



## Graduate and Professional Student Association

The Pennsylvania State University  
 315 HUB-Robeson Center  
 University Park, PA 16802  
 Email: gpsaoffice@gmail.com

GPSA 71st Assembly Meeting	Wednesday, January 26, 2022	6:00 PM	134 HUB/Zoom
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### Action Items:

- PRIDE Brunch this Sunday, looking for a few volunteers to monitor the rooms, reach out to Megan Minnich if you are available on Sunday at 11AM over Zoom
- Programming is looking for feedback on their legislation about a graduate/professional student talent showcase event in their Slack channel

### Business Conducted:

- Ava McCartin was confirmed as an Assembly Delegate for the School of Law
- Rola Tarek was confirmed as an At-Large Assembly Delegate
- Resolution 71-11: Reorganization of the GPSA Standing Committees, was passed, which amended the GPSA Bylaws to create a new Student Engagement Committee which combines the Programming and Community Outreach Committees

### Agenda

- I. Meeting called to order at 6 PM
- II. Roll Call – See Appendix I
- III. Adoption of the Agenda
- IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes from 1/12/2022: Approved
- V. Open Student Forum
- VI. Special Presentation: Kelly Mroz, Director of Student Legal Affairs
  - a. We are absolutely here for access to justice, here to explain what the law means and help people be in a position to make decisions in a knowledgeable way
    - i. Equally available to everyone at the university, as we are paid for by the student activity fee and housed in student affairs
    - ii. Maintain an advisory board with representatives to make sure that communication and voice from students is a regular part of our input
  - b. Located downtown and did expand this fall to Commonwealth Campus students, in addition to University Park students
    - i. Great Valley and the College of Medicine also have access as opted into an additional fee (neither campus normally pays the student initiated fee)
    - ii. Goal of the office is to advocating for individual student and what's best for them, not just the typical student
  - c. Overall satisfaction rate is around 96-97%
    - i. Work very hard to treat every student coming into our office like a valued client at a private law firm paying us \$200 per hour for our services

- ii. High satisfaction seems to track with how important our service is, and our goal is to make life easier for students who come in by removing legal burdens from students
- iii. 65% of students in our survey say they wouldn't have legal representation without SLS
- d. Pandemic trends
  - i. Lower overall case count, flipped percentage of civil and criminal cases
  - ii. Historically 60% criminal, 40% civil, now flipped to 60% civil and 40% criminal (generally fewer citations)
  - iii. Overall student satisfaction remains the same as prior
- e. **Questions and Comments**
  - i. **Ashley** – is there any extent where students should be concerned where your office prioritizes the university's interest over theirs?
    - 1. They shouldn't be concerned that we would prioritize the university over them if we accept their case, but if we could be in a position where we can't fully advocate for a client due to conflict of interest, then we cannot provide service
    - 2. Relatively small percentage of cases that would provide a conflict (involving the university or two students in adverse possession to each other)
      - a. When this comes up we try to help as much as we can and frustrate as little as possible
      - b. Can provide general information and referral information
  - ii. **Claire** – Would you be willing to talk about the exciting initiatives you have this year for the Student Fee Board to consider?
    - 1. Initiatives around conflicts of interest
      - a. Proposing a pilot conflicts counsel program
        - i. Fund a consultation for a lawyer
        - ii. Starting with landlord tenant issues because those have a lot of roommate conflicts at their core (between two students)
    - 2. Name change petitions
      - a. Last year UPUA provided some temporary funding for name change requests
      - b. We're looking to make this part of a regular part of the fee request
      - c. Students have been relieved to find out this is currently a service and there has been no concerns about lack of buy-in or commitment
  - iii. **Jalen** – came people come to SLS prior to signing leases to get advice or assistance over reading the fine print of leases?
    - 1. We do free lease reviews for students, even for transfer students who haven't quite started at Penn State yet
    - 2. We have five attorneys with very varied backgrounds that can help you with a wide range of legal issues, including proactive things like planning documents, power of attorney, wills, etc

