

E-Council meeting 4  
07 Oct 2024  
Meeting Minutes  
(Cameras On)

Call to Order 12:35 ( Aminah, Jessica, Lokesh, James, Jennifer, Askoh, Yash, Xixellonje, Soham, Saad, Neha, Naghmeh, Mrunel, Dan)

Land Acknowledgment: Discussion

Approve Agenda

Approved [E-Council Meeting Minutes 25 Sep 2024](#)

**Report from Vice President for Student Affairs Renique Kersh**

1. The Graduate Student Association falls under the Division of Student Affairs, under the Campus Life, Student Engagement, and Belonging Department. The GSA has academic partnerships with other organizations such as the Center for Democracy and Civic Life, the Career Center, and the Student Affairs Success Center. Retriever Care, formerly known as BRACKT, and Retriever Essentials also are resources that support students.
2. The Division of Student Affairs aims to provide more administrative assistance to the GSA, to alleviate some of the pressures and constraints faced in previous years. This change was meant to provide increased support and ability for the GSA to meet its mission and goals.
3. Members of the GSA should consider what needs to change internally to the organization and externally with the support of the Administration, to meet the needs of graduate students. For example, members should consider what committees, events, and prior administrative roles are no longer needed, so we can reallocate resources to other activities that would better benefit graduate students. The GSA should also consider how we can better collaborate across the Division of Student Affairs organizations, and between graduate and undergraduate students.
4. The undergraduate Student Government Association has set aside funds to hold collaborative events with the GSA. The GSA will need to discuss how we can allocate within the budget to collaborate with them since the GSA has not allocated funds to collaborate with the SGA.
5. UMBC has a new policy where students have the time, space, and ability to protest for important issues. Students are now better able to cooperate with the UMBC administration to appropriately hold protest and other demonstrations. This is an Interim Policy. If students wish to demonstrate regarding an issue, there are now designated spaces. Students should speak with the Division of Student Affairs first, to reserve the appropriate spaces. Organizations can request additional resources to support their needs.
6. There is going to be a new Black and Gold Advisory Board, with leaders from all levels of campus. This multi-goal group will discuss the Graduate Student Fee from the Fall and Spring semesters. The mandatory fees will be reviewed this Fall, while the student

activities fees will be discussed in Spring 2025. The Black and Gold Advisory Board will serve as the forum space where organizations can review and discuss how the fees have been used in the past. Organizations including the GSA and SGA have presented at the forum. The GSA will present and explain its budget at the forum, and Board members will make recommendations after we present the fees in the future. The Treasurer, James Gilmore Jr., is designated to attend and serve on the Fee Board.

7. The Graduate Student Success Committee Chair (GSSC) informed Dr. Kersh that many graduate students aren't aware of what the Division of Student Affairs does. The GSSC Chair proposes that the Division of Student Affairs hold an information session to inform and meet with Graduate Students. Dr. Kersh was also invited to attend GSFest.

### **Report from GSA Treasurer**

1. The Treasurer provided the Expected GSA Budget for FY 2025. The projected funding amount is \$516,672. This amount, in comparison to our expenses, means the GSA is in a deficit of approximately \$3000. As a proposed budget, this is not confirmed until confirmation is provided by the GSA's accountant, who will provide the final budget in the Spring 2025.
2. For FY 2024, the GSA did not spend all of its budget. Therefore, the funding could be reclaimed from FY 2025, to help cover the gap. Otherwise, the gap could be filled if the final budget is larger than the projected budget, but this is not guaranteed.
3. For FY 2025, the GSA has not yet held many events. GEARS and GSSC have held the most events, despite all Standing Committee Chairs having received their budgets. The treasurer requests that all Chairs who hold events provide receipts. In the future, CNMS will hold its first town hall. Of the Standing Committees, GEARS is expected to request the most funding. The majority of the budget is spent through grants provided by the GSA, to provide transportation for research and professional development conferences.
4. The Grants Review Panel and Equity of Funds Committee Chairs will work with the Treasurer to research the Allocation of Funds to identify where most of the grant-funding applications come from. It would be beneficial to know, to improve the equity of the grant provision, to understand if the difference in grant applications is due to differences in need, or uneven levels of information to apply for grants. It would also be good to identify the proportion of funding denied, and which Colleges or organizations could benefit the most from GSA grant funding. During the next Treasurer Report, more information and statistics on income and expenditures will be provided.
5. The FY 2025 Budget has a tab where Senators and graduate students can review the list of where all organizations and committees receive funding from the GSA. A Senator wanted to know how funds could be reallocated to support organizations, despite the proposed budget being in the red (deficit). The Treasurer identified that this is the proposed budget, and so the final budget could have a different amount, and that the final budget would be provided in Spring 2025.

