GSG Assembly Meeting
Jadwin 102
May 10, 2017 5:45pm

The meeting is called to order at 5:54pm.

Approval of April Minutes
Will Smith (Politics Rep) motions to approve the minutes. Robert Decker (French and Italian Rep) seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

University Health Services
- Doctors Valerie Lewis (Associate Director of Medical Services) and Jonathan Pletcher (Director of Medical Services), presenting:
    - Available services to graduate students:
        - CPS (Counseling and Psychological Services).
        - Health Promotion Services.
        - IT (Medical Care).
        - Administrative capacities.
    - Within medical sciences Dr. Pletcher and Dr. Lewis oversee everything from athletic health, outpatient clinic, travel plans, sexual health and wellness services, or urgent care. They have a triage system to evaluate the appropriate level of care needed.
    - Want to engage patients, create a feeling of community. Want to make sure that services respond to Graduate Students needs, and for that they need to hear from Graduate Students how can we improve.
    - Dr. Lewis: 4 months since arrival, coming with a different eye, have been learning how UHS operates and asked a lot of questions trying to understand the landscape. They hope to engage all in learning what are the unique needs for Graduate Students, their families, dependents. Contact them (and Dr. Lewis in particular) for sharing questions, needs or concerns.
    - Want to be a source of information, education and outreach in addition to providing services from UHS.
- Questions:
    - Adam Fisher (Special Events Officer):
        - Last year I got an apendicitis, UHS was closed (Winter recess). It would

be good to have UHS more accessible during year when GS are around.

- Dr. Lewis: Thanks for bringing this up. Obviously grad students have different schedules, and knowing them we can better provide service. Acute episodic care is difficult to provide but a general continued care with someone you have a relationship with is something we want to do. We want to address that. There is variability of staff for various reasons, we try to be mindful of matching demand and volume with staff availability.
- Dr. Pletcher: There's a physician on call 24/7. This is one of the few colleges in the country where there's one.
- Adam: I called, but the message said it was closed.
- Dr. Pletcher: We'll change that message.

○ Mohammad Shahrad (Electrical Engineering Rep):

- Last year a close friend wanted to use CPS but the waitlist was so long. Do you have info on the average waiting time?
- Dr. Lewis: We're aware of that as well. We work closely with CPS but that's not our service line. They're fully aware and changing their systems to be able to change their systems. They're adding triage where there is a provider who at the time of presentation makes an evaluation of the acuity, and schedule an appointment according to that level of acuity.

○ Mircea Davidescu (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Rep):

- When students go on leave for a medical reason is their coverage terminated? That's when we need it the most.
- Dr. Pletcher: We can make the decisions, so we can extend the coverage up to 3 months. We can work to find ways for the student to have longer coverage. But the student has to take the initial steps. Just like healthcare in this country it depends on self-advocacy.
- David Walsh (History Rep): Are there ways of making this easier? I had an issue on my first year during winter holiday, I didn't know where to go, the steps weren't clear. I was not aware until now that there is an on-call physician. Part of the reason is McCosh is a long walk from grad housing so making more clear the resources available in Lawrence, GC, Lakeside, even in town… Let them know that the first thing is "Go to McCosh and call Public Safety". Second comment: Self-advocacy is necessary in the american health system but are there ways to maximize grad students' awareness? E.g. what are the steps for the grad students?
- Dr. Pletcher: Most of this is in the website, but how do we make it explicit? Question for you, what would be the best way to get this information out that is user-friendly?

- ■ David: There is a graduate student portal.
- ■ Dr. Pletcher: In the website you can go to "How do I use our services", but we try to make the website as generalistic as possible. The portal is another way to send messages with Healthcare Providers. Lot of people don't know that but it's available. Not available for family members but working on it
  - ○ Jonathan Balkind (President): How can we contact with questions?
  - ○ Dr. Lewis: We look to you: We're happy to drop in, have office hours (NOT CLINICAL), you can let us your preferred way of contacting us.

