**GSA General Assembly Meeting Agenda**

**Wednesday October 5, 2016**

**HGS 119, 6:30 PM**

Meeting started at 6:51PM

1. Approval of Minutes

Nick Vincent (Microbiology): every rep should have a voting card. David Yaffe-Bellany from the YDN is present at the meeting, but he will not quote you without your permission.

Minutes are approved.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Agenda is approved.

1. Election for Treasurer

Nomination: Jenn Sun (MCDB)

Jenn Sun (MCDB) is elected as the treasurer.

1. External Committee Elections
   1. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Climate and Inclusion Committee

Nick Vincent: one-year term – advisory committee related to campus diversity and inclusion issues. At least one faculty representative, a (few) staff representative(s), and at least one graduate student from the graduate student of color coalition.

October 15, 12PM (first meeting)

Quarterly meetings.

Nomination: Pratima Gopalakrishnan (Religious Studies)

Pratima Gopalakrishnan (Religious Studies) is elected to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Climate and Inclusion Committee.

* 1. University Tribunal

Nick Vincent: Faculty-heavy committee but with positions for students, with jurisdiction over students from all Yale schools. This committee hears disciplinary cases that the president thinks will have particular impact to Yale as an institution or the school in question.

This committee should not meet very frequently.

Joe Lewnard (Public Health) was a rep last year, and the committee never met.

Nominations: Melis Laebens (Political Science) and Patrick Dunn (CMB)

Melis Laebens (speech).

Patrick Dunn (speech).

Patrick Dunn (CMB) is elected to the University Tribunal.

* 1. Minority Advisory Council Update

Nick Vincent: the committee is not currently meeting for the foreseeable future. David DeLeon (English): did she give a reason? Nick Vincent: no. Liz Salm (Neuroscience): most of the people from administration last year serving on the committee were already meeting separately.

1. Resolutions concerning student unionization efforts at Yale

Nick Vincent: we as the executive board has decided to present three resolutions on GSA’s stances on graduate student unionization. Proxies cannot vote: only GSA representatives physically present can cast vote. As they currently stand, all resolutions have three “therefore, let it be resolved” clauses, but only one of them can stand on the passed resolution. Many reps have sent out surveys gauging their constituents’ opinions: you are encouraged to take them into account and rely on them for voting purposes, but you are not bound to them.

* 1. F16-001: Graduate Student Assembly’s Preliminary Position on Graduate Student Unionization

Nick Vincent reads resolution F16-001. We will first have a deliberative discussion before amending the resolution.

Jeremie Koenig (Computer Science): meta point: election will probably happen soon, and the reason we are talking about this is to see what our graduate community thinks. The takeaway is that we support or denounce the campaign. I am pro-union, and my department is largely pro-union. David DeLeon (English): English department is overwhelmingly pro-union. I have had questions about GESO’s tactics in the past. I would favor neutrality on all these subjects. My constituents have it pretty well, but this is not the case at other universities. If there is a union here, it could be a beacon for hope. Many things we are confused about are still uncertain: we still do not have a charter for the union. Spending three weeks on this topic is a bad use/waste of my time.

Toomas Laarits (Management): I would like to speak against unionization, both particularly in the case of GESO and in general. It is reckless for GESO to put out the petition in two weeks – it is very opportunistic. This leads me to believes that GESO is motivated by general political concerns rather than actual graduate student concerns. I think there would be support in the assembly to vote against the micro-bargaining unit. Fabian (Economics): I would like to echo what Toomas said. We in economics have a good situation. We will be neutral towards the general stance on unionization, but GESO behaves very outrageously in the economics department. Organizers come into the department right after people’s dissertation defense and do not leave when asked to. We do not believe that Local 33 and its people are not those who can present concerns of graduate students well.

Katie Oltman (Psychology): are we talking about just resolution 001 or everything? Nick Vincent: Please, let us concentrate on discussing the first resolution (graduate student unionization in general) for now.

Joe (Public Health): The fact that there are only ten departments voting is a big concern in that the union is not interested in recruiting other departmental members. My department does not have a good funding situation. We have different relationships with faculty and different teaching assignments from humanities and sciences. A Ph.D. is not employment, and you are doing it wrong if you are taking it as employment: nothing a graduate student can do should take, for example, 9 years. Sarah (History proxy): history is a department overwhelmingly pro-union. Opposition to the union would be divisive in graduate community and would not be good for future conversation.

