

# **Arts & Sciences Graduate Student Union**

## *Official Minutes*

**Date/Time:** Thursday January 14, 2010 3:00pm-4:00pm

**Location:** 340 Gardiner Hall

**Representatives Present:** Ricky Woofter (Chemistry), Sarah Williams (Psychological & Brain Sciences), Lynda Mercer (Humanities), Stephanie Honchell (History), Kim Meyer (Mathematics), Patrick Ridge (Spanish), Alex Molina (Urban Planning), Carolyn Morgan (Political Science), Beth Irvin (Urban & Public Affairs), Shireen Deobhakta (Urban and Public Affairs), Carissa Shafto (Psychological & Brain Sciences), Rebecca Wells (Communication), Ryan Trauman (English)

**Representatives Absent:** Brooke Cochran-Webber (French), Jennifer Cruze (Justice Administration), Jeremy Hornbeck (Physics), Eli Levine (Biology), Kelly Watt (Fine Arts), Jennifer Oladipo (Pan African Studies), Will Salmons (Theatre Arts), Jacqueline Thompson (Theatre Arts), Jamie Ratliff (Fine Arts), Chip Thomas (Sociology), Mith Barnes (Humanities)

**UL Faculty and Staff Present:** Dr. Wendy Pfeffer, Assistant Dean of Graduate Affairs, Rick Vanlttersum, Program Assistant Sr., Graduate Affairs/Advising

### **I. Welcome: Lynda Mercer**

Mercer called the meeting to order at 3:05pm.

### **II. Approval of 12/08/09 Meeting Minutes**

Mercer opened the floor for discussion of minutes from the prior meeting. Wells noticed a slight error with the dates and times presented in the minutes and corrections were noted. After amending, Woofter motioned to approve, Wells seconded, and the minutes from the December meeting were approved with unanimous consent.

### **III: Discussion Item: Old Business**

a. Update on RSO Status: Vanlttersum updated the union on the progression of the group's Recognized Student Organization status. In mid-December, all required paperwork was completed and submitted to Student Affairs. Vanlttersum said he had been in contact with Matt Selm, a graduate assistant for RSO, who confirmed receiving the application and that the Student Organizations Board would review the paperwork. He presumed that the process might be delayed due to the break between the semesters and he would have a timeline at a later meeting.

b. Update from Dr. Pfeffer: Pfeffer applauded the group's efforts in writing its constitution and considered the GSU off to a good start. She added that the Dean's Office remains happy to support the group in any way it can.

#### **IV. Discussion Items: Committees**

a. Maintain or Select New Committee: Mercer opened the discussion of maintaining the current elections & constitution committee or forming a new entire committee before elections later in the spring. The current committee consisted of Hornbeck, Morgan, Barnes, and Thomas. The consensus view was to maintain the current committee. Since three members of the committee were absent, naming a chair was tabled for a future meeting.

b. Create Events Committee: Mercer called for volunteers to serve on the standing events committee. Pfeffer recommended that the first point of action for this committee was to review the minutes from the GSU's first meeting to examine which events might be useful for the A&S Graduate School population at large. Mercer, Wells, Woofter, and Ridge volunteered to serve on the committee, with Wells serving as chair.

c. Create Information Committee or Information Officer: Vanlittersum informed the GSU that Art III, Sec 9 of the GSU Constitution formed a standing information committee, but the bylaws lacked a clear definition of the committee purpose and roles. The consensus was that an information committee/officer would handle correspondence between GSU members, manage the GSU listserv and website, and develop other communication forums (Facebook etc) for the group. The debate shifted to whether committee was necessary for this purpose or should an officer fulfill information duties. Pfeffer recommended that either the secretary be responsible for information or be an ex officio member of the committee, as information is the one of traditional roles of the office. Mercer questioned whether this committee and other pro-tem officers should start their job responsibilities right away or wait until full term officers are elected in March. Since disseminating information is an essential function, Vanlittersum offered to continue as the information contact while this role would eventually be transitioned to an officer or the committee. He also recommended leaving one person as responsible for information, as having an entire committee for the task seemed inefficient. Shafto and Woofter expressed concerns with having the secretary solely responsible for information, as the secretary held a considerable amount of enumerated duties, especially when balanced with a full-time academic workload and related responsibilities. Mercer suggested amending the GSU Constitution to add a new position of information officer and requested a motion to do so. The information officer would take on information related duties from the secretary (Article III, Sec. 6, Clause i. and ii.), manage the GSU web site, and be responsible for all publicity for the group. Trauman motioned to approve, seconded by Irvin, and the motion was approved by unanimous consent. Mercer agreed to work with the constitution committee to change the language of the constitution to clarify the duties of the information officer and remove the standing committee for information.

#### **V: Discussion Item: Open Discussion**

a. Departments with Multiple Representatives: Irvin and Molina inquired into eligibility requirements for departments with more than one representative. According the GSU

constitution, eligibility for voting membership and travel funds is based on attendance of representative(s) from a department, not from a degree program.

b. Graduate Student Council Symposium: Mercer announced that the GSC is sponsoring a symposium for March 5, 2010 with abstracts due on January 25. All three divisions from A&S, social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities, will be represented and prizes will be awarded.

c. Graduate Student Council Dinner/Dance: Mercer announced that GSC was sponsoring a dinner/dance at the Muhammad Ali Center on February 26, 2010 and encouraged representatives and their departments to attend. Additional information was sent via the GSU listserv.

d. Outreach to Prospective Students: Wells mentioned improving outreach to prospective graduate students as a potential goal of the GSU. Vanlittersum explained the Dean's office would be very interested in any help representatives could provide in this area. Wells concluded that developing individual relationships between graduate students and undergrads in the same department, potentially in an event setting, would be very helpful to departments that have fewer resources in recruiting potential students. Vanlittersum brought up the potential of setting up a peer mentoring program, which would pair current graduate students with prospective undergraduates, similar to the peer-advisor program in A&S advising. In this program, seniors and juniors serve as student advisors to freshman and incoming students during summer orientation and in GEN 101 courses.

## **VI: Next Meeting**

a. Meeting Time and Date: The next meeting of the GSU is schedule for Thursday, February 11 at 3:00pm at 340 Gardiner Hall.

## **VII: Adjournment**

Mercer requested a motion for adjournment. Shafto motioned to adjourn, seconded by Williams, and the motion passed with unanimous consent. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm.