

GSA EA &GA Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2024
2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
ZOOM

The meeting minutes have been prepared by GSA Internal Communications Officer Morgan Lavenstein Bendall. Notes were taken by Elsie A. Cortes and Morgan Lavenstein Bendall.

Members of the Executive Council in Attendance

- Destina Bermejo (President)
- Koton Babaguchi (External Vice President)
- Adam Binswanger (Treasurer)
- Claudia Johnson Madrigal (Academic Affairs Officer) late
- Morgan Lavenstein Bendall (Internal Communications Officer)
- Mykael Pineda (Candidate for Public Relations/Community Outreach Officer)
- Genevieve Egbunno (International Affairs Officer) LAte
- Jullanar Williams (Climate, Diversity, and Equity Officer)
- Arabi Seshappan (Solidarity Officer)
- Mohit Saraswat (Candidate for Legislative Affairs Officer)
- Elsie A. Cortes (Social Media and Graphic Design Officer)
- Jai Mica Vaca (Undocumented Affairs Officer)

Members of the Delegate Assembly in Attendance

- Jordan Collignon (Applied Mathematics)
- Kunle Adewole (Chemistry and Chemical Biology)
- Rachel Casper (Cognitive and Information Science) idk
- Zachary Malone (Environmental Systems) **ABSENT**
- Emily Cobbs (Interdisciplinary Humanities)
- Ariell Smith (Materials and Biomaterials Science and Engineering)
- Sameen Yunus (Physics)
- Hunter Prout (Sociology) idk

General Assembly Member

- Roman Giglio

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to have our monthly general assembly meeting. We discussed the committees, semester newsletter, GSA elections, and Fee Referendum.

Meeting began at 2:05 pm

Welcome by the GSA President and Delegate Chair - Destina and Jordan

- **GSA Meeting Times**
 - A when2meet has been posted to determine a set meeting time for future GSA meetings (<https://www.when2meet.com/?23450803-3EWkm>).
 - Need every member of the GSA to add their availability.
- **Announcement** (*Issues that concern the General Assembly directly*):
 - Jorge Arroyo - UROC hires graduate students every summer to mentor and support undergraduate students in research programs. I want to attend a meeting to promote the opportunity and answer any questions.
- **GSA Action Items:**
 - *EC & DA*: File out when2meet
 - *By-Laws and Constitution Committee*: Review and update job descriptions in the constitution by February 7th.

Graduate Student Concerns

- Graduate Group Concerns from the Delegate Assembly
 - Issues to the level where they want to hold some focus groups and distribute a survey around their program - believe they share some concerns about inter-program climate difficulties and issues of inequity/inequality which are unaddressed.
 - Concerned about who to go to when options within their program are exhausted - where can they get support?
 - Discussion is ongoing between the graduate group and GSA members Jullanar Williams and Claudia Johnson currently.
 - Suggested collaboration between GSA and the union to determine how to play a role in these concerns and how to provide support - possible relation from strike involved.
 - Issues include decline in funding opportunities (TAships not being offered in fifth year, for example).
 - Main ideas: *anonymous* surveys, third-partying by GSA (prevention of bias), open letter to faculty, collaboration with EJIE

Establishing Communications with Councils/Committees

- CCCAE (under EJIE), we need to establish better communications with these options - meeting notes on their end are not available, and we have not coordinated meetings that include Jullanar Williams as of the present.
- Address any committees/meetings which do not include accessibility options for meetings (such as Zoom), or need to allow for more student involvement

- SWG is another group with current communication concerns - only communicates via in-person meetings, as well.
- If any concerns get particularly serious and are not getting addressed, the Board of Regents is one way we may engage in necessary conversations - the last option if we do not make progress.

Upcoming Meeting about UC SHIP - February 13, 2024

- *Is this meeting open to the public?* Students should know about this meeting, and how it affects them.
- Opportunity for students who may be affected by this to voice their concerns or questions concerning UC SHIP.
- Jai Vaca will attempt to get information on how to access this meeting for students - and will try to get a Zoom Meeting link for GSA.

