Logo_4C.tif Graduate Student Senate

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, October 16, 2015**

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

**Gallery- McFall**

**Handouts:** GA Minutes 10/2/15

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

**Absences:** Art (1), MBA & MOD (1), Computer Science (1), Food & Nutrition (1), Leadership Studies (1), Musical Arts (1), Graduate Art Students (1)

**Agenda**

* Call to Order – Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Vice President Julia Largent called the meeting to order. She welcomed everyone General Assembly (GA) and thanked GSS President Maryam Kamran presiding over the previous GA in her absence.
* 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 – Theatre and Film made a motion that the minutes from the Oct. 2 GA be approved, which was seconded by Photochemical Sciences. The “ayes” carried and the minutes were approved.
* Guest Speaker: **Dr. Alberto Gonzalez**: In addition to his responsibilities as Professor and Chair of the Department of Communications, Dr. Gonzalez is President of the Board of Trustees of La Conexión, a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization founded in 2013 to help meet the needs of the Latino community in Wood County, which has grown 40% in the last decade. La Conexión offers a number of resources for all residents within both the visible and invisible Latino communities in Wood County, including community building exercises, leadership-building workshops, Spanish translation services, children’s literacy programs, and free English as a Second Language classes among others, as well as providing educational services for people in Wood County who want to learn more about Latino culture and heritage. La Conexión included a number of staff and faculty from across the campus community who help organize different events, one of which is the Dia de los Muertos event being held at St. Aloysius Catholic Church on November 1, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. The event is similar to a radio play and helps teach about the importance and diversity of Dia de los Muertos celebrations in Latino cultures across the Americas. Another event, Christmas Across the Americas, will be held at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church on December 6, 2015. This event utilizes children in the community to help educate people about Christmas celebrations in different Latino cultures in North and South America. La Conexión is also involved with helping the migrant worker population in Wood Country, and often brings food, clothing, and other supplied to migrant camps across the county. Anyone who is interested in learning more about La Conexión and the services they provide, or who would like to volunteer with the organization, should speak to Julia and she will provide you with Dr. Gonzalez’s contact information.
* **Dr. Michael Ogawa**, Vice President of Research and Dean of the Graduate College – Dr. Ogawa made his second appearance in GA to talk more in-depth about university goals and objectives, and how those relate to the Graduate College and graduate students. He began with a brief reminder about the Hatch program, which was discussed during Dr. Ogawa’s previous visit (please see GA Meeting Minutes from Sept. 18, 2015, for more a more detailed listing of information regarding Hatch).
  + Popular Culture asked how patent laws could impact any submissions from graduate students who wish to compete in the Hatch program, and whether or not ideas generated by students in the program belonged to the university. Per Dr. Ogawa, any intellectual property created by faculty, staff, or students while at Bowling Green State University, or that were generated using university resources, officially belong to the university regardless of whether the university claims direct ownership of said property. In relationship to ideas generated through the Hatch program, however, the university’s policy is to return ownership of ideas to the students who create them because Hatch is not intended to be a revenue-generating enterprise for the university.
* Dr. Ogawa then moved into a discussion of university goals and objectives, and how student admissions and retention plays into these things. Much of this information was covered during Dr. Ogawa’s previous visit (please see GA Meeting Minutes from Sept. 18, 2015, for a more detailed listing of this information), but some new information was given: Undergraduate retention on campus has improved from an average of 69% over the last four years to 78.5% this year, graduate enrollment is up 14% this year, and the Graduate College is working to streamline the online application process for prospective graduate student. Increases in retention and enrollment rates across campus have allowed the university to avoid cuts to department budgets, faculty, and staff, and has allowed the university to invest in creating new degree programs. A renewed focus on revitalizing existing programs, reimagining teaching methods, and reinvigorating and starting new cutting-edge degree programs will help grow enrollment even more, which will generate additional revenue for the university and strengthen the university’s fiscal position. The Graduate College has been focused on creating new Master’s degree programs, particularly professional Master’s programs, but is now looking at expanding their portfolio of Doctorate programs, with a greater focus that integrate courses and faculty from allied fields or departments. The Graduate College is also looking to expand its offerings in terms of accelerated Bachelor’s/Master’s programs, which would allow students to earn a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree simultaneously and graduate within five years
