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 30, 2015**

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

**Gallery- McFall**

**Handouts:** GA Minutes 10/16/15

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

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

**Agenda**

* Call to Order – Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Vice President Julia Largent called the meeting to order, and welcomed everyone 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 or else they will be counted as absent.
* Approval of Minutes – Biology Graduate Student Association made a motion that the minutes from the Oct. 16 GA be approved, which was seconded by GuSTO. The “ayes” carried and the minutes were approved.
* Guest Speakers: **Dr. Sidney Childs**, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs – Dr. Childs wished everyone a Happy Falcon Friday, and advised that he would be speaking about how the mission and vision statement of the Division of Student Affairs helped support the goals of the university. The mission of the division is to advance the mission of the university by promoting student learning and personal growth, valuing all community members, and developing innovative student-centered programs. The vision of the division is to remain committed to developing intentional learners, engaged citizens, and social changed leaders. The division believes that students who have a connection to the institution have a more well-rounded experience, a sentiment with which Dr. Childs agrees. The division partners with the Office of Academic Affairs and other offices across campus to help students thrive, and to leave the institution better than when they came. Dr. Childs and the division are committed to helping the university achieve 82% undergraduate retention for first year/first time/full time students, which President Mazey recently set as a priority for the next academic year. The division’s strategic plan focuses on student success, diversity and inclusion in student affairs, and creating an environment where all students feel this is the best place for them to be. A large part of achieving this goal is making sure we have programs and services at the institution to make under-served and under-represented student populations feel welcome on campus, and making sure faculty and staff are equipped to address the needs of these populations. Another priority is marketing, and whether or not individuals at the university feel their stories are being told. Funding for higher education in recent years has been a challenge, so the division is working to demonstrate the impact of higher education, and the best way to accomplish this is to tell our stories in multiple ways. Dr. Childs believe different constituents across campus have different stories to tell, and can tell those stories better than anyone else can, so the division is working to bring those stories to light. He is also committed to making sure the division is fiscally responsible, and fiduciary in the way the work of the division is carried out. The division is committed to creating partnerships with academic colleagues and partners outside the institution to help achieve their goals. Finally, Dr. Childs is committed to utilizing technology to further engage students, and the division is always looking for new ways to maximize and fully engage students at the institution.
  + Student Development Association asked for an update on the search for a permanent Vice President for Student Affairs. Dr. Childs said that President Mazey recently announced that the university was hiring an outside consulting firm to conduct a search for the right candidate to fill the position full time. He also announced that the name of the position will be changed to Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost of Academic Affairs. This is being done to make sure Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are working together towards retention and graduation. According to Dr. Childs, additional details about the search will be made public as they become available.
  + Biology Graduate Student Association asked what is the primary thing the division is doing to help the graduate student community on campus, and asked for specific examples of how the division reaches out to this population. Dr. Childs said that he sees graduate students as graduate students, and does not try to lump them in with other student constituencies. He regularly meets with the President and the Dean of Students to hear concerns and issues relevant to graduate students. He also pointed out that the division has strong ties to many graduate programs, and that many graduate students work in the division. As for specific examples, Dr. Childs mentioned Graduate Student Orientation (GSO) and diversity training as things the division does that speak specifically to the graduate student population.
    - Jodi Webb also said that they realize there is a constant struggle for graduate students to be recognized on campus, since they are outnumbered by undergraduate students. Student Affairs tries to recognize and acknowledge the uniqueness of the graduate student population, but perhaps more could be done to help integrate graduate students into more programs across campus.
* **Barbara Waddell**, Office of Equity and Diversity – Barbara Waddell was scheduled to speak at GA, but was not able to attend the meeting. GSS will attempt to reschedule her presentation during the 2016 spring semester.
* Officers, Chairs, and Committee Reports
  + International Affairs Chair/Multicultural Affairs Chair
    - Shahad Al-Doori /Derron Borders
      * A Trip Around the World: An Intercultural Soiree – An email about this event was sent to the campus community earlier in the week, and Shahad and Derron asked the senators to help spread the word to their constituents. This event will take place Tuesday, November 17, and will give members of the campus community a chance to taste foods from across the world and engage in fun activities. The event is part of International Education Week. Another event taking place that week deals with issues related to women in the workforce and the oppression of women in the workforce. Flyers were made available for senators to take back to their departments.
        + Biology Graduate Student Association asked if the event was free. Shahad and Derron said it was free, and that this was also a Ziggy Points event.
  + City-University Relations
    - Kaci Abolt – Kaci could not be present at GA.
    - Michael Oiler
