



Attendees

Edith Zarco
Aarushi Kataria
Liv Zbihley
Wen Chen
Maria Simms
Jeferson
Kasia Kurylowicz
Valay Agarawal
Smrit Nisheeth
Bilal Baqar
Matt Bousquet
Emily Simon
Jose Guerra
Tanvi Varadhachary
Ittipat Prapaprasert
Muhammad Fajar Nugraha
Carolyn Schafer-Geurin
Avinash Kumar
Ashish Srivastava
Jiaying Yun
Soham Gurjar
Yuhui Yao
Kishor Kumar Reddy Mannur
Konstantinos Ameranis
Nicholas Holfester
Nico Johnson
Justin Mun
Bhuvana
Roxanne Fisher
Rupan Bharanidaran
Kaley
Diana Martinez
Tyler Mikulis
Connor Christensen
Terrius Harris

Date: 2/27/2023

Meeting start: 6:35pm

Tyler: Tonight's going to be a lot about asking questions, comments. You'll hear from Terrius who is VP of Community Initiatives.

Connor: It's an opportunity to talk about potential changes where we push for programming and anything that is a positive part of the graduate experience.

Tyler: We're the graduate council. You will also see stuff from UChicago GRAD, which is the university's administrative arm. But we work with them and have a symbiotic relationship. We also have our key liaison from there, Brooke. If you also have questions that are more administratively focused, she might pipe in for stuff like that.

Brooke: I've been at the university for 21 years. When I started, grad students were not a priority, but over time, grad students have been prioritized by the administration and that's how UChicago GRAD came to be.

Tyler: To start off, we have these meetings fortnightly. These meetings are always open to everyone. We will also have a couple admins in the spring quarter and we'll talk more about them later. So if you want to ask questions, we'll have folks from U-SHIP, safety, and the President of UC as well. 6:30 monday nights, every two weeks.

Agenda:

1. Hellos
2. Background on GC
 - a. Intros
 - b. General structure
 - c. Q and A with Terrius
 - d. UC Grad and Brooke Intro
 - e. Upcoming Events
 - f. Misc.

Connor: It is the responsibility of the execs to ensure we use our funds as efficiently as possible. They are broken down into several committees, from student life to funds and internal affairs/ops. Student life tends to be more event-focused but also initiatives on campus. The funds are allotted for conference attendance, purchasing software for personal development, and also for fun initiatives. We want different divisions to hang out with each other. So if you want an event between divisions, we can fund it. We also have reps from every division. For every 500 students, you get one rep. Some schools like Graham don't send reps as often, but in general we have reps from every school at the university. Execs cannot vote, but reps can regarding the GC budget.

Tyler: Our bylaws are skeletal and barebones. So while there are these funds, if there are ever things that are not covered, that is something that we are eager to change. We are flexible with modification.

Connor: Are there questions on how this all works?

Question: So who's part of the board?

Connor: So that would be the execs - please raise your hands.

Tyler: The board comes up with the budget that we present to the council for approval. The council can amend it, etc. It's an informal process.

Tyler: Here is a list of all of the representatives. We have active reps from 10 of 12 schools. We don't have any reps from the divinity school or graham. We don't run rep elections, those are all run by individual departments/divisions. Different schools do it differently.

Connor: Some schools are loosey goosey, others are strict regarding having elected reps. We just want dialogue going back and forth between us and reps. It's something to keep striving for.

Tyler: One of our big things is figuring out how to reach more people, since we need to expand our mailing list. Brooke's office sends out an email, but reps are a key lifeblood/source of information as well. When they don't exist, the organ dies. Do any of the schools have updates at this time, by the way?

Tyler: The law school had a town hall, we have them once a quarter –

Harris: There was an issue for int'l students [inaudible] – ability to work for three years. What I understand is that you have to work for one year and then apply for an extension. For a couple of schools that graduated from Harris – Harris was advertising itself as having data certs that allows you to get this extension – it hasn't really happened for them.

