**GSA General Assembly Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday November 30, 2016**

**HGS 119, 6:30 PM**

Meeting started at 6:46PM

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes are approved.

1. Approval of Agenda

Agenda is approved.

1. Graduate School Alumni Association Introduction- Andrew Richter

Nicholas Vincent: Andrew will be here tonight. I had the opportunity to meet him as an *ex officio* member of the GSAA, one of whose responsibilities is to organize the Where Do I Go From Yale career event. Mary Ann, one of the two co-organizers of Where Do I Go From Yale this year, will be at our next meeting to solicit ideas.

Andrew Richter: the GSAA has been evolving over time to become a much more effective body. Unlike other alumni associations that just gather alumni together for wine and cheese receptions, we put our energy (in the last 3-4 years) more towards serving future alumni (graduate students). We organize the Where do I go from Yale, which aims to help the transition process from graduate life to career. We have been trying to gain credibility with the AYA and the graduate school leadership – we have been doing quite well on both fronts. Raul, a GSAA member, is now the first graduate chair of AYA, which is a big deal. So we have been getting more respect from the AYA, which has come to look at us (GSAA) as a more creative and ambitious alumni group. We have tried to make ourselves relevant and useful, and we have been making progress. We have a very cordial relationship with the Dean (Lynn Cooley), and I feel comfortable calling/getting in touch with her. My own personal feeling is that Dean Cooley has a genuine concern about the welfare of the graduate students. This relationship gets better with every year.

Andrew Richter: I actually really want to listen to your conversations, because we cannot serve our missions if we do not know about graduate students’ needs or hear about them first hand. It is appropriate and necessary for us to be updated – of course we can do it through your leadership, but we also want to hear from GSA reps first hand. I will try to make as many meetings as possible.

Katie Oltman: so you represent the graduate school alumni, are there alumni associations for professional schools? Andrew Richter: yes, the law school one is not very visible; the nursing school has one; architecture wants to get one, etc. Most professional schools are encouraged to have these alumni associations, but not all of the deans were particularly excited about getting them. The alumni associations are trying to do a better job, so this situation will improve.

Melis Laebens: how do you try to keep people around the world together? Andrew Richter: there are many alumni who really want to contribute. Right now, we have people from Norway/Nigeria, etc. on our board, and there are members from the West Coast who fly in twice a year to attend our meetings. There is a diversity of profession represented too – there are many academics, and many people who work in other professions. Laura Brown: in addition to Where Do I Go from Yale, what other stuff does GSAA do? Andrew Richter: one of the things we do is to be an encouraging lobby group with the Dean of the graduate school. For example, we have voiced our concerns about the HGS news, and we have asked what we could do about the unionization issue. Also, many city clubs (e.g., Yale Club of NYC) invite graduate members to events, but graduate students have the conception that these events are more intended for undergraduate alums. So we have been collaborating with these clubs to co-sponsor events, so that graduate students and graduate alumni feel comfortable to participate in them.

Emilio Salazar: how well represented are the humanities/social sciences compared to for example sciences? Andrew Richter: I served on the nominations committee that looks at applications. We generally divide applications into humanities/social sciences/natural sciences and do take into account representation issues of disciplines and divisions. We also would like to make the Where Do I Go from Yale event more appealing to humanists. GSA rep: what other issues in addition to unionization have you worked on? Andrew Richter: we have stayed updated on child care, for example, though we have not truly gone to battle on this yet. And this is part of the reason I am here tonight: because we do not want to go battle the administration unless we know that this is really what the graduate students want. Wendy Xiao: I would add to that list of concerns the issue of housing prices, which have been rising in New Haven astronomically, though our stipends have not been. Andrew Richter: great – we are happy to lend a supportive voice when these issues are brought up.

Michael Cohen: do you represent the professional school PhD students? Andrew Richter: like a law PhD student? We have very fluid boundaries. Toomas Laarits: all PhD students are housed in the graduate school, so you might have more members than you thought! GSA rep: has the GSA given reports to GSAA? Nicholas Vincent: not formal written reports, but during the GSAA meetings, I have been giving some updates on childcare, mental health, etc. Marius Constatin: mentoring programs? Andrew Richter: maybe – in my experience, mentoring programs are very difficult to build. Matching people up creates consistent expectations from both sides: it’s not easy. Careers and Life at Yale is very focused on it, and I have seen them asking GSAA board members to be mentors, without mentioning whether the mentors are supposed to be mentoring graduate students – they want to create as flexible a program as possible.

1. Resolution F16-004: Revision to the by-laws regarding the Elections Committee

Resolution F16-004 passed (50 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain).

1. Election: McDougal Center Planning Committee (one representative)

Nicholas Vincent: as all of you are probably aware, this building will cease to be HGS as we know it in a few years. McDougal Center is currently housed here but will move to an interim location for about 3-5 years (the place the McDougal Center might go permanently is a place that might be vacated with the reshuffling of humanities departments). This is a serious task (there will be an architect), and we get to send one GSA rep to the committee to work with the architect to see what graduate students need from this graduate center. This position is open to everyone, and construction will begin next summer.

Paul Lemler: what is the time commitment like? Nicholas Vincent: this information has not been discussed yet, but I think the committee meetings will probably meet a few times in the spring. Wendy Xiao: we asked for this committee and passed a resolution two years ago to get GSA reps on this committee. Rachel Love: is this space also serving as an HGS replacement? Nicholas Vincent: not necessarily: the McDougal Center will be there, with the expectation that GSA will use their space for meetings. Emilio Salazar: will we get reports about the work of this committee? Andrew Vielkind: yes, there will be confidential information, but there are also areas in which these committees want student feedback.

Andrew Vielkind is elected to the McDougal Committee.

