

UMBC Graduate Student Association

Executive Council Weekly Meeting

16 September 2020

I. Check-In & Attendance

Alex, Samantha, Avijoy, Kylie, Aniket, Akriti, Dawn and Jeff in attendance.

II. Reports

a. President

- i. Alex introduced Jeffrey Halverson, who will continue to attend an EC meeting each month.
- ii. Updates from faculty senate and SGA meeting:
 1. Discussions focused on how students are adapting to the online learning environment and in particular new students' experiences. One concern raised was that faculty cannot require students to share video or their screens.
 2. Alex suggested the idea to have a "listening town hall" where students can express their concerns and we listen to their input.
 3. A concern was raised over the number of platforms used for courses and meetings.
 - a. Jeff mentioned that he and Samantha will bring this up in the FOLIO committee meeting.
 - b. Aniket added the suggestion to include links for meetings into calendar events to be easier to access.

b. Vice President

- i. FOLIO website and student ambassador programs are live. Brian Barnes informed Samantha that there are already 50 hits to the student ambassador website.
- ii. Samantha attended the faculty meeting with Jeff and reiterated his input about the value of providing feedback for faculty.

c. Treasurer

- i. Added updates to Points of Policy section 8.
- ii. Avijoy has been reviewing the applications for the GRP (not too many applicants yet). He is working to select members.
- iii. Jeff asked for a general overview of the budget.
 1. He and Avijoy both stated that enrollment numbers did not drop significantly as feared due to COVID.
 2. Alex added that the enrollment is about the same as last year so the budget is almost exactly half of last year's budget.

- iv. The applications for grants are nearly half of last year and many events for GSOs cannot take place, so the overall demand for funding is much lower than a typical year. Overall, the fall budget is looking good.
- d. Historian
 - i. Small revisions to the website have been made. Kylie is working with Meghan to revamp the Legislative Concerns website with voter resources and beyond the vote resources.
 - ii. A few senator bios have been received. Kylie/Alex will remind senators in the first meeting to continue submitting photos and bios for the website.
- e. GAAC
 - i. Akriti met with Alex and Samantha about starting the GAAC committee for the year.
 - ii. Akriti has emailed Elizabeth(?) to schedule a meeting and is reaching out to senators and students to raise interest for committee members.
 - iii. Alex mentioned that the College Park unionization is one issue to stay on top of and asked Jeff if there are other topics to focus on.
 - iv. Jeff/GAAC:
 - 1. Jeff agreed that the unionization is the highest priority.
 - 2. Jeff also agreed with Alex that the campus climate survey would be good to look at.
 - 3. Jeff added that health insurance will be an important topic next semester.
 - 4. Jeff encouraged gauging concerns from senators since GAAC is an advocacy group for all GAs.
 - 5. Jeff mentioned that there will be a meeting in the future with GAAC members, Alex, himself, Robin, etc to discuss in greater detail the ongoing unionization concerns.
- f. GEARS
 - i. Yesterday there was a GEARS meeting, which was very productive. They are working to select GEARS committee members.
 - ii. Aniket is organizing a workshop with the career center.
 - iii. Aniket will soon email Scott Morgan about his availability.
 - iv. The budget for this year will likely be smaller (no food, no rooms) and there is an idea to purchase gift cards for attendees.
 - v. The idea for this year's format is to have all major events in March (3MT, Gritty Talks) so that students have more time to prepare research, rather splitting this into two separate events.
 - vi. There will be smaller events such as a career center workshop leading up to the main GEARS in the spring.
 - vii. Collaborations with PROMISE and a modified virtual poster workshop are ongoing/being organized.

- viii. Jeff agreed that the idea of several smaller events will retain more interest than long virtual events.
- g. Legislative Concerns
 - i. Website update mockups have been made and will go live soon.
 - ii. GSA has become a partner with SGA and the center for civic engagement to encourage students to vote and open discussion to relevant political issues in students' lives.
 - iii. The next dinner with friends will be on Wednesday, September 23 and Meghan will be one of the hosts.
 - iv. Meghan has been brainstorming with Kylie on how to outreach to STEM communities and emphasize the importance of voting.
 - v. Meghan has been brainstorming broader election extravaganza experiences that students who are ineligible to vote can participate in.
 - vi. Alex brought up the Rise act and Meghan is thinking about how this can take shape virtually.
 - vii. Meghan has edited the PoP section 4.
 - viii. Alex shared with Jeff the collaboration with Johns Hopkins "STEMulate the vote" to collect STEM questions and distribute to politicians running for offices.
- h. OGSL
 - i. Maria
 - 1. Writing advising has been off to a strong start (appointments made on the first day the schedule opened!) The position has been very busy, and Maria has felt that feedback from students is positive.
 - 2. Maria is offering evening hours for writing advising on Wednesday evenings starting this week.
 - ii. Ethan (Dawn)
 - 1. Dawn updates that Ethan has been learning his responsibilities and has sent out an events form.
 - 2. The soft deadline for GSOs is October 1. So far interest is lower than normal years for GSO enrollment.

III. Business

- a. Old Business
 - i. Senators for CNMS (not discussed)
 - ii. Constitution, Bylaws, PoP
 - 1. PoP: Senator Responsibilities
 - 2. The emergency clause has been removed (it is unnecessary as all powers are defined in the bylaws.) Alex will use feedback to revise and finalize PoP for the senate meeting.
 - 3. GRP as a Standing Committee (not discussed)

iii. *A field guide to grad school* Reading Group

1. Jeff and several other university groups have expressed interest in the reading group. EC members interested in the reading group will contact Dawn by Friday to have copies of the book ordered.

b. New Business

- i. Chat with Jeff Halverson
- ii. Senate Meeting Agenda