**GSA General Assembly Meeting**

March 9th, 2016

Meeting began at 6:45 PM

1. Guest Speaker: Associate Dean Michelle Nearon, Director of the Office for Graduate Student Development and Diversity
   1. The Office for Graduate Student Development and Diversity (OGSDD) was renamed from the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO). There are 12 graduate students working as fellows on seminars, panels, workshops.
   2. The Boucher Seminars—Edward Alexander Boucher who was the first African American to get a PhD in North America, and the sixth person of any race or ethnicity to get a PhD in the Western Hemisphere. 1874 Bachelors from Yale, 1876 PhD from Yale.
   3. The office recruits across the US and Puerto Rico, offers personal advising, and peer-to-peer advising, Diversity fellows have office hours that are in HGS 128. Monday to Thursday 10 AM- 4 PM and Friday 10 AM to 2 PM.
   4. Programs overseen by the office
      1. There exists a summer undergraduate research fellowship (SURF) for students across the US
      2. Two post baccalaureate- programs—one for biological sciences; one to cover other divisions (humanities, social sciences, physical sciences). The first cohort of the latter program will come this July. NOTE: office will be on the lookout for a graduate student coordinator for the SURF program, as well as a graduate student coordinator for the emerging scholars program (the one that is new this summer.
      3. Four-tiered mentoring program: first tier: graduate students mentor undergraduate students; second tier: senior graduate students mentor junior PhD students; third tier: post-docs mentor senior graduate students; fourth tier: junior faculty mentor post-docs.
   5. OGSDD: Historical origins of higher education, classroom dynamics, and strategies to create inclusive and effective learning environments
      1. Historical origins of higher education: Dean Nearon discussed the history of education and how it started as something to educate wealthy white males to eventually becoming what it is today: something that exists to transmit knowledge, discover new knowledge, to educate a citizenry for participation in an increasingly global society, and to address and correct intentional and unintentional inequities in society.
      2. Classroom dynamics: campus communities can be divided into classroom and learning, and the learning can be divided into faculty-student interactions and student-peer interactions. What are some reasons that students do not participate in classroom settings? Unprepared, shy, frustrated with domineering peers, experience uncomfortable feelings about the topic, sleep deprivation. If you don’t participate in the classroom setting, it affects the intellectual capacity to learn. Other issues are social status, gender, race, age, social class.
      3. Role relationships: interaction patterns between the instructor and students and among student peers. Other influences: bias, implicit bias, stereotypes, contingencies, identity contingencies.
   6. Strategies to create inclusive and effective learning environments
      1. New seminars and panel discussions: religious oppression (April 20), followed by sessions on racism, classism, ableism, and transgender oppression. In these seminars, context, case studies, and the next steps will be discussed. Goal is to create a campus community that is welcoming and safe. And the learning environments are such that everyone has the ability to learn.
   7. Questions
      1. Bryan (FES): Is the post-baccalaureate program open to everyone or just under represented minorities (URMs)?
         1. Not limited, but traditionally URMs.
      2. Bryan (FES): Is the Four-tiered mentoring program open to everyone?
         1. Yes. Post-baccalaureate is for prospective student, but URM can be based on field. URM in nursing? Male students. URM in foreign languages? American students.
      3. Sol (Neuro): To what extent does OGSDD do orientation events? For example, some students who really should/ need to might not come out for these events—it is a self selecting group.
         1. There is the possibility of online module for everyone to take similar to a sexual assault module that students have to take before registering for the next semester of classes. This is something that is desperately needed. Would like to see more small group conversations about tough issues and topics that do not just include people who are affected by these situations and experiences.
      4. Christopher (Linguistics): Likes the small group format, but it might be a good idea to break up into sessions so it is not a complete bombardment of information.
         1. Might eventually move to having more sessions that work in tandem with other offices on related seminars to keep the conversation going.
      5. Janna (Religious Studies): Presentation at the Divinity School specifically for teaching fellows and diversity was fantastic. Has there been any discussion about standardizing this? How many professional schools have this?
         1. No mandatory training- this is something to think about. The Divinity School session was an experiment to see how it worked.
      6. Janna (Religious Studies): Potential for tailoring to needs of particular professional school worked very well.
         1. Michelle said this was more of a lecture style, but she wants to add in more scenarios in in the future. She used more scenarios in the sciences training, and she felt like it worked really well. There needs to be a way to have more people involved so Michelle is not the only one running around to all of the schools to hold these sessions. There were also faculty sessions. This is not an issue just for graduate students—faculty are in front of students, too!
      7. Bryan (FES): This is all happening at the same time we are trying to increase the diversity of the faculty. People complain about not being able to find an advisor who is the same background, sexual orientation, etc. So what is happening at the institutional level to help people not care about color, orientation, nationality, etc. in an advisor?
         1. This is correct. If there’s one professional development session that’s not mandatory, there will be faculty who need to be there who will not be there. There needs to be a way to make the awareness and experience continual, and there are ongoing conversations about how to do this effectively. Ideas?
      8. Bryan (FES): Make it mandatory!
      9. Katie (Psychology): Forcing people to take place in diversity initiatives does not work. Studies have shown that people’s prejudices increase.
      10. Liz: And companies that implemented diversity initiatives have not worked.
