

Graduate and Professional Student Government

Assembly Board Meeting Minutes

University of Pittsburgh, 837 WPU

October 28th, 2019



Meeting Summary

- Due to the release of the AAU Climate Survey, the Assembly Board had a discussion about the current issues and practices that various schools are facing when trying to provide students with a safe learning environment.

Attendance

GPSG Executive Board Officers:

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

GPSG Assembly Board Members:

- ANKUR
- CSSA
- ISA
- TASA
- Arts & Sciences 1
- Arts & Sciences 2
- Arts & Sciences 3
- Biomedical
- Dental
- Education

- Engineering
- SCI
- Katz (Part-Time)
- Katz (Full-Time)
- Law
- Medicine
- Pharmacy (PharmD)

Absent:

- Christy Taylor (VP of Committees)
- GOSECA
- GSPIA
- SHRS
- Nursing
- Pharmacy (PhD)
- Public Health
- Social Work

1. Call to Order

- President Coombs called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve September minutes. *Minutes approved. None opposed.*

3. Old Business

4. Reports

- **President's Report** (president.gpsg@pitt.edu)
 - AAU Climate Survey Results
 - Few have heard about the results, few have read the report
 - On back of Finance Report, there are some tables of interest from the report
 - At the Faculty Senate meeting, the Chancellor said the university didn't believe the results in 2015 because it was the first survey, and the results seem high
 - a. Now that they have the same results on a 2nd survey, they believe the numbers
 - b. Rachel is not happy that nothing has changed since the last survey, and is expressing that concern in a meeting with the Chancellor
 - Chancellor agrees that graduate students are experiencing something different from undergraduate (from advisors, PIs, etc.)
 - a. Tomorrow there is a meeting with Dean Bonner to set up grant program for student government boards to deal with this issue
 - Any school specific issues –
 - a. A&S: comprehensive documents about harassment in their department (Psychology), lack of Title IX involvement – will send the Documents to Rachel
 - b. TASA: is there training for faculty?

- i. Dr. Urban thinks that there is, but conversations with faculty members who have said they have never taken them
 - ii. Makes sense considering the undergrad experience, but less for the graduate students
 - 1. At least 39% of graduate students experience harassment, and 80% don't report
 - 2. Hearing from students that Title IX is not working, and are afraid of repercussions
 - 3. In Rachel's program, the student is responsible for finding a new PI if something doesn't work, but if students don't find a new PI then they are out of the program
- c. A&S: not a lot of accommodations for graduate students dealing with the issues/aftermath of sexual harassment
- d. Engineering: Is there a sense/data on what is wrong with Title IX? An external Review seems to be a good use of dollars to learn what the issues are
 - i. Last year, GPSG EB wanted to know the data from Title IX
 - ii. When asked for the data, the university said that Title IX (Katie Pope) doesn't give it to students. When we asked Katie Pope, they said that the university never asked for the data
 - 1. First report delivered this year
 - iii. Is there other data that could give us information?
 - 1. The response time for the Title IX office is 3 months according to their data, which is an extreme time period when considering the severe events
 - 2. A&S: No data in outcomes, or satisfaction of the outcome; no one is going to be 100% happy, but there is ways to collect this data
 - 3. Need to ask for a different solution than Title IX – Conflict Resolution Centers are available on other campuses, a place where you can bring your issues and they can help you learn about your conflict style, mediation, restorative justice pathways
 - a. Right now, the only options are department chairs and Title IX
 - 4. For those who have experienced the process, their accuser said they were using it as a learning experience
 - a. Title IX is there to protect the university, not to advocate for students
 - 5. There are so much nuance, there is nothing at our university to deal with the nuance
- e. Beyond just sexual harassment, dealing with students and balancing not wanting to destroy careers, and such but we need other things
 - i. TASA: warnings for behaviors?
 - 1. SOM has something in place, a student committee; decentralized system per school
 - a. Belittling comments happen a lot, and what can be done with the constant stream – after some time it feels normal
 - 2. A&S: Office of Student Conduct – an undergraduate “facing” office; doesn't do much for undergraduates either. Works well when the university accuses a student
 - a. When it becomes a liability to the university, then they get involved

