**GSA General Assembly Meeting Agenda**

**Wednesday March 8, 2017**

**HGS 119, 6:30 PM**

Start of meeting: 6:41 PM

1. Approval of Minutes
   1. Minutes are approved.
2. Approval of Agenda
   1. Agenda is approved.
3. Comment on Faculty Mentor Award Committee conflicts of interest

Nick Vincent: there was some concern last week about mentor award committee conflicts of interest. I followed up with Dean Sleight, who said that the vote of the committee is structured in a way that an individual vote should not sway the outcome. Laura Brown: yes, it is usually a consensus who the top candidates are (they usually receive many letters of nomination/support), and it is difficult for someone to come out in support of a candidate not obviously among the best. Liz Salm: there was one person I know from being on the committee last year.

1. Election: Academic and Professional Development (APD) Chair

Nick Vincent: one person has expressed interest in replacing Rachel Love as APD chair. The APD chair will also attend executive board in addition to running APD.

Nomination: Seb Bezerra

Seb Bezerra is elected as APD chair.

1. Departmental meeting reports
   1. Religious Studies

Pratima Gopalakrishnan: We started with an introduction of GSA and the project-based approach in the standing committees. Sarah Zager: people want to know who is on the Yale Health Advisory Committee. People also want to know more about bystander training from the Title IX office. Another concern is that some people felt that the GSA emails were a little anti-union and that the town hall did not really make clear the distinction between GSA’s relationship to the administration and Local 33’s relationship to the administration. Pratima Gopalakrishnan: people also want consistent signage for Yale shuttles.

* 1. Economics

Fabian Schrey: 120 students in the department; attendance is one to three people. We will have another meeting. Economics is wondering if the department can make accessible a document on faculty diversity.

* 1. Chemistry

Paul Lemler: we have 160 in the department. We held two events with 30-40 attendance. About 70% of survey responses mentioned that the department faculty is not diverse. People also want the conference travel fund to be rectified. Many clueless people did not know the Schwarzman Center; those who knew wanted food and beverage service. There was a desire for stronger faculty training for Title IX support. Health care plan: wait time is too long, and scheduling mental health appointments is hard for people working in labs. People also want better dental and later shuttles from science hill. Emilio Salazar: do people know that they can take the blue line to downtown from the parking lot. Liz Salm and Jenn Sun: you have to walk a lot to get there.

* 1. Geology & Geophysics

Anwar Mohiuddin:We have 52 people, and 13 showed up. Not many people knew the center for teaching and learning. For health care: long wait times, even for the first appointment. People want a multi-purpose room (e.g., with yoga mats) on science hill. PWG classes also seem expensive to students, who have been going to East Rock for alternative options. People also want information related to signing of contracts. Wendy Xiao: this document is on the GSA website. Fabian Schrey: in Watson, there are two multi-purpose rooms. There are also classrooms that people can reserve. This might change if Watson is repurposed. Yana: people encounter aggressive drivers who would not stop when requested; they are also interested in CT Transit. People think that an Uber-style app would be great (they have to wait in the cold for a long time even when they are told that the shuttle is near). People are concerned about lack of enforcement of traffic rules in downtown (especially bikers going in the wrong direction on one way streets). East Rock is not well-lit and people have been mugged. People also are not well aware of lab safety resources. The Compass link might be broken on the GSA website. Susan Pratt: which areas of the health care center are people concern with for long wait time? Anwar: Mental health care; one person within the last year had to wait for six months. Nick Vincent: and this is not about scheduling conflicts (i.e., she was offered an appointment but could not take it)? Anwar: No. Michael Giannetto: the eye department is sensitive to emergencies. Emilio Salazar: there has been a promise that the Uber-style app would come out in the next few months since December 2015. It is on the rider app but they are not doing anything with it yet. Nick Vincent: for the sexual harassment training, you can contact Stephanie Spangler. Liz Salm: the peer advocate program is done in a great way in the medical school (but may not work as well in a graduate school context). Nick Vincent: Stephanie Spangler had very positive experience and said that we as a body have a lot of insights.

1. Using extra departmental meeting money

Fabian Schrey: some departments do not have active representatives, and if there is money left over, we could use it to get a few people to go into these non-represented departments and hold a GSA meeting. The aim is to see why these departments are not represented and to tell them about GSA. Many of these programs are Masters programs where people do not really know about the GSA. Kevin Regan: does the money roll over? Jenn Sun: No, we usually try to spend it on other stuff like swag. We have about 4000 dollars left, both because of vacancies and because some departments have not had a meeting. Seb Bezerra: my department had a meeting, which the department paid for. Jenn Sun: the deadline for using this money is the end of this month, at which time Fabian will look into holding additional department meetings. We are trying to get people to hold these meetings. We also probably will not use all the money. Consuelo Amat-Matus: maybe hold a big meeting for everyone not represented? Chris Geissler: I think this is a great idea because this is putting money to its originally intended use. Can we roll the money into CTF fund? Jenn Sun: those are two completely separate accounts. Nick Vincent: a lot of our peer institution student governments can have this money rolled over, so I want to find out why we cannot do that. Wendy Xiao: there is supposed to be a GSA reunion party in the fall, and it would be great to use this money to get GSA members to come attend this. We have not set a date yet. Michael Giannetto: we could make a welcome packet for new GSA reps. Nick Vincent: we need to do a better job advertising the new rep packet, because it already exists. Melis Laebens: this is a good idea; we could also have a social event? Wendy Xiao: there is an event in October. Marius Constantin: there is also an event in May. Patrick Dunn: more social events? Sarah Malkowski: I would support using that fund to social activities. Wendy Xiao: we have a separate budget item for that as well. Representative: it would be great to have these functions help the masters reps too who may not have as much institutional support.

