**GSA General Assembly Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday February 1, 2017**

**HGS 119, 6:30 PM**

Meeting started at 6:49 PM

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes are approved.

1. Approval of Agenda

Agenda is approved.

1. Reminder of attendance policy

Nick Vincent: We will enforce the attendance policy this semester to make sure everyone is an active advocate of his/her department. Glad to see so many people here today! Wendy Xiao: the attendance policy is liberal.

1. New Haven Bike Share Presentation and Feedback

Krysia Solheim: I work with the transportation/engineering department. Bike share is a shared bike and public transport system to expand people’s transportation options. It’s good for short trips (there are time limits; you rent from a station and return it to a station; e.g., CitiBike in NYC, Indigo in Philadelphia, Biketown in Portland, etc.). Bike share is affordable, convenient, environmentally friendly, 24/7, and healthy. We have been working on bike stuff for quite a few years, and things are starting to get better (in 2008, there was the safe street campaign, and in 2010, there was the safe street manual). The contra-flow bike lane was recently introduced on High Street. In 2015, the Bike Bill was passed, before which it was illegal to build protected bike lanes (Long Wharf/Water ST/Brewery ST protected lanes were introduced in 2016). So there has been a lot of effort to reduce the need for a car in and around New Haven.

Krysia Solheim: to use Bike share, you sign up for a membership and use a credit card on an app. It will use 4th-generation bike share, so the information will not be in the dock, but there will be a GPS tracker in the SmartBike. Emilio Salazar: it sounds like it would be useful for members of community. Would this be for people who visit New Haven as well? Krysia Solheim: yes, there will be one-day passes available. Emilio Salazar: So the reason I ask is because I had a difficult experience signing up for a one-day membership in Long Beach. Krysia Solheim: the process should be pretty simple. There will also be a smart lock (that can lock the bike to any bike infrastructure) and air-quality detectors on the bikes. The bike stations can be anywhere (right of way, sidewalks, etc.), bikes are also not considered vehicles in CT, so this will not take away parking. This project will be funded by private investment and membership fees.

Krysia Solheim: the contract has not been signed yet, and we do not want the launch to be in the fall (cold weather). So we may wait until Spring 2018 to launch the program. There will be various types of membership: pay per ride, all time you can ride, etc. The stations will be located near transit stations, doctors, theaters, etc. We also would like people to request stations on SeeClickFix or email/call in. Fabian Schrey: I lived in London, and it was a pain to leave home an hour after rush hour because you have to wait until people recycle the bikes to their stations. Krysia Solheim: there will always be popular stations. For example, in NYC, there is an angels program whereby people get points for free rides if they bring bikes back to their stations. There is also a sample survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHVBikeShare](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHVBikeShare). I welcome ideas about outreach. Any ideas? Please feel free to let me know! Also, there is a chance that the Yale program and the New Haven program may not be integrated.

Wendy Xiao: is there a critical mass of bikes for people to depend on this program? Krysia Solheim: I don’t know about a particular number per person, but many cities have started with small programs, though obviously it is better to have large programs that reach many commercial and residential neighborhoods. Usually student memberships are $40-50 per year, and the regular memberships might be around $95, especially if Yale joins. Consuelo Amat Matus: to reach the Hispanic community, I recommend having Spanish instructions and having coins as a payment option. Krysia Solheim: definitely, we are working on both! Katie Oltman: is there a theft contingency plan? What if a bike gets stolen when a person is using it? Krysia Solheim: theft is a problem, but these bikes have GPS locators, and they will report to the management if something weird is happening (e.g., the bike is moving at 35MPH). So we are not super worried about it.

