

Graduate and Professional Student Government

Assembly Board Meeting Minutes

University of Pittsburgh, Dining Room B, WPU

Monday, February 24th, 2020



Meeting Summary

- A townhall meeting with Dr. Nathan Urban (Vice Provost for Graduate Studies) and Provost Dr. Ann Cudd.

Attendance

GPSG Executive Board Officers:

- Christy Taylor (VP of Committees)
- Crystal Taylor (VP of Communications)
- Yashar Aucie (VP of Finance)
- J. Stephanie Rose (VP of Programming)
- Amanda Leifson (GSA)

Guests

- Dr. Ann Cudd
- Dr. Nathan Urban
- Jen Walker

GPSG Assembly Board Members:

- ANKUR
- ISA
- GOSECA
- TASA
- A&S 1
- A&S 2
- Biomedical
- SCI

- Dental
- Education
- Engineering
- GSPIA
- SHRS
- Katz (Professional)
- Katz (Full Time)
- Law
- Medicine
- Pharmacy (PharmD)
- LAGOS

Absent:

- Rachel Coombs (President)
- A&S 3
- CSSA
- Nursing
- Pharmacy (PhD)
- Public Health
- Social Work

1. Call to Order

- VP of Committees Christy Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve January 2020 minutes. *Minutes approved. None opposed.*

3. Old Business

- LAGOS
 - Continue to welcome and incorporate LAGOS into the Assembly Board

4. Reports

- President's Report
 - No report
- Committees' Report
 - No report
- Communications' Report
 - No report
- Finance's Report
 - February 2020 Finance Report
 - 14 Travel Grant applications with Finance Committee
 - 1 Supplemental Fund application approved
- Programming's Report
 - Upcoming Events

- March 28th, 2020 -- Mega Grad Collab (Pointe Park, Chatham, Duquesne)
 - a. Point Park Campus
 - Grad Appreciation Week *TENTATIVE SCHEDULE*
 - a. April 6th, 2020 – Movies @ Rowhouse
 - b. April 7th, 2020 – The Factory @ Warhol
 - c. April 8th, 2020 -- Pirates Game @ Skull Bar
 - d. April 9th, 2020 – Wine Tasting @ Dreadnought
 - e. April 10th, 2020 – Game Night @ Victory Pointe
 - f. April 11th, 2020 -- Spring Fling @ Rivers Casino
- Executive Administrator's Report
 - Graduate Student Lounge Updates
 - Panther Central – new cards
 - SAGE Day on the Hill
 - March 29th – April 1st, Washington DC
 - Travel Planning Meeting updates:
 - EB Elections
 - Candidate Campaigning: February 23rd – 29th
 - Executive Board Elections: March 1st - 7th (Election Results: March 16th)
 - Transition
 - a. March 26th: Transition & Recognition Dinner
 - b. March 27th – 28th: Training
 - Leadership & Service Awards
 - Deadline for (self-nominating) applications: February 28th, 5 pm
 - 3 Minute Thesis
 - Speaking to Non-specialist Workshops
 - a. March 5th, 2020 (12-1 pm, B26 Alumni Hall)
 - b. Graduate Student Events page to register for the Three Minute Thesis Preparation Workshops: <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/students/graduate-studies/graduate-student-events>
 - The Provost Office will be holding a competition for those students who do not have a school wide competition
 - University-wide 3MT Competition: April 6th, 2020
 - Graduate Student Retreat
 - March 2nd, 2020
 - Looking for students to attend the lunch (11:45 am to 1 pm) at the University Club
 - a. Students will be providing suggestions and perspectives on a range of graduate student issues with the attendees of the retreat, please [RSVP](#) to nominate yourself.
 - b. You do not need to attend the retreat to participate in the luncheon. If you have questions, contact Stephanie Hoogendoorn at hoogen@pitt.edu.
- Assembly Board Member Reports
 - *Arts & Sciences*
 - No report
 - *Biomedical*
 - Monthly Wine Wednesday
 - a. Idea from Neuro program
 - b. Talked about Mentor/Mentee relationships
 - c. Upcoming one about Mental health
 - Holding 3MT Competition
 - Helping to judge local Science Fair
 - Annual Ski trip – well attended
 - *Dental Medicine*

