Graduate and Professional Student Association

The Pennsylvania State University
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<th>GPSA 70th Assembly Meeting</th>
<th>Wednesday, September 2, 2020</th>
<th>6:00 pm</th>
<th>Zoom meeting</th>
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Actions Items:
- Confirming New Delegates and Associate Justice
- Let Alex know if you are interested in being a poll worker at the Bryce Jordan Center or the HUB during the upcoming election
- Graduate Homecoming Court nominations are open, please submit nominations if you have someone in mind

Legislation Passed:
- Resolution 70-05: Statement of Support to Coalition of Graduate Employees at Penn State: COVID Justice
- Bill 70-06: Virtual Grad Cup

Agenda

I. Meeting called to order: 6:02 PM
II. Roll Call – See Appendix I
III. Adoption of the Agenda
   a. Motion made and seconded to replace “Artemio Cardenas” with “Star Sharp” as the “Faculty Senate” representative on the Agenda
IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes from April 29, 2020: Approved
V. Open Student Forum: No comments
VI. Special Presentation: Ben Locke, Director, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
   a. Discussed the changes that occurred with CAPS as a result of the shift online in Spring 2020
      i. Went from 100% in-person with phone calls to fully online in approximately 5 days in March 2020
      ii. CAPS not allowed to provide services across state lines – mental health services not permitted to function unless certified in the state a student is located in
1. CAPS responded to this issue by having students call them and then they would sort out the situation after the fact

b. Provided an overview of the Fall 2020 plan for CAPS
   i. Still open and helping students on a daily basis
   ii. On-campus presence exists (2 clinicians, 1 staff assistant) in case of emergency, but it is light in case the university has to go fully online again
   iii. Located on the 3rd floor of the Bank of America Building because UHS needs the extra office space
   iv. CAPS authorized to fill two positions: psychologist liaison with Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity and clinician focused on Black students’ experiences
   v. CAPS encouraged to expand its services and its capacities, so it will offer more than it did pre-COVID
   vi. More online resources
      1. You@PSU
         a. Comprehensive well-being portal for university students
         b. Looking into an HR component that would open it up to faculty and staff
         c. Available in the Penn State Go app
   2. Online Mental Health Screening
   3. CAPS Chat
   4. CAPS Virtual Library – has info related to COVID-19 as well as mental health issues

vii. Utilization in the last two weeks down compared to Fall 2019

c. Questions and Comments
   i. Q: What is the utilization of CAPS by grad students and how can we help publicize CAPS?
      1. Dr. Locke’s sense is that grad students are willing to, and do, utilize CAPS fairly regularly
      2. Talking about training for faculty and staff so they can become more aware of graduate student issues
      3. You@PSU – there’s been a huge increase in the utilization of mental health services and some informal help via resources like You@PSU can be a good first step instead of going immediately to professional help.
   ii. Q: What role do you see students and student fees playing in the long-term plans for CAPS’s location?
      1. CAPS serves about 10% of the graduate and undergraduate student body each year and acknowledges there is likely more work to do
      2. Student advocacy makes a huge difference for mental health services
      3. CAPS currently has three locations, which is an inefficient system for mental health services
      4. GPSA and UPUA have been pushing for a building or space dedicated to student well-being; lots of issues, but the most
important thing is to keep the need for student wellness on the front burner.

5. Student Fee Board has the ability to fund things that are important to students; IM Building just paid off and now those funds could potentially put toward other projects.

iii. How is CAPS preparing to meet the mental health needs of marginalized students, especially international ones, during the pandemic?
   1. Have a standing task force committee dedicated to serving underrepresented students (international and others)
   2. Challenge this year is providing ongoing care to students living in other countries (state and federal licensing issues); online services can hopefully assist these students.
   3. Implementing a telecoaching/telehelp resource (Ginger) that is outsourced and has the ability to function in all 50 states
      a. Done by text to start, is available 24/7, and is available for up to three months after someone starts, with the option of continuing thereafter.
   iv. Please reach out to Dr. Locke if people hear about or encounter problems that CAPS can potentially assist with.

