**GSA General Assembly Meeting Agenda**

**Wednesday September 7, 2016**

**HGS 119, 6:30 PM**

Meeting started at 6:40 PM

1. Approval of the Agenda

Agenda approved as stands

1. Welcome and Introductions: GSA, Committees, Summer Steering Update, and Rep Packet

Nick Vincent (Microbiology): GSA is comprised of: Executive Board (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Chairs (4), CTF Director, Webmaster and members of Steering Committee); Steering committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and six additional representatives. Minimum distributional requirements: two humanists, two social scientists, and two scientists. Any representative can run for Steering Committee- elections later in this meeting, see below); departmental representatives (everyone elected by their department is a departmental representative); standing committees (four standing committees where projects are handled; see committee information sheet for more info; if you have not received a copy, contact Alex at [tongjia.zhang@yale.edu](mailto:tongjia.zhang@yale.edu)); please note that all reps are required to be affiliated with a committee!!; external committees (University Wide Committees, Provost’s Committees, Graduate School Committees, etc.—elections will be held at Sept 21 meeting. List of vacancies and committees will be sent out in advance of the meeting).

Four responsibilities of the GSA rep:

1. Attend general assembly meetings.
2. Hold Department Meeting Seb Bezerra (Medieval Studies): one of the most important things you can do is to advocate on behalf of the graduate students in your department. The budget is 100 dollars per GSA rep. After you hold the meetings, please report back to the assembly and submit a printed report. More information on this will be forthcoming
3. A third responsibility is to contribute to a current project. Alex will send out sheet with information on committees into which projects are grouped.
4. Engage with your constituents

Nick Vincent: brief update on summer steering: Alicia, Wendy, and Bryan (last year’s FHC chair) did a great job in compiling a lot of information on childcare, so please read the report, which shows how our advocacy is done with data collection and recommendations. We have also reviewed departmental meeting reports and identified new areas of need and graduate concern. Wendy (MD/PhD) reviewed housing data, which raised concerns on rising cost of housing in New Haven. Other accomplishments include the *Compass* and discussion with the implications of the NLRB ruling. We also discussed compiling a faculty conduct survey.

1. GSA Budget

Seb Bezerra: the budget is very similar to previous years, since we have not received a raise for a while. We have made some adjustments in summer steering – so the amount spent from summer steering is slightly less, but otherwise the budget is essentially the same. We will come out with an 80 dollar surplus. One thing to note is also that 60,000 dollars are devoted to Conference Travel Fund, which supports graduate student travelling to conferences for presentation of original research, a part of our work we are very proud of.

Vote by acclimation for approval. Budget was approved as stands.

1. NLRB and Student Unionization Discussion

Nick Vincent: a little bit of background first. NLRB recently ruled that graduate students are also employees under the NLRA in a case concerning graduate students at Columbia University. Wendy Xiao: this does not mean that the university must immediately start categorizing students as employees; instead, if graduate students vote for unionization, then the university has to categorize students as employees. Nick Vincent: Our current situation: GESO/Local 33 has petitioned for unionization in 10 departments. This is a micro-bargaining unit approach. GSA’s stance is that we do not have a stance on unionization, and that we advocate on behalf of all graduate students. Today, some of GSA’s officers have had the opportunity to meet with the leadership and discuss some of our concerns and questions.

David (English): what was the meeting about? Nick Vincent: we wanted to know GESO/local 33’s goals and their reasoning behind selecting 10 departments for unionization. Patrick (Physiology): one issue is that we wanted to figure out the status of GSA reps/members who belong to one of these ten departments. Labor law may not permit negotiating with any organization besides the union. Rachel Love: does this problematize student advocacy for all students or just ten departments? Union may be an obstacle to all graduate student advocacy. Wendy Xiao: GESO said that they would not be opposed to GESO members also being a part of GSA. There might be legal issues: it is a labor law concern not to discuss contract terms with anyone besides the union

Connor (History): Are we voting on a resolution? Nick Vincent: Not tonight- wanted to have discussion with the assembly before deciding on any stances we may take.

Fabian (Economics): would Local 33 bargain through departments individually or jointly? Wendy: jointly. Alexandru (visiting, non-rep): if GSA is considered in some way the management, then GSA cannot be part of the negotiation process as students/employees. Liz Salm (Neuroscience): we are not management. Joey (Astronomy): if 9 of 10 departments vote for unionization, will the one department voting against be part of the union? Seb: all teachers within departments voting for unionization will be part of the bargaining unit.

Laura (Music): did Local 33 say anything about the other departments not selected for unionization vote? My constituents are against having Local 33 as their representing union. Seb: another way of saying this is that GESO only wants to petition for departments where they know they will win. Alexandru (visiting, non-rep): GESO has had elections in the past at Yale and lost. They have spent 50,000 dollars on each vote. The situation now is that they want to win.

Alicia (Polisci): if local 33 represents these 10 departments, does the university work separately with the rest of the departments? For example, can university offer childcare to the rest of the graduate student body if Geso does not bargain for childcare? Wendy: no, this will be perceived as bribery/perceived labor law violation.

Jacob (economics): what happens with union dues? Seb: union dues will be determined by a percentage of the stipend and the percentage increase in stipend, so one will not get the full increase.

Chris (linguistics): The university may not be able to offer benefits to students in non-unionizing departments if perceived as bribery to vote no. But we also do not know a lot of the terms of GESO’s bargaining terms, so there is a lot of uncertainty that we simply do not know. Seb: the negotiation will be done by the steering and coordinating committees, which include students not from the ten departments that petitioned to vote. GESO leadership also responded that they do not know the answers to any legal questions. Patrick: Yale will likely argue to change the bargaining unit; right now, the bargaining unit includes only teachers from the ten departments, but NLRB will make the decision on the bargaining unit.

