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402B Bowen-Thompson Student Union

Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0181

Phone: (419) 372-2426

<http://www.bgsu.edu/gss>

**Graduate Student Senate General Assembly**

**Friday, February 26, 2016**

**3:00-5:00pm**

**Gallery- McFall**

**Handouts:** GA Minutes 2/12/16; Shanklin Colloquium Guidelines; Election Guidelines; Winifred O. Stone and Presidential Graduate Diversity Scholarship Guidelines; Applied Geospatial Science Reinstatement Petition

**Censured:** Analytics; Physics & Astronomy, African People’s Association, Chinese Scholars Association, Health Care Administration Association

**Absences:** Geology (1); German (1); MBA/MOD (1); MPASA (1)

**Agenda**

* Call to Order – Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Vice President Julia Largent called the meeting to order, and welcomed everyone to General Assembly (GA).
* Roll Call – GSS Secretary Jeffrey Moore took the roll and asked the senators to remind anyone they see coming in late to check with him before they leave, and to sign the attendance rolls in the back of the room, otherwise they will be counted as absent.
* Approval of Minutes – Criminal Justice made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2016, which was seconded by Sociology Graduate Student Association. The “ayes” carried and the minutes were approved.
* Guest Speakers: **Dr. Alexander Goberman,** Associate Dean of the Graduate College– Dr. Goberman thanked Julia and the GA for inviting him to speak, and said that the primary focus of his presentation was to encourage graduate students to be more proactive about keeping track of their graduation requirements. Previously, the Graduate College kept track of degree requirements and graduation progress, with students and sometimes graduate coordinators in the dark about students’ progress. The College has largely stopped this practice, and is encouraging departments and students themselves to take a larger role in keeping track of their requirements to make sure there are no unpleasant surprises when a student applies for graduation, which does happen from time to time. Dr. Goberman reiterated his stance that students should be proactive and fully informed about their degree requirements, and encouraged the GA to tell their constituents to be in communication with their graduate coordinators and/or the Graduate College if they have any questions or concerns about requirements and graduation applications. The Graduate College is in the process of shifting all graduate programs on campus to the DARS system, which will help automatically track graduation requirements, and can be accessed through MyBGSU. When students apply to graduate, the Graduate College makes sure students have met all requirements, including admissions requirements and GPA requirements, before the application is approved. This sometimes means dealing with issues related to incomplete grades or students who somehow did not submit transcripts during their application process. All of these issues must be rectified before graduation applications can be approved, and encouraging students to be more aware of their own progress and requirements will help cut down on the possibility of people applying to graduate who are not yet qualified. Dr. Goberman advised that graduate students must take at least 18 credit hours at the 6000 level, and that credit hours can expire if degrees are not completed in a timely fashion; a masters-level degree must be completed in six years or less, while a doctoral-level degree must be completed in eight years or less before credit hours expire and classes must be retaken. If a graduate student thinks they will need more time than this to complete their degree program, they must make arrangements with their graduate coordinator as soon as possible to avoid any problems with the Graduate College guidelines on expired credit hours.
  + Sociology thanked Dr. Goberman for the information, and said it might be helpful if a yearly letter or email was sent to all graduate students currently enrolled at BGSU to help remind them of these things. Dr. Goberman said the Graduate College currently sends just such an email to people who have applied to graduate, but he can work on getting a similar email placed into his annual cycle of automatic emails.
  + Philosophy asked for clarification on the credit hour expirations, and wanted to know how this would impact students enrolled in a joint masters/doctoral program. She also asked if those students should apply for their Master’s Degree as soon as they have met the requirements or wait and get both degrees at once. Dr. Goberman recommended students in those types of programs compartmentalize; that is, fulfill their requirements for and apply to graduate with a Master’s Degree as early as possible to avoid credit hours expiring. He did say that some graduate coordinators may have specific preferences for students in their departments, and recommended that anyone in this position speak with their graduate coordinator about this issue.
  + HEADS asked what happens in the case of a student who has an unresolved issue with a professor assigns an incomplete grade, and then leaves the university before that issue can be resolved. Dr. Goberman said that was a harder issue to work around, but it was possible for graduate coordinators or a department chair to petition the Graduate College for a grade change or an exemption to a degree requirement. Dr. Goberman said those issues are handled on a case-by-case basis.
