

GSA Delegate Assembly Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2020

1:00pm-2:00pm

Zoom

Members in Attendance

- Adam Binswanger (Applied Math)
- Ben Falandays (Cognitive Science)
- Christopher Bernal (Management of Complex Systems)
- Anuvetha Govindarajan (Physics)
- Aislinn Beam (Psychology)
- Carlisha Hall (Public Relations Officer)
- Jordan Collignon (Internal Communications Officer)

Opening Remarks, Jordan

- Each delegate is the voice of all the students in their department. As such, issues conveyed in the department should be directed to the delegate of that department.
- Noted that it's important to take time this summer for the DA to organize before the fall semester begins.

Department Updates

- Each delegate gave a quick update on the activities of their department. Would this be a routine for all DA meetings?
- It is apparent that much news about the department from faculty is not being shared with students in many departments; it's harder to stay connected on what's happening during the summer. The most recent updates pertain to how to safely reopen and restart research departments. SE1 and Castle already have procedures in place, but we are still waiting to hear back about the rest of campus.
- All students are being encouraged to stay at home as much as possible. Most graduate classes are going to be completely online. Classes are rolling back in-person and hybrid plans to adhere to new social distancing guidelines.
- The MCS department is still new and is gathering feedback from the students. Feedback is usually reported to the graduate group chair, including events that students want to see happen.

- How are departments taking care of the new 1st year students? The Applied Math department originally planned a retreat designed to help 1st year students transition into the program. The Psychology department is figuring out how to host a party for 1st year students to get to know the faculty and colleagues. The Physics department originally planned a colloquium every year with lunch included. All of these programs are being transitioned to a virtual platform.

Updates on Elections Process

- Jordan has contacted every graduate group to verify if each department has the authority to elect their Delegate Assembly representative. Half of the departments replied within the first few days, most don't have primary contacts for this. We are not replacing the seats that are already filled, but we want to replace the ones that are currently vacant. This recent election only filled 6 DA seats out of 16.
- The timing of the pandemic contributed to a low turnout in the DA. Many departments had no students running, and a few departments that usually carry out elections did not complete the process. Three departments are beginning the process now, and we should hear back from each of them next month.
- In addition, some departments that didn't elect a delegate in the DA the year before still did not elect one. Furthermore, those who were interested in running did not know whether to contact the GSA or their department. Both of these issues are contributing to a communication breakdown between the GSA and these departments, so it's important that we know who are the go-to people in each department.
- There was a question about why we are asking for departments to elect a representative at the same time as the GSA election. Mainly, it is more convenient to departments to coordinate their election schedules with the GSA's schedule. This is not always possible, since individual departments can undergo different election processes, and under exceptional circumstances departments may hold elections spontaneously.
- It is not required for the DA to be completely filled. More departments lead to a more balanced dialogue for student and department issues which will hopefully lead to more feasible solutions for the departments affected by these issues.

GSA Event Planning, Carlisha

- The event planning committee met last week to propose a calendar of events which was presented in this meeting for further input from the DA. Mainly the DA was asked to give feedback on the proposed calendar and gauge interest.

- Some of the events include 1st year support groups, Netflix party, workshops, and arts & crafts nights.
- Themed media submissions would take place each month, and students would submit photos or videos relating to the theme on the GSA Instagram. There would also be a grad student of the week showcase.
- It was noted that the international student support group offered by CAPS might overlap with our international hangout group, so we should check that both are on different days.
- DA members are not required to be involved with any of the events, but they are encouraged to participate. Anyone interested in the GSA or general membership who would like to facilitate or host any of these events should email Carlisha.

Assigning an Interim DA Chair

- The delegate elected interim chair will lead meetings and suggest agenda items for DA meetings in collaboration with the IVP. The interim DA chair will also communicate activities of the DA to the IVP, then the IVP will communicate this information to the EC. This position will be active up until the first meeting after the election, at which a vote to appoint a yearlong DA chair will be held.
- The DA unanimously appoints Adam as interim DA chair. (5 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions)

Meeting adjourned at 1:48pm.