Melis (Polisci): does the union/local 33 have the obligation to present information on how the union will work *before* the election? Nick: no, the vote will simply be on whether you want local 33 to represent you in a union.

Paul (Chemistry): three questions: dues for students on NSF grants? Can students opt-out of the union in departments voting yes? What is the threshold for passing the vote? Seb: no research assistants are currently on the petition, but if they are on future petitions, they will also have to pay dues. Wendy: there is no opt-out clause, and they will have to secure a simple majority in the micro-bargaining units.

Alexandru (visiting, non-rep): GESO is not like a Columbia student union; GESO/Local 33 have been trying to unionize for twenty years. Is the unionization done for the interest of us as graduate students? There is a lot of outside interest (e.g., Yale’s Local 34 and 35, as well as UNITE HERE) that stands to benefit from the graduate student union. Will GESO/Local 33 actually represent students? Wendy: there are alliances being made between GESO/local 33 and political groups, but we are not sure if it is legally required for graduate unions to strike together with, e.g., cafeteria workers.

Sarah (Religious Studies): Yale’s graduate union is not the only one to have a parent union. Emilio: Is it easy to de-unionize? 10 years later, the entire student body will be entirely new, what happens if they do not want a union? Katie: the contract has a term and you just have to not renew that contract to be dissociated from the union. Wendy: I thought this was the case only because at NYU, the institution would not recognize the union again. Chris: based on labor law, the employees can just wait for the contract to expire. Patrick: at some point, the university can also offer evidence of students not supporting the union and call for a vote of confidence. Etienne (visiting, non-rep): from NLRB: employers can file petitions too.

Alicia: what is the most up to date timeline? Liz: the hearing is on Monday but could last several weeks. Nick: the hearing is open to the public (in Hartford). Toomas (management): how to go forward for GSA as an organization? Perhaps we could gather questions and forward them to GESO/Yale and post them on the website as a source of information.

Nick Vincent: GPSS is working on a website to be used as a resource for information. The administration also has a technical, long FAQ list, but obviously we want an information source that is not going to be perceived as biased. We are also planning for an open forum, with questions solicited in advance but also an opportunity for open discussion. We invited the GESO/Local 33 to be part of the panel, which will also include an opposition voice and GSA. We will revisit this issue soon and, as Connor (History) mentioned, we may have a resolution to be circulated soon.

Katie Oltman (Psychology): who would be the opposition on the panel? There is no formal opposition body right now, but we may not just want a student (e.g., from psychology that is anti-union).

Alex will circulate a sample resolution for anyone interested in submitting one for the September 21 meeting.

1. Elections
   1. Conference Travel Fellowship (CTF) Director

Patrick : CTF is a competitive fellowship program aiming to promote academic and professional development of students. We distribute 15,000 dollars in each cycle (four cycles per year). The overall time commitment is about 10-15 hours per cycle; sometimes there are complications that may take longer, but the time will depend on how much the director wants to reform the current application and scoring system. Nick Vincent: by virtue of being a CTF director, one would also be on the executive board, which adds about 1.5 hours of commitment once every other week to attend executive board meetings.

Nominations: Kevin Regan (Chemistry)

Kevin Regan voted (by acclimation) as CTF director.

Nick Vincent: during your tenure as a GSA rep, you should definitely participate in reading the CTF applications. It is a great way to contribute!

* 1. External and Standing Committee Elections

Steering Committee:

Nick Vincent: the steering committee holds biweekly meetings with the Dean, which is a great way to communicate with the administration. Steering will take place during the off week of general assembly meetings (usually one hour). Steering committee members are also automatically on executive board. The steering committee has distributional requirements: at least two reps in humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

SS Nominations: Katie Oltman (Psychology) and Alicia Steinmetz (Political Science)

Katie Oltman and Alicia Steinmetz elected as SS steering members. Voted in by acclimation.

Open Nominations: Joey Schmitt (Astronomy), Laura (Music), Elizabeth Salm (Neuroscience), Patrick Dunn (Physiology)

Joey Schmitt (Astronomy), Laura (Music), Elizabeth Salm (Neuroscience), Patrick Dunn (Physiology) elected as steering members. Voted in by acclimation.

Nick Vincent: if you have any issues that you want to bring up to the administration, one great way is to bring them to the Steering Committee.

Committee introductions:

Rachel Love (Classics): APD works with many university-wide committees (e.g., library). Our big activity this year is the incivility/misconduct survey (how graduate students feel they are being treated on campus).

Alicia: PR makes newsletter, ad, promotional materials, podcasts and play with ways of interacting with constituents.

Emilio (Neuroscience): T&C connects with the transit and security departments at Yale. We try to improve shuttle/bus systems and transportation.

Susan (Physics): F&C works on childcare, mental health (focus group), dental plans, etc.

Nick Vincent: we are trying to run the committees in a different way to promote participation in the committees – more of a project-based approach. Wendy: you have to join a standing committee!

1. Concerns from the floor

Nick Vincent: we worked on an informational card with GPSS introducing student government function and jurisdictions during the summer. Feel free to look at these cards, which contain some valuable information. These were handed out at new student orientation.

Laura (Music) and Consuelo (Political Science): we organize the Ask-a-Lawyer sessions, a very valuable community outreach program. We need volunteers! Lucy (American Studies) volunteers.

1. Adjournment

Alex will put a standing committee sign-up in the sign-in sheet for the next meeting.

Meeting ended at 8:03 PM