  + GSS President Maryam Kamran asked if there were any specific issues the Graduate College sees on a more regular basis, and if so what could graduate students do to avoid them. Dr. Goberman said there has been an increase in the number of cases of students receiving an incomplete grade from an instructor that the student was not aware of or did not agree to. The incomplete grade is meant to be a way for a student to finish course requirements within a set period of time, typically as a way of dealing with extenuating circumstances that make it difficult or impossible for a student to finish a course within the semester of enrollment. This causes problems if course requirements are not completed in a timely manner, or if students simply stop attending classes, as the grade is eventually converted into a failing mark if not resolved. Dr. Goberman advised students to stay in contact with their graduate coordinators if they need to leave their program for an extended period of time, such as an extended absence due to a medical issue, so they can work out a way to leave and come back without causing any penalties to the student. Lastly, Dr. Goberman told students to be aware of deadlines for writing, revising, defending, and submitting theses and dissertations, as there have been a number of cases of students waiting until just before the submission deadline and not being able to graduate because their work was not defended or submitted with enough time to be processed.
  + HEADS asked for clarification about registering for dissertation and/or research hours, and if there was a continuous registration form. Dr. Goberman said once you start enrolling in dissertation hours, you must be continuously enrolled in those hours each semester. This can also cause a problem as some students may not register for the correct type or amount of credit hours, and may lose assistantships or other financial assistance, or even lose their place in their programs.
  + Higher Education Administration asked for clarification on whether international students needed to be enrolled as full time students after their coursework had been completed. Dr. Goberman said he was unsure of those requirements, and typically refers those questions to the Office of International Student Services (ISS). Maryam said if you are on an assistantship you must be enrolled in a minimum of eight credit hours, which is considered full time for graduate students. World Student Association said ISS has a form students can fill out if they need to drop below full time for any reason, which will allow them to keep their assistantship and lot lose their visa.
  + Computer Science voiced a complaint about English language course requirements for students who have not demonstrated a minimum English proficiency level. The senator said he knows of students in his program who have received perfect grades in their courses but have not been able to graduate because they have not enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESOL) courses, which the senator said was unfair. Dr. Goberman said the Graduate College does not typically waive or grant exceptions for ESOL courses, and that students should talk to their graduate coordinators if they have concerns about these requirements.
* Guest Speaker: **Julie Wagner,** Dance Marathon – Ms. Wagner showed a brief YouTube video and talked about Dance Marathon, also known as ZiggyThon. Dance Marathon is a 24 hour dance, bicycling, and gaming marathon typically held in the first weekend of April as a fundraiser for Mercy Children’s Hospital in Toledo. This is one of the largest events on campus, and the 2015 Marathon raised $340,000. Undergraduate students can sign up to dance, or to bike 180 miles over a period of two days, but the event has typically not targeted graduate students, faculty, or staff involvement. This year, the Dance Marathon is asking graduate students to sign up for the Bikes for Tikes program, which asks people to pledge to bike 180 miles, either in actual bicycling or on a stationary bike. This is a good way for graduate students to get involved and stay connected with the event. The cost to enroll in Bikes for Tikes is $25, and participants receive a t-shirt. Participants are also welcome to come to the actual Dance Marathon in April to show their support. An email will be going out to the campus community from the Dance Marathon Steering Committee with more details soon, which will include a link to sign up. Other upcoming ways to get involved are a fundraiser at Panera on March 1 and a 5K walk on March 19.
* Sociology Graduate Student asked where the money raised for the event goes. Ms. Wagner said the money goes to the Children’s Miracle Network, a fundraising network for children’s hospitals and charities, who then allocate those funds to a local organization, in this case Mercy Children’s Hospital in Toledo.
* Julia asked if Bikes for Tikes was a team event or an individual event. Ms. Wagner said the actual dance marathon is a team event, but Bikes for Tikes is an individual event.
* Guest Speaker: **Monica Moll,** Director of Public Safety/Chief of Police – Ms. Moll thanked GA for inviting her to speak. The purpose of her presentation was to talk about guns and gun safety on campus, which is a timely issue considering recent news stories of mass shootings and concealed carry legislation currently working its way through the state legislature. Assuming the current proposed legislation is signed into law, which most people expect it to at some point, the BGSU Board of Trustees (BoT) would be authorized to change the university policy on whether or not concealed carry would be permitted among students, faculty, and staff on campus. Currently, members of the university community cannot carry concealed weapons on campus lawfully, but members of the community can because BGSU is a state-funded public university, and state law allows for concealed carry. That said, the BoT can determine who among the university community can carry and under what circumstances. Ms. Moll does not think the BoT will change its current policy regardless of whether or not the proposed