4. If you have grad guides that lay out information for your students, or you want to attend the Chancellor meeting, let Rachel know
 - j. SOM has Pair from – if you have a grievance (student v. student, student v. faculty); it's an informal system, it's anonymous. Dean of the learning environment gets all the reports, they can identify the student they try to provide resources; there is a honor committee that if the Dean can't solve, then the Honor committee will take a crack at it
 - i. It doesn't have to be punitive
- **VP of Committees' Report** (committees.gpsg@pitt.edu)
 - Available Committee Positions
 - Provost's Award for Excellence in Mentoring
 - a. ~~Doctoral student, 2-year appointment~~--- FILLED
 - Dining Committee
 - Student Admissions and Aid Committee – 2 more meetings this semester, Tuesdays
 - Mental Health Task Force
 - Currently in the process of drafting a mission statement and goals.
 - Dr. Darr (Director of the Counseling Center and head of task force) also provided updated utilization data related to student interactions at the counseling center.
 - a. Estimates included an increase from ~500 (2018) to 700 (2019) students seen (over similar time frames) and a waitlist of ~250 students now reduced to 0.
 - Broadly, future directions of the task force will include identifying actionable steps to improve student utilization of the counseling center as well as increasing awareness and training of faculty, staff and students in identifying vulnerable individuals and/or those who may benefit from the counseling center.
 - Welcome any feedback from graduate students related to their experiences with any information they've received through their advisors or through school-orientation about access to the counseling center, their ability to use it, etc.
 - a. **Email VP of Committees with any comments**
 - **VP of Communication's Report** (communications.gpsg@pitt.edu)
 - No report
 - **VP of Finance's Report** (finance.gpsg@pitt.edu)
 - October Finance Report
 - **VP of Programming's Report** (events.gpsg@pitt.edu)
 - Gradsgiving (11/27): <https://gpsggradsgiving2019.eventbrite.com>
 - a. WPU Ballroom, 5-7 pm – Free
 - b. Sold out, waitlist open
 - Myers-Briggs Indicator Assessment (12/3 & 12/4)
 - O'Hara Student Center, 11-1 pm – Tickets \$7
 - a. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment can aid you in your academic and professional interactions. In this session, you will receive your MBTI report and learn about yourself and other indicator types.
 - i. December 3rd: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gpsg-mbti-session-i-tickets-72156015585>
 - ii. December 4th: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gpsg-mbti-session-ii-tickets-72157323497>
 1. Low interest, might drop to one event
 2. A&S: Motivation for the event? For fun and professional development – seen how controversial in offering; this isn't the final say on personality. It's enlightening to see how you work verses how others might work. School of engineering, school of

- Upcoming event with Dean, Associate Dean for Student Engagement 11/6 – ask questions, going through reorganization
- Focusing agendas for the year –
 - a. Mental health
 - b. Mentoring, what to do when it goes wrong
 - c. Funding questions -- not sure who decides teaching assignments, different pay scales but not transparent
 - d. Climate survey for their school
- Upcoming Events
 - a. Painting/yoga event
 - b. Candle Lab
- *Engineering*
 - Hiring committee members to support our officer staff
 - Self Defense Event with Pitt Cops
 - a. Recommend, good event
 - Volunteer event with Hilltop Urban Farms
 - White Water Rafting
 - Movie Screening for Global Ethics Day
 - Working on a couple of collaborative events with other schools
 - a. Global Ethics event
 - b. Partnership with BGSA
 - c. Upcoming, professional development
- *GSPIA*
 - No report
- *School of Computing & Information*
 - Looking at the relationship of child-organizations under SCIGSO, and how best to strengthen those relationships as the number of child-organizations grow
 - SCIGSO, CS-GSO, and SCI Student Services hosted the SCI Fall Picnic on 10/11 at the Vietnam Veteran’s Pavilion.
 - a. Even on the Friday before Midterm Week, 180 students, faculty, alumni, and families attended
 - b. SCI Sports Club made its debut with a badminton and soccer Sports Tournament
 - Upcoming Events
 - a. Bowling Night: Our child-organization International Student Organization (ISO) is going to hold a Bowling Night on 11/1 from 5 PM to 9 PM with SCI Sports Club, which received more than 90 reservations in a week. The venue was selected to be Arsenal Bowl in Lawrenceville. The students will be divided into 2 groups to play in 2 sessions.
 - b. November Social Hour: SCIGSO is going to celebrate Diwalloween on 11/8 as our November social hour. Diwalloween is a combined celebration of Diwali and Halloween. Since we are celebrating Diwali, an Indian holiday, we reached out ANKUR for advices that we’ll have a workshop for Rangoli pictures.
 - c. Potential Event: Our school hosted a Thanksgiving dinner last year and we are working with our department to have another banquet for Thanksgiving, so we are working together to make it a Thanksgiving Month.
- *Katz (Full Time)*
 - Welcomed six new board members
 - During midterms and Fall I finals, we focused on mental health and supporting students through providing meals and opportunities that focused on mental health
 - In order to direct SEB's efforts this year, we have put out a student preference survey (closing on 10/20) to better understand what our students feel is most important about

their experience. Once we receive the preference survey back, SEB will initiate plans relating to specified preferences.

