University of Chicago Student Government

**Graduate Council**

May 5, 2014

Booth C07

6:00-7:00 PM

**Bold=In attendance**

**Law School:**

**Gillian Seaman   
Hunter Vance**

**Booth:**

**Kristen Uyemura**

Zeynep Gunay

**Eric Adler**

**Jason Forte**

Humanities:

Ahona Panda

Daniel Morgan

Social Sciences

Ella Butler

**Harris:**

Andrés Pérez  
Emilio Franco

**SSA:**

**Julia Tier**  
Aaron Mallory

**SSD:**

**Tom Worth**Misha Teplitskiy

**BSD:**

**Erin McAuley**   
**Jeffrey Steimle**

**PSD:**

**Anthony Martinez**

**Div:**

**Ted Good**

**Pritzker:**

**Hannah Roth    
Dominic Catalano**

**Josh Johnston (Chair)**

**Anthony Martinez (Vice Chair)**

**Jimmy Brown (ORCSA)**

**Representatives from the Coalition for Equitable Policing: Ben Chametzky, Tyler Darnell, Ben Boyajian**

6:02 pm **Meeting called to order**

**Budget review**

* Polsky Center’s Innovation Showcase request got approved, so we’ve allocated all our funds
* Travel fund has been entirely spent
* Events Committee has approximately $300 left
* $1500 left in Miscellaneous fund, which we use for food
  + Could plan an end-of-year party, or something

**CEP Presentation/vote on proposal**

Presentation by representatives

* Brief history of campaign
  + There were a few events last year that sparked this campaign:
    - A student in the College who was tutoring local high school students suggested that they meet at an on-campus café, and the high school students responded by saying they didn’t feel comfortable going on campus because they were told by the UCPD that they
    - UCPD’s violent reaction to a peaceful protest by Students for Health Equity at the UCMC
  + UCPD’s response: didn’t consider CEP’s concerns to be problems
  + This year: SG leadership conversation with Marlon Lynch
    - Asked pointed questions, most of which were brushed aside/not really addressed in a satisfactory way
    - Lynch requested “more feedback” in the form of a petition; students created a petition that addressed the major disparities observed/experienced by students and community members; delivered petition signatures to the UCPD HQ w/ ~60 people
* Problems identified by CEP:
  + (1) The UCPD explicitly racially profiles
    - Felt to be a particular problem given that the community surrounding the University is predominately black; the UCPD has conceptions of what students vs. community members look like, and they look for people who don’t fit that profile
    - Problematic for many reasons, including (but not limited to):
      * Students of color are also racially profiled and feel excluded from the campus community
      * Local high school students (and potential prospective students) feel that the University is unwelcoming and inaccessible
  + (2) the UCPD has quasi-public/quasi-private status
    - UCPD is the primary policing force for a large area of the South Side, stretching from approx. 34th St to 64th St.
    - Many of their constituents/the people they police do not have access to administrators/decision-makers who govern the UCPD (significantly less access than students)
      * UCPD polices a community of 65,000 people, compared to the University community of ~16,000
      * Students have access to resources/processes that community members do not, e.g. Deans-on-Call
    - UCPD serves in a public capacity in many ways
    - One petition demand was that UCPD develop a process analogous to IL FOIA – UCPD claimed that FOIA doesn’t apply because they are a private entity
* Petition asks for the UCPD:

1. Develop a process analogous to Illinois’ FOIA
2. Release comment card information to the public
   1. Comment cards contain name, race, and other demographic information
   2. Need general demographic information to analyze data and identify trends that could substantiate racial profiling claims
3. Reform the complaint system – current system is not aligned w/ those of public police forces
   1. Current system requires complainants to come to the office in person, which can be intimidating for people who have already felt harassed by the police
   2. CPD, for example, receives complaints by email and mail in addition to in person complaints