    - First City-University Relations Commission Meeting – The first meeting of the City-University Relations Committee is scheduled for November 10. This is the second year the commission has been in existence, and its goal is to bring together members of both the city and university communities as one to discuss issues relevant to both groups. Michael asked for time at GA to see if there were any questions or concerns the graduate student population would like him to bring to the attention of the commission. In addition to his time at GA, you can forward questions or concerns to Julia, who will forward them to Kaci and Michael.
      * HEADS asked how often the commission meets, and if the meetings are open to the public. Michael said the commission will meet once a month at either 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. He would clarify the time and get that information to Julia to distribute to GSS. The also stated that commission meetings are open to the public.
      * Theatre and Film asked if the commission had anything to say about violence in Bowling Green, particularly downtown during the weekend, and if there was any plan to have more of a police presence. Michael said he recently met with representatives from the Bowling Green Police Department but this did not come up, so he will bring it to the commission’s attention.
      * College Student Personnel said they thought the idea of the commission was good, and that it would help foster collaboration between the city and the university. The senator asked if there had been any discussion about students who are afraid to leave campus and venture into the community due to hostility or the aforementioned violence. The senator also brought up the parking situation in downtown, which they said was not the most attractive for students venturing off campus. Michael mentioned that issues of parking, sidewalks, and crosswalks have been discussed by the commission in the past. There is also discussion about new construction in front of the Administration Building to make the gateway into campus more open and inviting. He will bring up these issues to the commission.
      * Disability Chair Jackie Luedtke said walking or biking to campus can be frightening as drivers in the city do not seem to know how to share the road, and many pedestrians and bikers do not seem to understand where they can and cannot go on sidewalks or roads. She asked if there could be more of an emphasis on raising awareness of these issues, or if the possibility of constructing bike lanes could be discussed to keep the sidewalks clear for pedestrians. Michael said the recent mayoral election has made this a topic of debate, and the winner of the mayor and city council races will likely determine whether or not this issue remains relevant or becomes stagnant.
      * Culture Club asked to return to the issue of parking, particularly BGSU Lot 4. There have been incidents where students have been cited by the police for crossing the railroad tracks due to safety concerns, but the senator said the sidewalks in that area are not practical. Michael agreed this was an issue, and that he has also encountered this problem. Again, he pointed to the mayor and city council elections as being of relevance to this issue as Dan Phillips, a candidate for mayor, has talked about this at some length in his campaign. He also mentioned that the biggest threat to the physical safety of the university was a train derailment, and that he would like to see more people in local government talk about how to address this concern.
      * HEADS asked what relationship the commission had with the Not In Our Town initiative. Michael said that although this initiative has not been discussed by the commission, to the best of his knowledge everyone on the commission supports this initiative.
      * Student Development Association asked if any plans were under way to add more parking around the Bowling Green Police Station. The senator mentioned that he knows of several instances of people getting parking tickets when they go to the station to pay previous parking tickets because there is no parking adjacent to the station. Michael said that parking, in general, is a contentious issue with the commission, but that he will bring this issue to the commission’s attention.
    - College Affordability Roundtable (Michael) – Michael also attended this roundtable earlier in the day at Ground for Thought. Ted Strickland, former governor of Ohio and current senatorial candidate, was on hand, as were several members of the undergraduate student community and several BGSU alumni. Much of the discussion focused on affordability, and the group represented a wide spectrum of people, including those attending or who previously attended BGSU on scholarships, those who paid out of pocket, those whose parents paid, and those who paid for their education with student loans. Since 1980, the state has slashed funding to public universities, which puts the burden of payment on students. Gov. Strickland spoke about keeping educational institutions accountable administratively, and working with the state legislature to find solutions to this problem.
  + Environmental Affairs
    - Caitlin Buhr – One of the biggest issues related to sustainability on campus is recycling. BGSU has a single stream recycling system, meaning people can put all recyclables into the same receptacle, but there is some confusion about how this system works. Caitlin is organizing an event where people will stand at recycling and landfill receptacles in the food court of the student union for a single lunch hour to inform people about which receptacles to use for which items. The goal is to inform, rather than to annoy. She is looking to organize this event on November 16.
      * Computer Science asked if there was any possibility of changing the colors of the recycling bins to help differentiate them from trash bins. Caitlin said this was not likely, since the student union just had new bins installed. One possibility, however, was changing the size and shape of the holes on the front of the bins to help differentiate them.
      * MPASA asked to clarify whether or not plastic bags could be put into the recycling bins. Caitlin said only plastic containers with numbers stamped into them are recyclable.
  + Academic Affairs
    - Dhiman Chattopadhyay
