

EC/GA Meeting Minutes  
October 11, 2022  
5:30pm-7:30pm  
KL 232

This meeting was moderated by GSA President, Edgar Perez-Lopez. Minutes of the meeting have been prepared by GSA Internal Vice President, Lorenzo Booth and reviewed by Edgar Perez-Lopez.

**Members of Executive Council in attendance:**

Lorenzo, Annelman, Kotano, Arabi, Edgar, Destina, Jarrod, Yulissa

**General attendance:**

Jordan C., Mark W., Adityaa B., Mohit S., Jonathan A. Beryl A.

1. Welcome by the GSA President
2. Public comment period
  1. Updates about contract bargaining (Mark from UAW-SRU):
    1. All units (2865 (TAs), 5810 (postdocs), and SRU (GSR/fellowship recipients)) have been in contract negotiations for a year now.
    2. Negotiations are breaking down for some of the bigger demands because the UC does not want to meet concerns about items including: cost of living adjustment, class sizes (TAs), mandatory of placement of workers with an advisor in the event of abuses (SRU), guaranteed multi-year appointments, and the main demand: to raise wages such that no worker is rent burdened (defined as rent approx <30% of income).
      1. Recall that all workers across the UC system are paid the same and our contracts are negotiated as one. Also rent burden is increasing in Merced, in spite of the comparative affordability at this moment.
    3. The bargaining table has run its course regarding contract disputes. It is expected that an offer for something like 6% wage increase will be proposed but this is unacceptable in a world with 9% inflation.
    4. Unit executive council has approved language for a strike authorization ballot. The same language will be used for all units. Expect an announcement for the vote in the coming week.
      1. The goal is for ~600 yes votes authorizing the strike which would represent a majority of the academic workers at UC Merced
    5. Strike would result in a cessation of all teaching work and all research work. Strikes are decided because this is the highest leverage point for the UC system and coincides with key fall milestone dates (finals, grading, reporting deadlines, applications, etc.) The strike would remain open until concessions are made
    6. The next phase of union work would be regarding contract enforcement
  2. Questions regarding contract bargaining from EC and public attendees:
    1. Question regarding how bargaining is done
      1. People are elected from each unit on campus, 2 reps per unit that meet with UCOP legal staff. We all have the ability to vote for these reps (internet election).
    2. Question regarding strike expectations
      1. TAs: not expected to submit grades and teach classes. Withholding grades and instructional support is characteristic and required for receiving strike pay in the event of it being necessary

2. GSR/fellowships: withhold on-side labor including lab/field work barring some extraordinary circumstances. Encouraged to not submit publications
3. Students taking classes: Union can't offer any protections for missed classes, so they can't recommend that you stop attending class. So, continue to attend class. Faculty who are allied should consider moving instruction online during the period of the strike.
3. Feasibility
  1. UIC had a successful worker-wide strike
  2. Colombia University had a successful strike despite not having a majority mobilization.
  3. We have labor allies with other unionized organizations that would not cross picket-lines
  4. Prepared text will be offered for communicating to advisors in a respectful and understanding manner
3. No other public comments
3. Updates from Executive Council members (6:15 pm)
  1. President
    1. Tax workshop series proposal sent to graddiv. It would cover lots of things including: how to do taxes (domestic/international), NRST wavers, financial literacy
  2. External Vice President
    1. Attended UCGPC meeting
    2. UC Riverside won a 2-yr research grant to create a mental health taskforce. Proposal titled: "Engaging the academy to address underrepresented graduate students' mental health needs". There is the desire to have UC Merced graduate student participation specifically. 15 people from across the UC will be selected by UCGPC nomination specifically. **Contact Arabi if you are interested, or to nominate someone.** See also: <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/2022/engaging-academy-address-underrepresented-graduate-students-mental-health-needs>
    3. Grad Summit 2022 is an annual event where UCGPC goes to Washington, D.C. to lobby for things that concern graduate students. On November 5, there will be a large zoom meeting that anyone can attend to set priorities for the Grad Summit event. UCGPC will determine who makes the best case and spend the rest of the term incorporating the selected topics into the Grad Summit efforts. To attend or to propose a presentation topic, go to: <https://ucgpc.org/gradsummit>
    4. Updates from UC Merced
 

We held our first events. Other campus are planning events related to the Fall general election. **Add to agenda: Discuss holding townhall for local candidates running for local offices (eg. city council)**
  3. Internal Vice President
    1. There was no DA meeting last month due to academic deadlines and scheduling conflict from IVP
    2. In the intervening time, 4 additional graduate groups have determined their DA representatives
    3. Election ballot for vacant EC/DA positions proceeding slowly due to staff members on vacation, but it is proceeding.
    4. DA plans to consider ways to take a more active role in decision-making in the GSA
  4. Climate, Diversity, Equity officer
    1. Attended first CCCAE meeting (Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Campus Climate, Anti-racism, and Equity). CDO talked with the group

2. No updates from GDACD
5. Internal Communications Officer – Absent
6. International Affairs Officer – Absent
7. Solidarity Officer
 

Updates already conveyed in public comment period. No incoming emails about workplace issues.
8. Undocumented Affairs Officer
 

October 5, fed court decided that DACA legality is going up to lower courts. For existing DACA recipients, reapplying should be enough to continue status. There are no new applicants being accepted at the moment. This creates issues for those entering grad school related to things like: TA eligibility (work permit), fellowships, and a host of other limitations. An idea to survey graduate students to see how this affects them.
9. Treasurer
 

We still haven't decided on timing related to the award cycle. For now we will send out a reminder email 2 weeks before each award cycle is done. Also, need to make a decision regarding RCO/sponsored events, should the deadline be kept to Oct 31 or moved out a bit?

**VOTED:** Decided to keep date as-is, since there will be another cycle next semester.
10. PR / Community Outreach
 

First event was last month, all food was eaten. Our next event is tomorrow in the quad. Churros vendor fell through due to radio silence from the vendor when the school was trying to contact them. Suggestions for next month: movie nite with popcorn from a local vendor, flag football event, Toloma 5K run, Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, (4-8pm) halloween street bash downtown (GSA signed up), DCI event. Two largest ideas: movie nite, DCI workshop.
11. Misc-events
 

GSA is going 50% on pizza for the trivia night event Thursday. Hunter farms event on October 19, GSA will provide snacks.
4. Transformational Impact Fund Budget Review (6:50pm)
 

There are a lot of restrictions on what we can do with the funds. Anything that involves compensating GSA members would have to wait until next semester. Non-personnel requests can be considered now.

  1. Budget item: expanding travel awards. Increase frequency of awards? Increase number of people awarded? Increase amount of award? Problem with increasing frequency is the 30-day period between conference and reimbursement. Also last cycle we had ~30 people apply for 2 slots per school. **VOTED:** Decided to increase the number of people awarded per cycle and the amount of the award.
  2. Other items: Transportation assistance (GROW) would be figured out in future meetings. Graduate student symposium, we can give out little trinkets and gift bags
  3. Public comments for this agenda item
 

Consider making investments for graduate students: consider buying phone/laptop chargers, loaner laptops and things that graduate students need in a pinch. Library loaner laptops are for undergraduates and all get allocated very quickly

For symposium rewards, consider tokens to the gift shop rather than straight gift-bags. "I have enough water bottles". Therefore, students can decide what they need for their scholarship.
5. Invite community candidates for townhall related to fall election (7:20)
 

Time is a bit tight to make this happen. Instead we'll assemble an email with election-related information.
6. Potential guest speakers for Nov December meetings
 

Grad dean for next meeting. DCI speaker eventually (for a general event?)