



GSA Executive Council Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2021
3:30-4:45pm
Zoom

This meeting is moderated by GSA President Shayna Bennett. Minutes of the meeting have been prepared by GSA Internal Communications Officer Jordan Collignon.

Members of Executive Council in Attendance

- Shayna Bennett (President)
- Benny Nguyen (Internal Vice President)
- Zunaira Iqbal (External Vice President)
- Taylor Fugere (Academic Affairs Officer)
- Jordan Collignon (Internal Communications Officer)
- Karla Seijas (Solidarity Officer)
- Larisa Gavrilova (Climate Diversity & Equity Officer)
- Betsabel Chicana (Legislative Affairs Officer)

Updates since Last Meeting

Zunaira

- The UCGPC wants to be classified as a non-profit. In their last update the UCGPC has been classified as a social welfare group, but has always operated as a non-profit. Having an official classification as a non-profit will also allow any donations to the UCGPC be tax deductible. This can boost funding toward the organization.
- Updates on curtailment:
 - UC Merced has opted out of curtailment, but it appears there is a rumor that staff are being asked to “resign” for a couple years to help the University recover funding lost due to the pandemic. If true, this would be extremely concerning to us.
 - UC Santa Barbara only allows curtailment of employees who make more than \$59K per year. However, word got out that the process for checking for those who fall within any of the tiers for curtailment was not implemented correctly. A consequence is that the university has less TAs employed this semester.

- Send an email to Chris Kello about what is happening with the UCs curtailment responses. Eric Cannon is head of finance in Graduate Division and should also be included in this conversation. Graduate students are given a guaranteed duration of funding as part of their acceptance letter. That funding cannot be withheld.
- The UC Regents are accepting applications for the Student Regent of 2022-2023. Those who are selected will receive full tuition plus a stipend for the year which they serve. No one from Merced has yet to be named a Student Regent. Hopefully this is the year where that will change.

Karla

- The Union is hosting a couple workshops this week. This Thursday there will be a [town hall](#) with the Parents and Caregivers working group at 12pm, followed by an open meeting at 4pm. On Friday at 4pm there will be a [utilities grievance workshop](#). There is a push for a \$100 monthly stipend for all employees to offset the additional cost of utilities as a result of working from home.

Benny

- Contacting graduate student organization on campus, would like to set up a meeting with each of them. Not sure how many of them will be active this semester.
- Applications for GSO funding and Sponsored Events funding are not open yet. All the information has not changed since the last funding cycle. Quy is double-checking with Cassie to ensure everything is correct before moving forward. Normally our funding cycle is in the fall, but was postponed when nearly all clubs went inactive as a result of the pandemic.

Shayna

- Brenda Ortiz would like to set up interviews with a few GSA members. Notify Shayna if you would like to be included in the scheduling.
- Responded to the librarian regarding the email about UC Merced's agreement with Springer to make research articles open access. It would be better for the message to reach the entire campus community, rather than specifically grad students. Shayna will reach out to add the librarian to the general meeting agenda.

IVP Bylaws

- The IVP bylaws will need to be modified more in response to the officer's role transitioning to the assistant of the Delegate Assembly and to remove redundancy of the current responsibilities listed.

- It was pointed out the first responsibility has the same wording as one of the responsibilities of the Solidarity officer. For two different positions, the language used should also be quite different. We want to push for the IVP being the connection between the GSA and GSOs and have a role in the GSO and Sponsored Events funding process. Change the first part to say “To assist the GSOs, DA, and the Treasurer.”
- A motion was made to approve the modification to the proposal for the IVP bylaws.
 - The motion passes unanimously (8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions).
- According to the Constitution, any proposed amendments to the bylaws need to be made available to the graduate student body at least two weeks before the Delegate Assembly can vote on the amendments. A few of us are drafting a new set of bylaws and will include these changes if the draft.
- The bylaws should be put to a final vote at one of the Delegate Assembly meetings. There will be a meeting of the Delegate Assembly on March 16 and April 20. It is recommended that the bylaws be put to a vote at the March 16 meeting in order to keep this vote separate from the end of the election. The proposed bylaws will have to be sent to all graduate students for review by the end of February to comply with existing bylaws.

Diversity Training

- Larisa and Adam are trying to strategize a plan for offering diversity training in the next few weeks. Larisa sent an email to Asmeret to ask for assistance and has not heard back from her yet. A meeting has been scheduled for Thursday to give time to respond.

Spring Awards

- About \$2,000 of funding allocated for the EVP and LAO to travel were not used this year due to COVID restrictions. In our last meeting we discussed the idea of using the funding to honor several graduate students in recognition for their hard work.
- Shayna is checking if UC policies will allow us to use funding for this purpose. Grad Div is open to this discussion.
- Should prizes be awarded in the form of a gift card or a dollar amount? Policies might limit us to awarding gift cards, but students may be more interested in receiving a check for the entire amount instead of allocating it all to a single business.
- Should a committee make the decision who receives each award? If it's a large amount, like \$500, then a committee is important, but likely not for one \$50 gift card to Raleys.
- How should students be chosen for the awards? Are we going to have grad students nominate each other? Are students going to be selected at random? An award should be for recognition of something, thus receiving an award at random for something is very unusual.

- We should first come up with what awards would be suitable and write a description for each of them. How many awards? We are thinking about four awards with a minimum of \$200 for each recipient. Each of the four awards would have two recipients, so possibly \$250 per award.
- Ideas for the awards should focus on Leadership, Community Service, Research, and Social Justice. Gauge how well the nominee for the award fits the category, how they've overcome barriers and adversity, values associated with the mission of the GSA. Grad Div can help us frame the process.
- To make this easier, let's have one group per award write a description for the award they choose.
- A motion was made to approve the names of the four awards and to establish groups to write the descriptions.
 - The motion passed unanimously (8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions)
- The groups will be divided is as follows:
 - Social Justice Award: Larisa and Karla
 - Community Service Award: Betsabel and Karla
 - Leadership Award: Zunaira and Jordan
 - Research Award: Shayna
- Our goal for this task is to have drafts of each award description before the next EC meeting. There should be instructions for applying for each award. A shared document will be edited on Teams; everyone can update the descriptions at any time. If we need to change the name and purpose of any awards chosen, we still have time to do so.
- We should also consider an in-name award for faculty mentorship. We want faculty to be more likely to support their students being involved in the GSA and other service work.
- Similarly, recognize a TAs who has gone above and beyond.

Recap and Tasks for Next Meeting

- Work on the responsibilities of additional officer positions in the GSA.
- Work on getting the award descriptions drafted.
- Decide whether the GSA should approve UCGPC's proposal for classification as a non-profit organization.
- Go over the list of tasks at the end of the agenda. Review which ones have been completed and which ones need work.

Meeting adjourned at 4:46pm.

The first General Membership meeting will be on Wednesday, February 3rd from 4-5pm.

The next Executive Council meeting will be on Tuesday, February 2nd from 3:30-4:45pm.