- We are gearing up for a joint "midterms are over"/Halloween happy hour, a family-friendly seasonal event early November, and our cultural Friendsgiving around Thanksgiving. Additionally, we will be holding our first Town Hall this month.
 - *Katz (Part Time)*
 - Social Events
 - a. During blended course weekends (October 19-20), the PSEB provides light refreshment to engagement and feedback
 - i. Learning from the experience, how to better engage with students (event during midterms was not as productive)
 - b. Hosting a Chili Cookoff during the weekend of November 2nd, which focuses on the PSEB theme of family engagement where we try to engage students with children or spouses to interact with the administration, faculty, and other students.
 - i. Cancelled, Exploring other events off campus the next weekend (student feedback)
 - Administrative Endeavors
 - a. The PSEB is spearheading Committees—focus groups for Katz students to engage in discussion regarding their experience at Katz. Our theme areas focus on areas of major discussion within the school, such as the blended course format, but also in areas the Provost wants governing bodies to focus on too, such as health/wellness. This will be implemented over the next several months
 - b. Did meet with SEB to talk about initiatives
 - *Law*
 - No report
 - *Medicine*
 - No report
 - *Nursing*
 - No report
 - *Pharmacy (PharmD)*
 - Upcoming Events
 - a. Inter Professional Trivia – half health professional based questions
 - b. Candlelight vigil for school regarding the opioid epidemic
 - i. Formal proposal to the chancellor, looking for other schools to provide letters of support
 - 1. GPSG EB will provide a letter of support
 - 2. Additional information will be provided to schools if they are interested in writing letters of support
- *Pharmacy (PhD)*
 - No report
- *Public Health*
 - No report
- *School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences*
 - RSTGSO (Rehabilitation Science and Technology Graduate Student Organization) is currently coordinating a clothing order for our department.
 - a. They're also planning a Halloween fundraising event within the Rehab Tech department and partnering with the Orthotics and Prosthetics program to raise funds for their annual Assistive Technology Night (not held until Spring)
 - i. This will be on Thursday October 31st from 11:30-1:30 in the RST common area in Bakery Square

- b. They're also planning to hold a fundraiser at Choolaah to raise money to plan for their Assistive Technology Night.
 - OT (Occupational Therapy) is having their first official white coat ceremony on November 2nd.
 - PT (Physical Therapy) just had a successful blood drive, filling all available spots
- *Social Work*
 - Held town hall event for students to learn about board positions
 - a. Applications open October 21, 2019
 - Held LGBT+ Happy Hour for National Coming Out Day
 - Sold business cards and sweatshirts to students
 - Held Inclusive language training
 - Working on documents to easily transition new board members
- *ANKUR*
 - 9/14 – Fall social to welcome students from India, O'Hara student
 - October no event
 - Upcoming Events
 - a. 12/6 -- Diwali festival, temple visit
 - b. 12/10 – Dwali formal event, Bellfield Hall, 7pm
- *CSSA*
 - Video game event last month, graduate and undergraduate students
 - Halloween event with CMU's CSSA
- *ISA*
 - 09/29 – Welcome Picnic
 - 10/18 – Karaoke and Game event
 - 12/14 – Upcoming event
- *GOSECA*
 - No report
- *TASA*
 - 10/02 – Happy Hour
 - Republic day 11/3 – open to everyone, \$15, 7pm

5. Committee Reports

- Student Admissions, Aid, and Affairs
 - Policies have been updated formally, including a formal review and appeal process for students denied in-states rates (two levels of appeals).
 - Specific note related to Graduate Students: Why does Pitt not offer a waiver of out-of-state tuition for graduate students as other schools (University of Michigan Public Health) does, which makes us less competitive for admissions?
 - **Future SAAA Agenda item**
- Community Relations
 - Renovations to Bigelow Boulevard and William Pitt Union will take place beginning mid-November and will last until August 2020. These renovations include limiting Bigelow to two lanes (currently four), adding in medians and small green space on the road, hopefully improving pedestrian flow. William Pitt Union will have the driveway removed (although still available to emergency vehicles or University Police if necessary) and places with more room for student groups, activities, free space, etc.
 - **Bigelow will be closing to traffic (and possibly pedestrian traffic) starting November 1st through August 2020.**
 - The draft for the Institutional Master Plan for Pitt is now available for Public comment through November 5th.
 - Pitt's Community Engagement Scholarship Forum will take place on March 4, 2020
 - Over the last two years, the city has been meeting with University officials and representatives to gather information relevant to beginning the Oakland plan. The City is now

forming action sub-committees (“Action Teams”) for relevant topics. (e.g. transportation/mobility). The city will be holding a public meeting related to the plan, tentatively in February and will be forming the Action Teams by April.

- **The city is looking for student, faculty, staff and residents to serve on the committee. If any students are interested in serving on the action plan team, please contact Dominic DiSanto at jdd65@pitt.edu.**

- See full reports on website (www.gpsg.pitt.edu)

6. New Business

- Upcoming meetings – we usually cancel December meeting, but we’re also looking to cancel November meeting. We propose:
 - Reports in November
 - Fun event in December
 - Any objections, let Rachel know

7. Announcements

- Next meeting: TENTATIVE **Monday, January 27th, 6 pm in 837 WPU**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:10 pm