- VII. Executive Board Reports
  - a. President – **Schönn Franklin**

- i. Graduate Development Officer
  - 1. Met with interim dean and former dean to work through how to best proceed forward with this
- ii. Graduate student trustee
  - 1. Still working through committees on the Board of Trustees to add this to committee meeting
- iii. Graduate Dean search committee has been reconstituted
  - 1. Currently have four candidates, being asked by the provost to fill candidates and ultimately make a final decision on which candidates will move forward
  - 2. Additional search committees for associate/assistant director of the graduate school for well being and mental health and professional development also ongoing
- b. Vice President – **Jalen Jeter**
  - i. Student Advisory Board for Office for Sexual Misconduct
    - 1. Still working on new projects and new working groups, assessments and evaluations to see what students want from this office
    - 2. Planning a town hall meeting for the coming months, will be working with A&D committee on that
  - ii. Serving on the CCSG election committee
- c. Treasurer – **Matt Billups**
  - i. Available funds for the rest of the fiscal year: \$29,000
    - 1. Fall Graduate Writing Bootcamp came in under allocation
    - 2. Criminal Justice Reform conference was cancelled
    - 3. In your committees please think about events you want to run or programs you want to put on to help graduate and professional students
  - ii. **Questions and Comments**
    - 1. **Alex** – also please feel free to reach out to other graduate student organizations in your departments and colleges about co-sponsoring events
- d. Secretary – **Alex Zhao**
  - i. Please notify if mispronouncing delegates' names or if delegates enter the meeting after attendance has been taken.
  - ii. Committee chairs please send attendance records after each meeting.
  - iii. Sending out the newswire tomorrow, please submit any event announcements or graphics by noon.
  - iv. Please notify if you want to be excluded from public recordings.
- e. Faculty Senate – **Lillian Schaeffer**
  - i. Much of the discussion during Faculty Senate was around the transition to a new president on March 7
  - ii. SRTEs
    - 1. How we can protect students and faculty alike if there are instances of violent or discriminatory SRTEs
  - iii. President Barron spoke in the beginning about the importance of free speech and where we stand as a university
    - 1. Admission statistics

- a. Seem to be increasing specifically due to Commonwealth Campuses and the international and out of state populations
  - iv. Reports focused on inter-university relationships, coursework software and educational technologies, and supporting academic freedoms without interference of racial and social justice
  - v. **Questions and Comments**
    - 1. **Claire** – could you clarify Barron’s free speech comments and clarify what “without interference of racial and social justice” meant?
      - a. On free speech, Barron mentioned the importance to protect free speech from the left and the right and ended up citing Milo as an example of how if you limit people’s speech it ends up encouraging one side to inflame tensions
      - b. **Ali** – a lot of the responses to his comments were emotional due to the Oliver Baker situation and the lack of transparency, and also the perception that the university was retaliating against Professor Baker
        - i. Has become point of contention about faculty feeling unsafe and unsupported in the classroom with the administration not having their backs
        - ii. Faculty Senate Chair and prior chair putting together a larger conversation on what this looks like for faculty, we are looking to talk about how it plays out for graduate instructors and how we can make sure that we’re protecting academic freedom but also safety for graduate and professional students right now
- f. Graduate Council – **Claire Kelling**
  - i. Graduate minor double counting course policy
    - 1. Our resolution was presented and results from our survey, including mentioning that it was not a unanimous vote
    - 2. Feedback was pretty overwhelming that they wanted to flexibility to remain within programs and that a graduate school wide limitation would hurt programs
    - 3. Overall a good discussion but unclear if the policy will be voted on anytime soon
  - ii. Personal time policy (vacation time)
    - 1. Proposing 20 days of personal time to be guaranteed per academic year
    - 2. Still unclear what this means in terms of university holidays and closures but that is the current proposla
  - iii. Graduate Dean Search
    - 1. Stated as a failed search, Schonn did a good job clearing some things up today
  - iv. Working on a policy on how many people are required to be in-person for exams like comprehensive and dissertation defenses
  - v. Recommend registering for the Graduate Exhibition
- g. Speaker of the Assembly – **Sandeep Krishnakumar**
  - i. Please fill out the attendance form if you can’t make it
  - ii. Committee chairs please feel free to reach out with any questions or updates that you have