      11. Michelle: This needs to happen at the departmental level. If a faculty in a department takes care of it, other faculty might be more likely to attend and to take it seriously. It could be wrapped up with something else that might be mandatory. Everyone should have multiple mentors. T helps to have someone who can relate to our experiences, but until we diversity the faculty, it is going to be difficult. Faculty advisors are not always good mentors.
      12. Sol (Neuro): It has come to her attention that some issues have to do with faculty retention and tenure. Are there initiatives of senior faculty mentoring junior faculty members? What about a fifth tier of mentoring?
          1. There is more work to do, and this is a great idea. Initiatives in Arts and Sciences are ongoing to work for this. It is not just a diversity initiative, but for mentoring in general
      13. Wendy (MD/PhD): What about minority students who are not underrepresented? For example, when professors get emails from students with Asian names, they are much less likely to answer. What are some things that are being done to help these students?
          1. Workshops are intended for everyone, and they’re not just tailored to a small segment, so these students can still attend the workshops and benefit from what is being discussed.
      14. Michelle is trying to collect actual scenarios, especially microaggressions. She will eliminate any identifying information before using the scenario. Looking for more subtle things that take place and affect classroom dynamics and the ability to contribute to the community. Send information so that she can use this to help faculty and also with student peers. Liz will send out a form for students to submit anonymously. Michelle is located at Warner House and accepts walk-ins. She travels a lot from September to December, but is around for the majority of the remainder of the year.
2. Discrimination and Harassment Resources Focus Group
   1. Secretary and Vice President Kim Goff-Crews, Valarie Stanley, Director of the Office for Diversity and Equal Opportunity, and Associate Dean Michelle Nearon joined us for this discussion.
   2. Kim: Discussion of the website that was sent out regarding formal processes that lead to any kind of grievance process that leads to disciplinary action. What’s the next iteration of this? Here to solicit some information from the GSA.
   3. Student discrimination and harassment reporting and response website: many people could not find the relevant information they needed.
   4. On the website, there are areas on guidance and support, where there are ways to deal with discrimination in a large number of areas; policies and laws, which includes everything policy-based and legal listed that students might need; and FAQs.
   5. Kim Goff-Crews provided an excellent chart to help people understand formal complaint options for student complaints of discrimination and harassment.
   6. Note: If there is a problem with the faculty in another school, you should start with that school’s dean.
   7. Are there too many processes? The UWC deals with anything regarding sexual misconduct. The President’s Procedure focuses just on discrimination and harassment that focuses on race and ethnicity.
   8. The website is very text heavy—is there something we could do to make it more accessible?
   9. Valarie oversees lots of the informal processes: Is the terminology ok? Formal vs. informal? It is called “informal” but it really is not an informal process. Should it be called a grievance vs. a complaint instead of formal vs. informal?
   10. Procedure: someone goes to the Office of Equal Opportunity (Valarie). If the student does not know what to do and wants to get some feedback on an issue, it is a good idea to make an appointment with this office and get information on what your options are. The student can learn about the Dean’s Procedure, the Provost’s Procedure, the President’s Procedure, or filing an informal complaint with the Office of Equal Opportunity.
       1. For the Dean’s/ Provost’s/ President’s Procedures, there is a hearing that could result in disciplinary procedure and there is a 45 day statute of limitations. In the informal procedure, there There is no committee, there are no forms, and there are no deadlines (i.e. no statute of limitations).
       2. Decide to file a compliant? An investigation is conducted and it is kept as confidential as possible. A finding will result from the investigation. Maybe there is mediation, maybe no real investigation. For a student to be disciplined, it has to go through the formal process. Need mediation between another student and you do not want punishment for the other student, OR if it is a faculty or staff member, the informal procedure can be the way to proceed.
       3. Informal implies that there is mediation—there can still be a formal investigation. There might be some recommendations for discipline at the end of the process. This process deals with all kinds of discrimination—not just ethnic—it could be religious, disability, sexual orientation, etc.
       4. Questions?
          1. Emilio (Neuro): If a student want to file a complaint and is deciding which pathway to take—how does s/he decide to go formal or informal?
             1. Valarie’s office can help with this! Valarie would talk the student through the processes to help understand the pros and cons of each, but ultimately it is the complainant’s decision.
          2. Bryan (FES): In professional schools, starting this last February, there have been the AAU school-specific events. What is the Office of Equal Opportunity doing in terms of making sure that the schools are following certain steps, overseeing progress in the future, etc.
             1. This is not coming through the office of Equal Opportunity. This is going through the Provost’s Office and Stephanie Spangler, who is the overarching Title IX Coordinator for the university. She is working on the next steps for this. Lots of deans are hiring university staff to help in their specific school. Stephanie Spangler is working with each dean individually.
             2. Michelle mentioned that there will be training sessions within the graduate school for DGSs, but she is unsure whether it will be mandatory.
          3. Kim: The president has made it mandatory for anyone with the Dean title, all Vice Presidents, etc. to have mandatory diversity training with a faculty member from Harvard.
          4. Sol (Neuro): Some people might feel self-conscious coming to the office. Has the office considered presenting this information in a flowchart way to help students navigate what might be the best procedure for them?
