

Graduate Student Government: September Council Meeting (9/21/2023)

Theo starts meeting at 6:35pm.

Introductions of Theo (President), Shashi (VP), and Ariel (VP). Theo welcomes everyone and explains the general structure of GSG and of council meetings.

For voting and for approving the minutes from the last meeting, we need one person to create a motion and another person to second it before we open up for voting.

As we come in every month, grab your nametag, sign in via the iPad that goes around the room, get food, and sit down.

If you cannot attend, let the President and VPs know ASAP, and nominate someone to come in your stead.

Approving of meeting minutes from April 2023 meeting:

- First individual motions to approve it
- Second individual seconds this motion.
- We vote: unanimous approval!

Committee updates since submission of committee reports:

- **Executive board:** Wants to continue the blood drives that GSG did last year. Many thumbs-up went up around the room in support of this.
- **Social committee:**
 - First Friday Dinner in September was a success!
 - Also we're doing volleyball over the summer.
 - Preparing for a dance in December.
 - In October, we'll have George Chan talk on the power of procrastination. They are very excited for this event, and they need volunteers!
- **Quality of Life committee:**
 - Going to have a town hall for grad students with dependents and allies. Purpose will be to see where people are at and what some of the needs are and increase solidarity among them.
 - Looking for volunteers.
- **Academic Affairs committee:** Updated us on past meetings with various individuals across campus.
- **Diversity and Inclusion committee:**
 - Cross-cultural collaboration workshop over summer: poor attendance. Hoping to have it in spring to get more attendants
 - Mentioned other events.
 - Mentioned that international students may need info in advance about clubs and resources before they arrive at Notre Dame.
- **Professional Development committee:**
 - Did collaboration workshop with DEI committee, and it was successful.
 - Next event is September 26.
 - Grad Guidance = program where grad students mentor undergraduates who are applying to grad school. This is an initiative that started last semester and that will be started up again this October.
 - Workshop at the end of October on publishing.

- **Sustainability committee:** Town Hall went well!

New business:

- Anyone else have new business?
 - Anthropology rep: Issue with access to St. Liam's Hall. No parking near St. Liam's, and we have to go there to get certified to see someone outside ND. People usually live off-campus. Would like to have patient parking (even 5 spots at 20-30 minute parking).
 - Physics dept rep: food insecurity. Quite a few physics grad students have food insecurity problems. 2 years ago, there was a plan where ND gave meal swipes per semester on down-low. It would be nice to bring those back and make them more obvious.
 - Ariel mentions Grad21: freezer of microwave meals in basement of Bond Hall. Gets restocked once a week. Grad students can take as many meals as they want once a week. Not great in terms of dietary restrictions.
 - Arpitha talked with Julaine regarding if there's a possibility to do daily food pickup from North Dining Hall for picking up excess food. They're on a pilot process and are talking with dining hall staff to see how it works out.
 - This discussion gets referred to the Quality of Life committee.
 - Exec board is having ongoing stipend talks with University Admin.
 - Grad students are no longer responsible for negotiating stipend when they get a grant; departments have their own thresholds to raise when someone gets a grant.
 - Sean: rep for ESTEEM group. Based on IDEA center outside campus. Concerned about members of that cohort struggling to connect with other grad students. Connected with MBA rep in this room.
 - Ariel clarified that GSG represents grad school *except* Law and MBA programs (due to funding and logistics).
 - Tatiana: the DEI committee is trying to have MBA and Law students serve on their committee.
- Constitution updates: Sustainability committee gets a mention in the Constitution!
 - First individual motions.
 - Second individual seconds.
 - We vote - approved! (31 votes "yes").
 - Sustainability will be added into the by-laws.
- Second update: GSG originally operated on an academic calendar. Proposed change is to make a year-long (12-month) budget.
 - What usually goes on during the summer?
 - CPG (Conference Presentation Grant).
 - Travel reimbursement for international students flying into Chicago and needing to get down to South Bend.
 - A couple of events happen over the summer, too (volleyball, etc.).
 - Budget is changed in-line.
 - We can always vote to change the budget as long as we have a quorum.

