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**All Member Graduate Council Meeting**

Date: 1/24/2022

**Attendees:**

**Executives:**

Kim Liu: Co-Chair

Nikita Mehta: Co-Chair

Grace Schlesinger: Liaison to Board of Trustees

Rebecca Delay: VP Internal Operations

Bishwa Pandey: Parliamentarian

Olivia Purra: VP Social Programming and Events

Sophia Horigan: VP Health and Wellness

Jo Griffin: VP of Community Initiatives

Briana Banks: VP of Diversity and Inclusion

Indranil Ghosh: VP of Research and Personal Development Fund

**Representatives:**

Alexa- Crown

Jacqueline Horwitz- Law

Tyler- Law

Aaron Alpar- PME

Jiachong- PME

Charlotte Stender- Hum

Bilal Baqar- Booth (Executive Program)

Omkar Bhave- Booth (Executive Program)

Henry- PSD

Megan Barnett- PSD

Ney Grant- Hum

Hugh Yeh- Pritzker

Fatima Bouftas- Pritzker

Patrick Maguire- SSD

Johnathan Davis- Booth

Maddy Oswald- SSD

Henry Liu- PSD

Yingxuan Liu- SSD

Colleen Wohlrab- SSD

Dinesh Das Gupta- Harris



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**Meeting Opens 6:30pm :**

Grace starts the meeting letting the group know that she, Nikita, and Kim are drafting a memo for safety and security meeting with the Board of Trustees that is to take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February. She requests representatives to send out a Participant Request Survey across all divisions.

Nikita provides updates on the work done by IGSAB. She informs the group that the mentorship program has been rolled out with the form available to all divisions and on the website. Currently there are close to 60 responses, but most applications are for mentors and there is a need for more mentees.

There is also an initiative to help improve the access of international students to employers who sponsor OPT/CPT. There is a plan to follow Booth's model of creating a detailed Excel file using survey to identify what support a potential employer does or does not provide to international students. There are plans to have coffee chats and informal talks with HR reps of firms that sponsor international students.

Nikita brought forth a motion to elect Jo Griffin as the Community Relations Representative to a newly formed committee at the provost's office. The votes were as follows:

Booth: Yes  
BSD: Yes  
Crown: Yes  
Harris: Yes  
Humanities: Yes  
Law: Yes  
PME: Yes  
PSD: Yes  
SSD: Yes

The motion was passed by unanimous consent and Jo was elected as the new Community Relations Representative.

**Discussion on Covid Response by the University**

Jo and Sophia led a discussion on the University's response on the Omicron outbreak and the communications from the behalf of administration, based on point raised by the Law



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representative in the previous meeting to identify how the GC was to respond and what that mechanism would be.

Reps were asked if they were aware of Formal complaints in their division. Booth, Law, PSD and Crown replied affirmatively.

Reps were then asked if they were aware of informal complaints raised on slack, email, social media or in person.

All divisions except BSD replied affirmatively.

Representatives raised the following points:

We need to have meetings with the decision makers to understand their rationale, along with meetings with the undergraduate council to hear their experiences.

The representative from Booth raised the point that the University was much slower in tracking their peer schools. Additionally, this delay also caused some financial losses to people who had to cancel or alter travel plans based on the flawed communication that was received.

The consensus across all divisions was the university's communication and updates were vague and did not inspire confidence in the planning.

- Having a better sense of the hierarchy of the decision-making process, including meeting with some of the people within admin who make key decisions
  - For example, what goes into making a quarter remote vs. pushed back a week?
- Uniting across the university, including undergraduates
  - Sentiment that divisions often do not know where other parts of the university are or how they differ
  - Desire to hear how each division is handling COVID in regard to in-person/hybrid options
  - The lack of centralized guidance makes it confusing and disjointed
- Increased transparency in admin decision making
- Updates from administration during the decision process
  - For example, decision tree of next steps, or 'we are waiting for scenario X before making a decision about scenario Y'
  - Frustrating that admin didn't confirm that classes were starting on the 24<sup>th</sup> until 1-2 days before
- Having a student liaison that connects directly with key admin and can share their viewpoints regarding decisions
- Take into account the diversity of programs
  - Weekend/evening programs may be impacted in different ways than full-time programs

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The representatives from Law raised the point that it would also be important to know how much of a say faculty had in the matter, since a lot of them were more comfortable in taking classes virtually.

Jo and Sophia moved the conversation to how the GC should respond.

