

# **Arts & Sciences Graduate Student Union**

## *Unofficial Minutes*

**Date/Time:** Thursday February 11, 2010 3:00pm-4:00pm

**Location:** 340 Gardiner Hall

**Representatives Present:** Ricky Woofter (Chemistry), Lynda Mercer (Humanities), Kim Meyer (Mathematics), Jeremy Hornbeck (Physics), Patrick Ridge (Spanish), Beth Irvin (Urban & Public Affairs), Carissa Shafto (Psychological & Brain Sciences), Rebecca Wells (Communication), Eli Levine (Biology), Jennifer Oladipo (Pan African Studies), Vanessa Johnson (Fine Arts)

**Representatives Absent:** Brooke Cochran-Webber (French), Jennifer Cruze (Justice Administration), Will Salmons (Theatre Arts), Jacqueline Thompson (Theatre Arts), Chip Thomas (Sociology), Mith Barnes (Humanities), Stephanie Honchell (History), Alex Molina (Urban Planning), Carolyn Morgan (Political Science), Shireen Deobhakta (Urban and Public Affairs), Ryan Trauman (English), Sarah Williams (Psychological & Brain Sciences)

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

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

Mercer called the meeting to order at 3:01pm.

### **II. Approval of 1/14/2010 Meeting Minutes**

Mercer opened the floor for discussion of minutes from the prior meeting. After reviewing the minutes, the representatives offered no changes. Hornbeck motioned to approve, Levine seconded, and the minutes from the January meeting were approved with unanimous consent.

### **III. Discussion Item: Funds from Dean's Office**

a. Overview: Mercer moved up this agenda item in order for Pfeffer to fully participate in the discussion. Pfeffer had previously spoken with Dean Hudson regarding financial support of the GSU and that Hudson had agreed to do so. Specific amounts were not discussed at the meeting, but Pfeffer floated the amount of \$2,500 as a prospective budget for the remaining 2009-2010 academic-year. Before funds are dispersed from the Dean's Office, a budget proposal (clarifying the GSU's proposed projects and/or events for rest of the academic year) must be submitted as quickly as possible.

b. Discussion: Mercer opened discussion by asking for input from the events committee. Wells reported that the events committee had met to brainstorm events

and fundraising ideas, but did not have any specifics planned. Pfeffer added that funds from the Dean's Office could be used as "seed money" for a larger fundraiser. In addition, she reminded representatives that assisting A&S graduate students with travel funding, purchasing research material, and purchasing other types of data sets were among items discussed as potential goals for the GSU. Hornbeck and Irvin supported this premise as they both were on waitlists for conference travel and assumed other A&S graduate students were in similar situations. Pfeffer suggested creating a mechanism to distribute travel funds in the amount of \$500 per student, while acknowledging that amount would likely not fully fund travel expenses. The GSU would need to propose a total amount to spend on travel funding, an amount per student, the application process for students obtaining said funds, and determine whether the travel funds would be an outright grant or connected to matching funds from another source (departmental, student, etc). Mercer was concerned with the limited availability of funds for students as a \$2,500 budget was considerably less than Graduate Student Council's travel budget of approximately \$60,000. She explained that the GSC was able to fund most graduate students' travel requests, but only to a maximum of \$300 per student. To help spread assistance, Pfeffer proposed using \$100 per student in order to help more students and supplementing the amount from GSC. Shafto explained that awarding supplemental funds may be counter-productive, as the maximum \$300 from GSC assumes that funds were not available elsewhere. Under that scenario, a \$100 award from the GSU might result in a \$200 award from the GSC, thus a student only receives the same amount and no additional benefit.