- Dental Prom – 360 people attended, majority of school
- Annual conference –St. Louis, sending 5 students
- Attending Day in Harrisburg
- *Education*
 - CGSE Extra Mile Award: Extra Mile Award that honors a faculty member and an administrator or staff member who exemplifies the mission of the organization by virtue of going above and beyond the call of duty in their support of the school
 - SOE Student Lounge: Alumni donated money for a new SOE student lounge
 - a. Named after donor: Karen Vander Ven Creativity Student Lounge
 - b. Purpose of fostering creativity & community
 - Events:
 - a. Beauty & Beast Ballet Fri Feb 21st
 - b. Mario’s Oakland Happy Hour Thurs April 2nd
 - c. Anti-racist Raja Yoga – every Wed 5:30 pm at Homewood Community Engagement Center
 - i. Welcome to everyone
 - d. 2020-2021 Elections (new members announced at CGSE Conference April 3rd)
 - e. Spring Research Conference April 3rd, 2020
 - i. Research Talks & Roundtables, Posvar 5th floor 9-5 pm
 - ii. Poster Session & Reception, WPU Ballroom 6:30-8:30 pm
 - iii. Anyone doing research on education can apply for the roundtables or poster
 - 1. Cgse.pitt.edu for application
 - f. SOE Reorganization Information Session
 - i. Hosting 3 sessions with Dean’s Office (Dates TBD)
- *Engineering*
 - Seven Springs Ski Trip happened on 2/16 – always a popular event, always sells out
 - Continuing Wellness pillar with yoga and self defense
 - Pens game in early March (sold out in a week)
 - Have been visiting several department seminars to show face and encourage students to read our emails
 - On track to execute 2019-2020 budget at about 90-100% which was one of the strategic goals we set at the start of the year
 - Leadership changeover will be in June 2020
- *GSPIA*
 - Social Hour
 - Fair for student organization
 - Hosting a networking workshop for 2nd years before trip to DC
- *School of Computing & Information*
 - Question: Are there any election procedures regulated by GPSG?
 - Upcoming Events:
 - a. February Social Hour – Lantern Festival
 - i. Well attended
 - b. ISO Ski Trip
- *Katz (Full Time)*
 - Continuing our commitment to charitable outreach and donation through volunteer efforts at Special Olympics events, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, and Junior Achievement Training Day
 - a. Annual “Katz Karaoke Showdown for Charity” on 1/31 raised \$680 for the Boys & Girls Club of Western PA
 - Initiated “Student Speaker Series” to promote collaboration with clubs and students
 - a. “Networking 101” and “Mobile Advertising” were two of the topics

- Upcoming Spring Events: Cultural Night, Spring Fling
- *Katz (Part Time)*
 - Working on hosting MBA-focused events
 - Spring Fling dance
 - a. March 21st for MBA students
 - Recently hosted Ice-Skating event for students in the Cranberry area
 - a. Branch out to other neighborhoods
 - b. Looking to host it again next year
- *Law*
 - Open Diverse work space, went well
 - a. To encourage students to use the event
 - New student organization in support for students with a disability
 - April will be the elections for new executive board
 - Long waits for counseling services, concerns on mental health and looking to provide services in house
- *Medicine*
 - Social – had a number of 3rd and 4th year students
- *Nursing*
 - No report
- *Pharmacy (PharmD)*
 - No report
- *Pharmacy (PhD)*
 - No report
- *Public Health*
 - No report
- *School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences*
 - Conference on Friday
 - a. 200 people attend
 - b. Making it an annual event
- *Social Work*
 - No report
- *ANKUR*
 - No report
- *CSSA*
 - No report
- *ISA*
 - Selling tickets for New Year
 - a. March 21st
- *GOSECA*
 - 17th Annual Graduate Student Conference
 - a. Barco Law Building
 - b. Friday & Saturday
 - c. Website for more details
- *TASA*
 - No report
- *LAGOS*
 - LAGOS tabled at the 17th Annual Brazilian Festival: Carnaval on Feb 15th
 - On Feb 22nd, LAGOS members volunteered with Casa San Jose for their door knocking campaign to raise awareness of the upcoming 2020 Census.
 - Feb 25th was LAGOS' first time participating in Pitt Day of Giving and we had a great time fundraising to secure visibility, resources, support, and advocacy for Latinx Graduate

Students. A HUGE THANK YOU to our 27 donors and everyone who helped spread the word.

