

**GSA Executive Council Meeting Minutes**  
**February 18, 2020**  
**3:30pm-4:30pm**  
**SE1 298**

Minutes prepared by Jordan Collignon

Meeting moderated by Ritwika VPS

**Members in Attendance**

- Ritwika VPS (Co-President)
- Cerena Lee (Internal Vice President)
- Alexandria Pabst (External Vice President)
- Jordan Collignon (Internal Communications Officer)
- Shayna Bennett (Treasurer)
- Jonathan Anzules (Academic Affairs Officer)
- Maria Ramirez Loyola (Climate Diversity & Equity Officer)
- Phoebe Coy (Applied Mathematics Delegate)
- Sammy Villa (Quantitative & Systems Biology Delegate)

**Furniture for the GradPad**

- The GSA is writing a letter to Vice Chancellor Nies about what furniture should be included in the GradPad. Given the limited amount of space, the GSA should be strategic about this.
- A suggestion was to include a napping station.
- For the kitchenette, we have a microwave and a Keurig machine for coffee. It is suggested that we get another coffee machine as well as a toaster oven. Shayna will focus on the procurement of the machine.

**GSA Elections**

- Attached to the email containing the closed meeting agenda is a suggested timeline for the election. Tawana has asked Alex Navarro to assist in the process. Tawana should be included in the next GM meeting to talk about how to carry out the election process.
- We also need to form an elections committee, specifically with people who will not be running in the election itself. There should be around 2 or 3 people on this committee, one of which is the elections commissioner or elections officer as stated in the Bylaws.

- It is suggested that we open up to people who are interested in being part of the elections committee. Info on this should be sent through email.

### **Should the EC Minutes be Public?**

- Making the meeting minutes public is a standard for transparency of an organization, but the details of the meetings can contain sensitive information.
- **Proposal: Make the closed meeting minutes available to the public, subject to the following redactions:**
  - **People’s names are left out of the minutes.**
  - **Anything “off the record” should be left out as this is sensitive and could be used against the GSA.**
  - **The closed meeting minutes will only be made public after redactions are made and approved by the entire Executive Council.**
- **This proposal was voted on and passed unanimously by the Executive Council.**
- Meeting minutes as they are will be sent to the GSA only. Once the above steps have been taken, approval should be acquired before making the minutes public.

### **Comments about Quorum in GSA Meetings**

- Quorum is unclear between the EC and DA. It appears that the EC has an established quorum for voting on important items (a minimum number of officers are required to be present to consider passing legislation). However, it was stated in previous minutes that the DA has no quorum for voting.
- Currently the quorum for EC meetings is that half of all EC officers must be present to approve legislation.
- The GSA Constitution states that quorum in meetings is established in the GSA Bylaws, but it depends on the item in question being voted on.
  - Bylaws amendments have to be approved by the DA via a majority vote.
  - Officers shall be elected by a plurality vote.
  - Replacement, and appointment of officers are done by majority vote.
- There is no quorum specifically stated for voting on other forms of legislation.
- An amendment to the Bylaws should be considered to clearly establish a quorum in all GSA meetings.

### **DA Meeting Summary**

- The EDI proposal was approved by the EC, but was set aside in the DA so that members of the DA can ask questions about what was being voted on. This was caused by a disconnect between what was discussed in EC/Gen meetings and what was voted on.

More communication on items approved by the EC is necessary for the DA to vote confidently on the same items.

- In addition, there was confusion regarding if the GSA needs to vote on items involving a collaboration with outside organizations.
- The item to be voted on was for the GSA to advertising events hosted by EDI; one of these events is the Graduate Student Free Speech Week.

### **Rock the Vote**

- The primary elections are coming up. It is suggested that someone work on sending out info regarding how to vote in the upcoming election. This person can serve as an ex-officio officer.
- It was strongly suggested that international students do not get involved in the process of sending out this information as this could have negative repercussions on citizenship or entry into the US.

### **Letter to Mark Cunningham**

- Another draft of the letter has been sent out to the GSA for suggestions. This will be the last round of edits as it is planned to be sent out Wednesday. A couple suggestions were brought up in the meeting.
- It will be helpful to start out in each section with what has been working well before going into what has been a hinderance or a larger issue.
- Parking issues are getting more apparent: the cost of parking will be going up by \$5 next year. Graduate students pay the same price as faculty and staff for permits; the main difference is that a larger proportion of faculty and staff can afford the expense. With the pay working graduate students not increasing, the cost continues to add up.
- The points above are suggestions to be included in the letter to Mark.

### **Amendments Proposals Concerning EC**

- The following amendments are being considered. It is suggested that the EC and DA read and comment on them before the next DA meeting.
- An appointment process is not specifically mentioned in the constitution or bylaws. Therefore, a bylaws amendment is being proposed to establish the process. This will be voted on in the next DA meeting.
- There is no formal process listed in the bylaws for the general membership to propose legislation in GSA meetings. A bylaws amendment has been drafted to establish this process. This will be voted on in the next DA meeting.

- Currently, bylaws amendments only require approval by the DA. A constitutional amendment is being proposed to have all future bylaws amendments require approved by both the EC and DA. This will be voted on by the entire student body in the upcoming GSA election.
- Other amendments regarding the DA elections process and voting procedure for confirming new officers are also included for the DA to review.
- Comments about the proposed amendments should be directed to Jordan and Phoebe before the votes are made.
- Two future amendments suggested: one related to the officer handbook being drafted, and one for clearly establishing a quorum in GSA meetings.

### **Next GSA Event**

- A Pizza & Game Night is being planned as the GSA's 2<sup>nd</sup> event of the semester. The time and location is March 19<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm-7:30pm in COB2 290.
- There will be pizza from Dominos.
- Games from the GradPad will be brought over. Anyone who wants to bring games for the event can do so. The GSA can keep them in its office up to the event.
- The first event in the beginning of February had around 100 people coming in and out. Therefore, we expect a large crowd.
- Other room suggestions were given: Pavilion 104, KL169, KL 355. The capacity of COB2 290 is around 40 people, whereas the others listed here are a lot greater and are open space. Will we need a room this size, and do we have to pay a fee to use any of them?

### **Committee Forming**

- The GSA presidents will clarify things about forming working groups for GSA members to have more focused discussions. This was brought about due to a mix-up between the GSA collaboration between a non-profit and the idea of establishing a working group.
- For example, a working group could be formed regarding housing:
  - A small subset of the GSA will focus on housing
  - The group will bring back info about housing to the next GSA meeting
  - Issues are delegated within the group; it is not required that the entire GSA be part of the working group.

### **Other Points not on Agenda**

- The UC Regents have not yet voted on cohort-based tuition
  - There will be another meeting in March to discuss and potentially vote on this.

- The measure will not affect graduate students
  - However, undergraduate students will be affected.
- The Graduate Dean is working on academic strategic plan, which includes the push for UC Merced to R1 status.
- Some questions about funding discussed in the last General meeting have been addressed. Ritu will send an email to the GSA to comment on. Please send comments within the next two days since the Dean wants to have this information by the end of the month.

**Items Voted on (1 item)**

- The Executive Council Voted unanimously to have the closed meeting minutes be made public once appropriate measures have been taken to protect GSA officers from having information being used against them and the organization. Approval of any future closed meeting minutes, including this set, should be approved by the Executive Council before being added to the GSA website.

**Items Tabled for Later**

- Summer Funding Discussion

Meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.