

GSA EC Meeting Minutes

August 31, 2021

4:00 pm - 5:00pm PST

Zoom

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

Members of Executive Council in Attendance

- Jordan Collignon (President)
- Zunaira Iqbal (External Vice President)
- Benny Nguyen (Internal Communications Officer)
- Binod Bhattarai (Academic Affairs Officer)
- Sarah Downs (Treasurer)
- Aislinn Beam (Internal Vice President)
- Betsabel Chicana Romero (Legislative Affairs Officer)
- Arya Rajan (International Affairs Officer)
- Arabi Seshappan (Solidarity Officer)

GSA supported UAW's Letter Responding to Housing Crisis

- GSA has been tasked with finding (graduate) student testimonies for the next Merced City Council Meeting, Tuesday 09/07, 6PM. Location: City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, Merced Civic Center, 678 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340
 - Please reach out to anyone you know who has been affected by the Housing Crisis to voice their experiences so that the City recognizes and addresses this issue
- Betsabel will meet with a representative from the Union to align their agendas
 - Points of focus: predatory housing, what inclusionary housing looks like

Workgroup & Committee Updates

- Election Commission
 - Met with Enrique and have set the dates for Fall 2021 Election:
 - Nomination period: September 6th - September 17th
 - Deadline for students to accept nominations: September 24th
 - Voting period: September 27th - October 1st
 - Election Results Announced: October 5th
- Grad. Student Rights & Responsibilities
 - Need a draft by end of Week to send to Graduate Council Chair for informal review
 - Will be an agenda item on Graduate Council's meeting on 09/21
 - Will need to vote upon once draft is finalized.
- Events
 - Trying to schedule with Cassie Gunter, Graduate Div.
- Newsletter
 - This year, GSA will send a newsletter at the start + end of each semester.
 - Everyone has met/is meeting with Jordan to discuss yearly plans, this is exactly the content we're interested in for this Welcoming Newsletter.
 - We want some content from EVERY officer, anywhere from 6-10 sentences in length.
 - Additionally, we will include Officer pictures in the Newsletter, so if you have not sent Benny a headshot and a short bio, please do ASAP!
- Social Media
 - Team created: Aislinn, Jordan, Benny, Binod
 - We will trade off days to keep our social media active, especially as we prepare for our Fall Election
- Integrating the Delegate Assembly
 - We had discussed requiring committee involvement via bylaws
 - This year, we will be strongly expecting Delegates to be involved in committees, if all goes well, these expectations will become codified in the bylaws
 - First DA Meeting next Thursday at 1PM, Aislinn will bring this change to them and report back DA's response
- Approving the GSA Budget (small changes)
 - 1 Travel Award rolled over, so there were some slight budget changes from we last viewed the budget.
 - 6 yea, 0 nays, 1 abstain ; Budget passes.
- Advocacy Agenda Items (Goals for the Year as a GSA and as individuals)
 - First meeting after Election, we need DA to approve this Agenda
 - Benny
 - Organize the Email inbox, conflicting sorting systems
 - Make the Events page LIT
 - Aislinn

- Eventually working with GSOs
- Since there is no DA Chair yet, currently focused on assisting the management and independence of the DA
- Sarah
 - Reworking/Evaluating the Travel Award program as it stands
 - Question the efficacy of where we are spending our budget: Are we spending money that students find valuable; Are we supporting events that students want?
- Betsabel
 - Solidify relationship of position to Merced City Council
 - Specifically by talking to and creating relationships with the council members who represent the 6 districts in Merced
 - These council members vote on matters such as inclusionary housing! Or rebuilding older buildings!
 - As students/members of the Merced community, we need to attend these meetings and voice our opinions and concerns!
- Arya Rajan
 - Formalizing and solidifying the Shuttle Service for incoming/new international students
 - Increasing fellowship opportunities for international students
 - This increases the burden international students face as they need to work to fund their studentship (disproportionately as compared to domestic students)
- Zunaira
 - Restarting up the Basic Needs Committee for the year
 - UCGPC, attending the system-wide Basic Needs meeting
 - Connect with ASUCM to further press TAPS to improve bus routes
 - Continue to collaborate with Betsabel, Legislative Affairs, to address Merced-level issues
- Binod
 - Identifying all the committees, Revisit existing list, Analyze how they've been filled in the past
 - Create a system of reporting/accountability for the students who do fill these committees
- Arabi
 - Really spend some effort and time advertising that the Solidarity Officer exists and is a resource.

Meeting adjourned at 5:01PM

Next meeting 09/14 at 4 - 5PM, virtual/in-person TBD