Logo_4C.tif Graduate Student Senate

402B Bowen-Thompson Student Union

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

**Graduate Student Senate General Assembly**

**Friday, October 2, 2015**

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

**Gallery- McFall**

**Handouts:** GA Minutes 9/18/15; List of Assigned Committees

**Departments Censured:** None!

**Absences from Previous GA:** Leadership Studies (1), Physics & Astronomy (1), African People’s Association (1), Chinese Scholars Association (1), Health Care Administration Association (1)

**Agenda**

* Call to Order – Graduate Student Senate (GSS) President Maryam Kamran called the meeting of the General Assembly (GA) to order. GSS Vice President Julia Largent, who ordinarily presides over GA, was presenting research at an academic conference in Cincinnati and was not able to be at the meeting, so Maryam presided over the GA in her place.
* 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 or else they will be counted as absent.
* Approval of Minutes – Sociology made a motion that the minutes from the Sept. 18 GA be approved, which was seconded by Photochemical Sciences. The “ayes” carried and the minutes were approved.
* Guest Speaker: **Jayna Clemens,** President, Colleges Against Cancer (CAC)/Relay for Life – CAC is an organization that promotes education of cancer and cancer awareness at BGSU, and supports those who are caregivers and survivors in the campus community. The event, held at the Perry Field House on November 13-14, is a 12-hour overnight event. The overnight aspect is meant to signify that cancer never sleeps, and neither will those who fight it. The event is supported by the American Cancer Society, who gives 74% of the funds raised from Relay for Live events to cancer research and support services. The PowerPoint presentation used by Ms. Clemens will be provided to GSS and made available through OrgSync for those who may wish to view it again at a later time. The theme of this year’s event is “Paint the World Purple,” because purple is recognized as the general support color for cancer research and support, as opposed to specific colors correlating to specific types of cancer research and support. Additional “Paint the Campus Purple” initiatives will be rolled out across campus later this year. In addition to more fun, light-hearted fundraising activities like face painting tables and cupcake sales, the event also has more somber ceremonies that honor those lost to cancer, and recognize survivors and caregivers. The event will include a catered meal for cancer survivors on the evening of November 13, and this event is open to any cancer survivors, not just members of the campus community. For the survivors, the event tries to emphasize the fact that they have “won” their fights with cancer and show appreciation for all they have gone through. Interested parties can get involved by signing up as individuals or in teams by visiting [www.relayforlife.org/bgsu](http://www.relayforlife.org/bgsu). Each team will have a table to hold a fundraising event of their choosing, such as the aforementioned cupcake sales. There is a registration fee of $10, but that is reduced by half if you reserve your spot in the event by October 3. The theme of this year’s event is Carnivàle, and a promotional video can be found on YouTube by searching “Relay for Life BGSU.” Ms. Clemens stated that participation in past years has largely been amongst the undergraduate student population, and she is hoping her presentation will spur greater interest among the graduate student population. The next meeting of CAC is Tuesday, October 6, 2015, at 9:15 p.m. in 115 Education Building, and interested parties are invited to attend; you can also contact CAC directly with any question or concerns at [bgcac@bgsu.edu](mailto:bgcac@bgsu.edu).
  + Sociology Graduate Student Association asked to clarify the date of the event. Ms. Clemens stated it was November 13-14.
* Guest Speaker: **Michelle Schmitz**, Student Employment Services – Michelle Schmitz had been scheduled to speak at GA but was not able to attend the meeting; GSS will attempt to reschedule her presentation for a later GA.
* Officers, Chairs, and Committee Reports
  + Disability Affairs Chair
    - Jackie Luedtke, [jkluedt@bgsu.edu](mailto:jkluedt@bgsu.edu)
    - Disability Affairs Committee (4-7 spots) – Jackie explained that the position of Disability Affairs Chair was newly created last academic year, and several people were involved in filling the chair. She is committed to making a greater effort to be present at all GA and Senate Executive Committee (SEC) meetings this year to help establish a solid foundation for the chair. Although she works in the Center for Leadership this year, she previously worked as a Graduate Student Assistant in the Office of Disability Services, and found a passion for serving this student population. Jackie is looking to form a committee, possibly of four to seven individuals, who will work to help raise awareness of disability issues across campus. There is no set agenda yet for the committee, and she is open to suggestions from interested parties. One suggestion she has is to create a public service announcement campaign to raise awareness about ableist language on campus, and how this leads to oppression of the disability community. She also mentioned trying to partner with Undergraduate Student Government (USG), the DREAM Program, and other undergraduate and graduate groups to hold awareness-raising events in the spring.
      * GuSTO asked whether or not the awareness programs Jackie suggested would only target physical disabilities. Jackie said no, that the Office of Disability Services also serves students with other types of disabilities, including mental health disabilities, emotional disabilities, and physical disabilities, and the goal of the committee – and any awareness programs they sponsor – would be to support anyone in the disability community. She also mentioned that a representative from the Office of Disability Services is schedule to speak at the GA on November 13.
