



Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

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MINUTES
Graduate & Professional Student Assembly
September 14th, 2015
165 McGraw Hall
5:30 – 7:00 P.M.

I. Welcome and Introductions

R. Walroth called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

1. Introduction of voting members, 1 min.
- 2.

Voting Members Present: R. Abramov, C. Aurand, C. Benson, T. Bollu, J. Goldberg, M. Jodlowski, K. Ladha, A. Molitoris, W. Nicholson, N. Rogers, K. Schlauraff, T. Snider, T. Bernard, J. Veintimilla, R. Walroth, C. Wong, C. Yao

Voting Members Absent: R. Kreis

II. Approval of the Minutes

1. August 31st, 2015, 1 min.
Minutes were approved as printed.

III. Presentations

1. Student Run Grocery Store, 30 min.

Laurel Moffat, one of the 4 directors of the non-profit grocery store project, presented the idea at the GPSA meeting. It is set to open February 2016 in Anabel Taylor Hall and will be responsible for addressing food insecurity. In the most recent pulse survey, the directors of the store found 1/5 of all respondents have trouble affording all of their meals and end up skipping meals. They talk to Michigan State University and estimated graduate student need for affordable and accessible food is more compared to undergraduate students. Students can take an anonymous survey to determine food insecurity and will be offered discounts. The store will be rent and utility free thanks to their relationship with religious organizations, and tax-free since it is a non-profit establishment. It will run on a volunteer worker model to save costs. Along with making healthy food like fresh produce and dairy items more accessible, it will also offer budgeting and cooking classes. The directors requested and received \$360K for startup and renovation from the SA and are requesting \$75K from the GPSA to ensure graduate students have access. She then opened the floor to questions.

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She was asked about incidence of fraud in the online survey for food insecure students and she cited SNAP found only 2% fraud rates nationally. They might institute audits to decrease fraud rates. Their budget model includes giving 8% of their revenue to Anabel Taylor that will in return maintain their tax-free status and conduct audits; compared to 15% other non-profits must pay to maintain their status.

She was asked how this grocery would be better than Green Star and how the directors vision GPSA will raise money. She said the directors are in touch with Green Star which is supportive of their plan. Green Star is more focused on organic foods whereas the grocery store priority is low costs. R. Walroth said they will raise the student activity fee \$2 over the next 2-4 years. The grocery store is under the professional guidance of Center for Transformative Action that has experience with community, student workers, and social justice, Campus Life Community Relations, president of Green Star board, John Alexander who is on the Board of Trustees. A member asked about their exit plan if the store does not work out as planned. She said they would turn to research projects on food insecurity, as well as cooking and budgeting classes. If place is operating at a loss, they will shift to a food bank kind of model. They are not operating on a food bank model already since food pantries address food insecurity but do not empower students and do not provide fresh produce.

After conducting another survey, they found about a few hundred students who are food insecure said they will shop at the grocery store and these students are estimated to receive a 10% discount which is the equivalent of \$3400 every semester. They have met with the financial aid office repeatedly. Students who are on full financial aid (15% of undergraduates) will have all of their store expenses covered.

She was asked about the sustainability of the labor-worker model. She said the volunteers will be continually reminded of the mission of the store. They are confident attrition rate will not be high. Georgetown University has a similar store and their attrition rate is 2%. Students who serve on the staff will also receive a discount. Working at the store will also give students business experience. They expect the grocery store will generate its own revenue, an estimated 50% sale for the first year.

They plan to get word out to food insecure students through the website along with a link to the survey to qualify for discount, as well as through quarter carding, social media, and word of mouth. They are partnering with other student food groups and nutrition counseling in Gannett and with sports teams.

Lastly, she was asked about their plans for breaks over the semester since graduate students are on campus while undergraduates usually leave. She said they can look into a skeleton staff but they were originally planning to close for breaks and deplete the pantry. Emma Johnston, co-director of the store, said they are aware graduate students are in more need but they need help to extend it to students. Contact Laurel or Emma if any graduate students are interested in the project.

