

Graduate and Professional Student Government

Assembly Board Meeting Minutes

University of Pittsburgh

Tuesday August 25th, 2020

Zoom Link: <https://pitt.zoom.us/j/93897395508> (905030)

Attendance Record: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iBwoup5ycLldV80ZbSx-xQWOZO2O3_wKsd0iSjlwkG0/edit



Meeting Summary

- Start of the year discussions and about the level of communication regarding the COVID situation

Attendance

GPSG Executive Board Officers:

- Malena Hirsch (President)
- Morgan Pierce (VP of Committees)
- Deanna Mudry (VP of Communications)
- Yashar Aucie (VP of Finance)
- Jazzkia Jones (VP of Programming)
- Amanda Leifson (GSA)

GPSG Assembly Board Members:

- ANKUR
- CSSA
- GOSECA
- ISA
- LAGOS
- Arts & Science (1)
- Arts & Science (2)
- Arts & Science (3)
- Biomedical

- Dental
- Education
- Engineering
- GSPIA
- SCI
- Katz (Full-Time)
- Katz (Part-Time)
- Law
- Nursing
- Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Public Health
- Social Work

Absent:

- TASA
- SHRS*
- Medicine
- Pharmacy (PhD)

1. Call to Order

- President Hirsch called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm

2. Approval of Minutes

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

3. Old Business

- Graduate Student Fee Reduction
 - Should have seen reduced fees on Fall 2020 tuition statements
 - Reduced by 20%

4. Reports

- President's Report
 - Community Compact & Return-to-Campus Acknowledgement
 - Address concerns from students
 - Clarification -- two separate statements
 - a. Community Compact -- SGB, CGS, GPSG headed the group of students who wrote the statement; how actions impact the entire community
 - b. Return-to-Campus -- from Dean of Students
 - Concerns that this looked like a liability waiver
 - a. Was not a legal liability waiver
 - b. Spoke with Dean Bonner (who released a video), it is an assumption of risk
 - c. These two statements were coupled together, student leaders were not informed about

- i. Did shift the positioning of them after 87% of students had signed the document
- COVID-19 Resources & Information
 - Pitt COVID page: <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>
 - a. Information is fluid and changing quickly
 - b. A lot of resources, can be overwhelming -- the information is there for students, including resources for students
 - GPSG page: <http://gpsg.pitt.edu/covid-19-pandemic/>
 - a. To streamline graduate and professional student concerns, there is a tab on the GPSG website
 - How much are individual schools communicating about school-specific changes?
 - a. AB reports
 - Mask Pick Up
 - a. Students having issues getting Pitt ID (which is needed to get the masks)
 - b. Dr. Godley working with Panther Central to hopefully get the issue solved quickly
 - i. Different dates and evening times for pick ups to accommodate graduate & professional students
- Graduate & Professional Student Town Hall
 - Currently planning with Provost Office, Date/time TBA
 - a. Provost Office, Student Affairs, Health Center, HR
 - b. Health Insurance discussion (coverage & cost questions)
 - c. Topics that should be covered?
 - i. Research Funding
 - ii. Provost Office
 - iii. HR
 - iv. Insurance
 - v. Student Affairs
 - vi. Health Center
 - 1. Mental Health/Counseling
 - vii. International Student Issues/Concerns
 - viii. Legal issues (graduate students as TAs)
 - d. Worth holding one?
 - i. Some have already had Q/As with their schools/department
 - Previous Pitt Town Hall was directed specifically to undergraduates
- Committees' Report
 - If you are interested in participating on university committees, fill out the following survey:
 - https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4INpzl1IsgQMwrH
- Communications' Report
 - COVID Information Page
 - <http://gpsg.pitt.edu/covid-19-pandemic/>
 - The page will be continually updated as more information comes from the university
 - a. Aggregation of the university resources
 - i. Specifically for issues related for graduate students
 - ii. Can add information about funding
 - iii. Any additional information that would be helpful, please submit them to Deanna (communications.gpsg@pitt.edu)