- Held an Open Meeting on Feb 26th in which upcoming events were discussed and GSOC provided updates and information on grad student union efforts.
- LAGOS is starting a Latinx grad student academic repository: calling for published papers, open grants, fellowships, conference applications, other opportunities to include in a hub for Latinx grad students to access.
- Ongoing: still collecting responses for mentoring survey: bit.ly/pittgradmentoring
- Upcoming: LAGOS Writing Retreat on Saturday March 21st, planning meetings with Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, Latino Community Center, and the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature for partnerships.

5. Committee Reports

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

6. New Business

- Townhall Meeting with Dr. Cudd and Dr. Urban
 - Introductions
 - Urban – participation of several individuals in a conference in WI (Training), how to implement that training across campus
 - a. How to mentor up
 - Assistance for graduate and post doc students, international students, with tax issues
 - a. VITA – at Carnegie Library
 - i. Available to those who make less than \$55,000
 - ii. If more people are interested than slots, we'll try to be receptive to that interest
 - b. Tax Treaty information – free to graduate students; ask for license
 - Challenge in Business School for International students who are in need of sponsorship
 - Long-term, and in the short-term for internships
 - Urban – Career services is open to graduate students (used mainly by undergraduate students); schools might have inside help, but not uniform across schools (some for internships, others don't); central services through Career Services – have been encouraging graduate students
 - a. Sponsoring international students – not aware of anything specifically, OIS and Career Services might have additional information
 - Mentorship/Mentee Relationship
 - Holding mentors responsible but also working through career outcomes, etc.
 - Urban – focus has been on doctoral students, once again heterogenous across school on how mentorships are set up and evaluated; MD/PhD program – have both an academic mentor and a career mentor who stays with students for their entire program so they can help students navigate career; Assessment of information about what activities faculty members are doing – collecting information about time dedicated in meetings, holding faculty mentor workshops to ask for best practices; have asked all schools for how they are going to evaluate mentorship; creation of center of mentorship in the center of teaching – workshops for both faculty and students; developing those relationships is important; list of graduate faculty -- looking on how that list is generated and better used to students (providing students with more information), tying to statements of mentorship
 - Cudd – asking all schools and departments to produce reports about how they assess teaching, and mentoring as part of that; put a spotlight on mentorship as a part of teaching
 - Biomedical – concern that PIs in their field do not attend these types of workshops willing

- Urban – and the people who attend are not the ones who need to hear these things; students can play a role in influence in how faculty approach mentoring, by asking right questions; through peer pressure and trying to build a culture around mentoring, the Provost office has asked for these reports, which has increased discussion from faculty (some skeptical), about this topic; discussion about the definition of what mentorship is happening
- Cudd – embedding in within the annual and tenure review, send a clear message that it matters to the Provost Office
- Progress in Identifying Ombudsperson for every school
 - Urban – there is a list, trying to get it on a website, and Urban can send the information
 - a. If there are problems with the ombudsperson in one school, there is discussion about allowing other school's students talking with ombudsperson from another school
 - b. If there is concern about needing distance from situation, an outside person
- Mentoring Question –
 - Alumni being mentors
 - Urban – over the last year or so, software platform (Pitt Commons), mentoring platform, connecting alumni, university network – current or alumni can sign up to volunteer to mentor in that community, there is someone who is working part with alumni/provost office who is working on this topic; currently available – to hear more, on Monday's Graduate Student Retreat, an opportunity to learn more
 - a. Mentors can say how many people they will mentor, how to be connected
 - b. Last summer they did focus groups with alumni, and alumni is interested in connecting back to the university; specifically, in people not in academia
 - Cudd – alumni road show in California, the alumni seem eager to get involved in this process
 - Email – from Provost, to the student organization
 - Many schools act in silos, put sharing information across those walls
 - Graduate or departmental events can happen, reach out to Provost office and they can help coordinate that
 - a. Education has had an event in the past where Pitt Commons was demonstrated
- Mental Health Concerns
 - Policy for graduate students to express concern/report mental health crisis
 - Urban – the first place to go is the counseling center, 24 hour hotline, if the counseling center is not the right place, there is a Graduate Student Wellness guide that has some additional information; Resolve – Allegheny county resources (24/7 resources); ways that UPMC insurance helps with community resources; PhD program in Clinical Psychology has a counseling services
 - Student who may be a threat to other students –
 - a. Anything that may seem like an acute threat, Pitt Police is the trained; if there is a safety issue that is the first thing to do
 - b. Not an acute safety issue, the Provost office is a place you can contact with concerns
 - c. Concerns about discrimination, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is a resource
 - d. Things that are troubling, then contact the Provost Office (dr. Urban), the Dean's office in your school (Law asking the question), can be handled internally
 - Engineering – for students who may have friends that are worried about, are there 1 hour trainings?
 - a. Urban – there is an 8 hour mental health crisis training, schools are getting people trained, there isn't anything in place
 - b. There are documents that might provide additional information
 - i. What would be helpful?

