University of Chicago Student Government

**Graduate Council Minutes**

7 December 2015

Booth C-08

7:00-8:30 pm

Attendance (**Bold** = present, (L) = late)

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| **Elliott Balch** | **Graduate Council Co-Chair** |
| Casey Anthony | Graduate Council Co-Chair |
| **KR Ling** | **GC Representative - Booth** |
| **Jamarr Buchanan** | **GC Representative - Booth** |
| **Haley Stinnett** | **GC Representative - BSD** |
| **Elyse Watkins** | **GC Representative - IME** |
| Gabriel Velez | GC Representative - Divinity |
| **Matt Peterson** | **GC Representative - Divinity** |
| Lisa Fan | GC Representative - Law |
| **Jimmie Zhang** | **GC Representative - Law** |
| **Andrew Wilmington** | **GC Representative - Pritzker** |
| **Gabe Velez Lorna** | **GC Representative - SSD** |
| **Jonah Simpson** | **GC Representative - SSD** |
| Carlos Grandet (proxy) | GC Representative- Harris |
| **Proxy** | **GC Representative –SSA** |
| **Levke Koop** | **GC Representative-PSD** |
| **Romit Chakraborty** | **GC Representative – PSD** |
| Katie Perri | Graduate Liaison to the Board of Trustees |
| **Tyler Kissinger** | President, Student Government |
| **Kenzo Esquivel** | VP for Student Affairs, Student Government |
| **Alex Jung** | VP for Administration, Student Government |

Meeting called to order, 7:08pm

**Next Graduate Council meeting:**

Monday, January 11, 2016, 7:30 p.m. Harper Center (Booth School) C-07 (updated since mtg.)

**Travel Fund Update**

* Comment: Reviewing next round of grants soon
* 71% funded last quarter, record number of applications (83)

**Social Committee Update**

* Winter Event: February 26th, 2016 secured location at Rock Bottom
* Received feedback on Gargoyle Gala

**Finance Committee updates and actions**

* Met with Ecology working group, recommend funding
  + Interdisciplinary, small amount of money ($500 for quarter) for food
  + Next quarter proposing bowling event
* Overall funding note: thumbs up on working groups
* New Request: Pizza, Science and Discussion
  + Reached out to the group with budget questions
  + Amount wasn’t clear; wanted $3,600 to fund 6 events throughout the year
    - Reject, with recommendation to return for individual event funding
    - Suggest supplemental funding from other groups

**Student Government update**

* Tyler: Filled executive committee vacancies
* Carlos Ortiz from Committee on Social Thought entered at Student Government Community Liaison
  + Increase engagement and involvement of students on south side
* Vacancy in Undergraduate liaison to board of trustees filled
* Worked on budget research, will discuss later
* Assembly meeting last week; approved initiative for student leadership stipends for RSO leaders
  + 250 dollars/quarter
  + Came out of committee on RSOs
  + Legislation approved by assembly

**Trustees and Student Survey update**

* Will be able to conduct survey through random sample of student body
* Plan to implement next year, work more slowly on questions
* Developing areas for questions, survey lab is doing research on peer institutions
* Sampling procedure will be broken up by division in some way, TBD

**Next steps from Vice Provost Beilock’s visit**

* Weekly work hour cap: Follow-up thoughts?
  + 10th year SSD student Averill Leslie here to speak
* Extension of paid health insurance premiums (normally provided for first 5 years, now extended to 6th and 7th years) concerning for more advanced students
  + Looking for rationale for extending to 6th and 7th and not beyond
    - Provost office made the decision, provost referred student to graduate council
    - Asking for Graduate Council to potentially petition office for more information regarding the decision to limit coverage to 6th and 7th years on the students’ behalf
  + What are the options for further discussion/push back on hours cap?
    - Vice Provost still open to discussion?
    - Blocks to obtaining information from administration
    - GSU has also asked for meetings with administration, told to go through Graduate Council
    - How to address students that came in without funding packages that are standard in some departments, and now depend more heavily on outside work hours that are now capped
    - Suggestion: ask Vice Provost to come back at the second meeting in January to ask more questions, address priorities
      * Could clarify how the discussion “must happen in Grad Council”
      * Will invite her back in the next couple of meetings
      * Might be best to ask for information in advance of this meeting to further discussion/prevent lag time
  + Bylaws include a Graduate Issues committee, might be best to actually assemble this committee to address these problems
    - Let Casey or Elliott know if you are interested
  + There is also a committee on student services (CSS) that can address some of these issues
    - Connected to Student Health and the Provost

**Recent Discussions on SG structure and funding**

* Structure of Student Government has been discussed
* Met with Vice Provost, Vice President, Dean of Students
  + Asked for follow-up memo with issues and slides presented
  + Sent before Thanksgiving
  + Afterwards, student government leaders sent memo with new information, breakdown of funding beyond graduate council funding
  + Graduate Council co-chairs’ proposal: split GC from SG
  + Working on equity of funding this year
* Information gathering and dissemination is very important; survey is a good step
  + January could include a media blitz targeting graduate students on campus to increase awareness of funding situation and government structure
* Have Graduate Council Facebook page
* Is it appropriate to discuss graduate student issues on the Facebook page/social media
  + Haven’t discussed SLF or hours cap
  + Should the communications be more official?
  + Comment: Facebook page should stay neutral
  + Could emphasize “Community Time” portion of agenda at Graduate Council meetings to encourage open participation in council
  + Survey could elucidate more widespread priorities, but Facebook could help find the topics to ask students about initially
  + Might be helpful to have an anonymous complaint box on the internet linked to the Facebook page; more civil way of uncovering issues
  + Could feature RSOs available to graduate students on the Facebook page, spotlight resources/opportunities
* Tyler: focus should be on more actionable immediate issues that affect graduate students, rather than larger process structures and funding issues
  + Larger problem with administrators pushing off questions and discussions to other administrators/ other students
    - Government bodies help to stop this deflection and help build capacity towards developing relationships with administrators and having pull to get things done
    - Should increase graduate student awareness and participation in student government committees
      * Provide platform for interacting with administration
      * Could address graduate student issues (integrate)
      * Eg. Student Leadership Stipend
      * Committees average one meeting every 2 weeks, plus additional projects
  + SG includes GC and CC, committees meant to address issues, provide funding
  + Comment: would be nice to include more graduate students in committees where policies are made, but time could be an issue
    - Concentrate graduate issues into specific blocks to maximize effectiveness
    - Reach out with a specific description to students in departments, pitch as career development
    - Forward a list of committees, spread around winter quarter
      * Include information on appeal and role of graduate students on each committee
      * Graduate student representation should have a wide spread of the graduate programs (not homogenize interests)

**Community forum: issues, concerns, news**

* Question about limitation of childcare stipend to PhD students
* Should be an easier process for gathering information on policy decisions
* Office of student ombudsman, only reports to President, there to answer questions
  + Might be another resource for information
  + Potential for graduate student version

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned, 8:12 pm