1. GSA size and representation discussion

Wendy Xiao presented the powerpoint slides (produced by Stephen Albright). Wendy Xiao: Right now, half of the spots go to scientists, quarter to humanists, and quarter to social scientists. If we increase the number of students per rep, the ratio of reps in each division would stay pretty much the same. Melis Laebens: does this assume that departments would have the same vacancy rates? Chris Geissler: is there is a cap on max reps per department? Wendy: no, there is no current cap. The second slide shows that the same ratio across divisions would be maintained (2:1:1 for S:SS:H). Chemistry, FES, Geology, Music, Political Science, MCDB, Sociology, and Religious studies would be affected. Fabian Schrey: if you decrease the reps, then there might be more (percentage-wise) departments not represented. E.g., if the one (as opposed to two) rep is not active. Wendy Xiao: not if we actually enforce the attendance policy and kick out reps who do not attend GSA meetings and make sure new active reps are elected. The next slide shows the relative voting power of departments (the largest being African Studies and Medieval Studies, 6.9; and the smallest being Engineering, 0.55). The largest factor affecting this is actually whether the spots are filled.

Wendy Xiao: the downsizing would help administrative issues (making name cards, keeping track of attendance, getting food, food costs, etc.). Also, as GSAS grows, we would have more reps. So the downsizing has to be done at some point. Nick Vincent: we would still have 92 spots if we downsize. Wendy Xiao: and the additional spots in departments affected can be 1) kept for the next cycle (next year) or 2) indefinitely, as long as the reps are active. So if your department has 4 spots now but will have 3 in the new representation scheme, you can still have 4 newly elected spots as long as your department fills the 4 spots and the 4 reps actually attend the meetings. Liz Salm: I would also suggest starting the grandfathering policy after the fall, not the spring election, because then first-year students will have an opportunity to participate. Lily Zeng: does this take into account the dynamic nature of interest in GSA? For example, if a department has two reps and then more students become interested. Nick Vincent: this speaks to Liz’s point about deferring the policy to start after fall elections to give students more opportunity to participate. David Deleon: two concerns: 1) this grandfathering policy favors more active departments. 2) Is this a perception problem (where we are worried about not filling spots) or an actual problem? Nick Vincent: it is both. The perception problem is smaller. Wendy Xiao: so, for example, we do not have enough space in this room or food for 119 students. Paul Lemler: has this always been the case with vacancies, etc.? Liz Salm: yes, since four years ago when I joined the GSA. Toomas Laarits: I do not see the problem, and I would in fact make a stronger proposal, possibly suggesting one rep per department. We do not vote on division lines anyway. Seb Bezerra: humanists often feel powerfully underrepresented in the administration, and there are many issues that affect humanists a lot more than scientists (e.g., library and teaching). Connor Williams: Are we still doing the at-large spots? Jenn Sun: no. Connor Williams: the slides make a rational argument, but we are talking in hypotheticals, and representation is very fluid. It wouldn’t be good to lose spots. I suggest we strike the 5th whereas clause about administrative work. Also, there are fluctuations in interest from year to year—for example, I lost in a three-way race last year, so it might not be the best idea to cut down the number of available spots—some think representative governments should be large and unwieldy/ messy. Wendy Xiao: it is not that administrative work is a punishment. It is just that if we do not have superfluous, unproductive administrative work, then we will have more time to work on productive stuff for the GSA. We can definitely amend the resolution as well. Chris Geissler: 1) because the grandfathered slots are intended to respect active GSA reps, perhaps those slots can stay for two years or the average amount of tenure of GSA reps (but not indefinitely); 2) there is another option to have divisional representation as well (like GPSS, though I do not prefer that because I likely will not know my divisional reps). Melis Laebens: could we just target departments that are under-represented? Wendy Xiao: yes, we have talked about being more creative with PR and reaching out for particular departments (e.g., like what Fabian is doing), but even with downsized assembly of 92 spots, if the vacancy pattern holds, we will still have 20-30 unfilled spots. Ben Scruton: so this does not affect departments with fewer than 40 students? Wendy Xiao: yes. Paul Lemler: so this is mainly about administrative burden, but why would downsizing make GSA work better? Wendy Xiao: there are several ways to make GSA work better: downsizing, getting more people involved, enforcing the attendance policy, and especially not wasting spots. We just had 18 people violating the attendance policy, and 13 did not even care enough to respond. Melis Laebens: so this would change the absolute number of non-active reps not the percentage? Nick Vincent: not really, we do not know how this will really work out. Representative: there is a problem with vacant spots, and that is a waste of administrative time, but that is not how to deal with this – you could have more support staff (under secretary of attendance).

Nick: is there overall support for this kind of measure being taken place? (did not appear to be). Will revisit the issue in future meetings, including the opposite side of the same coin, which is trying to get the empty spots filled.

1. Concerns from the floor
   1. No concerns from the floor.
2. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:08PM