Connor: There was a letter written to Harris as a draft, but we were told it doesn't need to be sent. There was going to be an open conversation, but it is TBD.

Comment: An email was sent to international students about this issue.

Comment: They wanted more transparency. The University Office of Int'l Affairs had an event.

Connor: It sounds like it isn't fully resolved, but I'll reach out to see if there are any updates.

Rimjhim: We talked with IGSAB, and they said that they were working on getting a response from the Dean of Harris. Bringing together these entities and asking for a response is a way to do it.

Connor: Brooke?

Brooke: In response to IGSAB – we also work closely with OIA on this issue – conversations are happening, but advocacy is encouraged.

Bhuvana: Is this specific to Harris?

Connor: It is, but I'll send out an email to get an answer. Any other schools or nonreps want to share anything?

Question: We haven't received a code from OIA for TOEFL discount. Last one they sent was for April 5th. Deadline is April 15th. I'm wondering can we work on it?

Brooke: There's a filing taxes drop-in session. This session is happening on March 23rd. At that meeting there will be OIA and tax people. This will be just for international students.

Comment: It's a coupon to use software for it. OIA should be sending it out. Why isn't there one for domestic students? And it's only for federal taxes.

Connor: We'll send an email to OIA. Terrius, take it away.

Terrius: We are about connecting people, but we would like to introduce the executive board! If you're an exec, please introduce yourself. For the reps, please introduce yourself too.

[Various introductions]

Terrius: Point of these listening sessions is to be able to have an open space for grad students to come together and give feedback or provide suggestions. For this session and the others, we will be collecting data to incorporate suggestions and improve GC for next year as well.

Jordan: Hi everyone. I'm having a hard time deciding an issue that I should come to GV for versus my own department.

Terrius: Anyone can answer the question.

Connor: I like GC because it breaks me out of the Harris bubble. There aren't as many obvious GC issues (my opinion). GC deals with the broader GC experience. I would it push it back to you and say what are ways to get Harris students involved with the broader grad community?

Tyler: There are two main things we can help with: socialization on a broader scale, and second we also get a significant amount of funding for social, academic, and research events. Things that affect all grad students or social events that would cross the entire university. And also just broader grad council and university initiatives. Last year there were things dealing with COVID, this year its about increasing sanitation products in the restrooms. Last meeting, we talked about housing for grad students. So large, broad-scale initiatives as opposed to those that just affect Harris.

Terrius: Also think about the impact you want to have. I think it's important to know, because they might have the idea but not the resources. We have the resources.

Question: Had an idea about the midway and everyone loves music. Can we bring a popular concert or popular musician or up-and-coming musicians, and name the event "Where fun goes to die"? I thought that this would be a great event for grad students. So maybe student tickets are free, open up other tickets to the community, give a portion back to the community. Ideas are endless, but just thought it would be fun. At Harris we learned a lot about how UC has not been the best community partner historically. It'd be a tangible way to put it back into the community. Thank you.

Comment: If you have an issue at Harris, chances are other folks would have the same issue. Advocacy is fine, but you need power to bring change and talk to others outside Harris. If I had an issue that is what I would do.

Connor: This sounds awesome.

Sydney: I looked into pricing for this. It is going to cost something similar to Liv's events. Unless we are receiving help from different divisions, increase ticket prices, we'd have to figure it out. It comes out to \$150-150K. We would want food, tickets, and all of that. Logistically it would be a lot. But maybe we can figure something out.

Tyler: Other schools do it and we also have our spring soiree. Liv do you want to speak on it?

Liv: I also looked into this, undergrads have a student-run festival. I don't know if grad students have access to it at all. Maybe we could piggyback off of the student-run undergrad fest. The logistical kerfuffle is the turnover of the VPs every academic year. We start school in late September, so we have only two weeks on when the weather is nice. Over the summer, we'd have to plan this. That is always why we tabled it. Logistically, it conflicts with the school schedule. That being said, it would be a cool alternative to the formal social events, because it is in the community and directly off campus. So that would be something I would pass the baton on to the next VP of social programming. It would be a unique event.