             1. Valarie: What is on the website is what currently exists. This has been Phase 1. Phase 2 starts on Friday (at least the meetings for Phase 2). They got Phase 1 out because students just did not know what was available, so this is what is currently available in one place. But the flowchart is a great suggestion for the future.
          5. Janna (Religious Studies):Would the office also be a place to bring a complaint about a professor who made an aggressive and inappropriate comment? But something that is not part of the discrimination listed on the website?
             1. Valarie: Students can have the conversation with the office and see whether it is something to take care of
          6. Janna (Religious Studies): Is there somewhere else to take care of something like this?
             1. Can always go to the chair of the department or Michelle’s office.
          7. Sarah (MB&B): What about post-docs? Are they employee staff?
             1. Postdoctoral fellows are considered trainees, whereas postdoctoral associates are not as much trainees, but this makes most of them fall into the student bucket.
          8. Emilio (Neuro): What about an online submission for complaints on the website? Could get more complaints this way and would have to figure out how to sort them, but if the office is not already overflowing with complaints, it might be a good way to get them in.
             1. Kim: That’s a great point. What about an electronic reporting system?
          9. Katie (Psychology): Timeline question—Students might want to know what they are getting into when addressing this. Is it going to be a year of my life? How can we get students information about this?
             1. Valarie: Can’t give a blanket statement because each case is independent, but there has never been a complaint that went on for a year in her office. Some have gone on for several months because of how many people end up being involved, how accessible they are (for example, is someone on field work and inaccessible?, etc.) They try to take care of issues as quickly as possible, but the office only has two people in it, so if more complaints come in, there will need to be more staffing.
          10. Katie (Psychology): Do formal procedures take more time since they involve a tribunal?
              1. Kim: They try to get all issues settled within a semester because people want a resolution and they move around a lot. It might go a bit longer if there is a gap wth the summer or something.
          11. Christopher (Linguistics): Surprised to see that there are so many cases in the sexual assault reports that are sent to us where the respondents are found to be “not guilty” or that no penalty was imposed. Why is it that those outcomes are so common? Is it false reporting?
              1. Valarie: She is only involved in Title IX cases and not cases regarding the UWC or the police— cannot speak to these. Sometimes there is just not enough evidence- these cases use a preponderance of the evidence. One case in all of her years here has really had a false report, but that’s it. Usually something has occurred, but the other person might say it was not his/ her intention. With sexual misconduct and harassment, there are often just two people and no one to call on as a witness. The office feels awful when it happens because the office is NOT saying “I don’t believe you,” it’s just that there is not the evidence to support the allegation. Sometimes students are just looking for mediation or conversation, so they are not even looking for punishment. Oftentimes, people are disciplined, terminated, transferred, etc., however.
              2. Kim: Are you asking to explain why there are fewer findings?
              3. Christopher: “Informal” sounds very sketchy. And seeing the results, people might not want to bring their grievances forward. People who are unaware of the procedures might think that the preponderance of the evidence sounds sketchy, that people can be convicted by faux courts is strange, could be causing issues.
              4. Kim: Look at hypotheticals to see how things happen? Do these help at all?
              5. Christopher: They did help, but they were buried and not easily accessible at all.
          12. What is a benefit to go to the Office of Equal Opportunity vs. the police?
              1. To go to the police, it has to be a criminal act. Could go to the police, but if it there was no criminal act or direct threat, then the police cannot do anything. So that’s one major reason. If someone describes something to Valarie that is a criminal threat, she recommends they go to the police and Valarie can help navigate this and go with the person to the police, coordinate for the police to come to them, etc.
          13. Kim: Lots of students don’t want anything to happen in terms of punishment- they just want a conversation. It is surprising the number of students who are looking for this. If the response is too aggressive, people might not want to go to the offices about it.
          14. Suggestion from the assembly: It might be helpful to normalize the reported data to students who want something reported? Because now it just looks like nothing happens. Christopher suggested finding a better way to communicate this!
       5. Kim: Is there anything else we should be doing informally or formally regarding race, ethnicity, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct? She feels like the university is doing well in the sexual harassment and sexual misconduct areas in terms of taking action, but not as great in other categories—there is a long ways to go.
       6. Valarie: Do we have too many procedures? Do we need three? Should there be two, or even just one?
       7. Emilio (Neuro): Having gotten the chart from Kim, the procedures seem oddly named: Dean’s Procedure/ President’s Procedure, for example. Should be “discrimination procedure, “misconduct procedure,” etc.
       8. Sol (Neuro): There’s also the implicit idea built into it that might make it a bit intimidating for students who want to make use of the processes/ procedures.
       9. Katie (Psychology): Emphasizing that a procedure exists is a good idea. Lots of students just do not know about them.
          1. Kim: We will be coming up with better ways of publicizing the information.
       10. Any other questions? Send a note or email. Liz will also send out a form to provide additional information to Kim and Valarie.
3. Approval of Minutes
   1. No corrections, additions, or objections. Minutes stand as written.
4. Approval of Agenda
   1. No corrections, additions, or objections. Agenda stands as written.
5. Department Meeting Reports
   1. Linguistics – Christopher Geissler
      1. Tabled to next meeting due to time.
6. Concerns from the Floor

