

# Graduate and Professional Student Government

## Assembly Board Meeting Minutes

University of Pittsburgh, Langley Hall A219B

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019



### Meeting Summary

- Leadership & Service Awards, and Townhall meeting with Dr. Urban & Dr. Cudd to discuss student issues

### Attendance

#### GPSG Executive Board Officers:

- Rachel Coombs (President)
- Jennifer Enriquez (VP of Committees)
- Crystal Taylor (VP of Communications)
- Yashar Aucie (VP of Finance)
- J. Stephanie Rose (VP of Programming)
- Amanda Leifson (GSA)

#### GPSG Assembly Board Members:

- CSSA
- GOSECA
- ISA
- TASA
- Arts & Sciences 1
- Arts & Sciences 2
- Arts & Sciences 3
- Biomedical

- Dental
- Engineering
- GSPIA
- SHRS
- SCI
- Katz (Part-Time)
- Katz (Full-Time)
- Law
- Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Public Health

#### Absent:

- ANKUR
- Education
- Nursing
- Pharmacy (PhD)
- Social Work

### 1. Call to Order

- President Coombs called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm

### 2. Approval of Minutes

### 3. Old Business

### 4. Reports

- President's Report
  - Vote to Unionize
    - We'll inform you once dates have been chosen
    - Email sent out during the meeting – the vote for the included students will happen on campus during the week of April 15<sup>th</sup>
- Committees' Report
  - Bylaws Proposal
    - Interim Positions in case of vacancy
    - Lottery System for prospective GSAs
    - *Requested that proposal language be handed out beforehand so students could read it*
      - a. Bylaw proposal handed out during meeting, will be sent out during next month's reminder email
- Communications' Report
  - No report
- Finance's Report
  - Travel Grants –
    - Only 5 in February, funded all of them
    - Only 7 in March
  - Supplemental Funding

- Froze money from a GSA who did not attend Finance Committee Meeting
  - Returned money to supplemental funding
- Programming's Report
  - 30 March – Spring Fling (202 tickets remaining)
  - 01 April – Bowling @ Arsenal (13 tickets remaining)
  - 02 April – Movies @ Row House Cinema (38 tickets remaining)
  - 03 April – Pirates Game @ PNC Park Skull Bar (Space available on Waitlist)
  - 04 April – Professional Development Panel (90 tickets remaining)
    - Event includes lunch and a presentation/panel of University resources, initiatives, and opportunities. Additionally, we have reached out to a photographer to try and have professional headshots taken immediately following the panel – this will only be available for students who register and check in before 12:45pm on the day of the event
    - Headshots and lunch are confirmed, \$5 but might be refunded to students
  - 05 April – Mega Grad Collab (48 tickets remaining)
    - Attached are flyers created by the VP of Communications – please distribute them to your respective schools
  - Link for Upcoming Events: <https://pittgpsg.eventbrite.com>
  - Glitches & Concerns:
    - Event Conflicts – what can we do about them? Is there a way to mitigate them, or does it not matter?
      - a. There was a recent conflict of this nature related to the Pirates game, where GPSG was offering tickets at a lower price. We did not have additional space, so we couldn't accommodate additional students
      - b. In the future, what can we do to make sure as many grad students as possible have the same discount and opportunities and avoid undercutting other program/school initiatives?
    - Request for Feedback:
      - a. Any suggestions, questions, or concerns that the Events Planning Committee can take into account for future event planning for the academic year of 2019-2020?
- Executive Administrator's Report
  - GPSG 2019-2020 Executive Board Elections
    - March 15<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>
      - a. Campaigning for Candidates
      - b. Information on candidates is available on our website ([gpsg.pitt.edu/elections](http://gpsg.pitt.edu/elections))
    - March 25<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>
      - a. Voting will be on my.pitt.edu
    - Distribute Flyers, Inform Students
    - Rachel – you can communicate with candidates
      - a. It will pop up on your My.Pitt Portal, you'll vote once
      - b. GPSG doesn't help candidates spread information, but you might hear from candidates about reaching out to students
  - Small Organizations under Graduate Schools
    - Making sure organizations that are not student governments are receiving support from their school's graduate student government
- Assembly Board Member Reports
  - Due to the town hall with Dr. Urban and Dr. Cudd, we did not take reports during the meeting

## 5. Committee Reports

- See full reports on website ([www.gpsg.pitt.edu](http://www.gpsg.pitt.edu))