Brooke: I was wondering if we could piggyback off of grad student orientation event. We already have a tent and it's a huge financial event. Plus we have all the AV and most importantly, we have a permit from the city. The Midway is owned by the Park District. We have to do months of

negotiations. It could be a really cool kickoff, would have permit for food and alcohol. Grad council could really own this event and welcome students and say fun is alive and well.

Connor: I think we can make it happen before summer's over.

Brooke: Our office is going on in the summer, so we can tack it on to our orientation programming.

Connor: I think we should do it. If you really want to do something this year, you should take the lead. Having a fundraiser of some sort, etc, I think we can pull off this year and pull it off for orientation next fall.

Tyler: The Midway is underutilized and a lot of that is difficulties with the city, but with the development of the Obama foundation center, there is an opportunity to utilize the midway a bit more often. Along that lines, I would love to see a midway that is less focused on cars and one that has more areas that have people to walk and use the midway with what it was designed to do and be more of an open hang-out area. I think this is great.

Terrius: Anyone else?

Question: I wanted to ask about the Lyft program and the potential for there to be more rides for safety concerns? I was robbed last month at gunpoint, and it really shakes you up. I don't travel alone at night.

Comment: Another suggestion to jump off of that, is if there's an opportunity for Lyft rides to go outside of Hyde Park, but if not, can rides that go out of Hyde Park be compensated by UChicago? I often stay on campus after midnight and I can't take the Metra. Those 10 dollars can be applied in Hyde Park but also in South Loop, Edgewater, etc.

Tyler: So March 27th, our next meeting, the security person will be here and we can talk about this. We want to continue pushing them on this, because they are reluctant in expanding the Lyft program. One option would be better suited is having our own shuttle program at the very least. I know we have the 2, 171, and 172, and they are great but the university should at least develop more of those. There was also issues about lighting on the streets. So these are real concerns and stuff we can relay to Eric Heath. We are also happy to advocate for this. Regarding your point for outside of HP, that is a great one. We asked, but Lyft doesn't allow for going outside HP borders. Not a reason to not bring it up again, because Booth has availabilities with it, but they pay for it themselves.

Comment: Since Booth has a downtown campus, it's \$100/month and start/ending at Gleacher and Harper Center. Small bubble. That was a recent change within the past month after they added the downtown shuttle. It used to start/end in the HP area, but now it's expanded. It's very different.

Question: Are there opportunities to connect with Uber and expand the area? Maybe Lyft can do HP, and Uber can 5 discounted rides per quarter.

Connor: We asked Eric last year, and he said that it is very expensive. If Uber offers a better program, that would be great.

Sydney: It's \$1.2 million/month for 8,000 students. I'm pretty sure they pay that regardless if all is used or not.

Comment: You cannot transfer rides but you can order a ride for others.

Connor: One thing we can work on is advertise what the limits of our transport programs are and also plan where you live near transportation options. I think we also need to push this to Eric on March 27th.

Comment: B/c most of Booth lives in downtown, I think we need to make sure we should come armed with data, percentage of students who use it, etc. Need to make sure we're prepared.

Comment: Is \$1.2 million too much for student safety?

Sydney: I don't think it is, but the expenses balloon and that's the first thing that Eric is going to say - the cost. But emphasizing the trauma, the PR, are things that we can talk about it. We need to have some kind of response. We should have a good outline of why it doesn't matter how much it costs.

Connor: We're going to be doing a survey and add a link to the slides. On the link to the form, we're going to have a space for suggestions and points to bring up.

Rimjhim: When we're focusing on safety, lots of people live off campus. There are lots of shuttles limited to 61st/62nd street but not beyond that. So even if we ask them, they're going to say that UChicago buses are empty. The downtown connector campus is super useful because it's free and it's timed well. But then they can expand that to other places outside of UChicago.