legislation is signed into law. Her understanding is that most institutions in Ohio will keep their current policies regarding concealed carry in place unless forced to change those policies by state law, and listed Texas as a state where changes in state law forced institutions to make changes to their policies that may not have otherwise been approved. Ms. Moll stated that the current law says visitors to campus can carry openly-displayed weapons on campus or in any public setting, unless prohibited by property owners, because state law allows them to do so, and no license is needed for open carry. The BGSU Police have been notified of a pro firearms group that plans to hold an education walk on campus in late March or April, but an exact date has not been given. She will make sure the date is distributed to the campus community once it becomes available. Ms. Moll said she knows GSS recently sent a letter in opposition of the legislation to the Ohio Senate, and that Faculty Senate are still debating this issue, though she is not sure what if any impact these discussions will have on the bill’s chances of being signed into law.
  + Media and Communications expressed concerns about safety on campus, and said allowing people to carry concealed weapons would do little to help students feel safe. The senator said at a previous institution she saw a larger police presence on campus, and while the campus was said to be in a “high crime area,” she felt safer than she does at BGSU because of this police presence. The senator asked whether there could be a larger police presence on campus, and if there could be more police on active patrol rather than patrolling the perimeter of campus in automobiles. Ms. Moll said that a number of police officers are on campus on a daily basis, both in academic buildings and serving as liaisons in residence halls, but that because of the nature of their patrols they are typically seen by administrators more than students and instructors. Ms. Moll said BGSU Police currently has 25 full time officers, which is a fairly large police force given the size of campus, and that during warmer months many police officers will patrol campus on bokes. She said officers also carry a lot of equipment in their cars, so it is often necessary for their vehicles to be nearby in the event of an emergency. Ms. Moll also said that the senator raised a good point, and that someone who is actively looking to harm people is not likely to care about licensing requirements or laws, so in some ways the risk remains the same regardless of whether the proposed legislation is signed into law.
  + Sociology asked whether graduate students with teaching assistantships can have the same shooter training the faculty receives, since they work with students on a regular basis. Ms. Moll agreed that everyone working with students should get the training, and said she is willing to coordinate training sessions with any departments or programs that want it. She advised anyone interested in setting up a training opportunity to contact her or Capt. Mike Campbell for more information.
  + Representative-at-Large Mallory Minteer asked if it would be better to have a standing training date for new graduate students, since the graduate student population changes so frequently. Ms. Moll said she would be happy to arrange something like that if time and space can be found in Graduate Student Orientation. She also said with enough advance warning, her department can state a training session for any department or program on campus.
  + Theatre and Film expressed concern that political pressure may be exerted on the university, forcing the BoT to change university policy if the bill becomes law. The senator also asked about what would happen to students living in residence halls, and expressed distrust over the idea of a “good guy with a gun” stopping a shooter as there is not much evidence to support this idea. Ms. Moll said she understands the senator’s concerns, but her officers receive annual training on how to handle random shooter situations and are prepared if such an event should take place on campus. Ms. Moll said she does not think the proposed law would create a situation where there were students in every classroom with concealed weapons. She further elaborated and said she would prefer a set of laws that would require someone to go through a training class and background check rather than the current open carry law that does not require either. Ms. Moll said that while she understands this is a scary topic of discussion, the likelihood of a random shooter event on campus is small, and she would rather focus on issues that have a greater impact on the campus community: sexual assault, heroin usage, underage and binge drinking, and tornado safety among them.
  + In reference to Mallory’s suggestion, Julia said that suggestion has been passed to the appropriate parties on campus, but since Graduate Student Orientation is always being changed and reconfigured it is unlikely that such a suggestion would be taken up.
  + Student Development Association asked how the proposed legislation and current gun laws interact with campus policy. Ms. Moll said that since Ohio has open carry laws, and since BGSU is a public institution, visitors to campus are not breaking laws by openly carrying firearms on campus. Students and other members of the community, however, are bound to follow the BGSU Code of Conduct, which does not permit students to openly carry firearms on campus. Ms. Moll said these policies can change based on any changes in state law, and her department works to stay abreast of these changes and their implications for the community.
* Officers, Chairs, and Committee Reports
  + Environmental Affairs Chair
    - Caitlin Buhr