- iii. As we put on events and initiatives for the rest of this semester please make sure to advertise them to your constituents
  - h. Chief Justice – The Honorable **Samuel Altland**
    - i. Intent to run form will be ready in the next week and in March you'll see new communications from our associate justices around the election
- VIII. Confirmation of Presidential Appointments: Ava McCartin (Law School Delegate)
  - a. 1L in law school, interested in getting involved in the GPSA to get more involved in the relationships between different graduate programs and between the graduate school and the university as a whole
  - b. Experience in different leadership and advisory roles from undergraduate university and from high school
    - i. Have served on different advisory positions including being a student voice on a faculty committee for the honors program in my undergraduate
  - c. Feel passionate about graduate health care program and generally increasing communications between graduate programs and from the university
  - d. **Questions**
    - i. **Sandeep** – what committees are you interested in?
      - 1. Internal development since i have some experience working on bylaws and overhauling constitutions and bylaws
      - 2. Also interested in professional development committee
  - e. **Discussion**
    - i. **Eli** – for Schonn, is there anything that you saw in Ava that she didn't bring up that you think she would be a good fit in this role?
      - 1. **Schonn** – one thing not mentioned today was her commitment to learning the ropes and participating in whatever she is assigned to do
    - ii. Motion to vote to confirm by roll call, seconded
  - f. **Candidate Confirmed 24-0-0, see Appendix II for details**
- IX. Confirmation of Presidential Appointments: Rola Tarek (At-Large Delegate)
  - a. International student from Egypt here to start my PhD for Lifelong Learning and Adult Education
  - b. Applied for GPSA because I'm interested in getting more involved with the graduate community here at Penn State, including among international and marginalized students
  - c. Professional background includes 10 years of experience working with student leaders and refugee communities focused on North Africa and the Middle East
  - d. Used to be involved also in a global exchange youth program during undergrad
  - e. **Questions**
    - i. **Sandeep** – what committees are you interested in?
      - 1. Programming, professional development, community outreach
    - ii. **Claire** – how did you hear about us?
      - 1. Before joining Penn State I was looking for student organizations and how to get involved, and read about GPSA and the details of the organization's work
  - f. **Discussion**
    - i. **Sandeep** – for Schonn, what during her interview made you nominate her?
      - 1. **Schonn** – she touched on this during her interview but she has worked

in public, private, and nonprofit sectors

- a. In all these sectors she has worked with creating professional development experiences, and she is coming in to learn the ropes

- ii. Motion to vote to confirm by roll call, seconded

g. **Candidate Confirmed 25-0-0, see Appendix II for details**

X. Resolution 71-11: Reorganization of the GPSA Standing Committees

- a. First part of GPSA reorganization legislation to make sure that we are able to work as best as possible to achieve our goals

- i. I think that the best way for us to do that is to combine community outreach and programming into one committee focused on Student Engagement
- ii. Renaming Programming as Student Engagement
- iii. Student Engagement committee will encompass what the Programming and Community Outreach committees both used to do
- iv. Had discussion with steering committee on this issue and all chairs are in agreement in this issue

b. **Questions**

- i. **Claire** – can the programming committee chair comment on this legislation on whether they'd have enough time or capacity to take on two committees' responsibilities

1. **Ama** – The idea behind this is that each committee doesn't have enough people to plan everything that we want to do, and so for the programming committee we have been working with that capacity limitation in mind

- a. Lack of members is limiting our capacity to put on events
- b. A good way to work around this is to combine the two so that there are enough people to truly put on great quality events so that graduate and professional students and explore beyond just their classwork