The Harris representative raised the point that any mechanism must be sustainable and scalable.

It was suggested that a new subcommittee be formed to respond to crisis situations, by show of hands the majority supported this proposal. The committee was to contain liaisons to different administrative sections of the University.

Indranil highlighted a similar committee existed last year for Covid and there should be a permanent crisis response subcommittee that could act quickly, there will always be issues so it will always be needed.

Jo and Sophia asked how the subcommittee would be staffed, the majority felt a redistribution of existing reps was better than soliciting new applications.

The following reps volunteered:

- Yanan Long, PSD
- Yichen Hou, SSD
- Patrick Maguire, SSD
- Megan Barnett, PSD
- Sai Omkar Kandukuri, Booth
- Dinesh Das Gupta, Harris
- Tyler Mikulis, Law
- Liv Pura
- Bishwa Pandey

#### Closing Comments

- how will we disseminate information about this committee within the broad graduate community?
  - Purpose, intent
- Eventually will need to formalize in bylaws etc
  - Could allow committee to dissolve, exist as needed
- This committee should follow up on safety and security
  - Draft memos to send to Lori Lightfoot regarding streetlights, for example
- Was a previous COVID committee with undergraduate ties, could use framework

#### Broad Questions for Future Discussion



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1. What is this committee going to look like, and how will it work?
2. What does the group want to do about the contemporary issues: safety and transportation, and COVID-19?
3. What other issues are under the purview of the group?

### **Representative Reports**

#### Booth:

- Evaluating the operations that are being followed with the return to full in-person classes.
- The Dean is scheduled to speak to the board at Booth to talk about updates.
- Most classes do still offer some form of hybrid attendance.

#### BSD:

- Final phase of hiring professors. Emphasis on increasing diversity in the faculty. Candidates have been shortlisted and they will be up for interviews soon.

#### Crown:

- Hired a new student affairs official for a post that was empty since October of last year.
- Looking to provide mental health support as students return to school.

#### Harris:

- Wants to build out an alumni connections program and seeking advice on how to do so.

#### Law:

- Entirely in person with no option of hybrid classes.
- Diversity director is due to attend the student body meeting on 1/26, Nikita has asked for an update from Law on the discussions of this meeting and the outcomes.

#### Pritzker:

- First day back in classes with new rules. The administration is being extra careful.
- Clinics are back up and running but there is a capacity constraint to ensure patient and student safety.

#### PSD:

- In-person classes have resumed with hybrid allowance on the professor's discretion.
- There is a bit of confusion around TA stipend for this quarter and how TA's are to work. Some want to work virtually and support the classes while professors prefer having them in person so that is being ironed out.

### **Executive reports**



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Joseph (VP Marketing and Communications)

New marketing and communications process for GC newsletters is live. Reps are requested to familiarize themselves with the process so they can send their blurbs for future iterations of the newsletter.

Olivia (VP Social Programming and Events)

Winter quarter event is scheduled to be on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March at Rockbottom. It will be a less formal event than the Gala. Ticketing process will be different. There will be three tiers of tickets that will be distributed, early-bird and 2 regular tiers. This is to ensure if people don't get access to the first batch of tickets, they can get them in the second slot. Ticket sales will open on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm via Eventbrite. Liv will send out an email on that date.

The date and location for the spring gala is also confirmed for April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022, and it will be held at the Museum of Science and Industry.

Jo (VP of Community Initiatives)

There will be two events in February with the themes of "Fire" and "Ice". The committee is to meet in the coming days so more details will be made available in the coming weeks.

Briana (VP of Diversity and Inclusion)

The book drive was recently rolled out. There were 180 books that were distributed, 30 copies of 6 different books.

Briana pointed out that there was a greater number of students from Pritzker that received the books and there needs to be a mechanism in the future to make the distribution fairer.

Nikita pointed out this might be due to how emails are forwarded by division reps.

Briana provides an update on Juneteenth. The speaker will now be in person and the event will happen in the week of May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Sophia (VP Health and Wellness)

Updated us on the Free Menstrual Product drive. The packages will be distributed in the coming weeks and the pickup emails will be sent soon.

Students are allowed to pickup by proxy if they cannot make it over the course of the three days that the distribution will occur.

There will be a plant lottery in the quarter to distribute 400-600 plants. The priority will be to give plants to those who did not receive them in the previous year.

**Meetings Close: 9:02 pm**