      * Focus Group – Julia read a brief report on behalf of Caitlin, who could not be in attendance. A focus group is scheduled to meet next week with the company that has been hired to do an energy and sustainability audit on campus. There will also be a number of Earth Month events planned in April. Caitlin will have more details on both of these topics at the next GA.
  + Social Chair
    - Keji Kujjo
      * Graduate Student Appreciation – A Graduate Student Appreciation event will be held March 18, from 5:00-7:00 p.m., in the McFall Gallery. This event is open to all graduate students, not just members of GSS, so please spread the word amongst your constituents.
  + Vice President
    - Julia Largent – A change in the pay schedule for graduate students will take effect for the 2016-2017 academic year. Students will no longer get paid during the weeks of winter break, and some payments just after breaks will be half payments owing to when semester start dates are scheduled. These changes are being made as a result of a provision in the Affordable Care Act that stipulates the university must provide health insurance benefits to anyone working over 28 hours per week. These changes mean students will still get the full amount of their stipends, but the amounts will be paid out at different times. The changes will not have any impact on tax brackets.
      * Romance and Classical studies asked if there was a way to have a withholdings schedule put into place, similar to those offered to K-12 teachers, to allow graduate students to get paid over break periods. Julia said nothing of that sort was being discussed at this time.
      * Culture Club asked if this meant graduate students would not be paid for the week after the semester ends, when final grades are being calculated. Julia said she was not sure how to correctly answer that question, but someone from Student Employment Services would be speaking at the next GA and the senator should ask for clarification at that time.
    - TA/TI? Starting last year, the university made a distinction between TAs and Tis. TAs are teaching associates, and do things like grade essays and tests, and TIs are instructors of record in (predominantly undergraduate level) classes. To help ensure TIs are not exceeding the amount of contact/work hours per week that they are contracted for, the Graduate College has been drafting guidelines for what qualifies as a 20, 15, and 10 hour per week teaching load. The problem is that these distinctions appear to change from one semester to another, and a student teaching one section of a particular class a semester may be asked to teach two sections of the same class the next, seemingly in violation of these guidelines. Julia distributed copies of these proposed guidelines for senators to take back to their constituencies, and advised that these guidelines are not yet official.
    - Shanklin Colloquium: The Shanklin Colloquium is April 12, 2016. The deadline to apply for the Colloquium and graduate student awards is March 4.
      * Senator of the Year Nominations – Nominations are now being accepted for GSS Senator of the Year. Two awards will be given out, one selected by Maryam and one selected and voted upon by GA. The vote will take place via a Qualtrics survey, with the winner to be announced at the Shanklin Colloquium Banquet on April 12.
        + Philosophy nominated the senator from Theatre and Film. The nomination was seconded by College Student Personnel.
      * FPD
        + FPD awards should be available next week. The application for summer FPD will be available after spring break. The deadline to apply for summer FPD is May 1. Students looking to apply for summer FPD must be enrolled in at least four credit hours this coming fall be qualify, and the event for which they seek FPD must happen between the first day after spring finals week and the last day of summer break. Students do not need to be enrolled in credit hours over the summer to qualify.
      * Student Employment Services at next GA
        + Questions – Julia wants to know what questions people have for Student Employment Services, who will be speaking at the next GA. She will also accept questions by email for anyone who would prefer to remain anonymous. Theatre and Film asked for clarification on withholdings for the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS), and when and how that money can be accessed. Culture Club wanted more information about how the change to graduate student pay schedules will affect student pay, and how the university will guarantee students get their full stipend amount. Representative-at-Large Tyler Conlon asked for more information about whether or not students will be required to track their work hours going forward.
      * Winifred O. Stone and Presidential Graduate Diversity Scholarship Guidelines – Applications for the award, which is only open to incoming students, are due March 1. The award will cover a $5,000 scholarship for two years for Master’s students and $7,500 for two years for doctoral students.
      * Elections will take place at the next GA, March 18. Interested parties can be nominated on the day of elections, but applications must be submitted through OrgSync before noon on the day elections take place.
* Old Business – The second annual Interfaith Breakfast will take place March 22 in the Junior Fair Building at the Wood County Fairgrounds. Please RSVP through OrgSync by March 10 if you plan to apply. If you do not have access to the reservation link, please see Julia after the meeting.
  + SEC Nominations –
    - HEADS nominates Student Affairs Representative Krystal Allen to serve as President. The nomination was seconded by College Student Personnel. Krystal accepted the nomination.
    - ATLAS nominated the senator from English, Joseph Robertshaw, to serve as Academic Affairs Representative. The nomination was seconded by Media and Communications. Joseph accepted the nomination.
