

# GSA Executive Council Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2020

3:30pm-4:30pm

Via Zoom

Minutes prepared by Jordan Collignon

Meeting moderated by Ritwika

## **Members in Attendance**

- Ritwika VPS (Co-President)
- Brandon Batzloff (Co-President)
- Alexandria Pabst (External Vice President)
- Jordan Collignon (Internal Communications Officer)
- Shayna Bennett (Treasurer)
- Maria Ramirez Loyola (Climate Diversity & Equity Officer)
- Ahmed Correa (International Affairs Officer)
- Mark Seelos (Solidarity Officer)
- Joseph Dube (Public Relations Officer)
- Phoebe Coy (Applied Mathematics Delegate)
- Shannon Proksch (Cognitive Sciences Delegate)

## **Ongoing Online Social Events**

- Ritu, Shayna, and Jordan met last weekend to brainstorm ideas for events that the GSA can host.
- A document containing these ideas has been forwarded to the rest of the GSA. We would like EC and DA members to add their ideas.
- Once we have enough ideas, we need to put together a detailed plan on how we will carry out these events. This can include a calendar, who will host, how frequently, etc.

## **Delegate-led Happy Hours**

- The Applied Math and CogSci departments have similar events for their students. What are departments doing?
- Phoebe and Shannon will address this at the next DA meeting. Would like to hear from other DA representatives about other events are being done in each department.

## Preparing for GSA Transition

- The term for this GSA cohort will be ending next month, and students who are elected next week will be replacing us. We would like to make sure they can enter the GSA with an idea of what their responsibilities are.
- As part of the transition process, we are required to talk to the incoming representatives, give them a rundown of what has to be done, and give them pointers on how to handle these tasks. It was suggested that each officer could share their contact info with the student taking their place; this will likely make the transition easier.
- It was suggested some time ago that having a plan put together in a written document will help new officers settle into their positions. This document will be the written form of the conversation that should happen during the transitional meeting. Moreover, it should serve as a guide for all incoming officers.
  - Alex will send an example of what this is going to look like for the EVP position. This can be a template for other officers to use as they draft what needs to be done to fulfill the responsibilities of their office.
  - We would like all the current EC officers to submit a draft of their part of this document before the transition. That gives us about a month to have a polished product.
- It's possible that a position may require handling sensitive info, or things that shouldn't be shared publicly. In that case, don't feel obligated to include this info in the document. A point was raised about handling committee appointments. Usually there will be a contact person in the committee, having their contact info on this document would be fine, but info on what the committee discusses may be confidential and should not be included.
- As the years go by, these documents can be updated by each cohort as new roles and responsibilities are added and modified.
- It was also suggested that members of the DA should draft a similar document for the entire DA. Instead of having each DA member draft a part, have the entire DA work on it collectively.
  - Usually, the same group of DA members are showing up; the rest of them have stopped coming to meetings. Brandon has been speaking to several of these members to form their own official group to represent their departments so that each department can elect members to the DA instead of the GSA.
  - It was noted that having DA members assigned to other committees improves campus engagement.
- For filling committee seats, they don't always have to belong to someone in the GSA Council. We would also like to discourage the practice of having GSA presidents serving on lots of committee's simultaneously.

- For handling updates to the GSA website, it will be helpful to give the rest of the GSA access to edit the website. Jordan has been handling most of the updates this year, but other officers have more direct knowledge on different topics, and so assigning an officer and delegate to certain sections of the website will make it easier to keep the website up to date. Jordan should figure out a way to teach the new officers on how to use the website.

### **Update on Elections**

- Voting starts Wednesday. The ballot is ready, and info about the referendum is online.
- There are several positions in the DA that nobody is running for.
- Three EC positions: EVP, Treasurer, and Solidarity Officer, have nobody running for them.
- It was recommended that the president can appoint officers to fill these positions if they are left unfilled after the election, but the bylaws state that the GSA should appoint officers after the special election in the fall.
- The EVP office is the most critical position that no one is running for.
  - One of the bylaws that passed the DA last month was allowing the EC to delegate tasks to the rest of the EC officers. This could make it possible for the duties of the EVP to be fulfilled, but it's a lot of work. It was suggested that the EVP office be split into two positions due to the level of responsibilities. A proposal to include an office for legislative rep was being drafted in the past but has not been presented yet.
  - The bylaws make it unclear on whether a temporary appointment is valid for filling officer seats. However, the bylaws can be interpreted to be preventing in general appointments until after the special election.
- The office of the Treasurer is not as demanding, so another officer can assume the responsibilities here.
- A conversation on how to legally handle vacancies over the summer has been tabled until later; will also likely come up at the transitional meeting as the same may be needed to address the vacancies of the Treasurer and Solidarity Officer.

### **Discussion on how the U.S. Halting Immigration will affect Student Enrollment**

- President Trump recently signed an executive order suspending immigration into the U.S. The GSA believes that this order may severely drop international student enrollment for the fall semester.
- We could contact Grad Div to see what their take is; it's still uncertain what might happen.

- The order affects immigration visas and possibly student visas, but non-immigrant visas are unaffected.

### **Semester Newsletter**

- Ritu and Jordan need to send this out to the grad student body by the end of the semester. We hope to have a draft of this letter by next week. If there are any other topics that should be mentioned in the letter, please add them. This letter has been shared with the rest of the GSA so everyone can edit if needed.
- An absolute deadline to have this sent out is before the transition on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Would prefer to have this done a week before.

### **Comments on GSA Functioning**

- Alex thanks everyone for their hard work despite the COVID-19 pandemic throwing things out of control.
- Dean Zatz noted that this is the first time in years that the GSA was very productive, while undramatic yet functional.

Meeting adjourned at 4:22pm.