Recruitment for the Faculty-Student Committee on Sexual Misconduct:
- ● Jonathan Balkind (President): It's a good committee to serve on, we had 2 new members last year, one is continuing. We're looking for grad students interested in serving. Commitment is three meetings per semester, we would have to vet candidates in advance, it's an important committee and we'd love people to serve on it

Discussion of Annual Giving Collaboration
- ● Jonathan Balkind (President): E-mails were sent in the name of the grad students who gave information. There have been concerns with having names attached to these info, some faculty / students were addressed in this manner which led to an uncomfortable experience, which was unintended. This is something we worked with Annual Giving on, we discussed it here in Assembly. This has been one of the most successful events annual giving has had, they received 32 gifts in 2 weeks; around 400K$, many first time donors, lots of positive feedback, some negative feedback (either to AG or the individuals who filled the form in question). This is obviously important (AG is important for the university), but at the same time we don't want to create problems to the students who participate (AG didn't intend these things to happen). We cannot make it mandatory but at the same time we want to try and get as much involvement as we could. We want to make sure we send the right info to you and everyone else, they want to have communication with us, etc.
- ● Michelle Frazer (Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Rep): I was concerned with AG sending what I wrote (I don't remember it), I feel there was miscommunication not from GSG but from AG, and they should do better especially since it's only 24 e-mails.
- ● Jonathan: That's a discussion we had with Mircea, we need a clear timeline.
- ● Michelle: Even being able to go back to the Google form to see what I wrote would be good.
- ● Eden Consenstein (Religion Rep): We got emailed after sending that. I got correspondence from faculty I know who said: "look what you wrote", when I didn't remember writing that and they even added things I didn't write. This is sloppy at best,

unethical at worst. This was not news from my department like the e-mail AG sent said; it was a letter asking for gifts. These are slimy tactics. My question is: Why didn't they contact us asking if we were OK with these e-mails before sending it to important people? Why does the GSG have to be a part of this? If AG wants students to volunteer great, but GSG as a middle man only adds layers of complexity.

- Jonathan: When AG came to contact us they wanted to reach Grad Students, we wanted to provide a means for them to contact grad students but I also asked myself the same question.
- Mircea Davidescu (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Rep): These are valid concerns and in retrospective I agree, it could have been better clarified. Regarding why the GSG was approached and why it is useful for the GSG to be a part of this: If we received an e-mail from AG many students would disregard it, but the mission of the GSG is to inform the Graduate Student body about things that could be of interest for us, and in this sense the participation seems to be greater when it goes through Assembly.
- Brian Kraus (Plasma Physics Rep): There was an impression early on that this was a requirement. The email said "This is mandatory for Assembly members", afterwards it wasn't, but I had already sent it.
- Mircea: I think I would handle it differently next time. The intention was that assembly members should do at least one of writing or forwarding to the department. That was a miscalculation and it will be handled better.
- Noah Apthorpe (Computer Science Rep): Given that this has already happened, I propose two things.
    - One: AG should send each of the e-mails that went out to the people whose names were used and
    - Two: Write a message from GSG Assembly.
- Michelle: We could still endorse AG and the work they do in that message.
- Eden: This is concerning, people near me are concerned now. People I know got this, people whom I have applied a grant for. This is not great. I think Assembly should reach out to each student whose letter was sent in their name. I asked Vanessa Silva to send an apology to everyone who received my letter.
- Jonathan: Any future collaboration is going to be several months in the future. If you want to rise a motion you can do it, we can reconvene on the matter and solicit opinion, I'd like to hear, in writing, opinions from everyone of you whose emails were sent out on behalf of. I'm keen to continue helping AG because I think it will help us and future grad students, but this is a question for all of us.
- Noah: I move that we get in contact with everyone whose letter was sent.
- Brian: I second.
  Motion passes unanimously.
- Kate Pukhovaia (Academic Affairs Officer): Everybody's names are on those letters as

Vanessa said on April 21, it could be a good idea to ask AG to say we didn't sign those letters.

- Michelle: It may be easier to say we endorse AG but we didn't write those letters and only filled out a form.
- Jonathan: Vanessa has offered to come, since there's clearly a strong feeling on it we'll get in touch with her, figure out what do the letters look like and talk with her about what would the clarification e-mail look like.

