General Assembly

Friday, 14th October 2022, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Attendance: 13 Executives and 40 Senators

Meeting Started: 3:00 pm

Call to Order: By the Vice President

Roll Call: By the Secretary (we had a quorum with a total of 13 Executives and 40 Senators in attendance).

Approval of Minutes and Agenda: Seeing no changes requested, meeting minutes were approved.

Guest Speakers

- Dr. John M.K. Lommel, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- The Higher Learning Commission and the Reaccreditation Process
  - Why accreditation?
    - It’s all about equality
    - The quality of the institution’s academic programs is validated
    - Allows evaluation of the institution’s adherence to mission and sustainability of its finances
    - All of these are conducted by a review team that checks if an institution matches up to the HLC standard
  - Peer Review Team on Campus: October 17th – 18th
  - Encourages students to attend the Open Forums Discussion for students which will hold on Monday, 17th October, 2.00 pm – 3.00 pm
o The reviewer will ask the stakeholders (students/faculties) questions about the school policies, academics, and how it affects them generally
o On the 18th of October, Drop in session
o Opportunity for stakeholders (students/faculties) to meet in relative privacy with a reviewer

- **Rodney Fleming, Student Legal Services**
  - Overview of Student Legal Services
  - Core mission: Helping students alleviate problems to success
  - Student legal services are only liable to the students and not the government/university; answer to only clients (students)
  - Explanation of Student Legal Fee
    - Optional $13 fee per semester; 88% of students participate in the program
  - Survey results from students
    - 73% of students that filled out the survey said that legal issues affect their academics, 70% of students said that legal issues cause stress, and 27% of students considered leaving BGSU if they couldn’t get legal help
  - Questions & Answers:
    - Questions: Are there laws in Ohio that set a cap for rent increases?
      - Answer: No, a landlord is free to set the rent at any amount they believe they can convince a tenant to pay
    - Question from the GSS President: Can tenants petition for grandfathered property rights?
      - Answer: Homeowners (the landlord usually) can petition for these rights, not the tenant
    - Question from Philosophy (Masters): Why is the legal service not available for students in the summer period?
• Answer: The price may need to increase during the summer because the volume of students will be low during the 4 months
• Some schools pay for the whole academic calendar year
  ▪ Question from American Culture Studies Representative: Do you do wills for students?
    • Answer: Yes, Wills/Medical Powers of Attorney

• Marlene Reynolds, Student Health Insurance
  o Student Health Insurance Overview
  o Health Insurance Options
    o Healthcare.gov (marketplace)
    o Benefits.ohio.gov (Medicaid plans based on income)
    o International plans must meet BGSU requirements
    o BGSU–sponsored plan (United Healthcare Student Resources)
  o Need to visit Falcon Health Care and Urgent Care if unwell rather than the Emergency room because of costs
  o Need to understand insurance terms such as copay and deductible
  o Annual Premium Comparison with other universities
  o Miami University is lowest with $2,151 then BGSU at $2,329
  o BGSU allows international students to opt out of the university’s health insurance plan
    o This plan must meet the university’s standard
    o However, at Miami University, international students are not allowed to opt–out of the university’s plan
  o Important plans from United Healthcare Option
    o SureBridge – Vision option
      ▪ Eye Exam, Corrective Spectacle Lenses, Frames, Corrective Contact Lenses
    o SureBridge – Dental option
Preventative, Diagnostic, Restorative, and Adjunctive services
   ▪ Contact: 1–800–815–8535
   ○ Community Health Center Dental Clinic: 419–354–9049
      ▪ Without any dental insurance plan, the charge is based on income earned
   ○ Mental issues helpline:
      ▪ 1–800–273–TALK
      ▪ 419–502–HOPE
   ○ Questions and Answers:
      ○ Question: Why is the premium bill per semester rather than per month?
         ▪ Answer: It is by standard from the bursar policy and delays may occur if billing is per month hence creating coverage gaps that will be backdating of payments
      ○ Question: Why do students graduating in Spring have to pay for Summer health insurance plans?
         ▪ Answer: A new plan has been created for this which runs from January 1st – May 31st and the premium will be $970
      ○ Question: Can deductibles be waived especially for International students
         ▪ Answer: Deductibles cannot be waived, however, some services are not subject to deductibles
      ○ Question: Are there special mental health coverages?
         ▪ Answer: It has no special coverage, but it is covered along with other illness
   ○ For further questions, please contact GSS@BGSU.EDU and we will connect you with Ms. Marlene Reynolds.
Officer Reports