2. **Claire** - this sounds like this is more support for Programming, not a joint committee

- a. **Ama** – I can't speak on behalf of Community Outreach, but I do think there is power in numbers in terms of what we can do
- b. **Ram** - from Community Outreach, I also feel that we are lagging in terms of people, and so maybe combining the committees will help us more effectively organize events
- c. **Schonn** – this would double the number of delegates assigned to the committee, but these committees are not entirely disjoint in terms of their focus, events can have both community outreach and programming aspects, combining would increase the number of people focused and do a better job than separate committees

- ii. **Rola** – what is the rationale behind combining both committees into one?

1. **Schonn** – both of them provide programming but with different focuses, our current amount of programming is not sufficient to engage graduate and professional students

- iii. **Claire** – about doubling the number of delegates, how would you have that policy or practice be put in place for future Assemblies?
  - 1. **Schonn** – can be put in this legislation but can be better to give flexibility to future Assemblies,
  - 2. **Sandeep** – I get that it's good if the number of delegates are equal in each committee but a committee like programming just inherently needs more delegates, have seen firsthand that with only four people programming is spread pretty thin
  - 3. It's not an issue with just this Assembly, when speaking with Yasha (previous Speaker) she also noted that programming was spread pretty thin
  - 4. **Katie** – was this always an issue or has this become a bigger one versus pre-pandemic?
    - a. **Sandeep** – has actually become more challenging this year, last year all events were all online but this year there has been a mixture and those events have presented more challenges (booking rooms, getting supplies)

c. **Discussion**

- i. **Matt** - Personnel issues seems temporary, worry about loss of community outreach focus if they are included in other programming activities
- ii. **Schonn** – Even if we filled all the positions that are open, we would still end up with more delegates in certain committees
  - 1. They have been done by need and preference
  - 2. Amount of work depends on the ambition of the student engagement chair
- iii. **Alex** – Community Outreach and Professional Development were both spun out of Programming in 2018, this is its 4th year as a standing committee
  - 1. It hasn't found similar anchoring events like Professional Development or Programming
  - 2. Usually one or two volunteering events per year, with the most consistent event being blood drive co-sponsorship/drives
  - 3. A lot of this could be done better with more people, so combining makes sense, not enough events currently to justify it as a committee right now
- iv. **Ama** – there is a level of commitment with having people putting out a call for volunteers for committee events, we are essentially getting accountability in terms of people helping for setup for different events and being in the committee
  - 1. With more committed people in our committee we can increase the quality of events that we can put together and increase engagement on different outreach and issues we care about
- v. **Sandeep** – we're not proposing that programming and community outreach be combined into just programming, it's about getting more student engagement in general in the new committee, including with the State College community as well

1. Want to emphasize that in the steering committee meeting that we had, there was this understanding that will be a minimum of a certain number of events and initiatives organized by Student Engagement focused on community outreach
- vi. **Matt** – the community outreach mission has immense potential to impact our community, and would hate to see that effort diluted by on campus events, which are a critical piece, but so is the engagement in the State College community, we need to find organizations that already exist that promote opportunities, like volunteering, mentoring, and environmental sustainability, don't want to see that aspect decreased
- vii. **Schonn** – creating of Student Engagement committee will not stop community outreach, as it will be part of the mission of the committee, Community Outreach doesn't really have a mandate aside from providing service opportunities and engagement with the State College and Penn State community, the goal is to provide the GPSA with a committee that is focused on programming for outreach with the manpower to complete those events
- viii. **Claire** – want to echo what Matt said, think that there is immense benefit to collaboration with the Borough Council, I think that focus will be lost if they are combined, concern that in a couple of years we will lose this community outreach focus
- ix. **Matt** – it's important to establish relationships with other organizations within the community, if there isn't a committee that exists to build those connections then a lot of it can be lost
- x. **Schonn** – the work that can be done to increase community outreach can be done within Student Engagement, but if there are too few people then the work is much harder to do
  1. The Student Engagement committee will take over the mandate of the Community Outreach committee, it is simply working as a larger team
- xi. **Sandeep** – wanted to echo what Schonn had just said, we can still do community outreach within Student Engagement
  1. Proof that this can work is that UPUA, which doesn't really have a Community Outreach focused committee but they still put forward initiatives that involve the State College community
    - a. This is a testament to being able to do community outreach work even without a specific committee
- xii. **Katie** – I'm curious about the original decision to make professional development and community outreach standing committees, wonder if we will revisit this in a couple of years
- xiii. **Matt** – a very focused small team can accomplish more than a bigger one that is juggling multiple initiatives, and the student engagement chair would get double the work
- xiv. **Alex** – originally a Student Affairs committee, but Community Outreach and Professional Development were functionally standing committees, so they were broken out
  1. While professional development has found its rhythm, community outreach has not, it has produced consistent but few events (mostly