  + Computer Science asked if there was any discussion about adding a Doctorate program to their department. Dr. Ogawa stated that the Graduate College is taking an attitude of broadening their entire umbrella, rather than just trying to add to any one specific department. As a result, there was no plan to add a Doctorate program to Computer Science, but discussions have taken place about starting a Doctorate program that would draw from multiple disciplines, including Computer Science, Mathematics/Statistics, and Applied Statistics and Operations Management.
  + GuSTO noted that Dr. Ogawa’s presentation today did not touch on fees, which was a topic of significant discussion at the previous GA. GuSTO asked for clarification about the numerous fees graduate students have to pay, particularly the technology fee, which does not have any immediately-applicable use to graduate students. In particular, GuSTO asked whether the policy requiring graduate students to pay this fee would be revisited since the fee goes towards upgrading IT systems within dorms that graduate students do not use. Dr. Ogawa said that during times of financial stress, many universities raise tuition and fees in an effort to generate revenue. Bowling Green State University has the fourth-lowest tuition of any university in Ohio, and offers more scholarships and other tuition discounts than almost any other university in the state. Rather than raise tuition, which would be ineffective due to the number of scholarships the university awards, Bowling Green State University has raised fees instead. There is a long list of fees listed on the Graduate College website, whereas other universities do are not as transparent with their fees. Dr. Ogawa said he did not expect fees to increase in the coming year, as there was not as much fiscal pressure at the university due to the increases in retention and enrollment, but if those numbers change the fee strategy may need to be reviewed.
  + Theatre and Film asked whether there was any discussion about raising graduate stipends, which, although on par with other universities in the region, did not provide what most would consider to be a livable wage considering that graduate students with assistantships are restricted from taking other forms of employment. Dr. Ogawa said he understood the concern, as graduate students often come to him to say they want increases in their stipends. The Graduate College also wants increases to help be more competitive and attract the best students to the university. The current cycle of growth should allow for increases in stipends in the near future, though he could not say when or by how much. Essentially, more students enrolled lead to more revenue, which would lead to more money being made available for stipends.
  + Sociology mentioned that she had talked about fees with her constituents in light of the presentation in the previous GA, and students in her department are particularly upset about the technology fee. She and her constituents do not understand why they must pay a fee to upgrade the bandwidth capacity in the dormitories when they, as graduate students, do not live in the dormitories. Dr. Ogawa said he could not speak to specific about the presentation in question since he was not at the last GA, but that the fee is another means for the university to generate revenue. Undergraduates are required to live in the dormitories for two years, and if the IT infrastructure in those facilities in inadequate a means must be found to address the situation. As a follow up question, Sociology asked if there was a way the fee could be reduced or eliminated for graduate students, given that there have been increases in undergraduate enrollment and retention. Dr. Ogawa said that the fee was only one part of the larger issues surrounding the university’s fiscal needs, and that the technology fee was not the only source of revenue.
  + Chemistry and Photochemical Sciences asked if there was any information about student retention at the graduate level, since most of the information Dr. Ogawa had presented related to retention at the undergraduate level. He also said that many of his constituents feel like they are being economically punished with additional fees because of retention problems on the undergraduate level, and would think that fees would be reduced if retention is on the rise. Dr. Ogawa stated that there had been no significant change in graduate retention over the last few years, although graduate enrollment is up this year. When considering fees, decisions are typically made in such a way that they would affect the entire campus community as opposed to any specific department, program, or organization (DPO). Although he did not have any specific numbers at this time, he did not foresee any difficulties on the related to graduate retention rates.
  + Philosophy asked about the allocation of general fees listed in the most recent university budget, particularly the fact that $411 of our general fee goes towards athletics. She wanted clarification on what that money goes towards – scholarships, tickets, upgrades to athletic facilities, etc. Philosophy acknowledged that athletics are important because they help draw in a lot of donations to the university, but she finds the fees upsetting for several reasons: students get free or reduced tickets, the rec center is not open during hours that are more convenient to graduate students, and it seems like a waste of money considering faculty and staff cuts across campus. Dr. Ogawa said that he can understand why students might be upset, but that athletics are important to helping the university brand; a strong brand helps improve the university’s image as an athletically competitive and academically sound institution. No definitive answer, personal feeling only. The fear among some is that if the university brand is not strong, there will be a perception that degrees from Bowling Green State University will not mean as much as they have in the past, or have the same cache on the job market. As a follow up question, Philosophy asked who she could contact to find out exactly how this money is allocated. Dr. Ogawa suggested either the Vice President of University Advancement or the University Athletic Director.
