

Graduate & Professional Student Council

General Assembly Agenda

November 7th, 2017 5:30pm

Koldus, Room 144

I. Call to Order

Quote of the meeting:

‘You should never view your challenge as a disadvantage. Instead, it’s important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages’
-Michelle Obama

II. Procedure and Governance

III. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved (voice vote)

IV. Speaker’s Podium

Ombuds services - Dr. Teresa Wilcox

Dr. Teresa Wilcox presented about the Graduate Student Ombuds Services

- Role of the Ombuds Officer
- Standards of Practice: International Ombudsman Association
- What kinds of issues?
 - Academic issues (probation, dissertation requirements, grading etc)
 - Advisor issues
- What the Ombuds Person can and cannot do

Dr. Wilcox presented the Graduate Student Ombuds Services Annual Report AY 2016-2017 (handout was given out to the GA)

Most common issues:

- Unfair treatment/difficult relations
- Dissertation/Thesis requirements

To meet with an ombuds officer:

Email: ombuds@tamu.edu

Phone: (979) 845-3631

Q: When a student comes to you, what is the outcome?

A: Depends on the situation.

- Spend time trying to figure out the main/primary issues
- Typically student leaves with the next steps

Q: Are there instances where you direct to the Counselling Services?

A: Yes. If student is in distress. Sometimes let them go on their own, sometimes help them go there (immediate appointment)

SAFAB update - Grey Bonin (chair) & Tom Reber (and George Michael Switfton – board member)

Introduction to SAFAB:

- Student Affairs Fee Advisory Board

- Board is made up of 9 Aggies

- Make recommendations to the VPSA (Dr. Pugh) on budget requests

- Recommendations (recurring) – recommended the following that were also supported by GPSC

 - DOIT Project Manager

 - Disability Services – Career Ladder Promotions + 2 Gas

 - GPSC GA for Student Research Week

 - Student Counselling Services – career ladder promotions (but did not support the distance counsellor)

Continue to give feedback!

Q: How do you put priority on art services on top of counselling services?

A: Distance counsellor will be filled by the University to maintain accreditation – will not be filled using the Student Affairs Fees. Counsellor will be paid for from Distance services fees. (money is at the university but not in the student affairs)

A: Art gallery is very short on storage spaces, have to turn down donors right now due to space constraints

V. Pending Business

VI. New Business

Matthew Gaines Resolution – Matthew Etchells, Wilmarie Marrero-Ortiz, Jeffrey Opaleye

Matthew presented the resolution

Preamble:

- University has been trying to do this for many years (since 1977)

- Student Senate passed resolution last week to support Matthew Gaines statue

- Building in place of Bizzell Hall (will be there in 26 months): proposal for statue to go beside that building facing the MSC

- This needs to be rushed (short timeline): this will go to committee in 1 week, arts council in 2 weeks

-Funding will come from a private donor (outside of the University)

Matthew read out the Resolution:

Friendly amendments:

-Capitalization (White and Black)

-Missing quotation mark

Brenna: Resolution supporting statue coming from this body is needed. Fully supports resolution.

Trent: This issue first came up in 1998 (from Wikipedia) – lost in the wake of the bonfire. This has been brought up before

Matthew: A&M is missing a story that represents the beginning of the University (don't have the same buildings, statues etc.). We don't have anything that represents the creation of the University on campus. Matthew Gaines represents creation story.

Move to the vote:

Passed (voice vote)

Bus App Resolution – Chris Nygren

Presented by Chris Nygren

-The times/schedule on the bus app are not updated in real time

-Students could benefit if the schedule is dynamic

-Amendment

“GPSC would like to formally request” to “GPSC formally requests”

Passed by voice vote

Changing the year to “2017 – 2018”

Q: How long has the bus service been at Texas A&M

A: Good question

Q: When was the last time app was updated?

Chris answered question with problems with route.