blood drive cosponsorships and a few volunteer opportunities per year)

- xv. **Schonn** – the workload of the two committees are not equal, programming has more events than community outreach, there are multiple focuses for each committee and it will ultimately be up to the committees to determine their priorities

- 1. **Claire** – is there a volunteer to chair the new committee?

- a. **Schonn** – Should be answered after we pass this legislation

- b. **Ama** - Don't mind taking the lead on that, but we can always designate the type of events we will have, depending on the time that we are looking at

- i. The question isn't how much stuff we want to do, but rather how many quality events we want to do, and for that having enough bandwidth and manpower is important to this

- ii. One of my goals would be to make sure that there are established events and networks for the next Assembly in terms of maintaining that outreach aspect

- c. **Ram** – it will be nice to designate particular events as outreach events, once combined we can start working on signature events involving outreach so that th focus isn't lost

- xvi. Motion to vote by roll call, seconded

- d. **Resolution Passed 18 -3-5, see Appendix II for details**

## XI. Reports

- a. Advocacy and Diversity – **Megan Minnich**

- i. PRIDE Brunch this Sunday, looking for a few volunteers to monitor the rooms, reach out to me if you are available on Sunday at 11AM over Zoom

- ii. Committee meeting times this semester are at 5:30PM over Zoom on Wednesdays right before Assembly meetings

- b. Professional Development – No report given

- c. Programming – **Ama Agyapong**

- i. Coffee hour next month

- ii. Working on a talent showcase event for graduate/professional students, currently working on the legislation for that and would like feedback

- iii. Meeting times are the alternating Wednesdays at 6PM (non-Assembly meeting weeks)

- d. Community Outreach – **Ram Neupane**

- i. Meeting tomorrow morning at 9AM

- ii. In communication with UPUA representative for bicycle helmet event, planning to bring legislation in next meeting once we fully figure out the bike helmet giveaway event

- e. Internal Development – **Travis Russell**

- i. No report tonight

- f. Liaison Reports

- i. **Alex** – Student Transportation – recommended improvements to Lyft late night program, conveyed concerns over CATA service reductions

- ii. **Alex** – Graduate Exhibition – most details finalized except for Gather town, which is working out the contract
- g. Student Trustee – Janiyah Davis
  - i. Not in attendance
- h. Advisor – Adam Christensen
  - i. No report
- XII. Comments for the Good of the Order
- XIII. Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM

### Appendix I

U= Unexcused Absence | E= Excused Absence | P= Present | L= Late | Proxy = Proxy

Position	Name	1/26/22
<b>Executive Board</b>		
President	Schönn Franklin	P
Vice President	Jalen Jeter	P
Secretary	Alex Zhao	P
Treasurer	Matthew Billups	P
Faculty Senator (Graduate School)	Ali Watts	P
Faculty Senator (GPSA Appointed)	Lillian Schaeffer	P
<b>Judiciary</b>		
Chief Justice	Sam Altland	P
Associate Justice	Drake Broussard	P
Associate Justice	Ian Tennison	P
<b>Graduate Council</b>		
Graduate Council	Claire Kelling (Science)	P
Graduate Council	Katie Warczak (Liberal Arts)	P
Graduate Council	Hannah Nolte (Engineering)	P
Graduate Council	Annie Everett (Education)	P
<b>Assembly</b>		
Agricultural Sciences	Travis Russell	P
Agricultural Sciences	Ram Neupane	P
Communications	Ashley Smalls	P
Education	Seongryeong Yu	P
Education	Farhan Sadique	Proxy

