

**GSA EA & GA Meeting Minutes**  
**March 13, 2024**  
**2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**  
**HYBRID**

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)
- Kotonu Babaguchi (External Vice President)
- Adam Binswanger (Treasurer)
- Claudia Johnson Madrigal (Academic Affairs Officer) **Absent**
- Morgan Lavenstein Bendall (Internal Communications Officer)
- Mykael Pineda (Public Relations/Community Outreach Officer)
- Genevieve Egbunno (International Affairs Officer)
- Jullanar Williams (Climate, Diversity, and Equity Officer) **Absent**
- Arabi Seshappan (Solidarity Officer)
- Mohit Saraswat (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)
- Zachary Malone (Environmental Systems) **Absent**
- Emily Cobbs (Interdisciplinary Humanities)
- Ariell Smith (Materials and Biomaterials Science and Engineering)
- Sameen Yunus (Physics) **Absent**
- Hunter Prout (Sociology) **Absent**

**General Assembly**

- Priosmita Biswas

**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.

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**Meeting began at 2:17 pm**

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

- ***Announcement*** (*Issues that concern the General Assembly directly*):
  - Lunch with Chancellor, Dean Hrant, vice chancellor
    - Three action items:
      - Fee Referendum to make GSA positions paid
      - Jumper Monthly Meeting (GSA present at the beginning of the semester)
      - Merced Community Outreach
    - They are working on helping international students find housing.
    - They would like more engagement from GSA to help with outreach to K-12 for showing research on campus tours.
      - The Student Fees Committee organizes with the Office of Leadership, Services, and Career to mobilize grad students.
- ***List of votes for the meeting***:
  - TBD
- ***GSA Action Items***:
  - Send out semester newsletter
  - UCSHIP

**Graduate Student Concerns**

- Graduate Group Concerns from the Delegate Assembly
  - None
- Individual Students
  - None

**UCSHIP - Jai and Mohit**

- Currently, Jai, Mohit, and Emily (undergrad) represent UC Merced. There are representatives from each UC campus.
- The EOP meeting was yesterday(3/12/23) in Oakload.
  - March is when all the insurance changes are decided for the next school year.
- Changes to Insurance for 2024-2025:
  - Undergraduate student premiums are going up 25%.
  - Graduate student will not be effected financially since departments pay premiums.
  - Discontinuing g1 medication and Lyra Therapy
  - Increase to ER visits (\$125 to \$200)
  - No longer need to pay \$50 fee to visit student health center over summer

- There were thoughts of separating undergraduate and graduate plans, but this would not be good for graduate students since there are fewer of us.
- There is a meeting once a month for SAG where we need one graduate and once undergraduate representative.
- They are working on standardizing co-pays.
- Currently students have a say, but the executive team can veto student votes.
- Healthcare center visiting fee is not set for UC Merced.
- They are working on making the student health center \$10 per visit for non-UCSHIP members and \$0 for UCSHIP members.
- Providers overlap on LifeHealth and Lyra.
- We are concerned that wait times for therapy on LifeHealth are really long. CAPS only does short-term care and do not have a psychologist.

### **Committee Discussions**

- By-Laws Committee - Claudia, Jordan, Morgan
  - The revisions to the [By-Laws](#) and the [Constitution](#) are done. We need to send an email out for public comment.
  - In our last meeting (April 17th), we need the By-laws approval vote.
  - The constitutional amendments have to be added to the ballot for the general election.

### **Election Organization**

- They are waiting to hear back from the Office of Student Involvement(OSI) on how voting will be done on their platform(CatLife).
- If OSI doesn't work out, we just need to use third-party software.
  - Jordan proposed that we could have a third party supervise and use Microsoft Forms for the election.
  - We could copy what ASUCM is using Qualtricks to hold their election.
    - Mykael could ask about that.
- We have 40 people to elect into the GSA.
- Destina is going to stop by OSI about elections and update the list server so that no admin is on the list.
- Kotonno will ask if there would be a potential problem with the fee referendum conducting the elections not through CatLife.
- It doesn't seem that CatLife or Microsoft Forms can filter just for graduate students. Both would include a question asking if you are a graduate student or not.

### **Fee Referendum - Kotonno and Adam**

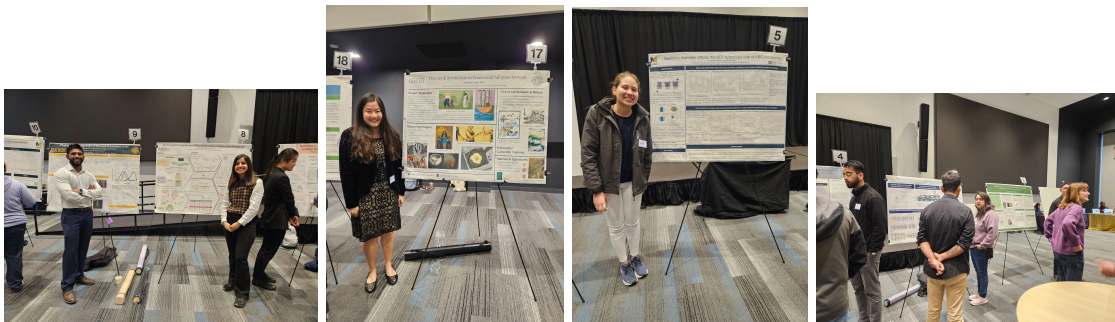
- Revised with UCM referendum committees and submitted the Fee Referendum to UCOP for review.
- We will hear back from UCOP by March 21st and host a town hall meeting to educate graduate students about the Fee Referendum.

### UCGPC - Kotonu

- Kotonu advocated for housing, basic needs, diversity in higher education, mental health, and undocumented students in Sacramento in February.
- Kotonu will be talking to state legislatures in DC that is in April.
- [Budget Housing Request to the California State Senate and Assembly Budget Committees](#) - who do I need to get connected?
- Chancellor discussion:
  - Talked about housing budget and looking for information about living off campus.
  - Basic needs, mental health, mentorship (GSR, NSF)
  - Discussion on recognition for professors that mentor as well as graduate students.

### Events - Mykael

- Research Symposium - thank you for all the volunteers!
  - We gave out poster tubes to graduate students who participated and have extras for the future.



Pictures with some graduate students who participated with their posters by Koto

- Volleyball events
  - Location: Yosemite Lake
  - Time: 6 pm to Sunset every Friday in April
    - Parking is free if they show up after 6:30 pm.
  - Items to bring: chairs, speaker
  - Mykael will be gone the first week of April so someone else will need to help set up that week.
  - Informing graduate students the first week of April
- Multi-Cultural Event
  - Date: April 13th

- Free food for graduate students
  - Need to send an email about this
  - Genevieve is going to ask if there is already a flyer. If not, will ask Elsie to make one.
- Grad Slam Watch Party
  - We are planning on renting out the commuter room and watching it on the TV on May 3rd.
- Retreat Bootcamp is dependent on when elections will be held.
- Yosemite BBQ in May TBD

**Meeting adjourned at 3:55pm**