Terrius: I love the statement about data. It might be important for us to do a survey.

Connor: We are going to do a survey and push it out second week of spring quarter, and have it ready for when President Alivisatos comes here. It's going to be a special section of the form.

Comment: For the survey, it would be important to give qualitative data. Stories like Maria's are at the crux of why this is important.

Comment: I think the app is not up-to-date for where the shuttle stops are. Transloc/UChicago safe. It says on the app that it comes by Harper, but it doesn't, for instance.

Brooke: UChicago Safe app has Transloc and all kinds of trackers that are up to date.

Comment: Transloc's the problem, it's one of the UC shuttles.

Comment: I have a lot of complaints about the shuttle service. For example, it's unpredictable which route they are operating. Sometimes the route I take doesn't go that way. The Transloc app sometimes says otherwise. For me, a clear indicator that it doesn't work well is that most of the time the shuttles are empty.

Terrius: Thank you so much for sharing. For those that did not have the opportunity to speak, I invite you to take the QR code here and share your thoughts.

Connor: If you don't have access to the slides, we'll send them to all of you and the new link to the form for the survey as well.

Tyler: We want to highlight some events we've done recently. Did a wine tasting earlier this month and matcha tasting event. They were both successful. Liv, do you have any major takeaways from winter social?

Liv: Saw that people didn't see the notes about the winter social. Are you seeing it in a newsletter, etc? I want to open up the floor to feedback regarding event advertising, who is seeing these events and who is missing them? Because it might be people who don't really read their emails, but if people are missing them for real, we have to think different ways.

Comment: Maybe one single email with a strong headline that would get a student to read it, and a few reminder emails would help.

Connor: We only have one email blast per quarter to send it. It has to be approved by several levels of administration.

Sydney: I try to send via Mailchimp, but you have to be on the list. We harvest your email when you register to our events.

Comment: It seems counterintuitive that student gov't doesn't get full access to emailing us.

Connor: I'll push back and say that it is up to students to get involved with us. It is a little bit on them to engage.

Tyler: It's an issue we've brought up before. Eventbrite didn't work properly, and it's something we're pushing.

Question: In the past, have you all tried sending out a subscription-type thing in the beginning of the year?

Tyler: We haven't done that, but it's a great idea.

Sydney: We actually have it in the newsletter that's sent out every week.

Comment: I didn't realize it's from grad council since the email comes from UChicago GRAD.

Sydney: Yeah, it's actually from Graduate Council in a corner of the newsletter. I had the same pushback that you guys get too many emails, and I don't think you guys need to get so many of them. But I'm not going to send you guys weekly updates.

Connor: I hope that reps can encourage your students to get involved as well.

Terrius: I also find that it falls on the students to get involved as well. It's a fair statement.

Comment: I think to maximize exposure, I know if you put a QR code somewhere, it would be helpful.

Connor: So when you sign up for an event, you automatically opt in.

Sydney: I know Harris uses WhatsApp groups. Other divisions, do you have something similar? Slack? I've heard from Harris that you guys don't use Slack.

Comment: That's something I've been thinking about a lot. The best solution is having people talking to you who can relay your communications.

Tyler: We don't have control over how the schools operate, for the law school, each year has a slack page for reps. Every time we have an event, the reps post them onto their school slack page. But that is because we have elections and all three positions filled. A lot of schools don't and we don't know how to get them filled. Often we don't have people who do it.

Comment: Wondering about traditional flyering about communicating about events. Physical flyers?

Sydney: A lot of it comes to the fact that I do the marketing on my own. I know what Harris has since I'm part of the school. With other divisions, a lot of my work relies on the reps to share the word to their own divisions.

Connor: The reps should try to communicate more often with their schools/divisions.

Sydney: There needs to be conversation about how divisions can get the word out through socials, etc. Would love to have this convo, and figure out where things need to be sent out. This convo has happened yet.