Questions

* One of Marlon Lynch’s main points was that CEP has not been open to discussing their demands/this issue—what is your response?
  + At the SG Leadership Talk, a couple of students asked pointed questions, and Graham and Lynch said they didn’t think CEP’s concerns were problems; asked for evidence/proof, in the form of increased complaints, for example
  + Recently changed wording on UCPD website in response to some student concerns,
    - Website also had a lot of dead links
  + UCPD is currently trying to gain accreditation from CALEA (which is entirely made up of law enforcement groups)
    - CALEA has best practices that are designed by law enforcement officials – seem to be more about protecting the agency from lawsuits than ensuring fair processes/policies
* How do accredited police departments deal with complaints?
  + UCPD’s accreditation documents are not available to the public
  + CALEA does say all anonymous complaints need to be investigated
  + UCPD used to say they wouldn’t investigate complaints unless there was a non-anonymous complaint filed; part of union contract
* How does CEP propose to deal with the union contract issue?
  + Union contracts come up for renewal, would suggest rewording the contract
* UCPD says they won’t fire or discipline officers for anonymous complaints. What would CEP propose as an alternative?
  + Currently, disciplinary hearings cannot be initiated by an anonymous complaint
  + CEP wants the UCPD to take anonymous complaints seriously, particularly when they repeatedly address the same issues
  + Independent Review Committee (IRC) reads complaints and usually concludes that officers have acted the right way
    - IRC receives all information that is not publicly available and reviews it – the committee is made up of faculty, students, administrators
* Community perspectives?
  + Many community members with negative experiences have been local high school students
  + Common youth perception that UCPD does not want them to be around the campus
  + Have reached out to churches and Hyde Park Kenwood Community Conference; generally community members are split on this issue
* Re public/private issue: other than implementing a voluntary FOIA and instituting a different complaint system, what can be done?
  + Difficult to come up with an ideal solution, but maybe a smaller jurisdiction
  + CEP wants UCPD to be a ‘model’ police force
    - No comprehensive list of policy changes, but there should be no question that the UCPD does not racially profile and treats everyone equally, whether they are affiliated with the University or not
    - Stronger background checks for UCPD officers – some officers have been fired from other police forces,
* Have you met with University administrators?
  + CEP was supposed to meet with Lynch and Graham this week, but Dean Rasmussen said they had to cancel the meeting and insisted that University administrators be present at the meeting
  + Have other allies – Craig Futterman at the Law School; actively looking for others
* Why keep trying to meet with Lynch if he doesn’t seem to be willing to work with CEP?
  + He’s the decision maker, and they’ve brought public pressure more recently, which has changed the circumstances
* University generally wants to protect members of the University community. Open information is a threat to the University’s reputation. How do you respond to this?
  + University is trying to do two things at once:
    - Protecting an academic institution/community
    - Policing tens of thousands of people who are not affiliated with the institution and wielding public power in that capacity
  + Also, FOIA information can be redacted
    - CEP just wants general demographic information; want to be able to compile data on race, quantity of stops, etc.
* Alderman’s take on this?
  + Have not been in contact with Hairston or Burns
  + Have looked a little bit into what can be done on the city scale; don’t want to go down this road yet
* Josh Johnston: To clarify, Grad Council would be voting to support CEP and endorse its petition/demands, so there’s no concrete deadline

Deliberation

* **Josh Johnston**- The proposal is as it stands. Do we want to lend our support officially, reject it? Or offer suggestions.
* **Julia Tier**- Is there precedence for GC signing onto a petition for a social issue like this?
  + **Josh**- Yes. It’s a fairly common practice. Particularly last year related to the arrest at the UCMC. We weren’t able to sign on because we didn’t have a quorum.
* **Hunter** **Vance**- seems like there is some good stuff in there, but I’m not sure if they have a clear enough position on what they want to do. Not sure how I feel about the FOIA thing. Not sure there’s a realistic solution.
* **Erin McAuly**-It’s an idea, but they don’t have legitimacy. I think they have good ideas, but they need to focus their ideas in the petition.
* **Anthony** **Martinez**- They’ve had trouble finding administrative support because they’re assuming the university is a big adversary. I’m offended by that because the administrators have been helpful to us and worked with us very well.
* **Hunter**- Is there anything other than saying we supported them if we sign on?
  + **Josh**- No. You could sign on individually. We are 2/3 of the body and in principle represent those students.
* **Jeff Steimle**- If you release those type of records the University could be open to liability.
  + **Josh**- We’re supposed to be acting in the best interest of the students here. It’s good to keep the University in mind, but we are representing students.
  + Jeff-You have to think from the university’s perspective.
* **Erin**- I think the petition is underdeveloped. Motion to create a statement from graduate council and submit to GC electronically for approval rather than sign onto the existing petition.
  + 7 in favor. 0 opposed. 2 abstain.
* **Josh**- someone will draft something and send it to Josh over the next few weeks.