Paul Lemler: in Boston, people can check the availability of bikes at particular stations. Will this be an option? Krysia Solheim: yes, definitely. David DeLeon: the biggest problem with NYC program is that it was really only for young people commuting to schools and not really for low-income people. Krysia Solheim: research has found that younger, whiter, more male members have used these bike programs, so there are equity programs currently available to make sure the program is widely accessible to everyone (e.g., giving people the opportunity to request stations, talking to community leaders, etc.). In a sense, we are always failing because I don’t know where the baseline is, but this is definitely something on the forefront and we don’t want the program to be solely used by, e.g., (no offence!) Yale students. We also have ambassadors, demo bikes to really work on producing a sense of excitement in the local communities. Marius Constantin: will people be required to wear helmets? Krysia Solheim: we cannot (and I don’t think any bike share system has figured out a way to) distribute helmets to every member/have everyone bring helmets everywhere. New Haven only requires 16 and under to wear helmets, so membership will be restricted to 16+. Nick Vincent: I know a lot of people have really started to feel more comfortable biking in the past few years as changes have come around (bike lanes, etc.), so this sounds like a great program!

1. Resolution S17-001:Creating an Ad-Hoc Committee to Study Effects of Sixth-Year Funding Policy Across GSAS Disciplines

Seb Bezerra: the resolution pertains to the discussion we had about sixth-year funding. The university, in placing a hard cap on the number of years during which students can receive funding, acts in detriment to the interests of many humanities students. Connor brought up the point that if we wanted to bring this up with the administration, we should form a committee to gather data and present a resolution to the assembly at the end of the semester. I am happy to undertake the scheduling of committee meetings. Nick Vincent: I brought this issue up with KGC (VP of university), so this is on people’s radar. Representative: I brought this up with Dean Cooley, who was against it, but she said that she would look into it.

Melis Laebens: how do you envision the data? Seb Bezerra: both that this issue affects a lot of students and that the solution would not present much financial cost to the university. But of course part of the purpose of the meeting is to see what would be the best way to present this. Nick Vincent: you can also see if there has been a decrease in the number of external fellowship applications before and after the 6th year funding iniative. Wendy Xiao: how do you see this together with the Continuing Registration Fee (about 1000 dollars). Sarah Zager: is it waived now? Alex Zhang: it is waived for students who are teaching, and not waived for students who are not teaching. Emilio Salazar: you might want to solicit the feedback of science students as well. Also, what if the data are not as convincing? Seb Bezerra: my hope is that as long as we can show that there is a potential problem, the administration might find it persuasive. Kate Phillips: there is also the problem that people are dis-incentivized/pressured away from studying non-Western fields because they do not have enough time/financial resources from Yale to study non-Western languages and cultures.

Resolution S17-001 is passed by unanimous acclamation (no oppose or abstain votes).

1. Request from Religious Studies Department on departmental student handbooks

Sarah Zager: religious studies recently formed a committee composed of students to write a handbook, so I just wonder if other departments have this practice. Pratima Gopalakrishnan: the DGS formulated a draft. David DeLeon: in English there is an advisory committee. We sponsor social events and sit on some committees that involve graduate students. Nick Vincent: Microbiology has a department handbook written by the DGS and faculty. We are a small department, so when the handbook is being revised, the draft is passed around and students have some input. Fabian Schrey: our (Economics) DGS is old and actually gives everyone individual written suggestions on what to do at their stage of program. Katie Oltman: Psychology has a 50-page handbook, revised and updated by faculty once every 30ish years. Sarah Malkowski: in Chemistry, our handbook is apparently updated every year. Students do not really have input. Adam Matula: it does say, “you have to qualify by this date,” but the faculty often just says that you don’t have to worry about it. Laura Brown: in Music, some issues were raised about process and transparency, so we started a handbook. Nicholas Curry: there is now a graduate student committee (e.g., on not having qualifying exams not be such a mess) in Music. Emilio Salazar: it’s useful to have dates of some sort, even if they are flexible. Yana Bebieva: G and G also has a handbook, covering milestones, teaching appointments, use of department facilities, etc. It’s very useful. Sarah Zager: if you could send us your handbooks, that would be great! David DeLeon: our department also has an annual town hall with graduate students for us to voice concerns