Semester Newsletter - Destina and Elsie

- Share information about your position, particularly anything important that should be shared - The goal is to get this newsletter out by early February.
- Testimonies, what/why you are in your position, things you have done - something to share with fellow peers and classmates across UC Merced, so they know the GSA has been active in their interests.
- Send your testimonials to Destina Bermejo and/or Elsie Cortes, who are organizing the final draft of the newsletter.

Election Organization

- Elections take place with the following structure
 - Nominations: March 18th-April 3rd
 - Voting: April 8th-April 12th
 - Results: April 15th
 - Retreat: April 20th
- Would like to have the incoming cohort for GSA to be prepared for their upcoming positions before the end of the semester. Leave them suggestions/options for where to pick up as they transition into their positions
 - Suggested date for retreat/transition meeting is sometime in May.
- Adam and Koto are working on the Student Fee Referendum so the GSA officers can get stipends for their work.

Gradpad Fruit Distribution - Jordan, Mykael, Destina

- Currently being done on Tuesday mornings. The schedule is not yet set for Feb 5th onward.
- *Physical requirement:* Carry a crate of fruit from the pantry to the GradPad.

- Could ask Grad Div for their cart to make this easier.
- Jai is going to have someone bring in menstrual products (there was a representative lost)
- Destina will make a sign-up sheet (one for the semester)
- *Action Item: Need to fix a time for doing fruit deliveries from Basic Needs to Gradpad.*
- *Action Item: Need additional volunteers from EC and DA to assist with this each week. This will help us find a time when a good number of people are available.*

GSA Events - Mykael

- Planning a Super Bowl watch party for February 11th, which is dependent on getting a location. If possible, Mykeal will reach out to Elsie to make a poster.
- Need help planning the Research Week Symposium.
 - Koto planned this last year and is willing to help.
- Planning on creating some type of weekly sport event where we would have snacks at.
- We agreed that doing a volunteer-based event would also be good. Destina suggested talking to the community engagement center.


Graduate Student Slack Channel

- It was suggested to have a big slack channel for all the general assembly.

Treasurer - Adam

- *When should we open the Spring Travel Awards?*
 - Roman stated that people usually apply 6 months before.
 - We can open them whenever we want this semester then.
- Adam and Koto are working on the Student Fee Referendum to create a stipend for GSA members. They need another person to serve on their committee.
 - Emily volunteered for the committee.

Committee Discussions - Claudia

- Announcements of any committees to be filled
 - SSHA hiring committee question from constituent
 - Formalize the appointment of Karla Seijas to CACSW
- The gray rows in the Google Sheets are all the inactive committees.
 -  UC Merced_Committees
- Claudia is managing the notes from GSA-represented committee meetings.
 - The person attending should be able to provide an outline of what was talked about and send it to Claudia.

- Jordan says that the GSA is supposed to identify the grad student rep to CACSW based on their charter.
 - Destina is going to ask Graduate Division.
 - We agreed to formalize the appointment of Karla Seijas. We will request that they send notes to Claudia.
- Arabi is asking for delegates for next Tuesday's (2/6/2024) UAW 2865 Monthly Meeting at 4 pm

Union Updates - Arabi

- The overpaying settlement from the strike was settled. If you did not receive a notice, you are no longer obliged to pay it back. If you got a notification in 2023, you do have to pay it but could do it in a payment plan. If you got a notification in 2024, then you do not have to pay for it.
- For strike pay, people do have to pay taxes on it. If you got the lump sum, you should have received a 1099-misc tax form. If you did it the other way, we are working on getting support from Grad Div to do a tax workshop for this.

Grad Div Grad Pad Request

- Grad Div would like to use the Grad Pad on February 14th and 21st. Granted request.

Cultural Show - Genevieve

- Collaborating on this event with Mykeal and ASUCM. There's interest from EJIE to collaborate, which would include the Merced community. We need to fill out a form.

By-laws and Constitution Committee

- We are requesting that all EC members review their job descriptions in Article 3 of the by-laws by next week and provide input on what they think should be changed.
- We are reviewing to see if there are additional amendment proposals for the constitution. We are hoping to have amendments finalized by March 1st.

Cap and Gown Committee

- Destina volunteered to lead this committee.
- We are going to ask students to donate Caps and Gowns.

Meeting adjourned at 4 pm

Note: Jorge Arroyo from UROC did not attend the meeting as planned.