VII. Executive Officer Reports
a. President – Alex Zhao
   i. All meetings this semester will be virtual and on Zoom
   ii. Congratulated GPSA on being responsive to issues and taking action over the summer; this much activity over the summer is unusual
      1. Submitted a letter with demands to the administration
      2. Signed several open letters related to international student visas and racial justice
      3. This assembly has a strong interest in advocating for graduate students
   iii. Town Hall to be held at the end of September to hear the concerns and experiences of graduate assistants – will be based on the Town Hall GPSA held last fall
      1. Keep end of September open since delegates will be needed to help run the town hall and spread the word to constituents
   iv. Poll workers are needed – get in touch with Alex if you’re interested in helping out with this (two voting precincts being moved to BJC and the HUB)
   v. Homecoming Court nominations currently open
   vi. If Borough Council position opens up for a grad student, Alex will be in touch, as we’ll need a delegate

b. Vice President – Julia Kelliher
   i. The telecoaching/telehelp resource that Dr. Locke mentioned is called Ginger
   ii. Limit of individual CAPS sessions is 6, but no limit for group sessions
   iii. TeleDoc replacing BetterHelp
   iv. COVID-19 Dashboard now being updated twice weekly
v. Student Code of Conduct being examined and re-evaluated
vi. No clear indication of under what circumstances the university will return
to fully online instruction – even with that change though, it does not seem
as though the university would completely shut down

c. Treasurer – Matt Billups
   i. Not a lot of funding requests over the summer, but have five bills leftover
      from the spring
   ii. Received Student Fee Board funding, which is a little over $50,000
   iii. Have about $14,000 left over from last year
   iv. Reach out if you have questions about funding

d. Secretary – Katie Warczak
   i. Attending the Marketing training for GPSA tomorrow
   ii. Let her know if name is being mispronounced or preferred pronouns are
       not being used

e. Faculty Senate – Star Sharp
   i. Faculty Senate has not met yet, but will meet on September 15th, will
      provide more updates next month

f. Graduate Council – Claire Kelling
   i. Leader of the Graduate Student Caucus
   ii. First meeting is not until September 16th
   iii. Top priority is ombudsperson program – ideally would have about two
        people that each graduate student could go to confidentially with problems
   iv. Looking to revise leave of absence policy

VIII. New Delegate Confirmation

a. Alex Cassell (Education) – Graduate Council
   • Interested in Community Outreach, but isn’t required to serve on a committee
   • Worked as a graduate student rep at the University of Georgia
   • Acknowledges privilege and does not want to overshadow underrepresented
      voices; says he has a lot to learn and wants to hear from a wide variety of
      people

b. Sandeep Krishnakumar – College of Engineering Delegate
   • Wants to get involved with GPSA because grad students often fall in a gray
     area between “student” and “faculty”
   • Interested in Advocacy Committee and working on issues related to
     employment, international students, LGBTQA+ students, and students with
     disabilities

c. Lauren Katch – College of Engineering Delegate
   • Interested in student advocacy and was involved as an undergraduate in the
     Women in Engineering program
   • Interested in the Advocacy Committee and issues related to women students
     in STEM
   • Still learning about graduate student issues

d. Brooke Mattern – College of Health and Human Development
   • Wants to be an advocate for grad students in her college, who have had some
     issues.
No formal student government experience, but does have experience working with large groups
- Tried to advocate for international students in her department in relation to milestones that caused visa issues
- Wants to serve on the Advocacy Committee and spread awareness of GPSA
- Specifically interested in advocating for students with disabilities.

