1. **Call to Order and Agenda Review [1 min]**

After a long quorum check – the meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Eugenia. She encouraged everyone present to reach out to the E-board/co-chairs if they believe that we can be of help with anything during this crisis.

Eugenia presented the agenda for the meeting, and requested that people maintain speaking order by requesting the right to speak in the chat window

1. **Approval of Minutes**

**There is a motion to approve the minutes. The motion is seconded.**

**The vote is taken. The motion passes with 30 votes for.**

1. **E-board Report Part 1 (No COVID-19 Business) (Eugenia and Elliot) [20 min]** 
   1. **Constitution Overhaul (Shane)**
      1. **Comment Discussion and Review**

Eugenia presented the proposed bylaws with the clarifications on Section III.1.9 and Shane explained the intent the bylaws.

In essence, the only bylaw modifications allows for continued operation of the GC during a crisis by providing a built-in method for the E-board to call an electronic vote (without *a priori* GC approval) as well as a mechanism to reduce GC quorum temporarily.

There is a question as to whether this bylaw will deal with what happens if the E-board wants to cancel a GC meeting.

**There is a motion to approve the amendment to the proposed bylaws.**

After discussion about whether it was best to adopt changes in small sections vs all at once, it was determined that voting the entire documents one at a time would be best since otherwise we would have to try to relate each portion to the existing documents as an ‘amendment.’

**There is a motion to adopt the new constitution as written. The motion is seconded.**

**The vote is taken – the motion passes with 37 votes for and 3 abstentions.** The new constitution is adopted, replacing the existing constitution.

**There is a motion to adopt the new by-laws as written. The motion is seconded.**

**The vote is taken – the motion passes with 31 votes for and 3 abstentions.** The new By-laws are adopted, replacing all previously existing policy documents which are not therein referenced.

Elliot said thank you and congratulations to the GC on passing these changes to our governing documents.

There was a question as to when the new by-laws go into effect. It was responded that the new by-laws and constitution go into effect in full force immediately.

* 1. **GRO E-Board Requests for Additional Time**

Eugenia explained the process of allocated hours and additional worked hour requests.

Swetha (treasurer) presented her request for an additional 8 hours this academic year.

**There is a motion to approve the requested hours (8). The motion is seconded.**

There was a question to Swetha – is 8 hours sufficient? She responded that since a lot of events were cancelled, she did not need too many additional hours. She did work some hours for events that were cancelled

**The vote was taken, and the motion passes with 26 in favor and 9 abstentions.**

It was discussed that Swetha was requesting fewer hours than she had actually worked. There was a lot of sentiment that she should be fully paid for all her work.

**There is a motion to approve up to 80 hours. The motion is seconded.**

**A vote was taken to approve a total of 80 hours for Swetha.**

**The motion passes with 32 in favor and 3 abstentions.** A total of 20 additional hours will be allocated to the treasurer.

Shane proposed his request for an additional 25 hours based on additional work relating to the constitution/by-laws and additional meetings where he is the official record keeper relating to SGA interactions and the COVID-19 epidemic.

**There is a motion to approve the request of additional 25 hours. The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken and the motion passes with 33 in favor and 3 abstentions.**

The next discussion was for Vittorio, the intercampus coordinator. If the remaining events are re-scheduled for the summer there will end up being a total of 5 intercampus events. Regardless, he has planned significantly more events than is typical.

**There is a motion to approve the requested allocation (25 additional hours).**

**The motion is seconded.**

There was a question as to if this would be for work that has been done or will be done.

The answer is that it is a mixture of both.

There is a question as to whether all of the allocated hours have to be billed.

The answer is no, this just provides for up to that number of hours to be billed.

**The vote is taken and the motion passes with 35 in favor and 3 abstentions.**

The next discussion is for Wangui, the communications chair. She apologized for poor connection as her internet went out and she is acting on her phone. She explained all of the additional work she has done and is continuing to do. The original position had 25 hours, she is requesting an additional 30 hours.

**There is a motion to approve the requested hours.** **The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken – the motion passes with 32 in favor and 4 abstentions.**

* 1. **The GRO Budget for 2020-2021 Academic Year**

Eugenia explained the normal process for budget approval in the GRO. The Co-Chairs and the treasurer generally prepare the budget, get it approved by the GC, and then submit it for approval by the university. Currently, SLI has not yet approved the format for the budget, which means that the relevant e-board members are not yet ready to submit a budget for proposal to the GC.

We are planning on basing the proposed budget on this year’s budget with some requested increases in allocations (such as for travel grants). Jaime noted that the E-board has discussed that we would like to offer even more travel grants next semester due to the fact that many people who otherwise would have been funded this semester but had conferences cancelled can still attend and participate in future conferences.