## **Report from the GSA Vice President about the Insurance Lapse Issue and what we need to do**

1. Aminah has met with Dr. Rae of Retriever Integrated Health (RIH) to address the lapse of insurance. Every year, there is a lapse in insurance coverage for some graduate assistants. When one insurance contract period expires, there is a two-week period where some Graduate Assistants are left uninsured, as it takes two weeks for the new insurance contract to come into effect. The insurance provider is Aetna. The Vice President is working with Dr. Rae to develop a policy that would let graduate students be informed that there maybe a two-week period where they are not covered, and hopefully resolve the long-term issue. When the state government approves the funding for the insurance, it takes two weeks for the coverage to begin at UMBC. The Vice President is working with RIH to draft a new policy as to how a graduate assistant or insured student should be supported even if something happens during a lapse period.
2. RIH is looking for ways to increase its support for graduate students. RIH wants to know what facilities and times are best and most desirable for graduate students. They wonder if evening hours or extended daily hours would benefit graduate students. They would like the GSA to inform them. Currently, the GSA can begin to develop a survey, which can be sent out by Wednesday, and provided to RIH the next week.
3. Representatives of the University System of Maryland (USM) inquired about the status of the insurance lapses that impact Graduate Assistants and students every year.

### **Monthly Reports from Standing Committee Chairs**

- GEARs
  - Need card scanner for events.
  - Need an update on swag orders.
    - The Chair ordered several items and swag for future events. However, the procurement department informed the Chair that they needed the UMBC swag designs from the Community Liaison. The Community Liaison informed the Chair that the procurement department already received the logo and swag designs. Therefore, the Chair should be waiting for the swag order to arrive.
  - Improved attendance from GSA members is required at events.
- GAAC
  - Update on the discussion with the transportation department
  - Update on Unionization; discussion with Greg Barbic (UMD-College Park)

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1) Lokesh: GS Fest Update: Wed 16 Oct, 4-6 PM, UC Ballroom
  - What's done
  - What's still needed of everyone
    - Only five senators have RSVP'd to attend GSFest. The GSSC Chair requested assistance to send an RSVP link to the Senators, reminding them that attendance is mandatory unless a good reason is provided for

not attending. The GSSC Chair will send the signup link to the President, who will send the tabling request to the Senators. E-Council members will receive a separate email, requesting them to volunteer and attend. The President will send a message reminder to the Senate and the E-Council.

- 2) Debrief events
  - Pack the RAC
  - Gathering on the Green
  - GSA Retreat
  - OGSL Monday Coffee
  - [GEARS Board Game Palooza](#) (60 vs 100, 30 vs 60)
  - Grad Night @ volleyball game
- 3) Town Hall Scheduling Update

### **PRIORITY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 1) Goal-setting and Accountability
- 2) Collaborative fall survey of graduate students
  - a) The President requests that all members of the E-Council and the Senate provide questions and feedback for what they would like to see on the Collaborative Fall Survey. The President would like this information before Wednesday. This is a hard deadline. The Vice President will have a completed survey sent out to the graduate students on Wednesday.
- 3) Points of Policy

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Monday Coffee, OGSL -

[GEARS Trivia Night](#), 24th October, 4 pm to 7 pm ITE 102. [Register here!](#)

### **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Jessica will be in Wisconsin doing dissertation research Oct 6-19 but will still be tentatively available for virtual meetings.

Since no other Standing Committee Chairs (besides Saad and Naghmeh) responded to my email about monthly report scheduling, GRP, LCC, EoF, and GSSC? Will report in the next E-Council meeting two weeks from today.

Adjourn: Motioned by Aminah, and James 2<sup>nd</sup>. Adjourned: 2:01 PM

### Executive Council Group Norms

- Communicate GSA precedent and decisions AND consider whether change is warranted.
- Protect the Senate's autonomy AND consider what obligations we can safely externalize (as long as our approval/voice/views are still involved & it's for the betterment of the graduate students)
- Delegate appropriately
- Consider who requires inclusion in your decisions and communications and when
- Commit to managing your own hours
- Respect other people's time AND your own
- Assume good intentions AND acknowledge impacts
- Take judicious risks AND take responsibility for negative consequences
- Active and respectful listening
- Take time to pause and breathe before you react or communicate
- Turn on your camera, and be active in the meeting (share your thoughts & availability or lack thereof in chat, etc.)
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