**Assembly Proposals**

* **Josh**- Assembly next Thursday will vote on GC budget- to increase by about 30%. Very important.
* **Anthony**- Want to increase event to $60K and increase travel fund to $30K. We may also try to double our membership and increase reps by two fold. This could help with the work load. Also- some departments are diverse in focus, etc. and could benefit from more reps.

**Vote on new leadership positions**

* Anthony Martinez running for Chair. Erin McAuly running for Vice Chair.
  + 14 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstain.
* Tom, Ella, and Panda sent e-mails to vote

**BSD Dean’s Council** (Noel and Caitlin)

* University is not adequately preparing students to work outside of academia. So they created a program through grad council with training, professional development that targets the current economy in science. We’ve created several professional development programs and partnerships with UChicago biotech association, etc. for panels and we’ve had great attendance and very good feedback from the biological sciences students.
* Most of our students don’t know what GC does, but we’ve invited BSD GC Reps to report to our Dean’s Council each month to increase participation.
* **Josh**- Historically BSD has used the least funding from GC. Probably because they often aren’t open to the entire student body. Does it make sense to keep that as a requirement? Maybe we should set some aside for programming that is specific to certain departments?
* **Jason Forte**- logistics for allocating funding to events that aren’t open to the entire student body.
* **Josh**- we could set aside a certain amount, like $4,000, for small specific programs
* Booth Rep-I personally like the rule that it has to be relevant to multiple divisions. I think that’s the mission of grad school and it ensures that GC events encourage cross-department networking.
* **Anthony**- I don’t think it’s actually in the guidelines. I think they’re very loose. It’s just something we’ve used to make decisions by in the past. For example, SGFC grants funding to groups that are technically open to the whole community, but we know that it’s unlikely others will attend.
* **Josh**- I think that’s similar to how we do things in practice. But we still ask people to explain how they are reaching out to other schools.
* **Hunter**- I like the way it is now that we generally try to fund programs that involve more divisions, but we can still help out smaller programs and groups.
* **Jeff**- I like the idea that our programs are open to everyone, but maybe we need to make connections between divisions as GC reps. Perhaps that’s GC’s role- being intermediaries between our divisions and others to help make events more inclusive.
* **Josh**- Bandwidth- not sure what people thought they were going to be doing as a GC rep. We spend most of our time voting on money. Should that be our mission? Or should we bring in interest groups? Anthony wants to expand reps in part so we can divide this work up and then do more. I thought it was going to be bridging divisions and helping students collaborate. We don’t really do that. We barely know each other.
* **Hunter**- That’s a fair point. I like the idea of expanding seats so we can divide labor. That will allow us to have more conversations. I bet our constituents don’t think that we’re spending all of our time voting on funding requests.
* **Tom**- I think we should get together more often, learn about each other, collaborate on more projects. If we meet more frequently and have better defined roles it could be better.
* **Jeff**- It’s boring to just sit and hear funding requests. I don’t think that’s what this was intended to be. I think we need to change it. Maybe certain people focus on funding and others on events.
* **BSD students**- people don’t know who you are. Increasing the number of people could be helpful. We rewrote the bylaws
* **Tom**- a lot of it comes down to resources. Administrators stand in the way of me getting information to the entire student body.
* **Hunter**- There’s not much for me to report back to Law School student govt when we’re just doing funding requests. If we did more meetings about social issues, etc. it would be more interesting for reps to represent the constituency. Whether that translates into action is an issue of govt in general.
* **Jason Forte**- There’s little that GC brings to the table for our students. We tell them what happened and publicize things on Facebook, but beyond that there’s not a lot that they want to hear from us.
* **BSD**- there are a number of issues that face the student body- union mvt, health insurance, etc. The undergrads tend to vote differently and vote loudly. A body that would represent the students could be very powerful. We have students who have families and need healthcare specific to our age.
* **BSD**- No one shows up to important meetings where we can make these decisions. We’ve had the opportunity to be on committees and chairs to make change, but people don’t attend.
* Van- you guys should get paid. Incentive to make people take it more seriously.
* **Tom**- was previously on SGA that paid members. Our effectiveness was 20 times what it is here. If the institutional structure is there.
* **Josh**- it varies a lot. The argument is that undergrads can’t take work-study because of SGA.