The next General Assembly Meeting will take place on Wednesday March 30 after spring break.

1. Adjournment
   1. Motion to adjourn
   2. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

**Parliamentary Procedure Basics Reviewed**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Purpose** | **To Enact Motion** |
| Main Motion  “I move that…” | To take action on behalf of the body | Second needed. Debatable. Requires majority vote. |

**Privileged Motions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Purpose** | **To Enact Motion** |
| Call for orders of the Day  Chair asks if there are any objections to the agenda. | Asks Assembly to stick to the agenda | Not debatable; approved unless there is an objection, requires 1/3 to sustain. |
| Adjourn  “I move to adjourn” | End of meeting | Second needed. Not debatable. Not amendable. Meeting closes unless there is an objection, otherwise immediately voted upon and requires majority vote. |

**Subsidiary Motions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Purpose** | **To Enact Motion** |
| Table Current Business  “I move to table the current business…” – Indefinitely or a set amount of time. | To lay one matter aside temporarily so that a more urgent matter can be considered. | Second needed. Not debatable. Not amendable. Requires majority vote. |
| Call the Question  “I move the previous question” “I call the question” | Closes debate and forces vote. | Second needed. Not debatable. Not amendable. Requires 2/3 vote. |
| Motion to Limit or Extend Debate  “I move that debate be limited to (or end at)…” | Limits or extends debate. | Second needed. Not debatable. Not amendable. Requires 2/3 vote. |
| Motion to refer  “I move that we refer the question of…to…(name of group) for…(further study) | Another group considers the motion and may change or modify the motion and then present it to the assembly. | Second needed. Debatable. Amendable. Requires majority vote. |
| Amendments  “I move to amend the motion by…” | Used to change a motion. Change must be related to the subject of the motion. | Second needed. Debatable. Amendable. Requires majority vote. |

**Incidental Motions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Purpose** | **To Enact Motion** |
| Point of order  “Point of order” | A question about the process or a particular motion. Typically to call attention to a mistake in parliamentary procedure or a question of Scope based on the Charter and Bylaws. | The member addresses the Chair. She/he need not be recognized before speaking, She/he may interrupt a speaker who has the floor. Automatic if granted by the Chair. No second needed. Not debatable. Not amendable. No vote. |
| Point of information  “Point of information” | To ask about the particular motion | Automatic |
| Parliamentary Inquiry  “Parliamentary Inquiry” | To ask about the particular process | Automatic |