Resolution passes (voice vote)

Attendance Presentation – Courtney Dickie

Courtney presented information on delegate/departments attendance and Colleges with perfect attendance

VII. Voice Reports

a. University Committees

Rules and Regs, Rule 7 – Tyler, Amit

Collecting feedback regarding proposed changes to rules regarding how many days could be missed due to illness without a doctor's note and regarding

-Collecting feedback

-Issue faculty senate has for Rule 7: Students missing exams, they have to create new exam

-Undergraduate student side: absences for job interviews, etc.

-Proposal to change student rules 7 to have attending a job interview with an excused absence

-Extend the medical leave without a note (2 to 3 days)

-Previously job interviews was included in Student Rules 7: it was removed (in the 80s or 90s) due to rampant abuse

Voice vote (impromptu)

No

b. Department, Program, or Organization Announcements

i. OAK Fund – Brenna Lin

Brenna wanted to bring to the attention of the GA the OAK Fund

OAK = Open access to knowledge fund (OGAPS, VPR, University Libraries contribute to it)

Currently there are \$5000 in funds for graduate students (only \$1300 have been used this semester) – we should be using up this fund (and requesting more)

ii. AAU Sexual Assault Presentation – Brenna Lin and Fernando Lavalle Aviles

Fernando presented the data:

Association of American Universities (62 universities)

-Study performed at the end of Spring 2015

-Sample size: 779,170 but response ~150,000

-Focused on graduate student sexual assault data from the study

-Most incidents are not reported

Will compare this data to the data collected from Haven

A&M has been advocating bystander intervention

VIII. Standing Committee Reports

a. Awards

Aggies Commit Application

<http://gpsc.tamu.edu/accessibility/awards-scholarships/aggies-commit-fellowship/>

- Winter applicants will be evaluated before Thanksgiving
- Aggies Commit Application: for high impact learning experiences (very broad)
- Giving out 13-14 Awards (only 13 views of the form so far)

b. External Legislative Affairs

i. SGA Municipal Affairs Poll - goo.gl/forms/4qjb89qpAqUseldn2

- Take the poll on the google form (from SGA): to identify things on a municipal level

ii. Bryan/College Station City Council Elections 11/7 – happened today

iii. Graduate Accommodation Leave Update

- Won't be called maternity leave, would be called accommodation leave.
- Will be launching next fall
- Brenna would like to talk to any grad students who went through the pregnancy process while in grad school

iv. SAGE Update

- Brenna went to SAGE last week in Pittsburgh
- New issue: Housing
- Other issues: Dial-A-Nurse program (Michigan), Counsellor embedded in graduate school (Michigan), Legal services
- Research funding, campus climate, finances (tax and debt), immigration, health and wellness (healthcare, mental health)

v. Tax Cut and Jobs Act

\$2k estimated tax increase for students
Student Loan interest deduction is repealed
Section 117(d) waiver of qualified scholarships and tuition is repealed
Section 127 exclusion of employee provided tuition assistance repealed

- Share with department what Chris sent out about the tax increase
- Call and let the Representative on the bill know how this would impact you

-Contact representatives this week!
Will no edits once it is on the floor

CALL and share information

Chris will send out more information

- c. Internal Legislative Affairs
- d. Marketing and Communications
Logo submissions and updates

10 submissions

Will vote on at the next GA meeting (and will be sent out to the Delegates this week)

- e. Recruitment
- f. Diversity and Inclusion
Meet and Greet Nov 30th, 1-3pm Gallery in Architecture

Interdisciplinary Dinner: Next Friday November 17th at 6:30 PM (10-15 people)
Faculty: Sonja Hernandez (History Department)

- g. Programming
Town Hall, Nov 14th ILSB Auditorium

- h. Quality of Life
- i. Research
- j. International Student Affairs

X. Special Committee Reports

- a. Student Research Week
- b. Grad Camp

XI. Officer Reports

- a. Vice President of University Affairs
- b. Vice President of Information
- c. Vice President of Finance
- d. Executive Vice President
- e. President
Question gathering exercise

XII. Advisor Comments

Grad Camp Director Application Open
<http://gradcamp.tamu.edu/apply-to-be-the-director/>

XIII. Administrative Comments

XIV. Announcements

XV. Adjournment

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Advocacy | Community Building | Research