

# GSA Fall 2023

## Executive Council of the GSA Meeting

09 November, 2023

### I. Attendance

- A. In attendance: Andrea Lorick, Achala Denagamage, Akash Vartak, Aminah Amjad, Atharva Puranik, Charles Waters, Daniel Douglas, Emily Faber, Grace De Oro, Jennifer Artis, Kara Seidel, Nirandi Jayasinghe
- B. Meeting called to order at (President): 11:34am

### II. Land Acknowledgement:

UMBC was established upon the land of the Piscataway and Susquehannock peoples. Over time, citizens of many more Indigenous nations have come to reside in this region. We humbly offer our respect to all past, present, and future Indigenous people connected to this place.

### III. Updates

#### A. Vice-President:

1. Report from the USM Student Council meeting this past Sunday:
  - a) On 4 Dec there will be a statewide summit on campus safety
  - b) The USMSC plans to draft a legislative resolution to address housing scarcity for international graduate students (some of our Senators were central to the discussion that led to this decision!)
  - c) In January the USM Chancellor will host a chat with international students
  - d) Update on the Religious Accommodations Policy: The language I showed you earlier has been updated in the latest draft, which may be finalized this week. I learned that the part about including absences for religious reasons toward the total allotted excused absences is only in there because some programs (such as medical & law school) require that for accreditation purposes. I have asked that the USM communicate clearly to all institutions, such as in guidance toward best practices, that the expectation is that



only outside policies (accreditation) should require limiting excused absences; as diversity advocates have also noted, otherwise the number should be increased so as not to unduly burden students needing religious accommodations.

- e) Next steps on the UMBC Religious Accommodations Policy: Meghna Chandrasekaran (from SGA) & I agree that we should meet with the Provost & all Vice Presidents, with OEI, and with the University Steering Committee to discuss how UMBC will update its own policies accordingly.

B. GAAC:

- 1. Insurance Webinar with RIH
- 2. Multiple surveys coming up focusing on following topics
  - a) GA hiring transparency
  - b) Stipend and mandatory fees
  - c) Advisory student relationship

C. GSSC:

D. GEARS:

E. Legislative Concerns:

- 1. Town-Hall date: November 17, 2023 @ 5:30-7PM
- 2. Explained to USM Labor Coalition about UMBC concerns for the CBB.
  - a) UMD which leads coalition wanted/expected UMBC to support creating a union, which not ruled out, was emphasized that UMBC's general stance is for providing the right to collectively bargain to graduate assistants, and would require a vote if GA's desire to unionize.
- 3. Identifying strategies to raise support for the CBB, and identifying student support
- 4. Suggested to hold a small campaign to raise awareness/ another vote
- 5. Suggested to reach out to GAAC if they have full list of all GAs.
- 6. LC invitation will go out if not already out yet.

F. GRP

G. OGSL

#### IV. New Business

A. GSSC -

- 1. GSSC's vision directly aligns with Pres. Sheares Ashby.
- 2. Kara and Emily have a few ideas they want to discuss with her.



- a) Potential symposium/wellness collab with GEARS and Pres Sheares Ashby
- B. Website Updates - GRP
  - 1. GRPC is in the process of reviewing the entire grant process and updating it so that it is easier for students to get the most out of it.
  - 2. Several options to streamline the process were considered and discussed. Achala will confer with other GRP members the feedback she received during this discussion.
  - 3. Andrea Lorick was present in the meeting. Andrea is GSA's accountant who will work closely with the GRP Chair and Treasurer moving forward.
  - 4. Achala will also get in touch with Akash to discuss website updates and changes reflective of process changes.
- C. [Senate November Meeting Agenda](#)
  - 1. A senator reached out asking for a discussion on the ongoing protest on campus. The senator wants to bring forth a proposal that we either sign [this statement](#) or issue one stating GSA's stand.
  - 2. The Senator also would like to use some of GSA's energy towards divesting UMBC as a whole from companies such as Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman. The Senator also wants to propose a sub-committee or a joint committee which will enhance UMBC's relationship with the companies that focus to help humanity.
  - 3. The EC had a discussion that was leaning towards not signing any statement, nor making one since it does not represent the interests of ALL graduate students.
- D. Contact your Senators Google forms
  - 1. Need to add this to the Senate agenda. I have created google form templates [here](#) which students can use to contact and send messages to senators.
  - 2. Each senator group needs to update those forms according to their liking and format and setup the way they prefer to receive responses.

## V. Announcements

- A. Next Senate Meeting Nov 13th

## VI. General Information

- A. GSA Contacts:

- 1. **President:** Grace De Oro, ([gsapresident@umbc.edu](mailto:gsapresident@umbc.edu))



2. **Vice president:** Jessica Burstrem, ([gsavicepresident@umbc.edu](mailto:gsavicepresident@umbc.edu))
3. **Treasurer:** Charlie Waters, ([gsatreasurer@umbc.edu](mailto:gsatreasurer@umbc.edu))
4. **Secretary:** Akash Vartak, ([gsasecretary@umbc.edu](mailto:gsasecretary@umbc.edu))

B. OGSL Contacts

1. **Community Liaison:** Jameer Robinson, ([gsa@umbc.edu](mailto:gsa@umbc.edu) with “ATTN Community Liaison” as the subject)
2. **Communications Manager:** Nia Staples, ([gsa@umbc.edu](mailto:gsa@umbc.edu))
3. **Writing Advisor:** Ben Marino, ([gsawa@umbc.edu](mailto:gsawa@umbc.edu))

VII. Adjourn