President

- FPD (Last year’s treasurer perspective)
  - Funds from GSS FPD are supplementary funds for applications
  - The need for graduate students to reach out to graduate coordinators/secretaries/advisors for departmental funding opportunities
  - Large Fall FPD application; funds from GSS for FPD are based on supply & demand (limited funds)
- GSS and Counseling Center Discussion
  - Structure of the Counseling Center was discussed on October 5th
  - Students are accessed and placed on the either short-term or long-term plan
  - BGSU Counseling Center appealed for trust among partnering bodies and encouraged peaceful and respectful dialogue
- Update on Budget
  - Still in works, more updates will be given to foster accountability
  - Budget will be presented at the end of the semester
- Question from the Philosophy (Masters), is the counseling program fee optional, and can it be waived if the service is not utilized by a student?
  - Answer from Vice President: It is not a waivable fee

Vice President

- Openings in Committees: Need for Senators/GSS Executives to volunteer for:
  - Marketing
    - Skills preferred include design, social media management, email marketing, planning, strategy, and copywriting
Next General Assembly meeting will be on Zoom (virtual)
- Guest speakers – BGSU President Rodney Rodgers and BGSU Mayor Mike Aspacher
- The public is welcome to join the Zoom. The Zoom link will be posted on the GSS Webpage under “Meetings”.

Treasurer

- Fiscal Affairs and Advisory Committee on the EDHD School Reconfiguration
  - Meeting held which concerned the reconfiguration of the College of Education and Human Development
  - Plans to collapse 5 schools into 3 schools
  - Concerns raised
    - Cost implication
    - Potential loss of accreditation for some programs
    - Committee stated that all concerns have been factored in and duly considered

- Summary of Fall 2022 FPD
  - Appreciated the Senators for outreach
  - Highest number of applicants for Fall (100 more than in 2020 and over 50 more than in 2021)
  - Due to carried forward funds from the last session, funds were increased for the conference category from $220 to $500 per successful applicant

- Co-Sponsorship Form and Budget Update
  - Still ongoing; subsequent information in the next GA meeting
Chair for Professional Development

- Professional Development Day – November 2nd, 2022 (8.15 am – 5.15 pm)
  - Pre-conference workshops (Safe Zone and Green Dot Trainings); Keynote Speaker; Networking Luncheon; 6 breakout sessions
  - Sign up for these events will be sent out in the coming weeks
  - Need to sensitize graduate students about the upcoming event
  - Keynote speaker: Jennifer McCary, Chief Diversity and Belonging Officer
  - Information about Professional Development Day can be seen on the GSS page: https://www.bgsu.edu/student-government/graduate-student-senate/ProfessionalDevelopment/GraduateStudentProfessionalDevelopmentDay.html.

Chair for Environmental Affairs

- Campus Sustainability Week
  - Starts from October 15th – 22nd
  - Film screening, Seminars, and Eco craft: October 18th
  - Tree planting on campus: October 19th (9 trees to be planted in BGSU); Sign up needed for interested participants

- Green Falcon Pledge – Partnership with Undergraduate Student Government (USG)
  - Collaboration with USG and Campus Sustainability
  - The need for students to be more mindful of the environment
  - The goal is to increase the level of sustainability among students
  - Need for Senators/GSS Executives to form a committee

- Interested parties should reach out to krware@bgsu.edu
Unfinished Business

- None to Report

New Business

- Voting Points coordinated by the President
- Eligible voters: Senators and the GSS Representative–at–Large

- Three Minute Thesis – Ratification and Creative Category
  - Ratification – GSS SEC should move forward in developing formal ratification contesting the Three Min Thesis “Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g., no poems, raps or songs)”:
    - Yes: 20 votes, 90.91%
  - Creative Category – GSS should move forward in the creation of a “Creative Category” competition:
    - Yes: 20 votes, 90.91%

- Graduate Student Survey Results – Top 3 Initiatives
  - These were the Top 3 initiatives
    - Graduate Student Stipend
    - Graduate Assistant Access to Staff/Faculty Parking Passes
    - BGSU Student Health Insurance Cost

- Graduate Student Stipend Ask
  - Option A – Raising the lowest stipend to be more equitable with the highest: (20.83%; 5 votes)
  - Option B – For a high percentage raise to be applied to the lowest stipend amounts and the smaller percentage asks for the highest stipend amounts: (45.83%; 11 votes)
  - Option C – Equal raise for all stipends: (33.33%; 8 votes)
Announcements

- Breathing Yoga Event on the Quad – October 19th: 12–1 pm
- Guns on Campus – Ohio Law and BGSU Policy (BGSU Teaching Community facilitated by GSS, CFE, and Chief Campbell) – Friday, October 21st: 3–5 pm
- Halloween Funfest with RSA – Wednesday, October 26th: 7–9 pm – Olscamp 101
- Graduate College Halloween – Monday, October 31st: Time TBD

Adjournment

- A motion from Philosophy (Masters) to invite Marlene Reynolds (Student Health Insurance) to further discussion. This was seconded by the Representative–at–Large
- Motion for Adjournment: Motion from Biological Sciences (Masters) to adjourn and seconded by Financial Economics (Masters)
- Meeting Ended: 5:00 pm