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All Member Graduate Council Meeting

Attendees:

Aimee Gonzalez
Megan Barnett
Sicheng Luo
Patrick Maguire
Dylan Sosa
Rebecca Delay
Sophia Horigan
Henry Liu
Ishaan Jalan
Aaron
Indranil Ghosh
Connor Christensen
Zhengyuan Ling
Jacqueline Horwitz
Alexandra Warren
Olivia Pura
So Jung Kim
Jiachong
Johnathan Davis
Cat Witt
Hugh Yeh
Jo Griffin
Yingxuan Liu
Maddy Oswald
Dinesh Das Gupta
Tyler Mikulis
Bishwa Pandey
Fatima Bouftas
Briana Banks
Nikita Mehta
Grace Schlesinger
Kim Liu



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Date: 02/08/2022

The meeting began with an introduction by Kim and Nikita for our guest. The guests for our meeting this week were Eric Heath and Dean Michelle Rasmussen.

Q&A with Guests

The Q&A and session was moderated by Oliva Pura.

The first set of questions were directed Eric Heath.

Q) What are your thoughts on the feasibility of the suggestions made by the GC viz a viz bus routes and the CTA?

A) Eric wanted to highlight two things.

On the topic of transport, the University is hiring a hire an assessment vendor to identify potential for improvements in the routes structure and frequency. The problem is there have been cuts to routes for about 5 years, which is a consequence of budgetary cutbacks that were felt across campus.

The initial funding for this exercise is approved and they have released a tender to find the vendor who will perform the analysis and present the report to the University. The assessment will involve studying Ugo, Lyft rides and CTA routes. Eric also stated that there will be a reexamination of the Lyft rides program because it is currently a costly program for the university. The assessment should be completed by the end of the academic year, so changes can be made before the start of the new year.

The other issue he highlighted was negotiating with METRA for student passes. Since Metra is a private entity independent of the CTA, it is hard to get them to agree to terms that are conducive to the university.

In immediate steps, Eric says there were new buses added to the South route because it was one that was underserved. They University has also asked for changes to the 171 and 172 bus routes. The issue currently is that the CTA cannot find drivers, a problem felt across all major cities. Finally, there is a move to add a campus connector route by August, the contractor has to purchase the buses, hire drivers and train them for a roll out in the new year.

Q) What are the metrics for measuring security on campus? Presently it seems to only be incidents that occur, but that is reactive, are there plans to have some proactive steps?

A) Eric agrees that at the moment the University does not have many security metrics in place and that the ones that exist primarily revolve around incidents.

He says there is a Public Safety Advisory council that was constituted last February under the Provost's office. They are in the process of finalizing their charter. The council will consist of faculty, staff, students, and community members.

There will be a annual perception of safety survey who's results will be made available in a annual

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report. The aim of this survey is to bridge the gap between perception of security and the reality of security on campus and in Hyde Park.

Q) How are we planning/ working toward solving the systemic issues that exist outside campus?

A) Eric says we know that policing and increased security are not the answers.

The other issue that exists is that of perception. When Eric and his team asked for increases staffing, it was for improving/reinstating programs other than policing. The program was for increased staffing at the medical center which has some of the highest number of incidents. But people think it is only to increase the policing footprint on campus.

There are significant investments being planned for community engagement that is being led by the Dean of the Crown School and the program has had success before and the hope it continues to be successful.

Q) What are the plans for communicating and branding of security in the University for Prospective students?

A) Eric agrees that the communication should be improved. There are plans to provide a holistic view of security on the UChicago website, including the community work being done. Additionally, there are plans to create whiteboard videos, which have performed well before, explaining what the University is doing and the services that are being offered.

Michelle says there is a need for a coordinated effort to show students what Chicago has to offer as a city and what the University can provide. As an example, she says students don't know that UCPD can come inspect their apartment after moving in to ensure it is safe to live.

Q) How do students who joined during the peak of the pandemic create the alumni network prior students had?

A) The development of the alumni network is something that Brooke Noonan and UChicago GRAD are doing very well and that the question would be better addressed by her.

Q) What are the priorities for the coming year?

A) Michelle outlines three broad priorities:

- Increasing access to wellness care: There has been a significant investment in the Telehealth program to expand the access of healthcare to students around the clock. This needs to be optimized now.
- Transitioning out of the pandemic structure: While she acknowledges it hasn't passed, Michelle says it is important to plan for how to go back to fully in-person.
- Orientation to Chicago: Show people that Chicago is a great place to live in and experience. There needs to be a better understanding of what the city has to offer and how to make the most of it.



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Budget reallocations

There was a motion to reallocate funds from the A&P fund, the R&P fund to the SPE fund. The total amount that was being reallocated was \$20,000. There was a question raised by a representative whether this amount would be sufficient, Olivia said yes it was sufficient.

There was another motion to transfer \$750 to the Marketing committee to help Joseph improve the outreach and marketing work.

There was a discussion on how this transfer would affect the Health and DII committees. Nikita explained that there were partnerships in place with university institutions to help partner and shift the costs of events. For example, the CII will partner with DI to get the speaker for Juneteenth.

Both motions were passed by unanimous consent.

GC Advisory Committee Debrief

The members of the GC advisory committee provided a debrief on their first meeting held the previous Sunday.

Based on the discussion, a request was made to all divisions to forward any covid response survey conducted by their students to the sub-committee. The general purpose of the meeting was to outline the short- and long-term goals. The group had decided that in the short-term it would look to work out a memo in response to the University's covid communication and highlight the lack of transparency/quantitative data that supported the decision being made. The long-term goal was to take on a greater advocacy role in the committee.

The long-term goal sparked a discussion between the broader council.

Nikita asked for the rationale for the advocacy bend in the long-term. She felt that this could cause an increase in bureaucracy within the GC.

The VPs of CI, DII and H&W stated that there are tasks relating to advocacy within the ambit of their responsibilities. However, due to the amount of work already present, often these tasks are sidelined to help plan events. Therefore, they are quite open to an advocacy group within the GC that can share the load for them. Kim pointed out that a similar group was formed 2 years ago, and it did not yield much in terms of success. Nikita also highlighted a similar group last year that did not meet or present to the GC, which is why she is shying away from creating a new sub-committee.

Dinesh suggested the advocacy group could be the point people to draft memos for all committees in the GC. Since the composition would be one member from each committee there would be someone who can write for each individual need.

The GC decided to focus on the short-term goal of Covid work and check back in two weeks' time to discuss the long-term goals of this sub-committee.