      * Communication Sciences & Disorders asked what collaborations the committee has formed with other groups on campus. Jackie stated that she had not yet formed any of these partnerships as the committee itself had not yet been formed, but that she was open to partnerships with any other groups on campus, whether they were graduate or undergraduate groups. She also asked the senators to take this information back to their constituents and to ask anyone interested in serving on the committee to contact her.
  + Social Chair
    - Keji Kujjo, [kkujjo@bgsu.edu](mailto:kkujjo@bgsu.edu)
    - Monday’s Brown Bag Social – Keji asked anyone with questions about social events, or ideas for future social events, to contact her or Maryam and she will work on making them happen.
    - A Brown Bag social will take place this Monday in 403 Bowen Thompson Student Union (BTSU), from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
      * Philosophy said she had heard about the possibility of trivia nights being scheduled on campus for graduate students, and asked if there was any news about this. Maryam stated that a representative from Campus Conference and Events Services had spoken at the last SEC meeting, and asked for ideas about the kinds of campus events graduate students might like to attend. Derron Borders, the GSS Multicultural Affairs Chair, clarified that the idea of holding regular campus trivia nights was suggested by several people at the most recent SEC meeting, as a number of local businesses hold trivia night events off campus that are very popular, but as of yet no such events had been scheduled on campus.
      * MPASA, Culture Club, Philosophy, and American Culture Studies all stated that they have teams of students who frequently attend trivia night events off campus, if anyone is interested in being part of their teams
  + Environmental Affairs Chair
    - Caitlin Buhr, [buhrc@bgsu.edu](mailto:buhrc@bgsu.edu)
    - Caitlin mentioned that BGSU has recently started preconsumer composting in the Oaks, Carillon, and Falcon’s Nest dining halls, by partnering with a farm in Pemberville. There is no postconsumer composing yet, but she still feels this is a positive step. Additionally, the university is undertaking an Energy, Sustainability, and Feasibility Study, and will be hiring consultants and contractors to find new ways to improve the sustainability initiatives on campus. Finally, Caitlin stated that October is Sustainability Month on campus, and a number of events have been scheduled throughout the month by the Office of Campus Sustainability. A complete list of events scheduled this month can be found online at <https://www.bgsu.edu/campus-sustainability/Sustainability_Month.html>
    - Caitlin concluded by asking anyone with ideas for projects, or things that they would like to see done through the BGSU Green Initiatives Fund, to contact her.
  + Student Affairs Representative
    - Krystal Allen, [knallen@bgsu.edu](mailto:knallen@bgsu.edu)
    - Student Bill of Rights – Although this is likely not going to be the name of the final document, Krystal is looking to create a committee to work on a Graduate Student Bill of Rights to clarify and fully outline the rights of graduate students on campus, and to clarify and define the expectations of student/faculty, advisor/advisee, mentor/mentee, and supervisor/supervisee relationships on campus. One of the goals of this committee is to be proactive with communication around these relationships so students know who to turn to if they have questions, comments, concerns, or grievances. There have been situations brought to the attention of GSS about current and former students who have been dismissed from assistantships, lost research opportunities, or had difficulties working with advisors, because they did not know their rights as students. The goal is to enter into a conversation with faculty and staff across campus, and possibly have training courses available online that would help solidify these expectations. Krystal has been looking to the Graduate College, the Office of Student Affairs, and other departments on campus to create open, transparent forms of communication, and the response so far has been warm. Interested parties should contact Krystal with questions, concerns, or to express an interest in serving on this committee.
  + President
    - Maryam Kamran, [mkamran@bgsu.edu](mailto:mkamran@bgsu.edu)
    - OED Assistantship (Stipend only), Social Media Campaign – The Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) is looking for a graduate student (preferably a doctoral-level graduate student) who is proficient in social media to serve a part time assistantship. The assistantship carries a stipend, but does not have any tuition waivers. The position would involve the use of OED social media, including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, among others, to spread information about the Sexual Assault Awareness Campaign on campus. This campaign would target undergraduate and graduate student populations. Interested parties should contact Maryam or Julia as soon as possible.
      * Keji asked to clarify the time commitment; Maryam said this was a part time position.
* Old Business
  + Elections: Representative-at-Large – There were no nominations for the open Representative-at-Large position. Maryam asked the senators to inform their constituents of this opening and to contact her or Julia if they know of anyone interested in serving in this capacity. The election remains open until the position is filled.
* New Business – No new business was presented to the GA
* Issues and Concerns