1. 1 hour trainings (in person training) is a lot easier than 8 hours; maybe something coordinated with the AB meeting
 2. Training in the military – has a couple of resources, a couple of scenarios, yearly, one hour sessions
 3. Last year there were mental health resources workshops, 20 min from clinical psychology faculty, here are common signs, common things that they face, proactive things to deal with
 4. Do the 8 hour training cost money?
 - a. No charge
 - b. EB had coordinated one last year, and can coordinate another one if there is interest
- Counseling Center – biomedical, concerns about graduate specific issues
 - a. Urban – Counseling center has had a bad wrap, as of today and in the last little bit, there has been no waiting time for counseling center
 - b. Group sessions that are graduate student specific, after concerns from graduate students in not feeling safe in group therapy sessions
 - i. There has been some work in schools to provide inhouse resources, looking to see how this can be made available in other schools (medicine and dental)
- Unionization Effort –
 - The money being spent on
 - Urban – the current status the PLRB has asked for oral arguments from university and steel workers on questions about voter list and who has burden proof on unfair practice clauses
 - a. May 28th
 - b. Triggered by previous ruling in October, after the election in April that voted against unionization by a 37 vote margin
 - c. Going through the process, the university has not asked for extensions, this is the PA process
 - Money better spent on graduate students
 - Urban -- the university position (started when Urban started), the creation of graduate union does not promote graduate students; payments to the law firm for all the work they have done, predates the unionization effort (10 years), idea that all the money is going to one purpose is not accurate
 - Leaders of graduate student is working to making graduate student's experience better
 - How can we work better with the Provost Office to make that experience better
 - Urban – communication is always key; wanting to hear what graduate student's concerns are about, the Provost office needs to hear those concerns in order to be aware of what is going on; the wants are very much in line between student leaders and the provost office, that is what they value as well; there is a lot of potential for cooperation between these two groups; working together to advance the mission of graduate students
 - Students have no means to provide means, how to create a channel and inform students about that channel so that students can express concern
 - Urban – monthly newsletter, Provost office hours to hear concerns, talk to different students at different times, 150 people attending the retreat next week, 30 graduate students invited next week; these are not sufficient channels
 - Cudd – we would love more of a two way street with communication with students
 - Non-traditional graduate students/minority students
 - Urban – there is not many university wide fellowship for diversity students, resources are made in the school level; policy – increasing the diversity of the graduate students; removing GRE requirements (more than half of the schools have removed that

requirements), and early returns have been good in increasing the diversity of applicant and matriculate students

- How do students perceive the environment as they are here
- Not a lot of influence at Provost level
- Cudd – Faculty diversity, Latinx cluster initiative, Latin America center, faculty diversity initiative more generally to incentivize deans to fund lines until it is available; engaging in training search committees to make sure pool is diverse and sharing best practices
- Law – is there a way to centralize the focus in the Provost office, there has been something every year about threat of violence, or derogatory language towards students or members, unless students are pounding down the door, and it doesn't change just through the school's initiatives. It does not appear to be sufficient
- Cudd – promoting inclusive teaching through the center of teaching, how to figure out ways to do that more generally, student affairs have programs geared towards diversity (though geared towards undergraduates)
- Urban – survey GradServu, just getting the results, and section of questions about climate/environment, identify areas where there are needs to provide specific programming to improve the environment, a useful tool to see where central support is needed; yesterday got the initial data; if students have concerns about set of questions, Urban is happy to have those conversations
- Law – matriculate quickly, if things take 5 years to change, then several classes are going to go through these experiences and sharing those experiences with incoming students/interested students
 - a. Important to do this timely, so you don't lose classes

7. Announcements

- Upcoming AB Meetings
 - March AB Meeting: March 23rd, 6-7:30 pm (Dining Room B, WPU)
 - April AB Meeting: April 13th, 6-7:30 pm (Dining Room B, WPU)
 - May AB Meeting: (New Executive Board) TBD
- Next meeting: **Monday, March 23rd, 6-7:30 pm**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:16 pm