

Bill # 70-24

# **The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)**

**The Pennsylvania State University**



**of the 70th Assembly**

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,*

## **Remote Chocolate Tasting**

**Offer students an opportunity to learn about chocolate**

(Decided: [ Y / N / A ])

### **Nature of the Situation:**

- 1 GPSA provides programming events to enrich graduate and professional student life and
- 2 promote a sense of community among graduate and professional students at Penn State.
- 3 Along with the typical stresses that graduate and professional study incurs, necessary
- 4 social distancing and remote work caused by COVID-19 have increased the need for
- 5 social interaction and mental health breaks while decreasing the options available for
- 6 events and spontaneous experiences. Previously, we have collaborated with the College
- 7 of Health and Human Development (HHD) to provide a cooking program for the graduate
- 8 and professional students (c.f. bill 67-10). The events were successful, and many more
- 9 students have expressed their interests to attend a similar event in the future. However,
- 10 such an event cannot proceed unchanged while continuing to follow social distancing

1 guidelines. In contrast, a chocolate tasting can proceed essentially unaltered, and there  
2 are even some advantages to a more-digital format.

3 Penn State's College of Food Science hosts one of the world's premier research  
4 programs on cacao, and a doctoral candidate there (Allison Brown) has run and planned  
5 chocolate tastings in a remote synchronous format and met various chocolate makers.  
6 Using materials provided by soon to be Dr. Brown, we will introduce participants to the  
7 world of craft chocolate. We hope to have one or more chocolate makers join the call, but  
8 have to finalize our order before that will be a possibility. This will allow us to run the event  
9 at a cost of approximately \$10 (estimate only, exact product selection may alter this figure  
10 slightly) per person. For comparison's sake, similar experiences are retailing elsewhere  
11 for \$35-70 (depending on how much chocolate is included in the tasting package), a  
12 discrepancy caused in part by:

- 13 • the quantity of product provided,
- 14 • the retail sales model, and
- 15 • the direct participation of chocolate makers in planning and management of the  
16 event.

17 This event provides a multi-sensory exploration of the many facets of chocolate, from  
18 labor and wealth inequality (its production in the tropics and the uneven distribution of  
19 profits between farmers, middlemen, and chocolate makers) to its production process (9  
20 steps in total), to an in-depth appreciation for the results of that process. Each participant  
21 will receive 5 pieces of chocolate totaling approximately 25 grams, access to digital  
22 tasting sheets, and a link to join the tasting event. People may only receive free chocolate  
23 once, but are welcome to attend multiple tastings if they wish to continue practicing  
24 mindful chocolate consumption. Each event will be limited to approximately 40  
25 participants in order to facilitate effective discussion. These events will be advertised via  
26 our newswire and GPSA social media accounts.

27 Bulk purchasing of mini bars (c.f. Askinosie, Raaka, Caputo's selection, etc. to choose  
28 chocolate makers, there are no craft chocolate companies within a 2-hour drive) will save  
29 a significant amount of labor and time cutting up and repackaging chocolate bars and is  
30 more COVID-safe but costs slightly more per serving.

31

### 32 **Recommended Course of Action:**

- 33 • GPSA authorizes the Programming Committee to purchase up to \$800 of craft  
34 chocolate for the months of March, April, and possibly May. The total amount is  
35 chosen to supply tasting kits for graduate and professional students attending each  
36 of the events while keeping event size reasonable, for a total of up to 150 kits.
- 37 • Up to 2 hours of soon to be Dr. Allison Brown's time prepping the slides at \$25/hour
- 38 • \$75 for shipping costs of the individual servings to attendees
- 39 • **Total: \$925**

Respectfully submitted,

**Nico Terry**

Delegate, Eberly College of Science

**Lan-Nhi Phung**

Delegate, Eberly College of Science

**Jocelyn Delgado,**

Delegate, Intercollegiate Graduate Degree Programs

**Matt McGee**

Delegate, College of Information Sciences and Technology

**Lauren Katch**

Delegate, College of Engineering

President \_\_\_\_\_ Affirm  
Veto

The Graduate and Professional Student Association