

## GSA General Membership Meeting

November 21, 2019

SSM 117

Minutes prepared by Jordan Collignon.

Meeting moderated by Ritu VPS.

In attendance:

- Ritu VPS (Co-President)
- Jordan Collignon (Internal Communications Officer)
- Shayna Bennett (Treasurer)
- Alexandria Pabst (External Vice President)
- Joseph Dube (Public Relations Officer)
- Phoebe Coy (Applied Mathematics Delegate)
- Taylor Fugere (Management of Complex Systems Delegate)
- Shannon Proksch (Cognitive & Information Sciences Delegate)
- Okan Ciftci (Materials & Biomaterials Sciences and Engineering Delegate)
- Marjorie Zatz (Dean of Graduate Studies)

### **1:00-2:00pm: Open Session**

Additional Notes:

Phoebe is a member of the Referenda Fee Committee. Any questions about the referendum process should be directed to her.

### **Food Pantry Referendum**

- The Bobcat Pantry opened in Fall 2018, which started as the pilot program Pop-up Produce to connect students to food resources on campus.
- Stats on Bobcat Pantry
  - 21% of graduate students have trouble purchasing food.
  - 61% of students experience some level of food insecurity.
  - The Bobcat Pantry had close to 10,000 visits since opening in August 2018. Approximately 800 of these visits were by graduate students.
- The Bobcat pantry will continue to receive funds until spring 2022, with a chance that funding may not be renewed past this date.
- A lot of this food comes from the Merced County Food Bank
- \$1500 a week can feed 400 students a week.

- New Fee Information
  - An \$8.00 fee would be added in addition to all campus fees that students currently pay.
  - A \$4.00 fee would be added for students enrolled in the summer.
  - The new fee would be enacted in 2021.
  - The fee would increase by \$1 every two years, which is to adjust for inflation. The fee will be capped at \$12 regardless.
  - Suggested that SFAC review the new fee annually.
  - Unclear whether graduate students will also receive Bobcat grant.
- **Motion to approve the referendum was passed unanimously.**

### **Reviewing the Process for Approving Changes Proposed by General Membership**

- We believe that it is important to have a clear process in place
- Would something like this have to go through the student body?
  - Placing this item on the ballot?
- Will this fee be assigned to graduate and undergraduate students separately? If so, would there have to be two separate votes?
- This existing process ensures that everyone can agree on the referendum.
- If the GSA wants to place a new measure on the ballot, it would need the approval of the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly.
- If someone in the general membership wants to propose an item that should be placed on the ballot, the proposal would have to be brought up to the GSA President, and voted on by the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly.
- The GSA currently has no guidelines about how to approve the guidelines by the Referendum Fee Committee.
- **Motioned to bring any general membership items proposed to the president and IVP of the Executive Council for it to go to a vote in the Executive Council and Delegate Assembly, to gain approval of both groups for the proposal to be placed on the ballot. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### **Veterinarian Bill**

- In the past, medical school students had the ability to defer loans, while veterinarians could not.
- An entry in this bill also included the ability for veterinarians to defer loans.
- **This bill has already been enacted. Therefore, no vote was necessary.**

### **Updates on Fellowships**

- Existing internal fellowship amounts have been changed to match that of TA/GSR fellowships.
- Dates are being finalized for continuing fellowships.

- There is also a proposal for professional development funding from UCOP for the purpose of supporting Ph.D. candidates and underrepresented graduate students.
- There will be \$30K in fellowship funds, with an additional \$10K for professional development programming.

### **Plans for Next Semester**

- The GSA should work on making itself more accessible to other graduate students.
- In the budget, there is \$1,000 allotted for small events for the rest of the academic year. Since the budget was approved earlier this semester, this fund has not been touched.
- We should talk with Cassie about what events we have in mind for the rest of the semester and write up a plan for each of them.
- It was suggested to have a recurring event, around once per month, involving bagels and coffee. Pizza is also a good food option.
- The QSB program hosts a similar event called Mix & Mingle.
- Another suggestion was to wait until the start of the Spring semester in January, where we could host a “welcome back” party.
- We could also have board games and other activities available
- Either way, we should plan these events now while we have enough time. Can we reserve the GradPad, a room in the library, etc.?

### **Voting on Candidates for Executive Officer Positions**

- Applicants were present for an interview with other members of the GSA Executive Council and Delegate Assembly. They briefly explained why they wanted to join the Executive Council and what makes them a good fit for the positions they applied for.
- **The Executive Council made a decision and voted unanimously on candidates for all three vacant officer positions. The three individuals chosen have been notified by email of the position they have been selected for. All other candidates have been notified about not being selected.**
- **Approval by the Delegate Assembly to confirm these three candidates is pending.**

Successfully completing all items on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.