    - Updates from CAA – Dhiman recently took part in discussion regarding a proposed “course retake” policy. BGSU undergraduates can retake two courses in the hopes of improving their grades, but no such policy currently exists for graduate students. A plan to allow graduate students to retake one course was approved and will be sent to Faculty Senate, who will then send it to university administration if the measure is approved. This proposed change in policy would allow a graduate student to retake one course during their career as a BGSU graduate student if they receive a failing grade. Both grades would appear on their transcript and would average out in the student’s grade point average. Another new development is a proposal to expunge academic dishonesty-related violations after 10 years, which would help students who may return to BGSU after an extended absence.
    - Dhiman also spoke on behalf of the India Student Association about the Interfaith Breakfast, which will be held on March 18, 2015. The theme of this year’s event is Peace through Hospitality, and will focus on how cultural and religious rituals to welcome guests can lead to peace and understanding. This event is sponsored by the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) and International Student Services (ISS), and they would like to see more GSS involvement this year.
      * Maryam asked for clarification on a timeframe for when the course retake policy changes might take effect. Dhiman said this was hard to say, as the measure still had to be approved by several other constituent bodies before it could go into effect. Dhiman said he would like to see these changes take effect next fall, but acknowledged that this may not be a realistic timeframe.
      * Graduate Allocations Representative (GAR) Michael Mastalski asked whether or not the committee was considering an appeals process in the event the course retake policy is not approved. Dhiman said that contingency plans have been discussed in case this policy proposal does not go into effect, but those discussions were in the early stages and he was not at liberty to give details at this time.
  + Vice President
    - Julia Largent
    - Body Image Committee – This is an issue that was brought before GA by Michael Smith, former President of GSS, last spring and tabled until this semester. Theatre and Film reminded Julia that this issue was still on the table, and asked that it be addressed during GA. A number of graduate students want to have language related to body image discrimination added to the university’s non-discrimination policy. Julia recently spoke to Barbara Waddell about the proposed resolution and Maryam discussed the issue with OED. Maryam followed up with OED, who said they would be willing to work on the issue with GSS, but that a lot of preparation would need to be done: a committee to investigate the issue would need to be formed; research on body image discrimination would need to be compiled, including definitions of what is meant by “body image discrimination,” and specifics about documented cases of discrimination; this research would need to be presented to the Board of Trustees; and the Board would have to approve any changes or additions to the policy. OED suggested that if GSS was serious about this issue it would be a good idea to work with the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and Faculty Senate to show there is widespread support in the campus community. The first step would be to form a feasibility committee to present initial finding to GSS, who can then vote to approve or decline a resolution on whether or not to move forward with this idea. OED will help in any way possible, but this process would likely take 6-12 months. Julia would like to form a committee to investigate this issue by the end of the semester.
      * College of Technology asked for clarification on the issue, since the current senator was not in GSS last spring and did not fully understand what was being discussed. Film and Theatre explained that the proposed resolution would ask the university to update their non-discrimination policy to include language protecting people’s body image, and guard against discrimination based on appearance. Julia stated that GSS discussed whether or not to update the diversity and acceptance clause of the bylaws, but this would be invalidated because there is no such policy for the wider university. Julia said she would email the senator from College of Technology or anyone else who was interested a copy of the resolution from last spring, and asked anyone interested in serving on the proposed committee to contact her.
    - Open Committees – The following committees still need a GSS representative for the 2015-2016 academic year. Please contact Julia if you are interested in serving on any of these committees. All senators are required to serve on at least one committee, but you can serve on more than one if space is available:
      * Disability Affairs
      * Student Affairs
      * Athletic Advisory
      * Dining Services
    - Survey for Crosswalks – A resolution has been proposed to add additional crosswalks across Thurston St. Julia will be putting together a brief survey this weekend to see how often, when, and how students cross this street. The results of this survey will be used to help acquire funding for the crosswalks, and to find out the best locations for these crosswalks. Please distribute this survey to your constituents as soon as it is available.
    - Applications for the BGSU Board of Trustees will be available in January. There is an opening for a graduate representative on the board to serve a two year term. That representative cannot vote, but the board takes the opinions of graduate students into consideration. Interested parties should be on the lookout for more information as it becomes available.
      * MPASA asked if you have to be enrolled as a graduate student for the next two years to be eligible, and Julia said that was correct.
      * Student Development Association asked if this term limit was set by the state. Julia said it was. She also said that the term of the current graduate representative to the board, Rolfe Richie, would expire in May.
    - Spring GA and SEC Dates – The following are the dates for GSS meetings and Senate Executive Committee (SEC) meetings for the 2016 spring semester (GSS meetings are 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the McFall Gallery, SEC meetings are 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., location TBD): This information is also available on the GSS website, on the calendar tab:
      * **Spring 2016 GA Meetings**
        + January 29
        + February 12
        + February 26
        + March 18 – Elections
        + April 1
        + April 15