2. Byline Funding Process, 5 min.

S. Chandrasekaran explained to the members how byline funding works. Graduate students are currently charged an \$81 activity fee for the year. The revenue is divided between GPSAFC (35%) which funds smaller groups and most field organization and Appropriations Committee (65%)

which funds large organizations such as Big Red Barn and the Programming Board which cater to >10% of the graduate student population. The activity fee is decided and set every 2 years and it is to be reset again this year. It will not change for the next two academic years. Several organizations are petitioning for an increase in their funding and will be coming to Assembly meetings. They are expected to vote at the November 9th GPSA meeting. Since the directors for the grocery store are too late to get byline funding, they will probably form an ad-hoc committee under GPSA and GPSAFC will fund the store. S. Chandrasekaran said byline-funding takes into account organization's other sources of revenue such as the SA and the University. Funds provided by the GPSA are not unrestricted and usually include caveats.

IV. Reports of Officers and Committee Updates, 10 min.

- 1. Executive Committee:** R. Kreis stepped down from voting member position. The Assembly will have elections for voting member at-large at the next meeting. The Executive Committee has been working on a decentralization effort this summer. Part of this effort is to ensure most fields have field organizations representatives.
- 2. Operations:** If a member wants to join an internal committee that has a Chair, he/she should fill out an application. External committee position applications are on a Google form. There are certain requirements that go along with the Chair position including a semi-annual reports and a transition report for the next Chair.
- 3. Appropriations:** Look under Byline Funding Process.
- 4. Faculty Awards:** No updates.
- 5. Finance Commission:** The committee will hold a Review at the end of the month.
- 6. Student Advocacy:** First meeting will be on Thursday at 6pm.
- 7. Diversity and International Students:** Next meeting is on October 8th.
- 8. Programming Board:** The Chair is organizing an event for GPSA members to promote better communication. A. Molitoris then announced the dates for the next few interschool mixers.

V. New Business

- 1. For Discussion and Approval: GPSA Resolution 1: Resolution Approving the GPSA Charter and Bylaws for 2015-2016, 10 min.**

T. Snider proofread and corrected grammatical and formatting errors under Amendment 1, which passed with a vote of 12-0-1. Amendment 2 changed the name of the Student Health Plan Advisory Committee and was approved 12-0-1. Amendment 3 establishes election procedures for election of General Committee of the Graduate School representatives, which passed with a vote of 11-0-2. Amendment 4 allows Tiffany St. Bernard to finish her year as GC rep and passed with a vote of 14-0-1. There is no restriction to who can apply to the GC; it will be open to any and all graduate students. Resolution approved and passed by a vote of 14-0-1.

- 2. For Discussion and Approval: GPSA Resolution 2: Resolution Approving GPSA Budget for 2015-2016, 10 min.**

This resolution calls for approving the budget that S. Chandrasekaran presented at the last meeting. The resolution passed 13-1-1.

3. Election of Communications Committee Chair OR Vice President for Communications, 5 min.

There were no nominations and the position will be left vacant for now. Responsibilities for the Chair include chairing and running Communications Committee, facilitating communication between the GPSA and the fields, as well the members of the executive board. One of the privileges that come with the position is private meetings with the Deans of the Graduate Schools.

4. Election of General Committee Representative, 5 min.

GC is the committee that runs the grad school in terms of academic and academic programs and ensures programs fit the criteria. The Committee discusses important topics such as stipend rates and tuition. It is one of the more powerful committees that graduate students can serve on. It is a 2-year committee.

C. Yao nominated A. Waymack. N. Rogers nominated J. Goldberg who declined the nomination. Anna Waymack presented a brief introduction of her qualifications. In the last 7 months, she has created an association on sexual awareness, ran inter-disciplinary conferences, worked with the administration, and helped set up an organization for her field. One of the topics she is passionate about is mental health in academia and the difficulty graduate students face being students as well as workers. She plans to lean on Cornell to provide more resources to improve lives of such students. She was unanimously elected to the position.

VI. Open Forum, 4 min.

NAGPS, an association for all graduate students nationwide, will hold a meeting on October 29th, T. Bernard is attending the conference and the Assembly would like to send another repetitive. Let R. Walroth know if interested in attending he conference.

R. Walroth adjourned the meeting at 7:04pm.

*Sincerely submitted,
Aastha Wadhwa*