  + Giuseppe Giammanco, Senator for Chemistry and Photochemical Sciences, Fees and Tuition – Giuseppe is doctoral student in the Photochemical Sciences program in the Department of Chemistry. After the last GA he sent an email to his constituents asking what issues they would like to see addressed, and the overwhelming response was the increase in fees charged to graduate students over the last several years. He contacted Maryam about this, who gave him the opportunity to speak at GA. In his department, 47 of the 51 graduate students, or about 96%, are international graduate students. Among the domestic graduate students, 75% of students in the last three years have left without receiving their degrees. Giuseppe believes the increase in graduate student fees is why, and explained that domestic graduate students have more options to transfer to other schools than their international peers. International graduate students are barred from having other forms of employment, and it is much more difficult for them to move between institutions while seeking a degree. Giuseppe presented a chart, a copy of which will be provided to GSS and made available through OrgSync, that showed an increase in fees between 2012 and 2015, from $2,600 to $3,400. These fees include an increase in non-resident fees, and a new technology fee that was added for the 2015 fall semester. The problem is that many students are promised certain stipend amounts or fee waivers the previous year, or before they arrive on campus, and plan out their living expenses based on the numbers provided to them by their department graduate coordinators. Later, these amounts change as new fees are assessed and students are forced to account for these differences, which can often lead to problems in terms of budgeting for living expenses. In his department, stipends have not increased during his time at BGSU, and his program has the second lowest stipend for Chemistry graduate students in Ohio, behind only Kent State. Students have become frustrated because more and more of their stipend money has to be paid back to BGSU, but the stipend has not increased. Giuseppe is not saying this is strictly an international student problem, but believes all students across campus are concerned about these fees, and he wants to open a dialogue about these fees with other graduate students. He asked the GA to think about who they should direct these concerns to, and what actions they would like to see happen in terms of addressing these issues.
    - Sociology agreed that that is not strictly an issue for international students, and said that many students in her department were unhappy about having to seek out additional sources of financial aid to cover these expenses. She pointed out that at the last GA we learned that both undergraduate and graduate student enrollment is up this semester, so she questions why we are still being assessed high fees when there are more students available to help cover costs. In the Sociology department, the graduate coordinator recruits students early in the year to start in the fall, and has had to try to save face after giving potential students information that was later proven wrong because of fee increases. She feels information about these fees needs to be made clear and provided to students earlier so they can make more informed decision about where to attend graduate school. Sociology also noted that the new technology fee is largely being billed as a tool to upgrade technology services in the campus dorms, and does not feel graduate students should have to pay this fee since they go towards services they do not have access to.
    - Theatre & Film thanked Giuseppe for putting this information together, because he had no idea the fee increases relative to stipend payouts were so high. He asked where further questions and concerns could be forwarded, and Maryam said they can be sent to her. Maryam also said she has spoken with or been present in meetings with a number of people across campus, including the university President and Provost, and those parties are aware of the difficulties of these situations, particularly as they relate to international students. She has suggested getting more direct communication from the Graduate College about fees during the spring and summer semesters and that these communications should say fees are subject to change based on university and state budget changes. Maryam mentioned that an email from the Provost’s office in early July mentioned the new technology fee, but this may not have been seen by many graduate students as they were not on campus at the time. She mentioned that several students had previously asked her about the possibility of having these fees automatically withdrawn from stipend amounts before they are paid out, and thinks this idea has some potential, but she would have to investigate how realistic this idea is.
    - College Student Personnel agreed that notices about fees need to come earlier and need to be easier to understand. He stated that his program has a reputation as a leader in the field, and some potential students may put off making decisions about where to attend school because they are waiting to hear back from BGSU, and information about these fees needs to be included in those decision. He advocated for notifying potential students as early as March.
    - Jackie said a lot of graduate programs on campus make decisions about admissions earlier than the decisions about undergraduate admissions are made. Students in her department have expressed dissatisfaction that administrators in their department do not seem to be involved in the decision making progress, and that communication about fees and admissions needs to be coordinated better so departments and the university do not appear to be contradicting each other.
    - Maryam agreed that the lack of transparency on this issue was a problem, and that it could lead to undue anxiety on the part of graduate students. One of her goals is to establish a database of outside funding opportunities, which will hopefully help alleviate this issue somewhat, but agrees that more needs to be done to communicate this information effectively
      * Dr. Michael Ogawa, Dean of the Graduate College, will be present at October 16’s GA meeting as a follow-up to this discussion.
* Announcements
  + **Next General Assembly:** October 16. 3-5 McFall Gallery; Guests: Al Gonzalez, Beatriz Maya: La Conexión; Dr. Ogawa
  + **GSS Grad Student Social**, Monday, October 5, 11am-1pm, BTSU 403—bring your lunch and let’s chat!
  + **Volunteers needed for Graduate College and Professional Fair**, October 27. Email Julia if interested.
  + **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 – GuSTO makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, which is seconded by MACIE. The “ayes” carry and the meeting is adjourned.