Seb Bezerra (Medieval Studies): I don’t want to speak too strongly. Attribution of cynical motivations to the union: I have spoken to a lot of organizers, and so many of them have good intentions, and the same desires as us. Stephanie Ranks (English): I am overwhelmingly pro-union. I have been on the steering committee of the union: we are one of you, and we want graduate student life to be better. A legal argument can be made that the GSA can be made legally implicated if it does not maintain a neutral stance.

Alex Zhang (Philosophy): This is an issue we been in touch with the Office of the General Counsel on multiple occasions. Graduate students are free to say whatever they want – the GSA is not a mouthpiece of the administration and is not bound by labor laws governing the behavior of employers. So – graduate students should not feel intimidated from expressing their opinions, whether they are pro-union or anti-union or neutral. Nick Vincent: GSA will not be legally implicated for its positions.

Emilio Salazar (Neuroscience): I have heard no argument against unionization that has moved me, including the email from the president and the administration. The strongest argument is the percent of stipend to be paid as dues.

Alicia Steinmetz (Political Science): we have an opportunity here to make a nuanced stance, separate from the administration and separate from the union. Consuelo (Political Science): I agree with some people’s disagreement with GESO’s tactics, but we can run for union leadership in the future to make it better. Nick Vincent: if someone feels that there is a consensus, an amendment can be proposed at any time.

Laura (Music): micro-bargaining strategy divides up units on a departmental level. Yale’s argument is that departments are not a good way to organize this, since there are so many interdisciplinary and porous programs.

Joey Schmitt (Astronomy) moves to amend the resolution and to strike the last two clauses (for GSA to take no stance on graduate student unionization in general).

Joey’s motion seconded.

Joey’s motion passed.

(Aye: 52, nay: 9, abstain: 1)

Motion to vote on the resolution as amended by Joey’s motion.

Motion seconded.

Resolution passed as amended.

(aye: 45, nay: 10, abstain: 2)

* 1. F16-002: Graduate Student Assembly’s Preliminary Position on Recent Graduate Student Unionization Efforts at Yale

Nick Vincent: this resolution is about the current efforts of Local 33. Pratima Gopalakrishnan: religious studies department has some experience with GESO and is in general pro-union. We support in general the same goals (both GESO and GSA). This can be done in other departments. There is only room for more agents advocating for good changes. GESO is not a static point.

Toomas Laarits (Management); this argument does not hold: we do not need two organizations doing the same thing. Seb Bezerra: GESO has legal bargaining power. Fabian Schrey (Economics): at the presidential election, you cannot vote for both the Democratic and the Republican candidate. Melis Laebens: I would argue to vote to be neutral. We have a frank dialogue in the department, and GESO has committed to having an election before a bargaining team. Consuelo: it is a personal argument that GESO is the Republican party. Also, GESO is a formative organization that we can change later on. We can have a GSA and GESO: GESO can have bargaining power but the GSA can do other things.

Nick Vincent: we have met with the leadership of GESO, which has said that they do not expect GSA to go away. But there are legal implications: childcare, e.g., cannot be negotiated by us if also negotiated by GESO. So there certainly may exist restrictions on what GSA can do should graduate students unionize.

Joey (Astronomy): our department went from pro to anti-union. GESO has alienated our department, and the fact that GESO has resorted to micro-bargaining units shows that GESO does not have the broad support across the university but only across ten departments. Julia Power (proxy): Spanish and Portuguese is pro union but not part of the ten departments, so these ten departments do not represent all of graduate student support for GESO. We also have many departmental problems that can use a more formal procedure.

Steven Paniagua (Genetics): we already have a stance on unionization - how can we have other stances? Wendy Xiao: yes, we can have a position (no stance) on graduate student unionization in general, but this does not preclude us from having different positions on these more refined issues.

Jacob Derechin (Economics): does GESO have non-student members? This is a concern.

Jeremie Koenig: yes, some GESO organizers are students, but some of them get paid.

Michael Giannetto (Chemical Engineering): our department was supportive but is now against local 33. Almost no one knows about the micro-bargaining unit. Once this decision happened, GESO pretty much disappeared from our department. So this raises an issue about whether GESO can indeed represent everyone.