Liv: We have flyers everywhere for all of the BSD/Chemistry specific events. That's the way I find out about these events versus email blasts. It never crossed my mind to do this for social

events, but it's something we should look into. It's much easier to do than sending an email we can only send once.

Tyler: I think this all boils down to representatives. We have open apps at the beginning of every year for people to apply for exec positions. 60% of apps were from Harris students. We try to get more people from different schools to try to apply. The professional schools that tend to be smaller and more unified student governments tend to have reps more consistently. We don't really know how to change it. For instance, humanities is a sprawling department, etc.

Connor: Some divisions/depts don't care at all, like archaeology. It's on the rep to some degree to convey their divisions' issues.

Terrius: I also agree with this. Hopefully, we'll get more representation in grad council.

Tyler: We'll also have pretty sweet prizes if you fill out the survey. Cool. These are the other events we have that are upcoming, check out the email. Scan the QR code to sign up for Maroon Insights: Bowling, they are Feb 28th, 7-9 pm and Mar 2nd, 2-4pm. Also want to highlight upcoming meetings w/ university officials: 3/27 with Eric Heath, AVP safety, 4/10 Mike Hayes AVP for Student Life, 4/24 or 5/8 Celia Bergman, PM U-SHIP, TBD Pres. Alivisatos. We'll gather questions beforehand before sending to them. You are all welcome to come.

Kaley: Hi everyone, I am the graduate liaison to the Board of Trustees. In charge of the student perspective series, where we invite grad students and undergrads to meet members of the board of trustees. In the fall we talked about diversity of faculty and barriers. After each one of these meetings, there is an official shareable summary document that I share with GC and in theory, all the grad reps should get a copy. I had schedule conflicts last quarter. If you would like them, please email or talk with me after the meeting. I'd also like to promote the spring quarter series and would love input on the topic. We had a meeting last week and talked about scholarships and how they can impact DEI goals as well. The other thing I do is lunches with one board member that I don't get to select and that's more just a Q and A space for various people. One is for undergrads, one is for half undergrads and grads. The email comes from the university and they send me the list of how many people showed up. We try to have representation across as many grad divisions as we can. Those are the two things I'm in charge of. If you have questions about the role of the board, I'm happy to always talk through that. You can always shoot me an email.

Connor: Any questions about trustees and board members? They are in charge of our endowment. The President reports to them, sort of a two-way convo about how to run the university. Kaley can't push policy on them but let them know what are some of the most pressing issues.

Kaley: We have to go through an approval process on topics with Michelle R. Last quarter I sent out a google form, and got some good responses (grad housing, etc). If you have any questions, let me know.

Question: Are you going to ask about UCPD?

Kaley: I don't think that's a me thing.

Connor: That's more of an Eric thing. The Board is more in charge of sweeping policies.

Kaley: Last year, one of the three topics was about safety and security on campus. It has been brought up and we can have follow-up discussions.

Tyler: We have no relation with the Board. We work with admins. We can interact with them, but we have little connection with the overall Board. We come from internal. Kaley's position is the only one elected by the student body.

Kaley/Tyler: The Board decides the President of UC and is more focused on strategic governance that is high level unless there is a big issue. They think about the financial status of the university. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to UC and they designate officers who run individual components of the university.

Question: Can we ask about the investments they do, and divestments as well?

Connor: There was an event last year at Harris about divestment, I agree we should push them on it. I would agree we could tell them about what's going on with the endowment.

Kaley: I agree and I brought it up in the fall, and I will say that the Dean of Students was not a fan of approving that topic. Maybe there's a better forum than the student perspective series. This is more for the board to understand the student experience than advocate for policy. Let me follow up and see if there's a better route.

Bhuvana: The University's financial statements are on the UC website.

Terrius: Sign up for bowling! Free food, lots of it.

Connor: There's a lot of swag! Take some, please. Thanks everyone.

End of meeting: 8:04pm