    - English nominated Treasurer Scott Chappuis to serve in his current capacity for a second term. The nomination was seconded by Media and Communications. Scott accepted the nomination.
* New Business
  + Applied Geospatial Science Reinstatement – Emma Spence spoke on behalf of Geospatial Science, and asked for her department to be reinstated. Ms. Spence said her department was not aware that the previous senator had stopped attending meetings until their students were told they were not eligible for FPD. Their graduate coordinator has been away conducting research in Antarctica, and the notice was not forwarded to any of the students. Ms. Spence said she wants to make sure her constituency has a voice in student government. She will make sure that she is able to attend all meetings, and has arranged for a standing proxy to attend meetings on her behalf in the event she has a professional conflict.
    - Leadership Studies asked if the department had ever been censured before. Julia said this was a new department, so there was no history of time conflicts or other problems to speak of.
    - Representative-at-Large Tyler Conlon asked for assurance that someone from the department would be at all meetings; Ms. Spence gave her assurance that she will attend if the department is reinstated.
    - Mathematics and Statistics moved to vote on reinstatement, which Tyler Conlon seconded. The “ayes” carried and Geospatial Sciences was reinstated.
  + Nominees addressing Senate – Owing to assistantship obligations, two nominees cannot be present to give candidate speeches during elections. Those nominees, Scott Chappuis and Tyler Conlon, have been granted permission to give their candidate speeches at this meeting.
    - Scott Chappuis – Scott said it has been an honor and privilege to serve as treasurer, and is seeking reelection to this position. He believes GSS would benefit from having someone with experience serve in the position to help ensure consistency with the FPD awards and budgeting processes. Scott felt there was something of a learning curve when he assumed the office, but because of his experience he can help ensure a smooth process. He has helped raise the amount of FPD allocated from $275 per student per year to $300, and has helped award more funding and sponsorship awards owing to surpluses in the GSS budget, which he hopes to continue next year if reelected.
      * Philosophy asked what would happen if GSS did not use its entire allocated budget, and how Scott would account for potential shortages if reelected. Julia clarified that GSS and the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) work on a different budgeting model than other student organizations on campus, and their budget does not fluctuate from year to year. In answer to the question, Scott said GSS had a $21,000 budget rollover from the previous year, and he has been working to make sure GSS spends a reasonable amount of their budget while maintaining fiscally responsible practices. This is work he hopes to do next year, and will work closely with SEC to make this happen if reelected.
    - Tyler Conlon – Tyler was only recently elected to serve as a Representative-at-Large, and wants to continue serving the graduate student community next year. He has not time commitments that would prevent him from attending meetings, and now that he has experience in the position he feels he can be a greater asset to the graduate student community. .
* Issues and Concerns –
  + Student Development Association asked about closures to student spaces in the Bowen Thompson Student Union (BTSU), and expressed frustration that these closures were not advertised ahead of time. Maryam said she recently attended a meeting where these changes were discussed, and the plan is to shutter and relocate the bookstore and move some campus offices into that space. In the meantime, some student lounges have been closed off or restricted and it is not clear when these will reopen. Maryam is also concerned because no one from the Student Union Advisory Board ever reached out to solicit feedback from the graduate student community regarding these changes. Julia mentioned that someone from Capital Planning was tentatively scheduled to speak about the various construction projects on campus on April 1, but as of now the speaker has not confirmed their appointment. Student Development Association asked if there was a student representative on the Capital Planning Committee, and Maryam confirmed there is not.
  + Theatre and Film expressed concerns about renovations to Hanna Hall and the moving of the Gish Theater, and rumors that the College of Business would be moving into that space. Julia said she was aware that College of Business was relocating, but it was her understanding part of the building, including the theater, was being left along for historical preservation. Keji said she was told there would be no renovations on that building until 2018, when other current projects were completed.
* Announcements
  + **Next General Assembly:** March 18, 3-5 McFall Gallery; Guests: **Michele Schmitz,** Student Employment Services; ELECTIONS
  + **Black Swamp Pub Happy Hour:** Join us today after GA for drinks and/or dinner at Black Swamp Pub in the Union.
  + **BGSU Libraries has a page for graduate students:** <http://www.bgsu.edu/library/LTL/students/GraduateStudents.html>
  + **If your department or organization has an event**, email gradcol@bgsu.edu by 4 pm on the Thursday before the week of your event to have it included in the weekly Academic Agenda.
* Adjournment – Mathematics and Statistics made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Graduate Writers Club. The “ayes” carried and the meeting was adjourned. Julia thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a good weekend.