Departmental Data Gathering

- Jonathan Balkind (President): We have a proposed survey to gather data about what's going on on each department.
- Kate Pukhovaia (Academic Affairs Officer): This is a survey for me to know what's going on on each department, this is data for me and based on that I want to figure out areas in which I can better serve you.
- Clay Hamill: This is a draft?
- Michelle Frazer (Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences): Should we fill it out or send it to our departments?
- Kate: You don't have to fill it out, do whatever you feel more comfortable with, but by June 14 I need one response per department.
- Jonathan: We thought it would be difficult to get info from departments. We will also ask Grad school about this info.
- Mircea Davidescu (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Rep): Regarding question 1a): Is that the formal number or the average?
- Kate: I'm more interested in the average track. The official info we'll try to get from departments and Graduate School.
- Amitesh Datta (Social Chair): Will these be released?
- Kate: No
- Daniel Kriz (Mathematics Rep): What is this used for?
- Kate: For me to understand which areas are really important, how different departments function and which areas need action. There may be a committee depending on the results.
- Rob Decker (French and Italian Rep): Were you planning on making a report to share with assembly?
- Kate: I will consider it after seeing the results.
- Jonathan: The plan was to get responses back by the next assembly meeting. Last summer we ran digital meetings, with good level of response, we'd like to know if we should do this again this year or we should continue this Summer with having physical presential meetings.
- Mohammad Shahrad (Electrical Engineering Rep): How would this work?

- Jonathan: We'd produce a similar agenda but enhanced and with longer explanations and open document for comments, we'd write responses ourselves, and circulate "minutes" formatted.
- Mircea: Was this better than half full meetings?
- Akshay Mehra (Vicepresident): The question is: Are these meetings useful?
- Jonathan: Should we make a motion?
- Jose Zamalloa (Quantitative and Computational Biology Rep): For the Summer are there present issues that a summer meeting will be sufficient/insufficient for?
- Akshay: Exec still meets weekly. Last Summer electronic votes worked. If we don't have quorum we can't pass anything, and then September we would have to do a backlog of everything.
- Mohammad: Do we have an estimate of people who will attend? Jonathan asks, about 10 people raise hands.
- Amitesh: Motion to make assembly meetings electronic only.
- Clay Hamill: Would it be possible to meet still and then send minutes/motions electronically?
- Noah Apthorpe (Computer Science Rep): Motion to make votes/minutes electronically but have presential meetings.
- Will Smith (Politics Rep): I second.
- Amitesh : I had an earlier motion in favor of having electronic only.
- Jon: Why don't we motion first for the electronic component, and then for presential component?
- Amitesh: I motion to send electronic minutes and agenda in advance and get electronic comments. Daniel Kriz seconds:
- Pass unanimously
- Noah: I motion that we still meet in person for June July and August. Will seconds.
- Mircea: Is there going to be food?
- Amitesh: We may not have budget for that.
- 15 pro, 5 against, 6 abstain. Motion passes.
- Michelle Frazer (Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Rep): Will these be sent electronically even if there is quorum?
- Jonathan: Yes.

Call for committee participation
- Jonathan Balkind (President): We want to draw attention to committee participation again, will send an e-mail with more info.
- Mai Nguyen (Facilities Officer): USLC is really important. We meet with administration, we have voting seats. If you want to influence policy, you should come.
- Jonathan: For context, there are 10 voting undergrads and they have 16 people, we only have 5 voting seats, 5 members, 3 people come on average.

<u>Open Forum</u>
- Akshay Mehra (Vicepresident): There was an e-mail from Josh Wallace regarding GHP, which is a project from GSG that spun-off. They completed a report last year and there will be a summit next week, which is open to all grad students. One of the discussions that came out was the GHP becoming an external entity of the GSG. It would be an external student organization. Josh has some reasons for the GHP not to separate, what are Assembly's thoughts?
- Akil Word-Daniels (GHP): Please e-mail me as soon as possible to talk about that, there will be another chance at the summit. As far as separating, that would come later in time, there may be some collaborations with PGSU and we cannot do that in GSG. That should be discussed later when the ideas are more consolidated.
- Jonathan Balkind (President): If GHP spins-off, we should vote in Assembly regarding sending the data.
- Michelle Frazer (Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Rep): If GHP becomes an organization, how is the membership managed? It could become political, I don't expect it to happen but it could.
- Jonathan: We've had discussions with housing, we'd continue to have Facilities (Mai) there, we'd also be bringing in people from various affinity groups, they would be one voice.
- Akil: As it is right now GHP it is a pretty isolated group, if we make it a student group it can become bigger.
- Michelle: My concern is that this could become political from one side or the other (in particular regarding unionization).
- William Smith (Politics Rep): The GSG has a lot of communication with administration, I'm not sure if a student organization will have as much communication. I'm also concerned that the University may paint it as politicized even if it is not and ignore any valid point GHP makes.
- Mircea Davidescu (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Rep): I think the GSG adds legitimacy to any report made, and I think this association should continue.
- Akil: Again this is a discussion for later. We could always have the GSG support the GHP to have more communication with administration. This would allow us to open up to other organizations that we're ignoring if we don't separate.
- Michelle: Would GHP be allowed to be involved in unionization? GSG can't.
- Akil: I don't know how that would work.
- Akshay: I think it's important to note that GHP is interested in advocacy in ways that GSG cannot do, the idea is to have a group that can make advocacy in a different way from GSG.