1. Department Meeting Reports
   1. Psychology (Lucy Armentano and Katie Oltman)

Lucy Armentano: career advice came up (both coming into academic and non-academic options). There were also complaints about dental plan (what’s the point if it just covers preventive checkups?). There were a few complaints mental health care. Katie Oltman: 90 in psychology and 40 attended. Transit and security also came up (orange during the day). People liked the walking escort program but did not like how it’s restricted to campus areas. Inclusivity: gender-neutral bathroom website is wrong (some bathrooms labeled as gender neutral are not, some gender neutral bathrooms are not labeled, etc.). People also want practice space (maybe with Schwarzman Center?). Wendy Xiao: that might not happen. We tried to advocate on this issue, but people on the Schwarzman Center were insistent that it is intended not to bring space not currently available to campus to campus but to bring people together. Lucy Armentano: people also had concerns about how so much of the campus is walled off to graduate students.

Nick Vincent: where is the gender neutral bathroom website hosted? Liz Salm: you can access it on the LGBTQ website. Nick Vincent: this could be a quick fix (like with some other recent website issues). Chris Geissler: recently grad affiliates are given access to other colleges to which they are not affiliates.

* 1. East Asian Studies (Kang Wei Heng)

Kang Wei Heng: About 16 in department and 12 attended. We talked about GSA initiatives and people are quite happy. Our students are here for one year, so I would also like to connect with other masters reps who might have insights about masters-specific issues. The department recently started accepting 2-year students, and the department does not have any written regulations about this. Funding is also an issue. A separate concern is that some people are applying to Ph.D. programs (e.g., in history, so I would love to sit down and talk to those reps).

Nick Vincent: are there other masters program reps in the room? (yes.)

1. Concerns from the Floor

Toomas Laarits: who is eligible to vote in the micro-units? Liz Salm: people who are teaching in the previous paycheck the decision is made. The problem is with shopping period. Nick Vincent: this is why an extension was granted, but masters students, professional students remain to be decided.

Nick Vincent: there is a lot going on in the community about the executive order. Yesterday, I received words from KGC and Dean Cooley. The orders affected about 30 people (about 10 in the graduate school), and everyone has been contacted and given opportunity to ask questions, seek advice, etc. The General Counsel’s office is prepared to deal with this if the ban is extended to beyond 90 days. Consuelo Amat Matus: there is at least one student in Political Science who is undocumented, and there is concern about what the definition of a crime is in prioritizing deportation. Chris Geissler: YLS offers legal aid.

Nick Vincent: the second episode of the podcast dealt with the unionization briefs and arguments, and I have sent it out to the entire graduate school community. Everyone did a fantastic job on this! We also solicited questions together with the podcast email. Patrick and Liz will be running town halls with factual, cited information. Patrick Dunn: we are planning hour-long town halls, starting with factual matters (Columbia decision, history of grad student unionization, etc.), and then proceeding to an open Q&A, with answers including citations. We would love to have people from both sides (people who love Local 33, people who do not love Local 33, people who have no opinion but would like to learn more). The elections will happen very quickly, and we really need people’s help. Seb Bezerra: will GSA’s stance be made clear? Patrick Dunn: have you listened to the podcast? Seb Bezerra: not yet. Patrick Dunn: right, so it has a disclaimer about not intended to persuade anyone but to provide information to grad students, etc. Nick Vincent: listen to the podcast (it’s very good)! I have just heard a lot of requests for information from graduate students (because they think that neither Local 33 nor Yale has not provided adequate information). Seb Bezerra: are you concerned that this might be regarded as a violation by the NLRB? Nick Vincent: no, this issue has been cleared back in September. As a student group, we are free to share our voices, whether it be unabashed support or otherwise. Connor Williams: will local 33 members be welcome? Liz Salm: Yes, we welcome everyone’s help in holding these town halls!

1. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:59PM.