- Students are also able to submit concerns
 - a. Anonymous comments possible
 - Finance's Report
 - FY20-21 GPSG Budget
 - Just received potential numbers, will have to delay sharing the proposed budget until next year
 - a. Due to COVID and the reduction of graduate student fees that happened right before the semester began
 - b. AB members will have a month to consider the proposed budget
 - Cultural Groups -- should have access to rollover, but if you need additional funds in the first month, we will address that on a case by case basis
 - Programming's Report
 - Welcome Back Event
 - a. Officially cancelled Hofbräuhaus welcome back reservation for AY2020
 - Virtual Concert or Paint and Sip event
 - a. TBD Week of September 14th
 - i. Still working through the details, more information to come
 - b. Price of registration between \$2 - \$5
 - c. Potential gift card for swag (raffle?)
 - MBTI Professional Development Workshop
 - a. Last year was in December
 - i. Potential Date October 5th
 - 1. Potential other dates to work for students
 - ii. Virtual/Multiple sessions
 - iii. Professional Development for students
 - Potential Voter Registration Events
 - Dr. Godley & the Provost Office initiative
 - Collaboration with university's Republican & Democratic student organizations
 - a. Supporting student groups on campus
 - b. Working to create digital events to increase awareness/voter registration
 - If you are interested in joining the Event Planning Committee, please email committees.gpsg@pitt.edu
- Executive Administrator's Report
 - SORC Reminders
 - SORC President & Business Manager Training
 - a. Virtual this year, will need to be completed by September 30th
 - Access to webinars:
 - a. Email IT Help Desk, tell them what organization you are with and that you need access to webinars
 - b. Setting up passwords for the Zooms
 - Student Organization Guidelines (for activities on & off campus)
 - a. Events may only occur in person after approval from Student Affairs
 - i. Activity Request Forms will be accepted starting September 14th
 - 1. Justification for in-person versus virtual activity
 - 2. Health & Safety Plan

- 3. Minimum of 2 individuals who will serve as Safety Liaisons
 - 4. For travel, applications must be submitted two weeks prior to proposed travel
 - ii. No in person events are allowed until approval is received
 - iii. SORC funds cannot be used for in person events without approval
 - Graduate Student Space
 - 5th Floor of the Union is currently closed
 - Indication about how many graduate students are on campus?
 - a. Who would want access to the graduate student lounge?
 - b. Limited to 8 individuals
 - c. Few issues with the card reader
 - Branded Face Masks
 - Schools for Slowing the Spread (SFSTS)
 - a. Zach Sedor-Schiffhauer (sedor-Schiffhauer.Zachary@medstudent.pitt.edu)
 - b. Originally founded at Case Western Reserve University, SFSTS is a student run, multi-institutional fundraising organization that works with students across the country to raise money for COVID-19 related causes by selling school-branded facemasks. Our facemasks are a pleated, premium 2-ply polyester mask with adjustable ear loops. Additionally, they are sublimation printed, altogether resulting in a fantastic looking and pleasantly comfortable facemask that will hold up to repeated washings.
 - i. www.sfsts.org
 - c. Effective way for the GPSG to raise money for local causes within the University (such as a student emergency fund) as well as the national [CDP Covid-19 Response Fund](#)
- Assembly Board Member Reports
 - *Arts & Sciences*
 - A&S GSO welcomes Dr. Rosemary Capo, the new Dietrich School Assistant Dean & the 2020-2021 GSO faculty advisor, replacing Dean Hoock in this position
 - a. Woman of color, very interested in issues with Diversity and Equality
 - Information -- DS sent out survey about graduate student concerns to collect information, sent from Dean and grad student
 - a. Few responses
 - b. A lot of information coming from the top down, little information back from students
 - *Biomedical*
 - Social Justice Journal club every other week
 - a. Purpose of the journal club is to help start discussions on actions that can be taken to increase social justice within our institution
 - Racial Inequality lecture series (2 so far) to increase education and awareness on racial inequality in academia
 - a. Dr. Glasco (Pitt History professor)
 - b. Dr. Banerjee (Pitt Sociology professor)
 - New chair position on the executive board – Diversity and Inclusion