      * **Spring 2016 SEC Meetings**
        + January 22
        + February 5
        + February 19
        + March 4
        + March 25
        + April 8
        + April 22
    - President
      * Maryam Kamran – The GSS Submit an Issue form is now live and available for anyone who has an issue they want to bring to the attention of GSS and/or SEC. If you are working on campus and concerned you are working too much, please let Maryam know. If there is a consistent problem in your department and you are concerned, try to track the number of hours you are working in a week, including but not limited to preparing class materials, planning lessons, grading assignments, etc. Referring back to Michael Oiler’s discussion of the College Affordability Roundtable, there is a taskforce on higher education affordability at Ohio universities, and she can send anyone who is interested the results of that task force. Also, if you have any information about any grants or scholarship/funding opportunities, please send those to Maryam so she can add them to the database she is working on creating.
        + MPASA asked what would be the purpose, or the ultimate end result, of tracking hours worked. Maryam explained that if students work over 28 hours per week the university must treat them as employees and account for their health insurance. In these cases the student’s department must free up the funding for the insurance. GuSTO also clarified that there is a buffer of about eight hours to account for shifts in hours during a given period. Julia stated that many graduate students are contracted for 300 work hours per semester, which averages out to 20 hours per week. As an example, Julia mentioned that her assistantship has allowed her to shift hours around to accommodate for on-campus events so long as she meets the 300 hour per semester quota and does not exceed 28 hours per week. Maryam also clarified that the 28 hour per week limit is strictly enforced for international graduate students.
        + GradsACT expressed concern about people who might complain about their work load being targeted for loss of assistantships. More specifically, the senator worried that if departments know they will be responsible for covering the costs of insurance for students who exceed 28 hours per week those departments may stop offering assistantships to avoid problems. Maryam stated this was one reason why she was asking concerned parties to use the online form or speak to her directly, to help prevent these kinds of actions from happening. In her capacity as GSS President, she could speak to a student’s department, or speak to the Office of Student Employment to help ensure this does not happen. Derron spoke up and said he had previously had a chance encounter with the director of Student Employment about this very issue, and the director was very concerned about the issue. The director agreed to accept anonymous submissions of grievances from anyone who feels they are being neglected. Julia said she does not think departments will stop offering assistantships, but she does think greater accountability will help university administration keep on top of departments that are not meeting their obligations to their graduate students. Derron said he had heard of some issues related to undergraduates losing stipends and on-campus work opportunities related to work hour, but he also did not expect this to affect graduate students in the long run. Maryam asked anyone with questions to contact her.
* 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 or 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 GA.
  + - * Issues and Concerns – Maryam – An issue that has come out of the new Student Issues Form is that an unexpectedly high number of forms have been submitted by students in the Biology Department. This has gotten Maryam thinking about whether or not there is more that can be done to assist students in this department, or if there is some other level of miscommunication and misunderstanding in that department that is causing students to submit forms and skew results across the board. If there is an issue within that department that needs addressed, it is good to have feedback so we know how to address it. Several weeks ago, the Biology Graduate Student Association distributed a survey asking students about their level of satisfaction with their degree program. Maryam thinks it might be beneficial to create a similar survey to send to all graduate students across campus so GSS could get a better sense of what student issues are materializing on campus, and how to best address them. She has previously mentioned this to Dr. Michael Ogawa, Dean of the Graduate College, who also thinks this is a good idea. She would like to try to avoid any department-specific issues, and get more of a sense of what is happening campus wide.
    - Michael Oiler asked what tool was used to create and distribute the survey. Maryam was unsure, but Julia said she seemed to remember Qualtrics was used. Michael said he had an interest in assessment tools and would be happy to help create a survey if there is interest.
    - Graduate Student Development asked if Maryam could share the results of the aforementioned survey by the Biology Graduate Student Association to see how it was constructed and what kind of feedback was received. Maryam said she could distribute this information to interested parties, and that this survey could be used as a starting point for a survey sent to a wider constituency.
* Announcements
  + **Next General Assembly:** November 13, 3-5 McFall Gallery; Guests: **President Mazey; Stacy Patnode,** Disability Services
  + ***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.
  + **3rd Annual Graduate Workshop in Applied Philosophy:** The Ethics of Emerging Technologies, Friday, Nov. 6th and Saturday, Nov.7th, Student Union, 207. Would robots have rights?  What is wrong with virtual child pornography?  Does genetic modification harm species? Please visit [bgsu.edu/gradphilworkshop](http://bgsu.edu/gradphilworkshop) for more information.
  + **India Student Association’s Diwali Mela**, November 7, 6-9pm. See Dhiman for tickets. An additional 100 tickets have been made available!
  + **World Student Association International Dinner**, November 14, 6:00pm. See Vaughn Thornton, World Student Association Senator, for tickets.
  + **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 moved to adjourn the meeting. The “ayes” carry and the meeting was adjourned. Julia thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a Happy Halloween.