Chris Geissler (Linguistics): we vote on whether to strike, if there is a union.

Susan Pratt (Physics): based on the survey, our department has primarily voted against GESO, which has used a lot of antagonistic and questionable tactics in the past. I just found out today that GESO would host a happy hour Q&A this Friday, but only selected students from physics would be invited.

Pratima Gopalakrishnan: neutrality is the way to go. We should think of standing in solidarity with Local 34 and 35. Laura Brown: our situation is vastly different from the janitorial or dining hall workers. So there is an argument against solidarity with 34 and 35. Alexandru (physics): people at the top of 34 are not just workers, just like GESO’s leadership is different from regular graduate students.

Paul Lemler: we need more information. Toomas Laarits: GESO has to provide answers, but they have not.

Motion to strike the last two clauses (for GSA to take no stance).

Motion seconded.

Motion passed.

(Aye: 35, nay: 24, abstain: 0)

Motion to vote on the resolution.

Motion seconded.

Resolution did not pass.

(Aye: 31, nay: 31, abstain: 1).

This is a tie. Usually in cases of ties, the chair casts the deciding vote. In this case, the chair (Nick Vincent) did NOT cast a vote but sent the resolution back onto the floor.

Resolution is sent back into general assembly discussion.

Fabian Schrey moves to strike the first two clauses (for GSA to oppose Local 33’s unionization efforts).

Amendment is passed.

(Aye: 38, nay: 20, abstain: 3).

Resolution is passed (opposes).

(Aye: 37, nay: 26, abstain: 3).

* 1. F16-003: Graduate Student Assembly’s Preliminary Position on Micro-Bargaining Units at Yale

Katie Oltman (Psychology) moves to amend the resolution and to strike the first two clauses (for GSA to oppose Local 33’s unionization efforts): we should amend in this way to be consistent.

Katie Oltman withdraws the amendment.

Patrick Dunn (CMB): Yale is required by law to negotiate with bargaining units, should students in those departments vote to unionize. It would be wrong to treat graduate students differently based solely on whether their department has decided to unionize, and to provide graduate students with, for example, different childcare benefits just because they have not unionized. This kind of differential treatment is not right.

Adam Matula (Chemistry): only 2 supported micro-bargaining in my department, and GESO ignored our interests. Paul: we should not be separated as graduate students. Alex (Physics): my advisor is in applied physics, we use engineering facilities, and my department is physics. Seb Bezerra: many people in my department are in joint programs: some would be negotiating, and others would not be. Andrew Vielkind (Film Studies): my constituents teach in different departments (e.g., Art History). Many art history graduate students also teach in other depts.

Jeremie Koenig: union would negotiate only for teachers. Sarah: yes. Other departments can also unionize.

Patrick Dunn: university is required to bargain on all issues related to labor practice. GESO will bargain on many other issues like mental health that apply equally to all graduate students as a whole community.

Chris Geissler: NLRB will make the decision. David DeLeon: I object to the entire resolution – the NLRB will make the decision, and we should not have opinion on this matter.

Nick Vincent: but you are not looking to the other side of the coin: we can have an actual influence on the legal decision, should we pass a resolution on the micro-bargaining strategy. Resolutions express the majority opinion of the assembly, and they might very well be incorporated into the legal decision making process.

Motion from the floor to amend and strike the first two clauses (for GSA to oppose the micro-bargaining strategy currently pursued by Local 33 at Yale).

Motion seconded.

Motion to amend passed.

(Aye: 45, nay: 18, abstain: 3)

Motion to vote on the amended resolution.

Motion seconded.

Resolution has passed.

(Aye: 44, nay: 17, abstain: 2).

Chris Geissler: can we put the number of votes on the minutes?

Nick Vincent: yes. I want to emphasize that this position does not represent the opinions of all reps or all graduate students, but the majority voice of the assembly on these matters.

Fabian Schrey: it should be made clear that the chair did not vote on the resolution, and that the chair merely made the decision to put the resolution back in discussion.

How do we distribute this? Sarah Malkowski (Chemistry): we will put it on the website. Nick Vincent: we also have a YDN reporter here.

1. Concerns from the floor

Rachel Love (Classics): there is an open house on Monday night for some of the standing committees.

1. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:34PM.