- a. Two co-chairs, committee of seven students with diverse backgrounds
 - Summer career seminar series with alumni from various fields to talk about their work and career paths
 - Upcoming events: additional Social Justice journal clubs and career seminars
 - Information -- SOM is having monthly town halls, having another one next week, relaying more information then, get emails about once a month
 - a. Classes online, returning to labs with PPE
- *Dental Medicine*
 - Cancelled Dental Symposium (end of September)
 - a. Looking to replace it with monthly speaker series
 - Information -- pretty good job, treating patients for the last couple of months so information is important (reentry procedures, COVID protocols)
- *Education*
 - Nominations for elections are being held 8/19-9/2
 - a. Elections will be held the week of 9/7
 - We are meeting with our advisor and Dean of SOE to discuss our goals/vision for the year, and how we can partner with the SOE on events/programming this term
 - We are planning our first full CGSE meeting with new members in late September
 - Information -- most information has been coming from the Dean
 - a. No direct/clear communication to graduate students about what classes would have been online, rather than from professor to professor
- *Engineering*
 - Activities
 - a. Evaluating a socially distanced picnic (9/4 in Schenley), meeting with advisor to discuss safety measures
 - i. SORC guidelines prevent in person events
 - b. Presented during SSOE New Student Orientation
 - c. Developing Fall semester virtual and attempted in person activity calendar
 - i. Current understanding is that in-person activities can occur off campus if in compliance with county guidelines and clearing safety measures with advisors
 - Student Concerns
 - a. COVID-19
 - b. Re-opening of engineering building to undergraduates
 - c. In person vs. virtual requirements
 - Faculty Actions to Address Concerns
 - a. Reinforcing that in-person activities are optional, only if students are comfortable
 - b. Trainings for Distanced learning & TAing
 - c. Working to secure hardware to facilitate distanced learning & TAing (headsets, doc cams, etc.)
 - d. Recognize likelihood to suspend in-person/classes, working to ensure continuity of education and TA duties
 - Sentiment of Engineering students
 - a. We're anxious

- b. We're concerned about what will happen as more undergraduate students return to campus and the safety risk that comes along with increasing population density in and around Oakland
 - c. A Number of students have expressed concern over the safety of riding Port Authority Transit - citing failure of drivers to wear masks or enforce mask and bus density guidelines. Obviously, this is out of Pitt's control, but it would be good to see if they can put some pressure on the city or port authority to enforce these rules as more students returning to the area will be riding public transit
 - Information -- have felt that things have been well communicated
- *GSP/IA*
 - New Position on the Board, Diversity and Equity
 - a. Did create the position, have a number of applicants, will be holding a election
 - Faculty interest in helping students of colors, first generation students
 - a. Holding at least one seminar with those students as they navigate graduate school
 - Virtual Happy Hour
 - Information -- been okay, class times changed to accommodate in person classes but the information was not communicated back to students (only posted on Portal)
 - a. Students haven't heard from professors before classes
- *School of Computing & Information*
 - Orientation recently, chance to introduce SCI GSO
 - a. Hoping to recruit some officers, and for the International student organization
 - Meeting with advisors, director of student organizations in SCI this week
 - Planning events moving forward
 - Information -- doing pretty well, professors are putting in effort to make the online learning good for students (trying to figure out Canvas)
- *Katz (Full Time)*
 - Looking to collaborate more with other organization
 - Working with PSEB on several virtual events that are a mix of career development and fun
 - Collaboration, Quality
 - Virtual Events
 - a. Virtual Happy Hour
 - b. Open Mic/Stand Up Comedians
 - c. Walkathon
 - i. School competition?
 - Information -- Katz has been supporting
- *Katz (Part Time)*
 - Restructure our board to work with more student organizations
 - Working to find virtual events that appeal to students
 - a. Local community groups
- *Law*
 - Hired a new Dean of Students (used to be the Ombudsperson)
 - Hired a new Associate Dean of Students for Student Excellence
 - Problem with admitting students with sharing anti-semetic memes

- a. Student Advisory Council created to develop guidelines and procedures for when admitting/finding out students have made choices
 - Information -- lots of communication, but some confusion about the information
 - a. Assign seats to those students who wish to access the Barco Library
 - b. Communication from professors have been all over the place, inconsistent
- *Medicine*
 - No report
- *Nursing*
 - Undergraduate Orientation presentation for incoming students August 18, 2020 at 12-1 pm
 - Board Meeting to occur Week of August 23rd – date TBA
 - a. Virtual events to be discussion
 - i. Typically do not hold many events due to students
 - ii. Looking to find ways to provide the necessary information for students
 - b. Creation of healthcare events awareness calendar
 - c. Will discuss ways to celebrate student accomplishments via social media platforms
 - d. Will discuss budgeting plans for upcoming year
 - i. Provided funds/grants to students who were in need
 - General body meeting for all current and new students, planning for September – date TBA
 - Class for all new students about racial injustice course
 - a. Coming this Spring
 - Information -- pretty good over the last couple of months, lots of emails, lots of different concentrations and responses on the degree students are pursuing
- *Pharmacy (PharmD)*
 - Information -- administration has done a good job of providing information on a weekly basis
 - a. Communication with professors has also been inconsistent
- *Pharmacy (PhD)*
 - No report
- *Public Health*
 - Orientation
 - a. Website for students to get information that would have been covered in an Orientation
 - Information -- schools has had two town halls, talking about new policies and procedures, receiving regular emails (biweekly basis)
 - a. Weekly Public Health information from departments
- *School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences*
 - No report
- *Social Work*
 - MSW director communicated with board to ask for the board to engage incoming students, building community for students
 - a. Yoga, Ice Cream Social, Bingo Event
 - b. Activism -- trying to separate months by specific issues
 - Information -- Dean & graduate advisor had office hours over the summer