Education	Yun-Chen Yen	P
Engineering	Sandeep Krishnakumar	P
Engineering	Niladri Sekhar Mandal	U
Engineering	Tanveer Ahmed	P
Engineering	Arnab Chatterjee	L
Engineering	Qian Zhang	A
Health and Human Development	Brooke Mattern	Proxy
Health and Human Development	David Desmet	L
Liberal Arts	Nora Tucker	P
Nursing	Sherif Olanrewaju	P
School of International Affairs	Gerren Graham	P
School of Law	Megan Minnich	P
School of Law	Eli Fields	P
School of Law	Ava McCartin	L
At-Large Delegate	Ama Agyapong (IGDP)	P
At-Large Delegate	Yuki Takahashi (SIA)	P
At-Large Delegate	Shakhzoda Tuychieva (Law)	P
At-Large Delegate	Sara Albrecht Soto (Liberal Arts)	P
At-Large Delegate	Rola Tarek	L

## Appendix II

Y=Yes | N= No | A = Abstain | Blank Cell = No Vote

Office	Name	Attendance	Ava McCartin (Law Delegate) Confirmation	Rola Tarek (At- Large Delegate) Confirmation	Resolution 71-11
<b>Graduate Council</b>					
Graduate Council	Claire Kelling (Science)	P	Y	Y	N
Graduate Council	Katie Warczak (Liberal Arts)	P	Y	Y	N
Graduate Council	Hannah Nolte (Engineering)	P	Y	Y	Y
Graduate Council	Annie Everett (Education)	P	Y	Y	Y

Assembly					
Agricultural Sciences	Travis Russell	P	Y	Y	N
Agricultural Sciences	Ram Neupane	P	Y	Y	Y
Communications	Ashley Smalls	P	Y	Y	A
Education	Seongryeong Yu	P	Y	Y	A
Education	Farhan Sadique	Proxy	Y	Y	A
Education	Yun-Chen Yen	P	Y	Y	Y
Engineering	Sandeep Krishnakumar	P	Y	Y	Y
Engineering	Niladri Sekhar Mandal	U			
Engineering	Tanveer Ahmed	P	Y	Y	Y
Engineering	Arnab Chatterjee	L	Y	Y	Y
Engineering	Qian Zhang	A			
Health and Human Development	Brooke Mattern	Proxy	Y	Y	Y
Health and Human Development	David Desmet	L	Y	Y	Y
Liberal Arts	Nora Tucker	P	Y	Y	Y
Nursing	Sherif Olanrewaju	P	Y	Y	Y
School of International Affairs	(Garry) Gerren Graham	P	Y	Y	Y
School of Law	Megan Minnich	P	Y	Y	Y
School of Law	Eli Fields	P	Y	Y	A
School of Law	Ava McCartin	L		Y	Y
At-Large Delegate	Ama Agyapong (IGDP)	P	Y	Y	Y
At-Large Delegate	Yuki Takahashi (SIA)	P	Y	Y	Y
At-Large Delegate	Shakhzoda Tuychieva (Law)	P	Y	Y	Y
At-Large Delegate	Sara Albrecht Soto (Liberal Arts)	P	Y	Y	Y

At-Large Delegate	Rola Tarek	L			A
Number of voters in Assembly:	28	Yes (Y)	24	25	18
Number of voters present:	26	No (N)	0	0	3
		Abstain (A)	0	0	5
		Veto	No	No	No