- Before, the summer budget was just a number. Now, by adding it to the budget, we break it down by line number so that it gives specifics to how the summer budget is being used.
- Also, there are usually more people here at Council meetings in September than April.
- New budget timeline is September to September.
- First and second motions occur.
- Voting - we have enough to approve new budget system (33 votes "yes")!
- Budget
 - Exec board is trying to lessen the burden of grad students by reducing \$\$ spending in GSG in order to reduce grad student activities fees. This will be a multi-year process.
 - We have a nice cushion from COVID years. We hope the cushion continues.
 - Reduced expenses for Jingle Bell Ball and CPG (not used all of it in last year→reduced it).
 - Exec committee money has gone up so that they can help support committees iff new budgets aren't enough.
 - We're hoping to run on a cut-down budget. It's an attempt.
 - Ariel runs CPG and is happy to be transparent about the funding.
 - Could we divide CPG apps into international & domestic conferences? Yes, that is taken into account. And international travel applications are weighted.
 - CPG is capped at \$500/individual right now. Ariel is open to changing it, but it would affect how GSG spends money in future.
 - Also, GSPDA offers a much higher amount (that doesn't come out of grad students' pockets), so we would encourage people to check out GSPDA.
 - Could we raise cap? We could, but grad school does match us \$\$\$. Also, there's CPG committee that should be in this conversation.
 - Jingle Bell Ball (JBB)
 - JBB is rather exclusionary because only a certain amount of people can get into the space per fire code, and it's a lot of money.
 - A lot of this is spent on catered food (which is needed in order to serve alcohol), and that's usually about \$5000. Chairs are also working on making it one exclusive (and thinking about subsidizing some of the requests on request basis) (and also thinking about providing childcare to those who attend).
 - But still only allows 450 people to attend.
 - Someone else seconds that—if it's a big event and is coming from grad student \$\$, then it should be accessible to everyone.
 - Someone else also seconds that point; they thank the exec committee for lowering costs for JBB but also ask for future considerations.
 - Someone also says that these concerns about JBB are a great way to get involved in Social committee and be a part of the JBB planning committee.

- Theo appreciates the thoughts raised and asks people to keep the conversations happening. It stands in the constitution that JBB or similar events happen.
- Wes asks how the JBB requirement landed in the constitution. Tatiana explains that this was the event opened only to all grad students across departments.
- Social committee reduced the ticket cost from \$10 to \$7 last year.
- Option: to decentralize JBB, i.e., collaborate with departments and host the event in multiple locations?
- People want to go but struggle to get tickets, because they fill up fast. Can chill with people and drink (alcohol!) and eat food.
- Campus spaces are free to use. We can look into outside venues, but that will probably up the bill currently.
- There's not a limit to how many rooms we could use for the event, but it would increase cost.
- We could also look into having an event outside.
- Tatiana makes a motion to table discussion of JBB. Because everyone has many ideas. And people should join social and DEI committees because this is EXACTLY what these committees talk about all the time. Many seconds to table so that we can get out of here by 8pm.
- Did we have a definition for "accessibility" for this meeting? Yes, implicitly stated: disabilities and financial and family.
- Feel free to approach the exec committee and chairs after the meeting!
- Motion to vote on budget by Montana.
- Second motion to vote by Nick Ross.
- Vote: 33 say "yes." So the budget passes!

Open floor for questions and comments (except JBB—approach Theo post meeting)

- Pranav: Dental came up. It was in Quality of Life committee report.
- Issue that GSG needs to publicize the travel summer funding. GSG were communicating with admin assistants for depts and thought that they were disseminating it to depts, but apparently not? Mimi says that this information is also in orientation email that all international students get when they first come to ND.
- Someone asks if they can have minutes for this meeting. Answer: people can share this agenda with their departments.
- Tatiana: The Stream is an email that has grad student events. GSG newsletter also includes event advertising to grad events.
- Would social media be more effective than email for this generation?
- Theo: Please encourage people to attend grad student appreciation events!
- GSG has Instagram and Facebook.
- Kristie: Is there a single space/webpage where we could put all of the resources, such as stuff? Theo: Canvas Grad Orientation page has a lot of this stuff! ND App also has much of information too.
- Talk with dept people about these things so that people are aware.

Announcements:

- Zombie preparedness festival on September 28.
- JBB committee is being established, and it's outside of social committee. If you're passionate about making this event successful, then please join!
- Fatemeh: Any idea about how we can have more people, we'd appreciate it! Because that's the biggest problem right now.

Theo adjourns the meeting at 7:48pm.