

GSA General Membership Meeting Minutes

April 28, 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)
- Shannon Proksch (Cognitive Sciences Delegate)
- Charles Nies (Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs)

CAPS Presentation: Dr. Tania Gonzalez + Q/A

- In the CAPS office, there are four staff psychologists, two behavioral therapists, two administrative assistants, and two providers bilingual in Spanish and Mandarin. The number of staff overall has increased since last spring. There are an additional two staff psychologist positions open. One mental health provider is able to offer help to 750-1000 students.
- [CAPS services](#) continue to be offered to all students via Zoom or by phone during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - All [support groups](#) are still being held as scheduled
 - The graduate student support group is being held over Zoom every week.
 - The international student support group is being held over Zoom every other week.
 - Contact Cassie from Grad Div if you would like to join either of these groups.
- Between the months of May-Dec 2019, 16% of all visits were by grad students. Between the months of Jan-Apr 2020, 17% of all visits were by grad students.
- There was a comment that students felt like they needed to be in a crisis in order to get service. It was pointed out that staff schedules were set to take appointments for 6 hours each day, and these were filling up.
- [TAO](#) is used as an additional tool to supplement therapy sessions.

- Live-help is another tool for students with UC SHIP. There is a \$15 co-pay for appointments. It was mentioned that issues were reported with this tool which have been fixed. If there are any other errors, contact Tania Gonzalez or Crystal Reed.
- CAPS is on track to move to a new building in June 2020. The new space will include a separate waiting area for graduate students to use. This is due to comments and concerns about graduate TAs being noticed by their own students.
- A future project is to bring a clinical training center to campus.
- CAPS is also working on a healthy minds study:
 - A survey will be sent to all students at UC Merced.
 - The goal of this study is to use the data to develop a strategy for tackling mental health issues.
 - A comment was made regarding the transparency of the study. Students should know exactly what the study is about and what information will be requested before participating.
- The [Calm app](#) is additional resource that was recently made free to all UC Merced students, faculty, and staff. A notification from the Vice Provost's office was sent out within the week mentioning the app. Users can log in with their UC Merced SSO.
- The [American Psychological Association also has resources](#) to manage stress, anxiety, and depression.
- It is important that the GSA and CAPS work together to understand just what students are experiencing during their time at UC Merced. This will help CAPS determine what resources will be the most effective.
- For any questions about CAPS, its services, or the information presented in this meeting, please contact Tania Gonzales at tgonzalez23@ucmerced.edu or Anthony Garrison-Engbrecht at agarrison4@ucmerced.edu.

Update by Charles Nies

- On March 27, the CARES act was enacted, and as a result, UC Merced will be receiving stimulus money. 50% of the money given will be used to support students. This money is limited and will need to be spent wisely. This funding must be spent by the end of the academic year, which in our case is by end of the summer semester.
- Students who are Title IV eligible can receive stimulus funds. Those who are eligible include those who are US citizens, who have not defaulted on loans, and men who are registered with the Selective Service system.
- Students have been asked to fill out the FAFSA to determine if they are eligible to receive this funding. International students, and undocumented students are not eligible. It is unclear if graduate students are eligible since the info to determine eligibility is in the FAFSA. UC Merced is still able to offer funding to all students through Basic Needs and food assistance.

Follow up on GSA Online Event Planning

- A more concrete plan and calendar for hosting events has been created and is available to GSA officers and delegates. We are now looking for students to be the hosts for these events. The activities within the calendar include the following:
 - Weekly Trivia Night
 - Speed Googling
 - Community media submissions. These shall be done in a way that complies with social distancing protocols.
 - COVID-19 Exercise Challenge
 - Walking Trail Challenge
 - Cooking Challenge
 - Board Game and Video Game night
 - We need to find someone who is into gaming and can help us with live streaming. It was suggested that Twitch would be a better platform to host this kind of event.
 - Jackbox Games
 - Can host for up to 8 people at a time per host
 - Arts and Crafts night
 - Can be a “bring your own supplies” event or a video guide.
 - Happy-hour social hosted by each department
 - Weekly writing checkup
 - Movie night
 - A small group of officers tested [Netflix Party](#), which has a chat window and the movie synchronized between everyone in the party. You must have a Netflix account to join the party. An email was sent out regarding instructions on installing the extension on Google Chrome.
- Now that the GSA has an [Instagram](#) account, we would like to start populating our page. It was suggested that the GSA should post pictures of the GSA officers and delegates coming out and coming in, with a short description of what they did while in the GSA, as a way of thanking them for their service. Please spread the word to the rest of the officers in the GSA so that they know what we are doing.
- The GSA website also has a form where users can provide feedback about the website itself. As the GSA posts its events on the website, we would like to hear from others on what’s working and what’s not. <https://gsa.ucmerced.edu/form/website-feedback>
- Shayna and Jordan are looking for participants to test their games. Shayna is looking for people to participate in trivia. Jordan is looking for a group of participants for testing Speed Googling. Please contact either one of them if you are interested in joining the test implementations before they go live.

GSA Officer Guidebook

- Shayna emailed a draft of the Treasurer's guidebook to the GSA. What should be in this guidebook for each officer is the following:
 - A brief summary of how things work for the position
 - Where to find paperwork relevant for the position
 - Examples of important forms
 - Formatting for emails
- There will be a folder for the GSA guidebook. One already exists in the GSA shared folder. In addition to the Treasurer's guidebook, the folder also contains drafts of the EVP and ICO guidebooks.
- Jordan made alterations to the GSA logo and constructed a new version of the letterhead for the GSA to be compliant with university regulations. We are still waiting to hear back from the marketing department to see if they approve of the GSA logo and letterhead. This letterhead will likely be included as part of the guidebook. Moreover, the letterhead will be used for future GSA communications with the graduate student body.

Public Comment

- No comments made

Update on GSA Elections and Organizational Logistics

- About 25% of all graduate students have voted so far, which is a much larger turnout compared to the previous election.
- Transitional meeting is coming up. May 14th was a proposed date for the meeting, but it is not yet official and can be scheduled earlier if needed.
- It was suggested that in addition to the Executive Council having a transitional meeting, the Delegate Assembly should also have one. It was also suggested that a meeting with both the EC and DA should happen so that people get to know each other and suggest ideas on how to help improve our connection to the graduate student body.
- Brandon has tried a few times to contact departments without delegates to set up student organizations to represent those departments, but no one has responded.

Other Comments

- There will be a follow-up meeting with Dean Zatz on Wednesday at 3pm that members of the GSA are recommended to attend. Shayna will send out the notes from the previous meeting.
- This is the final general meeting of this cohort. Ritu announced to everyone that it has been wonderful working with everyone as GSA President., and thanks Charles and Marjorie for all the support they gave this year. According to Dean Zatz, the GSA has done an incredible amount of work this year; we may have been the most productive GSA cohort in years.

Meeting adjourned at 4:29pm.