c. Create Ad-hoc Travel/Research Funds Committee: With the members having a desire to use funds to assist A&S graduate students with travel or research needs, Mercer concluded a committee be formed to determine how funds would be distributed to students, develop an application, determine the impact of funds on existing GSC travel funding, and create a detailed budget proposal for this academic year to submit to the Dean's Office. Hornbeck and Shafto volunteered to serve on this committee and promptly create guidelines for the application and distribution of funds. Shafto and Irvin suggested using the term "research funds" in lieu of "travel funds" to help avoid complications with other funding sources and increase opportunities for students to apply for funds beyond simply travel for conferences. Shafto asked the representatives whether funds should be distributed per department or on a "first-come, first served" basis. Woofter and other representatives suggested using "first-come, first served" due to the limited time left in the academic year. Pfeffer clarified that research funds would be awarded as reimbursement only and to include that as a warning on the application.

d. 2009-2010 Budget Proposal: Mercer requested a motion to request \$2,000 from the Dean's Office to be distributed in A&S graduate students in \$100 increments for research purposes along with \$1,000 to use to plan and host a fundraising event. Hornbeck approved the motion, Shafto seconded, and the motion was approved with unanimous consent. **[Note: Dean Hudson approved a budget for the amount of \$2,500 total for the remainder of the 2009-2010 academic year.]**

#### **IV: Discussion Item: Old Business**

a. Update on RSO Status: Mercer updated the union on the progression of the group's Recognized Student Organization status. In late January, Mercer was notified that the Student Organizations Board approved the Union as an RSO and she was asked to

attend a SGA Senate meeting for final approval. At the January 26 meeting, the Union was officially approved and received a certificate certifying the group's charter. A future RSO orientation meeting will be scheduled sometime later this semester.

b. Information Officer Update: The GSU Constitution Committee was still working on the language for an amendment adding an information officer to replace a standing information committee. Approval on the amendment was tabled for the March meeting.

## **V. Discussion Item: March Elections**

a. Election Proposal: With GSU officers still working on a pro-tem basis, Vanlttersum proposed that the March election be managed by the Graduate Affairs staff. If a GSU member is interested in nominating someone for an office, all nominations were to be sent to Vanlttersum via email. Open positions include: President, Vice President, Secretary, one representative for Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities, and Information Officer. The election will be conducted at the March GSU meeting via secret ballot. The final results announced shortly after the meeting via the listserv.

## **VI: Discussion Item: Open Discussion**

a. Graduate Student Union Website: Vanlttersum announced that the GSU website was online and would house pertinent information regarding the GSU including announcements, past meeting minutes, and meeting agendas. The website can be found at [http://louisville.edu/artsandsciences/Graduate\\_Education/graduate-student-union.html](http://louisville.edu/artsandsciences/Graduate_Education/graduate-student-union.html)

b. Funds Access: Irvin commented it would be helpful if the GSU would allow graduate students groups, in addition to graduate student, to apply for research and other funds. She also inquired about potential access to funds outside of A&S. Vanlttersum explained that becoming an RSO provided additional access to revenue via Student Affairs and other University sources. Woofter added that access to revenue outside of A&S was not guaranteed and typically student organizations need to apply for funds that coincide with a scheduled event or specific program.

c. Events Committee Report: Ridge and Wells gave a brief update on the discussions of the events committee. Ridge reported that the committee was looking to plan events to help publicize the GSU's presence on campus. He mentioned possible events such as a workshop to help undergraduates and new grads in graduate school on the application process (perhaps in pairing with the university writing center or another campus entity). Wells mentioned several potential fundraising possibilities including having art students draw characteratures for a donation and selling international food and beverages (such as bubble tea) at a campus event. In addition, Ridge brought up the potential of the GSU sponsoring a graduate school fair for A&S graduate programs. Irvin envisioned the GSU sponsoring an interdisciplinary employer forum for the A&S community, similar to an event being planned by the public administration program (scheduled for April 1, 2010). Hornbeck added that physics students at one time sold "liquid nitrogen" ice cream at an event, but found difficulties with the University signing off on doing so. The committee asked Graduate Affairs to arrange meeting between the GSU and an event planner to discuss potential events and fundraisers and the possible limits and implications with other campus units.

**VI: Next Meeting**

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

**VII: Adjournment**

Mercer requested a motion for adjournment. Shafto motioned to adjourn, seconded by Meyer, and the motion passed with unanimous consent. The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 pm.