Discussion:
- **Q:** What perspectives do they bring that are missing from GPSA?
  - Don’t necessarily bring new perspectives, but they were recommended to Alex and, with the exception of Alex Cassell, can provide viewpoints of underrepresented groups at Penn State
- **Q:** What stood out about Alex Cassell in his interview?
  - Has past student government experience and was a student government president so he has experience advocating for students
  - Graduate Council involves a lot of policy that student government experience would be valuable for
- **Comment:** Brooke is a strong advocacy force and Lauren and Sandeep sound like they would bring good perspectives – Diego Hernandez
- **Comment:** Alex Cassell initially put forth as an Education delegate and he’s a reflective person and is knowledgeable about areas where he needs to learn more. He’s also emerging as an up-and-coming education policy person – Ali Watts
- **Q:** What did Alex see in Lauren’s interview since she seemed only interested in women in STEM?
  - Has past experience, and is interested in being a liason to GADI, which shows she wants to be a wider advocate for graduate students
- **Comment:** Brooke is an excellent advocate and her department really needs someone to represent them – Lan-Nhi Phung
- **Comment:** Diversity is present and necessary on all committees and they should be aware of that – Star Sharp
- **Comment:** In a class where a student expressed “narrow” views, Alex Cassell pushed back against that student and said he was wrong, so he has previous experience using his privilege to fight for others – Artemio Cardenas
- **Comment:** Brooke very passionate about advocating for people around her and she is a force – Julia Kelliher

**ALL DElegates CONFIRMED 30-0 (see Appendix II)**

IX. New Associate Justice Confirmation
   a. Schonn Franklin
      i. Has a lot of experience with Model UN and student orgs
      ii. Taking time to learn right now; reviewing the constitution and by-laws
      iii. No major time commitments outside of GPSA and class
   b. **Discussion**
      i. **Comment:** Reached out to ask about being on the Judiciary Committee, has past experience, sweats the small stuff (detail oriented), and might be a potential future Chief Justice. That’s up to the Judiciary to decide, but the continuity he’s willing to provide is beneficial – Alex Zhao
ii. \textit{Q:} Does he have experience with by-laws and constitution?
   1. Yes, not within student government, but he does have Model UN by-law experience and what he did with his group as an undergraduate

iii. \textbf{Comment:} Schonn was a senator for an undergraduate student government – Michelle Massey

\textbf{NEW ASSOCIATE JUSTICE CONFIRMED 35-0 (see Appendix II)}

X. Resolution 70-05 - Statement of Support to Coalition of Graduate Employees at Penn State: COVID Justice
   \begin{itemize}
   
   \item CGE is making a number of demands, including that Penn State move to online instruction and offer COVID justice (specific demands in resolution)
   \item Adopting the resolution would mean supporting CGE’s demands and communicating this support to the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Provost, and the President of Penn State
   \end{itemize}

\textbf{Questions and Discussion}

\begin{itemize}

\item \textit{Q:} Can changes be made to the CGE’s statements or do we have to wholesale agree?
   \begin{itemize}
   
   \item Advocacy group is working on a new bill that would update and expand on CGE’s demands
   \end{itemize}

\item \textit{Q:} Where are non-grad student employees factored in, if they are?
   \begin{itemize}
   
   \item They’re mentioned in relation to the COVID justice demand about continuing financial support for non-instructional staff at pre-COVID levels
   \end{itemize}

\item \textit{Q:} What about classes that work better in-person and whose instructors are doing a good job of social distancing and protecting their students?
   \begin{itemize}
   
   \item Part of the reason that CGE is demanding pedagogy tools for graduate assistants is so that these types of classes can be moved online as effectively as possible
   \end{itemize}

\end{itemize}

\textbf{Comments:}

\begin{itemize}

\item Concerns that certain classes could \textit{not} run online, especially in STEM departments and colleges, which would mean robbing students of essential skills – Hannah Nolte, Katy Gerace

\item CGE is asking for online instruction, but isn’t looking to restrict grad students’ access to resources, tools, equipments, etc. – Diego Hernandez

\item Penn State isn’t offering thresholds for closing down and we need to keep people safe; even if we can’t teach perfectly online, we also can’t bring people back if they’ve died or are permanently affected by COVID-19 – Claire Kelling.

\item This resolution just covers class, not research, so it’s not advocating for all research to be moved online – Claire Kelling

\item CGE is a trustworthy organization and the only way to safely keep the university is open is to move to fully online instruction. Research is a different category altogether – Steven Baksa

\item Understand the focus is on the health and safety of students, but what about the students who learn better in person or don’t have access to
the appropriate resources or safe place to work/learn? We need to think of them as well – Sandeep Krishnakumar

- Penn State has had a lot of policy failings to the extent that we don’t know how bad the COVID-19 problem is here; our peer institutions are doing a lot more and we don’t have a lot of data or transparency. I’m concerned as an immunocompromised graduate student and CGE isn’t expecting the university to go online immediately as a result of their demands, just preparing for when we are inevitably forced online. CGE is calling on the university to do better compared to the transition that happened in the spring – Ali Watts

- I want to emphasize a pertinent point – one of the takeways from a meeting today was that Penn State doesn’t have a concrete threshold or metric for moving online. This kind of push is necessary; I understand the concern about research, but these demands are more about instruction. If we’re supporting particular demands, we have to make sure they make sense whenever remote instruction hits us – Alex Zhao

- CGE wants to secure finances and safety for all employees at the university and also ensure transparency for the inevitable switch to remote instruction – Lan-Nhi Phung

- Point of closing sooner is to re-open sooner, if we have an outbreak here now, it will make it harder and harder to return to on-campus learning – Claire Kelling

- Going online creates enormous disruption, so what CGE is asking for is as smooth a transition as possible for as many people as possible – Diego Hernandez

- Having legislation on COVID issues are important because graduate students are being affected by this crisis; however, could there be a model where undergraduates are sent home and graduate assistants are allowed to stay and come to campus to do research, etc., if they feel comfortable? – Artemio Cardenas

- Advocacy Committee working on a more hybrid model resolution that will be ready for the next GPSA meeting – Diego Hernandez

- This resolution is about instruction, not research, and the university keeps saying they will be “surgical” in their move online, so when the move occurs, it’s going to be gradual and with a process – Claire Kelling

- Penn State admin has made it clear that they will not be issuing a blanket shutdown statement – Julia Kelliher

- Penn State created the problem by having students back and will be causing problems by sending students back to their homes, which will be a huge problem for those communities – Nico Terry

- Students on campus are potentially negatively affecting the broader, year-round State College and Centre County community – Emma Robertson

**LEGISLATION PASSES 32-2-1 (see Appendix II)**

XI. Bill 70-06: Virtual Grad Cup
• Instead of physical Grad Cup, have a virtual 4-week long event between October 5, 2020, and October 29, 2020.
• Would feature a physical activity challenge as well as weekly virtual game nights
• Requesting funds for gift cards and t-shirts

Questions and Discussion
Q: Can delegates participate and has a more robust physical activity app, such as Strava, been considered?
   1. Delegates can participate, but a physical activity app could be considered, otherwise planning on using the honor system.
Q: Would everyone have access to this technology?
   2. Strava is free for everyone to use
   3. Perhaps Strava could be strongly encouraged, but optional, since “physical activity” differs from “exercise”
Q: Historically, have there been concerns about Grad Cup being an ableist event given its emphasis on physical activity?
   4. There hasn’t been a lot of thought given to making Grad Cup less ableist or less physically active
   5. Some activities more accessible than others
   6. Also about grad students gathering as a community
Q: Is there a specific reason there are 15 gift cards?
   7. The top three teams (up to 5 people) get gift cards