  + Graduate Women’s Caucus expressed dissatisfaction with fees as they relate to international students, and the difficulty of securing an i20 student visa for travel to the United States. She said it was difficult to get accurate fee information, and that some international students may feel as though they are being made the victim of a “bait and switch” when they arrive in America to begin studying and find out there are additional fees they were not made aware of. She asked if any ideas were being discussed to help alleviate this problem, or to improve communication to make students aware of these issues. Dr. Ogawa said that over the last few years the Graduate College has been working to improve its business processes, including better communication to students and among DPOs. The problem is that this process has been decentralized for many years, and as a result students either don’t know where to turn for correct information, or DPOs are giving information that may be inaccurate or incomplete. He also expressed regret for any feelings of resentment, and explained that decisions about fees are often made after the state legislature sets the budget for the year, which is typically on July 1. He explained that the university tries to act in an appropriate way to changes in the budget, but that the Graduate College is trying to improvement communication about this issue.
  + Popular Culture also expressed dissatisfaction with the way fee information is communicated. To illustrate the point, the senator told a story about an admissions communication they received from their department before they started their degree program that stated fees would be approximately $500, but the fee had risen to over $1,000 by the time they started the program that fall. Dr. Ogawa apologized for this, and said there was no justification for a miscommunication of this nature. He asked the senator who the aforementioned letter was from, to which she replied it was signed by the department chair. Dr. Ogawa said this was a problem, and that department chairs should not be communicating these issues directly to students as this is the responsibility of the Graduate College. He again apologized for what he called the “collateral damage” of such notifications, and that the Graduate College is working to centralize all such communications on campus to prevent these types of problems in the future. Julia mentioned that this was an issue she and Maryam have talked about, and that they also know of instances where the opposite is true – people are upset their department chairs are not making them aware of fees upfront, and who want this information worked into acceptance letters.
  + Theatre and Film noted that much of what was being discussed at GA could be boiled down to issues of transparency, to which Dr. Ogawa agreed. Theatre and Film asked what would need to happen to help with this issue, particularly in terms of seeing what the money graduate students pay in tuition and fees goes towards. Dr. Ogawa said he realizes that a lack of transparency makes people suspicious, and that he wants to see greater transparency in the Graduate College as well. He is happy to mediate discussion in whatever forum graduate students want, and while some decisions about tuition and fees are made above or beyond his jurisdiction he wants to work with people across the campus community to help make the process easier to understand.
  + Julia halted the discussion for the sake of time, and asked anyone with additional questions to forward those to her so she could send them to Dr. Ogawa for a response.
* Officers, Chairs, and Committee Reports
  + Disability Affairs Chair Jackie Luedtke, [jkluedt@bgsu.edu](mailto:jkluedt@bgsu.edu)
    - Disability Affairs Committee (4-7 spots) – Jackie reminded the senators that she is looking to form a committee 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. Anyone interested in serving on this new committee should contact Jackie at her email address, listed above.
  + Social Chair Keji Kujjo, [kkujjo@bgsu.edu](mailto:kkujjo@bgsu.edu)
    - GSS Social Activities Survey – Keji could not attend GA in person, but Julia sent around a survey on her behalf. The survey asked the senators to consider what types of social events they would be interested in attending, and at what times. Julia asked everyone to take a copy of the survey, fill it out, and return it to her at the end of the meeting
  + International Affairs Chair Shahad Al-Doori, [aldoors@bgsu.edu](mailto:aldoors@bgsu.edu)
    - Falcon Health Center Open House – International Student Services is sponsoring an Open House at the Falcon Health Center on Thursday, October 22, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event will be geared towards helping international students understand their health care options, but other members of the community are welcome to attend. Students will be able to get flu shots, which are free as part of the student health insurance plan, and there will be faculty and staff on hand to answer questions.
    - International Education Week – International Education Week will take place in November, though exact dates and times of events are yet to be determined. One event that is planned is the Trip Around the World Intercultural Soiree on November 17 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Shahad asked senators to share information about this event with their constituents, and that she hopes to have more information about International Education Week at an upcoming GA.