## 6. New Business

- Leadership & Service Awards
  - Kelsey Cummings

- Camille Davis
- Christy Taylor
- Rachel Vinceguerra
- Introduction to AB for Bylaw Considerations, vote will happen at the next meeting
  - Any changes to the bylaws will come to effect next year
- Town Hall (Dr. Urban, Jen Walker, Dr. Cudd)
  - This year, the focus has been –
    - Graduate Student Mental Health
      - a. Changes to Counseling Center, more graduate specific resources
      - b. Panel Discussion around issues for graduate students
      - c. Faculty, staff members who work with graduate students participated in training for Mental Health First Aid
        - i. Someone from every school were able to participate
    - Graduate Student Space
    - Grad Student Union
      - a. Many of these in concert with GPSG
  - How do you look at/benchmark events like L&S Awards? Are we doing enough, not enough?
    - How do we measure, what standards are we supposed to use?
    - How do we help reach out to graduate students to let them know about the things that we are doing?
    - Common feature of graduate programs is the difficulty of building larger community among grad and professional students (due to the nature of grad students)
      - a. No one has a great solution, but is definitely a topic that is being talked about on many levels
      - b. Some schools are able to do it better, and there are lessons to be learned
      - c. Centralized graduate student government has been successful in bringing to notice certain things (tax issue last year)
      - d. Graduate students want to be involved, maybe not with the grad student governments, but with interdisciplinary events/workshops
    - In the works –
      - a. Space for Graduate Students (Union)
      - b. Positions for better information and data both on graduate students here at the university as well as afterwards
        - i. Transparency around graduate programs is hard to find nationally, so effort is being put in to allow people to make more informed decisions
        - ii. Education that is relevant to the outcomes that people are actually moving towards
      - c. Personalized Education System, connecting graduate students to each other and alumni (Pitt Connect), for mentoring and networking
  - Takeaways from Dr. Urban’s meetings with Presidents, Vice Presidents of GSOs
    - Issue of communication & engagement
      - a. Looking for ways about strategies to make sure students are aware of opportunities, resources
      - b. Helping to get students willing to be engaged, committed
    - Professional Development, Career Services
      - a. Connecting with Alumni
      - b. Work in Progress
      - c. Career Center on campus has little involvement with graduate students, how can we provide resources that are specific to grad student needs
  - Dual Degree Students
    - Issues communicating with both schools, logistics balancing two schools
    - Anything to help streamline the process?
      - a. Not aware of things happening right now

- b. Dual degrees are important and serves students, usually focused on dual degrees for undergrads (BA, Master)
    - c. Problems that students face?
      - i. Wasn't seen as a student in both schools though part of a dual degree program
      - ii. Advising issues, in both schools getting information is difficult
    - d. Katz/Engineering, Social Work/Public Health, Social Work/Law examples
    - e. Centralized Graduate Student Office could help with that
  - Transfer of previous graduate credits/degrees between universities, a standard across schools or share the information about what is going on (related issue)
    - a. Dietrich, Engineering examples
    - b. Problematic advising issue, is something that could be addressed, especially if it is related to recruitment
      - i. Undergraduate case is well documented, and could be better for graduate students
- Mentorship Discussion
- Participated in National Research Mentoring Network
  - 32 faculty members trained on mentoring, and required to then serve as trainers for additional mentors
  - More faculty members now receiving more training on mentorship
    - a. Of course, those that are volunteering to be involved are junior faculty
  - New center for Mentorship
  - How do we influence/convince those who are not interested in training?
  - Students who feel that they have had poor mentorship should be able to have the chance to let people know
    - a. Trying to work on both formal and informal ways of sharing that information
    - b. Not part of tenure review files (graduate student experiences), but Dr. Cudd is interested in starting a conversation about implementing something
    - c. Students providing feedback – some level of trepidation or concern about confidentially measures for students; students have to feel a certain level of comfort to provide a feedback for it to work
  - How does the Provost Office measure Mentorship activity?
    - a. How do you set targets to evaluate moving forward?
    - b. Provost office doesn't have a set standard, each school kind of decide due to the nature of mentorship across disciplines
    - c. Provost office can set the tone, emphasis the importance of it
      - i. Lots of people mentor (faculty, staff, students, outside members)
      - ii. It's about creating an environment that encourages mentorship
      - iii. SCI – students aren't feeling like the have received mentoring; so what counts and how does the Provost office suggest/help take the abstract environment so schools can make concrete actions
        1. Data collected on the program, mentorship is part of the assessment of program
        2. Another way to collect information generally so students are not afraid to bring attention to the environment of a school
    - d. Provost Office – award for faculty members of doctoral student
    - e. GradServu – Pitt is going to participate in the survey again, 40% of student population filled it out last time; compare with 14-15 other universities
      - i. A multi-level communication plan, and an incentive to participate
    - f. Definition for mentor at the university level
      - i. Then train individuals who fit that definition
      - ii. Graduate students don't get the results of the feedback, and they are giving feedback

1. It's a mental health issue; it's hurting graduate students now
  - Mentorship is unique to the individual, it's often a multitude of people
    - a. What resources are available when the base line is not met? What is that baseline? It's a helpful starting point
  - A lot of carrots being talked about, but what sticks are used to incentivize departments/schools?
    - a. Tenure perhaps, annual review
    - b. Sticks may not be the best mechanism
  - How do you assess programs? Generally (all schools) or specifically (by discipline)?
    - All graduate programs (programs, evaluation) goes through the Provost Office
      - a. Budget goes to Chancellor of that school
- Bylaw Discussion
  - Why 3 to 2 years?
    - Difficulty for GSAs to get to that 3-year bar, lessen the barrier to opening the AB to more groups
  - Interim
    - Academic term when term discussed in section F

## 7. Announcements

- Next meeting: **Monday, April 8th at 6:00pm**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:28 pm