Comments
  - Could potentially give equal billing to physical activities and virtual game nights
  - Really try to make the event as accessible as possible – Diego Hernandez
    ▪ Programming will look into that and welcomes input on how to make the event more accessible – Jocelyn Delgado
  - Would suggest an addition to the legislation that specifies gift cards will be purchased from local businesses – Claire Kelling
  - Proposal to specify that “gift cards will be purchased from local businesses in the State College area” – seconded and approved
  - Make sure that the game nights are inclusive, representative, and not Eurocentric – Ali Watts
  - Proposal to specify that “The Programming Committee will investigate new methods to increase the inclusivity of Grad Cup to all students at Penn State” – seconded and approved
  - Several Sower’s Cafe gift cards left over from the spring, could be used for this event – Alex Zhao
  - Distributing the Sower’s gift cards randomly to participants could encourage people to join in – Claire Kelling

Legislation Passes 33-0 (see Appendix II)

XII. Reports
  a. Speaker of the Assembly – Yasha Duggal
i. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped out with student orientations

ii. All committees should be meeting once every two weeks and you MUST be there since that attendance counts for GPSA in general as well

b. Advocacy and Diversity – Diego Hernandez
   i. Committee meets at 5 PM the Wednesday of Assembly
   ii. New members should come to that next meeting in two weeks, but also join the Slack Channel
   iii. Committee dedicated to supporting the #ScholarStrike – happening soon, so no resolution, but Natalie (intern) will be making something for our social media
   iv. Want to make sure that any graduate assistant who participates in #ScholarStrike does not experience retaliation and, if they do, that they know to reach out to GPSA for help

v. Working on a new COVID-19 resolution and would like feedback from delegates on what demands to include that perhaps CGE left out.

vi. Working on a racial justice resolution as well

vii. Reminder that all sponsorships and collaborations need to adhere to our Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity

c. Professional Development – Justin Korman
   i. Working on adapting to the remote environment and crafting writing and resume workshops
   ii. Would like to still do headshots, but have to take extra precautions
      1. Suggestion that we use MFA students to take the headshots
   iii. No set meeting time yet, but next meeting is on Friday

d. Programming - Jocelyn Delgado
   i. Potentially hosting monthly events at 2000 degrees

e. Community Outreach – Katy Gerace
   i. Lots of events planned over the summer sidelined, so looking at different options, including outside ones

f. Internal Development – Steven Baksa
   i. Discussing some amendments to the constitution and by-laws, especially in relation to IUG students and how they’re incorporated into the Assembly
   ii. Welcome suggestions and feedback from outside the committee

g. Liaison Reports
   i. Academic Integrity Committee – Ali Watts
      1. Met every other week this summer because they’re working on a more specific code of conduct for graduate assistants
      2. Most of a proposal draft is written and should have full working draft by the end of the month/early October and has gotten permission to run the draft by GPSA
   ii. University Park Student Fee Board – Claire Kelling
      1. Student Fee Board in charge of allocating all fees paid by undergraduate, graduate, and professional students
2. Met this week and voted to re-allocate money initially devoted to free STI testing to flu vaccines - [https://sites.psu.edu/studentfee/files/2020/09/SFB-UHS-Proposal-Press-Release.pdf](https://sites.psu.edu/studentfee/files/2020/09/SFB-UHS-Proposal-Press-Release.pdf)

iii. Research, Computing, and Cyber Infrastructure – Hannah Nolte

1. Box is on the way out, so get out within a year; suggestion is that people move to Microsoft Teams
2. Working on making cyberstructure more integrative and remote operable
3. Q: Was there pushback on getting rid of Box?
   a. Yes, but the university pays for too many Cloud services to keep them all
4. Q: What is the space limit for Microsoft compared to Box?
   a. Unclear

h. Judiciary – The Honorable Michelle Massey  
i. Nothing to Report

i. Advisor – Adam Christensen

i. Your engagement with GPSA and various committees and liaison groups is important for affecting how the university operates

ii. Lots of good and hard work ahead of us, so stay engaged and keep doing the good work you’ve been doing

XIII. Comments for the Good of the Order - None

XIV. Meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM

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### Appendix I

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Number of voters in Assembly: 36

33 are required for quorum

Appendix II

U= Unexpected Absence  E= Excused Absence  A= Abstain  Y=Yes  N= No
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