* + Vice President Julia Largent, [jlargen@bgsu.edu](mailto:jlargen@bgsu.edu)
    - Submit an Issue Form – Julia and Maryam have been working on creating a Submit an Issue form for graduate students to submit questions, comments, or concerns, which will be forwarded to the appropriate parties within GSS. Typically the only way to reach people on the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) was to have a constituent talk to their senator, who in turn talked to the members of SEC, but this will be a new way to get information from the graduate student community. The form is live and is available on the Graduate Student Senate website, which is part of the Graduate College website. The form asks students to provide their name, their contact information, a detailed description of their question/comment/concern, and the person they want the question/comment/concern to be forwarded to. If you want anything added or changed, please let Julia know. The form can be found at the following link: <http://bit.ly/GSSIssue>
    - Regalia Award Winners – The winners of the Fall 2015 Regalia Award are Daniel Conklin, Nastaran Karimzadeh, and Gwendolyn Zugarek, each of whom will be receiving their degrees at the December commencement. The application for the Spring 2016 Regalia Award will be available late January or early February; more details will be made available when the application for the spring semester goes live.
    - If you have anything to report from your committees, please let Julia know by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday of the week of a GA so you can be added to the GA agenda. In this case, you would need to let Julia know by Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 5:00 p.m.
    - Volunteers needed for Graduate College and Professional Fair, Tuesday, October 27, 2015 – Volunteers are still needed for the Graduate College and Professional Fair. Volunteers are needed in two shifts, from 2:30-4:30 and from 4:30-end of the event (around 7:00), or for the entire event. Please spread the word amongst the undergraduate students you work with! Interested parties can volunteer by clicking on this link and providing their contact information and preferred shift: <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-and-professional-fair/volunteer-registration.html>
* Old Business
  + Elections: Representative-at-Large – There were no nominations for the open Representative-at-Large position. Julia asked the senators to inform their constituents of this opening and to contact her Maryam 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
  + Tobacco and Smoke Free Policy: Maryam and Mallory – After the presentation by the Clean Air Committee at the first GA, there were a lot of questions, and it seemed as if most senators were not entirely supportive of the policy. A survey was created and sent to senators to gauge their feelings about the issue because the committee had asked GSS for a letter in support of the proposed changes to the university Clean Air Policy. Based on the initial results of the survey, most senators are opposed to the proposed changes. Some information to come from the survey is that most who responded did not want to see designated smoking areas removed from campus, and that there should be a greater emphasis on education instead of policing and enforcing the policy. Maryam and Mallory will be meeting with members of the Undergraduate Student Government and the Grad Committee next week to discuss proposing a revised policy, which they will present to GA for discussion and feedback. One issue that came up regarding the presentation at the first GA was that adopting a stricter clean air policy is somehow tied to acquiring federal funding, but the details about this are not clear. The Clean Air Committee is worried about losing federal funding for the university, but it has not been explained what this funding is for or how this policy is tied to that funding. Another issue that came up during the previous GA presentation and was brought up by people who took the survey was the focus on marijuana usage on campus. Maryam recently learned that a presentation regarding the legalization of marijuana for medicinal and recreational use in Colorado by the Colorado Tobacco Prevention and Education Alliance would be given in the Bowen Thompson Student Union at 6:30 p.m. on October 26. This is especially relevant since a measure to decriminalize the use of marijuana for medicinal and recreational purposes in Ohio is on the ballot this November. Anyone with any questions or concerns should see either Mallory or Maryam.
    - Julia noted that the survey is still live, so anyone who has not yet responded can still do so. She also clarified that the funding issue is related to marijuana usage on campus; since marijuana is still illegal on the federal level, usage on campus may jeopardize the university’s ability to qualify for funding through the Department of Education. Mallory also noted that a number of state and local political official are pushing for adoption of stricter clean air policies across Ohio. Maryam pointed out that many people who took the survey were correct in saying that policies are already in place but not being enforced. She also said her contacts in the Undergraduate Student Government have been asking to have maps on campus showing where the designated smoking areas are
* Announcements
  + **Next General Assembly:** October 30, 3-5 McFall Gallery; Guests: **Dr. Sidney Childs**, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs; **Barbara Waddell**, Office of Equity and Diversity
  + **Volunteers needed for Graduate College and Professional Fair**, October 27. Sign up here: <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-and-professional-fair/volunteer-registration.html>
  + **Trivia Night with The Culture Club**: Cultural Studies Scholars' Association. October 16, 8:00pm at Two Foxes. Teams of no more than five players; $10/team. Winning team splits winnings with The Culture Club.
  + **Trivia night face-off at Buffalo Wild Wings hosted by The Culture Club and Graduate Communication Association (GCA)**. Oct. 29, 9:30pm. Suggested Donation $2/person. 4 players per team. Proceeds support both student organizations! Hope to see you there!
  + ***The 25th Putnam County Spelling Bee*** (musical) - Oct. 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31 @ 8pm and Oct 24, 31 @ 2 pm in the Eva Marie Saint Theatre in the Wolfe Center.
  + **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 – Julia adjourned the meeting, and wished everyone a good weekend.