- Mochi Liu: I had my own housing issues that's why I'm here. I think housing policy is not accessible to the grad student population, and GHAB, GHP work on these decisions so it should be open to everybody.
- Akshay: We've made open calls for this and we struggle to get grad students to get involved. It's never been limited to assembly members. That raises an issue: We have problems communicating.
- Clay Hamill: That being said if GHP did separate from GSG, we don't know really how it would control membership.
- Akil: These are good points, we want to make bylaws to stop that from happening, we would bring it to GSG.
- Mircea: Let's say GHP does another report, shares the data with another group (PGSU), now our facilities officer is there, is that considered as GSG taking a political stance?
- Jonathan: we asked this and they said no. We would put safeguards in place for that.
- Mai Nguyen (Facilities Officer): We've already put the report online.
- David Walsh (History Rep): On the data issue, is the concern that it would enable other groups to get access to raw data? What is the problem with that?
- Jonathan: Some data is sensitive.
- Hendia Edmund (Health and Life Chair): Is your concern that somebody could use the data to promote pro/anti-union messages?
- Mircea: My concern is that the data could be cherry-picked.
- Akil: That could be a problem, but I don't think it matters whether it is GHP in GSG or not.
- David: I think we can disagree on points and work together on better campus issues.
- Will: Why should it spin off if it doesn't matter? The only thing our constitution says is that we shouldn't take a position, so I don't get why that is important.
- Clay: I agree. What is the difference?
- Akil: I don't think PGSU could use any of the resources.
- Rob Decker IFrench and History Rep): The clause in the GSG constitution that prohibits it to engage in industrial action (my understanding of it) says that the GSG cannot provide materials or endorsement for unionization/anti-unionization efforts. That is totally different of the question of whether or not student groups can support GSG initiatives, including GHP, so it seems to work only one way.
- Clay: That further begs my question.
- Rob: I think the concern came up because members of the GSG exec board wanted to be cautious of the way these groups interact and support each other. The discussion is on how graduate groups support each other. This is a way to make sure GSG is not involved in something that could be read as political.

- Jose Zamalloa (Quantitative and Computational Biology Rep): Speaking for Hugh Wilson from QCB. He's been talking to friends and people are concerned that the fear for deteriorating relations between administration and students seems created by the wording of the communication from the university. This are two adult groups that are trying to improve the environment, so shouldn't the GSG try to unbias the dialogue? Our department (QCB) is conducting research on how do people feel about the communication from the university.
- Rob: One of the positive things of the debate is the collegiality of our conversations and it is important that we maintain that, so far we've been able to do it.
- Clay: I agree also on behalf of PUIC.
- Jose: The university on the other hand should be unbiased.
- Daniel Kriz (Mathematics Rep): They've given information sessions that are supposedly unbiased. Are you proposing a survey to the student body?
- Jose: I am doing a survey, and I am asking if other departments could do it.
- Akshay: One concrete thing we could do is sit with the administration, but we need specific questions: Do we want the university to remain neutral? Do we want to say it's unbiased? We've pushed forward a memorandum of understanding, that could evolve. That's where we see GSG playing a role; leveling the field.
- Mohammad Shahrad (Electrical Engineering Rep): Aren't there rules for what the administration can and can't do?
- Brian Wilson (Chemical and Biological Engineering Rep): There are laws of what they can't do (for example give money to students for not unionizing)
- David: Only during elections, which is what happened in Cornell and Harvard.
- Clay: It only happened in Cornell. Furthermore there are limits to what they say.

Amitesh Datta (Social Officer) motions to adjourn meeting. Brian Kraus (Plasma Physics Rep) seconds. The meeting adjourns at 7:30pm.

Next meeting: June 14th, 2017 5:45pm