1. Semester Committee Reports
   1. Public Relations- Alicia Steinmetz

Alicia Steinmetz: for the first item, I will have Sarah talk about the website. Fabian will then talk about the involvement project: why some departments are very involved and others not so much. Sarah Malkowski: please look at our new website and let me know what suggestions you have. I recently added drop down menus. Fabian Schrey: one proposed project is to send out a guide on being a good GSA rep, and we want to build up a succession of people interested in GSAs. We will have to talk about Jenn about this, but we are thinking about using left over departmental meeting budget to host meetings to introduce masters students to the GSA or some other event for students who do not have representation in GSA. We also want to talk to the DGSs about the information the departments need to know about the GSA.

Katie Oltman: I want to challenge that: not everyone wants their advisors to know that he/she is involved in GSA because not all advisors want their students involved with GSA. Fabian Schrey: we can certainly send an email to GSA people about this to see if people are okay. Seb Bezerra: why can’t we just ask GSA reps to send an email to their department/their DGS? Fabian Schrey: it might be more formal to send the emails from GSA as a single group.

Alicia Steinmetz: we are also re-launching common grounds (if anything, this would be a good public outreach program). We want to do a short video advert (starting with something like “Are you injured in a car accident?”/ “Are you having hard times finding common grounds with your advisor?” and ending with something like “find common grounds with common grounds.”). We have a volunteer to play a character in the video advert too. If anyone wants to be involved, please let me know! Toomas Laarits: so much work is going to be done for this, so maybe we should appropriate more money for this? Nicholas Vincent and Alicia Steinmetz: production costs will be zero for this advertising. Jenn Sun: the video will also be used for future advertisements too. Paul Lemler: are you tracking success? Jenn Sun: ultimately, how many people use this program will be a measure of the project’s success. Nicholas Vincent: can we see it when done? Alicia Steinmetz: yes!

Alicia Steinmetz: one of the main projects this year is the podcast, which we have named GradCast – not necessarily the best name, but much better than GSA Podcast. We want to launch this in spring, and Laura will create the music. Yale is not responsible for the content as a voice for Yale. Equipment is also figured out. Ben Rushdetyn: have you obtained Yale approval for this? Nicholas Vincent: we have come up with a license and terms of distribution with the General Counsel’s Office as well.

Nicholas Vincent: what are the other five podcasts in addition to the Cushing Center? Alicia Steinmetz: Music scene at Yale, two episodes on unionization (history and looking forward; we want to collaborate with GESO but we will see if they want to collaborate with us), one on oSTEM (encouraging LGBTQ individuals to be involved in the sciences; they are launching their own podcasts as well in the spring), one on endowment (we are still waiting for an interview with someone in your Provost’s Office).

Nicholas Vincent played part of the Cushing Center GradCast episode.

Rachel Love: where will the podcasts be released? Alicia Steinmetz: if we have enough bandwidth, we can host them on the GSA website, and then the podcasts can be downloaded from your mobile device. We can also release them on iTunes University.

Alicia Steinmetz: I am not sure what to put on the newsletter. Are we trying to give a lot of information? Are we trying to give added value? Nicholas Vincent: this year, news/advertisement items that used to pop up have not, partly because much focus has been on unionization. For example, another thing we used to advertise, Dine with the Dean, an event that used to be organized by us, is no longer in our hands. Emilio Salazar: we could also have a “what’s up with us” page on our website (e.g., on unionization vote). Alicia Steinmetz: do you think committee chairs should send the items to PR? Emilio Salazar: I also want something more digestible than just the minutes. Pratima Gopalakrishnan: I think dividing it up by committees would make sense (e.g., what projects transit and security committee is working on, etc.) and be helpful. Nicholas Vincent: another challenge with the newsletter is that there is sometimes a short timespan between the advertisement request and the event date. Rachel Love: we have also talked about what to put on the newsletter. Nicholas Vincent: yes – it should be GSA-sponsored or open to all graduate students.

Nicholas Vincent: another project for PR would be the new Yale Health data (better wait times, etc.) that Paul Genecin has given the GSA.

* 1. Academics and Professional Development- Rachel Love

Rachel Love: APD has two main projects. First: Liz and Steven are working on a survey about mentorship (which started as a focus group), which will provide important information about what a proper mentor/mentee relationship should look like in graduate school. Second, we want to gather some information about stipends in different departments and if/how they can be augmented (anywhere from 5-10k difference, as far as I know), and break them down by demographic categories. Katie Oltman: to get data about how there are more white males in the sciences and make more? Rachel Love: it would be a broader data-gathering process (another thing we could see is if humanists make less and most humanists are women; also, we do not want a subset of students be priced out of certain housing options). Toomas Laarits: can we gather this data from GSA reps? Rachel Love: it would be good to get this from an official source, i.e., the administration. Nicholas Vincent: also, we do not have GSA reps in every department. Fabian Schrey: do you want the data about supplemental income gathered by department meetings? Rachel Love: right now, we want to go through the Dean’s office.

Rachel Love: another project is a kind of orientation/something handy about non-academic resources available to undergraduates for graduate teachers. We also want to work on language teaching, which is very burdensome for graduate teachers (4-5 sessions a week). So coupled with the fact of Yale College expansion, we want to see people’s experience teaching these difficult classes and what can be done about them. Katie Oltman: a friend of mine is in French Literature and her teaching assignment is so heavy that she could not work on her dissertation.

1. Concerns from the Floor

Nicholas Vincent: Alex included the transit and security survey in the email containing this week’s agenda: please distribute it to your departments. Please also sign-in and try to make the 12/14 meeting: we have two speakers. I am also trying to get Kim Golf-Crews here for January on a bias project.

1. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:08PM.