- a. Not well attended
 - b. Professors didn't always communicate what the plans were
- *ANKUR*
 - Independence Day event in collaboration with CMU & Cornell University (India in Evolving World)
 - a. August 15th
 - Reception for incoming students
 - a. Help with initial concerns about moving to Pitt and starting programs
 - b. Assistance with course feedback and selection by connecting them with current students in their programs
 - c. Welcome kits
 - Upcoming events
 - a. Welcome event for incoming students (August 22nd)
 - b. Fall Social event (1st week of September)
 - c. Networking with Alumni (2nd week of September)
 - d. Planning to host events like Yoga meet, Teachers' Day (Sept 5th), and Hindi diwas (Sept 14th)
 - Concerns
 - a. Making events useful yet interesting enough to get new students excited about Pitt and their programs
 - i. Some events successful, others were not
 - ii. Collaborations seem to be the more successful
 - b. A lot of student concerns about the job market due to COVID, so focusing on more networking events
 - c. Rental management companies -- asking for students to quarantine before
 - i. Have heard this concern from students before, can reach out to the Provost Office for more information for potential solutions
- *CSSA*
 - New board elected
 - Delivered over 800 packages of masks and sanitizers to Chinese students
 - a. Most supplies came from the embassy and other companies
 - b. Reminded students to social distance and avoid gatherings
 - Online orientation for Chinese students on August 16th
 - a. Introduced the new students about transportation, housing, and COVID-19 related issues
 - Will start recruitment after the first week of the fall semester
 - a. Only 30% of Chinese students are here in the US, most are back in their home country
 - b. Working with Carlow, CMU, other universities to hold online events
- *ISA*
 - Thinking to hold virtual welcome picnic
 - a. Students have issues entering the US, couldn't access courses even with Flex@Pitt
 - i. Are those students getting support from their school and program?
 1. Will communicate with Dr. Godley
- *LAGOS*
 - General Body meeting for welcoming incoming students (August 28th)

- a. Can GPSG help with publicity?
 - i. Send either through the Google Doc on GPSG website, or through email (communications.gpsg@pitt.edu)
 - Hispanic Heritage Month coordination (September 15th – October 15th)
 - a. Virtual meeting for learning Native American Indigenous languages happening on October 12th
 - b. Latinx Faculty Spotlight
 - c. Latinx Graduate Student Town hall: being Latinx in Academia: Navigation, Support, and Mentoring of Graduate Students and Faculty
 - d. Latinx Mental Health and Trauma related to Migration Town Hall
 - e. Dates and more events to be announced
 - LAGOS Alumni network initiative
 - CLAS Student Action Coalition
 - a. Unify in the sense of programming, events
 - New website release: lagos.pitt.edu
- GOSECA
 - Looking for some additional officers for the board
 - Spring Conference
 - Information -- messaging goes to either professors or undergraduates, but few messages directly for graduate students
 - a. Meeting with Chancellor Gallagher, brought up this issue with his office
- TASA
 - No report

5. Committee Reports

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

6. New Business

- Question
 - What to do if there are offensive events, seminars, or circumstances that make Chinese Students feel uncomfortable
 - Ombudsperson for each school should be the first level
 - a. They would then be able to tell you what avenues you can pursue, provide with additional information/resources
 - b. Can communicate with any of the Ombudsperson
 - c. Clarity about whether it should be a student or an organization who can go
- Virtual Events
 - A&S Success -- Virtual Trivia Night
 - Better than just a happy hour, to accommodate students who don't drink
 - If you are interested in learning more about this type of event, contact Chloe Glover (cog20@pitt.edu)

7. Announcements

- Next meeting: **Tuesday, September 15th at 4:30pm**

Meeting Adjourned at 5:51 pm