

UMBC GSA Fall 2020

Executive Council Meeting

28 October 2020

I. Check-In & Attendance

Alex, Samantha, Aviojoy, Kylie, Meghan, Akriti, Aniket, Ethan, Dawn, and Jeff were present.

II. Reports

- a. President
 - i. Alex emailed EC/Senate asking for student interest in the Arbutus sustainability focus group. All positions have been filled with at least one student.
- b. Vice President
 - i. Samantha will be speaking at two upcoming events: DoIT and the Fall Gathering.
 - ii. Samantha asked what lessons we have learned this fall semester to carry into the virtual spring semester or improvements to consider
 1. Alex finds technology access including Wifi to be a primary concern, although he has also seen good/increased student engagement in classes under the new format.
- c. Treasurer
 - i. Grant reviews for this period are complete (6 applications received)
 - ii. Less than 10% of the budget has been spent from July through the end of October.
 1. Alex posed the question: What will we do with the leftover budget left unspent from the semester? Will there be a surge in spending in the spring semester? This topic will be reintroduced in future meetings for deeper discussion.
 - iii. Avijoy attended an academic ambassador meeting
- d. Historian
 - i. Some students have no bios on the website: Ashutosh, Chris, Jhansi, Rehan. Alex will reach out to them again.
 - ii. Kylie will be working on a new banner/button to feature on the main page to make “contact your senators” more accessible.
- e. GAAC
 - i. Whatsapp group has been started for international students and Akriti asked if this is an official organized group, and what the best course of action is to respond to this.

Akriti will reach out and ask if there is any way GSA can provide resources to the group.

f. GEARS

- i. November 12 at 12:00pm the first Scott Morgan introduction session will take place.
- ii. PROMISE and GEARS are planning the navigating applying for on campus jobs event for November 20
- iii. Concerns have been raised by international students related to temporary accommodations for incoming students quarantining upon entry to the country.
 1. Alex mentioned that the residence halls are not at full capacity and suggested reaching out to IES or Student Affairs for help with this.
 2. Jeff suggested organizing a list of questions and having an official meeting with Michelle or someone in IES to discuss these concerns

g. Legislative Concerns

- i. Election night extravaganza will still be taking place online
 1. There will be a virtual “commons” with various rooms and discussions simultaneously. Some of these will be less political activities including a music room. The event is focused on connection and community and the goal is to be a fun and relaxing event.
 2. Meghan is planning another event for after the election “Together beyond November”, 7-10 days after the election focused on addressing how students will be feeling after the election and finding community.
 - a. This event will be planned before the results of the election, as this event is not aimed at being partisan
 - b. Thoughts for planning
 - i. Jeff supported the idea of this de-stressing event and injecting this into the graduate student life
 - ii. Samantha supported the idea. No dissent from the rest of EC.
 - iii. Meghan will begin planning and reaching out to GSA about promoting the event.

h. OGSL

- i. Deanna- GSOs
 1. Not present, but Dawn mentioned that Deanna is working on reaching out to departments for interest in registered GSOs and finalizing registrations.
- ii. Ethan- Communications Update
 1. Newsletter will be sent out today, election day extravaganza is prominently featured in the newsletter.

2. In regards to previously discussed concerns across all departments with communicating and keeping up with advisors: Ethan is interested in the mentor/mentee contracts committee and has been discussing these issues with fellow students to voice their concerns on the committee.

iii. Maria- Writing Adviser

1. No updates or issues

III. Business/Updates

a. Old Business

i. Mentor/Mentee Agreements - Questions/Comments with Jeff Halverson

1. Jeff expressed concerns with conflating his practice to generate contracts as corrective measures with these new agreements proposed more broadly and proactive across campus. This may mean calling the two by different names. This idea of mentor/mentee agreements has been brought up to the computer science department, and some other departments (e.g. Biology) have already expressed interest.
2. The question is: is the goal to make this a recommendation or an official policy?
 - a. We would need GPDs to buy into the idea to make this a policy
 - b. We would have to go to grad counsel to be made an official policy, and potentially faculty senate too.
3. Alex: These agreements will force students and mentors to sit down and agree upon a schedule to meet. If there are issues students have the ability to reach out to department chairs with proof that their contract is not being fulfilled. Would provide efficiencies in the relationship. He is fearful that if it is only recommended this will not be practiced in departments where it is a concern.
4. Ethan agreed that it would be beneficial to both sides in the agreement.
5. What is the next step? Jeff will unpack and discuss this in detail in the faculty leadership meeting on Friday and immediately report back to GSA on what the thinking is. Making this an item of discussion at GPD meetings will also be important - potentially a topic in the next November meeting.

b. New Business

IV. Open Discussion

a. November Senate Meeting in 2 weeks