

# **Arts & Sciences Graduate Student “Caucus”**

## *Unofficial Minutes*

**Date/Time:** Monday, November 16, 2009 12:00pm-1:00pm

**Location:** 340 Gardiner Hall

**Representatives Present:** Carissa Shafto (Psychological & Brain Sciences), Ricky Woofter (Chemistry), Ryan Trauman (English), Rebecca Wells (Communication), Jennifer Cruze (Justice Administration), Jeremy Hornbeck (Physics), Sarah Williams (Psychological & Brain Sciences), Shireen Deobhakta (Urban and Public Affairs),

**Representatives Absent:** Eli Levine (Biology), , Kelly Watt (Fine Arts), Stephanie Honchell (History), Kim Meyer (Mathematics), Jennifer Oladipo (Pan African Studies), Patrick Ridge (Spanish), Will Salmons (Theatre Arts), Jacqueline Thompson (Theatre Arts), Alex Molina (Urban Planning), Jamie Ratliff (Fine Arts), Brooke Cochran-Webber (French), Carolyn Morgan (Political Science), Jason Smith (Political Science), Beth Irvin (Urban & Public Affairs), Chip Thomas (Sociology), Mith Barnes (Humanities), Lynda Mercer (Humanities)

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

### **I. Welcome: Dr. Wendy Pfeffer**

Pfeffer called the meeting to order at 12:04pm.

### **II. Approval of 10.26.09 Meeting Minutes**

Pfeffer opened the floor for discussion of minutes from the prior meeting. No changes were suggested from the representatives present. The minutes from the October meeting were approved with unanimous consent.

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

a. Safety: This topic was a key concern to members during the last meeting and Pfeffer explained she has been sharing those concerns with relevant administration members and groups. In her discussions with Dean Hudson, Pfeffer reported that all deans on campus were very aware that campus security is a paramount issue. The Provost plans to actively invest additional funds towards security in hiring additional security personnel on campus, improving lighting, and working on other concerns. However, campus safety is a long-term issue and will be rectified with quick fix solutions.

b. A&S Committee Participation: Following up on the past discussion on committees, Pfeffer confirmed that Dean Hudson is more than willing to extend a standing invitation for a member of the caucus (TBD) to attend A&S Chairs meetings. The graduate student representative would be informed of the current happenings in A&S and have the opportunity to provide input. Pfeffer added that the president of the A&S undergraduate student council has a standing invitation to attend the A&S Faculty Assembly and an invitation would be expended to this group's president, pending a review of A&S bylaws. There would also be opportunities for a caucus member to serve on the A&S Curriculum Committee and A&S Academic Grievance Committee. Representation on the Curriculum Committee would be particularly helpful in providing input on the creation of new graduate degrees, courses, and changes in graduate requirements for current programs.

#### **IV. Discussion Item: GSC Constitution Committee Report**

a. Status of Draft: Hornbeck reported the committee had met and was in process of writing a first draft of the GSC Constitution. The first draft was very similar to the model constitution provided by the Student Affairs, but with a few changes. The portion of the document related to member dues was eliminated as dues will not be collected as the caucus is a representative body and not a club. The committee also eliminated the office of treasurer as a leadership position, due to the non-collection of dues. Article II—Purpose was modified to reflect the purposes for the caucus as discussed in the initial meeting. Article III—Membership was proposed as “caucus members were to be selected by the department in a way the department sees fit” and the provision regarding non-students was eliminated.

b. Feedback: Members expressed concerns with a lack of a treasurer position, as one of the goals of the caucus was to help obtain additional funding sources for travel, purchasing data sets, and other purposes. Trauman added that the duties normally delegated to a treasurer could potentially be assigned to another officer, such as a Vice President. Pfeffer reminded the committee to consider the guidelines for membership as a whole (potentially all A&S graduate students) versus the representative body within that group. Woofter recommended certain membership and attendance guidelines be in place (similar the campus-wide GSC) to ensure fairness with distribution of funds and on other affairs. Pfeffer suggested using the A&S divisions (Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities) in regard to attendance guidelines and quorum, in an effort to reduce the strain of required meetings on already busy graduate student schedules. Moreover, Pfeffer put forward the creation of an executive council of officers and one representative from each division to potentially meet and conduct business between regular required meetings.

c. Ratification of Constitution: Vanlittersum raised the question of ratification of the drafted constitution. The model constitution and guides provided by Student Affairs left no mention of ratification procedures for a student representative body. The question was raised whether the caucus' constitution needed approval from the entire graduate student body or simply the caucus itself. Vanlittersum stated he had a call into Student Affairs regarding this issue, yet had not heard back prior to the meeting. (*Note: In later discussions with Student Affairs, ratification of a Constitution through the caucus is sufficient to meet established RSO guidelines*). Since the constitution document was still in progress, further discussion on ratification was tabled for a future meeting.

## **V: Discussion Item: Nomination/Election of Caucus Officers**

a. Officers: With the writing of a constitution still in progress, nomination and election of officers was tabled for a future meeting. Vanlttersum added that in the process of becoming at RSO, there are meeting and form requirements with Student Activities for the Spring 2010 semester that likely may occur before a slate of officers is in place. Pfeffer proposed that a President Pro-Tem should be selected from the caucus members to fulfill these requirements at the December caucus meeting.

## **VI: Planning for Future Meeting**

a. Next Meeting: Pfeffer suggested the meeting time be changed, as there are several representatives who were unable to meet on Mondays at noon. Tuesday, December 8 was recommended due to the scheduled campus "reading" day, thus classes were theoretically not in session. Vanlttersum offered three times (11:30am, 12:30pm, 1:30pm) and instructed representatives to respond to a future email with their availability at each time. Members would be notified of the scheduled time via email.

## **VII: Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm.