a vote by web form
 - Treasurer (Lauren)
 - Working with Cassie to create a schedule for submitting reimbursement requests for sponsored events, to ensure that clubs don't get left out.
 - Currently working with Finance Office to make sure that we are in compliance wrt. events/GSO disbursements
 - Clarification on EVP travel funding in the budget: It is currently a placeholder for a future contingency if EVP travel stops being covered by the Dean/GradDiv. Currently it is allocated in the budget but is not being used.
 - Clarification on “incidentals” category: It is to allow to give GSA flexibility to cover expenses as they arise such as: items in the Grad Pad that need replacement, events that have higher costs.
 - Currently travel awards account for >50% of the budget.
 - As the student body grows, our allocations from student fees will grow and we will be able to add to sponsored events in the future.

6. Gather ideas on things to do moving forward
 - Some comments regarding the nature of student fees for gym membership. Have heard reports of people who have successfully opted-out of gym membership fees in return for not being able to access the gym. Currently, graduate student's don't pay athletic fees. Unsure about how to go about changing overall gym membership to opt-in. This would be a good candidate for something to poll overall graduate student interest.
 - 2019 elections, invite Tawana Parks to the next GSA meeting to explain how to handle spring elections.
 - Consider an external poll to ask students what they are interested in / what GSA can do for students.