**There is a motion to allow for the E-board to approve the budget without GC approval (in the case that a valid GC meeting with quorum cannot be convened in a timely manner.) The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken, and the motion passes with 29 in favor and 9 abstentions.**

The co-chairs reiterate that we will not change the main content/line items, but are grateful for the authority to manage it without the GC if necessary.

* 1. **GRO GC Meeting Calendar for Spring 2020**

We are currently off from the original meeting schedule due to the cancellation last week and the COVID-19 situation. We can meet more frequently or continue to meet at the same frequency. We have received some requests to meet more frequently from graduate students at large.

Eugenia opened the floor to discussion this question.

The Biology representative commented: It is a very good point that these are unprecedented times – given the pandemic, she may not be able to make this a weekly commitment given all of the things that are going on around.

The Physics representative commented: The prior comment is totally valid, but perhaps we can use the emergency situation bylaw to reduce quorum. Personally, she thinks weekly meetings are useful as the situation for graduate students is constantly evolving and the GC can respond better if it meets more frequently.

The Political Science representative commented: He tends to agree with the first comment that adding more commitments when people are dealing with may be challenging. He thinks we should only have meetings to vote on actionable items. Perhaps the E-board can provide weekly updates on the advocacy efforts, but meet bi-weekly to actually vote on relevant matters.

The secretary noted that we have not yet reduced quorum yet, but the E-board can now convene GC votes on important matters electronically. If we want to reduce quorum, we will need to do that at some point.

The co-chairs noted that the next main thing that needs to be voted on in a more ‘in person’ capacity are elections and the determination of electable positions.

The Funding/admin chair asked if the idea is that we would have bi-weekly meetings. The co-chairs clarified that right now there is no particular stance. He supported the idea of sending thorough updates from the GRO to the entire graduate body on the off-weeks if we have fortnightly meetings.

**There is a motion for fortnightly GC meeting. The motion is seconded.**

The social chair noted that last week we had a listening meeting relating to COVID-19 issues. He supports the idea of holding some additional meetings of that kind. For E-board elections, a full electronic meeting is also probably preferable.

The motion was amended and now reads:

**There is a motion for fortnightly GC meeting unless additional meetings are deemed necessary by electronic vote of the GC. The motion is seconded.**

The secretary commented that we have the authority already for the e-board (on request of a GC member if pertinent) to hold an electronic vote to hold an additional meeting.

**A vote was taken on the motion – the motion passes with 32 in favor and 2 abstentions.**

The co-chairs proposed that we will keep the fortnightly schedule starting from today (03/30/2020) – an additional meeting can be called as needed.

**There is a motion for the next GC meeting, starting the fortnightly schedule, to occur on April 13th. The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken and the motion passes with 37 in favor and 1 abstention.**

* 1. **Event Update:**
     1. **Intercampus Formal**

The venue is happy to have us reschedule. Currently they are holding a date for us in July. We have worked out a refund mechanism with SLI. We will send out a form for people to opt-in to refunding and returning their tickets. There will be a second round of refunds once the final date is set. If the event does not happen, everyone will be refunded.

There was a question as to whether this will be in a gray area since the university cancelled all events through the end of the semester and the event will be paid from this year’s budget.

The co-chairs respond that they got confirmation that if the university is open by June 1st and the event can be planned by June 1st (with the payment completed by June 1st) we can hold the event.

Vittorio (the intercampus chair) noted that the same holds for the speed dating and the Monte Carlo event.

There is a question as to how the ticket refunds work. In short: anyone can request a refund – those refunded tickets would be re-sold prior to the event, but anyone who holds onto their tickets can still use them.

1. **E-Board Report Part 2 (All COVID-19 Business) (Eugenia and Elliot) [40 min]**
   1. **GRO-GSA-TRU Advocacy for Graduate Students**

The co-chairs and secretary have had a number of meetings with TRU and the GSA (graduate student association, School of Medicine) regarding many student concerns related to the COVID-19 situation. This has also led to two meetings with Vice Provost Nancy Kass and Vice Provost Stephen Gange.

The key concerns are broken into six areas, summarized below. We will be sending a more complete document with approval from TRU and GSA soon.

1. **Student funding issues:** Extension of funding for all PhD students; Cutting non-resident tuition; Expanding centralized funding (DTFs; Eemoving limits on existing funding streams (such as DTFs)
2. **Short-term time-to-degree issues:** Master’s degree completion for research-based degrees; Loss of student health insurance for those about to graduate
3. **‘No cost’ issues: P**ass/fail options for all graduate student courses; Cancellation of the GRE; Extending the time-to-degree cap
4. **Guarantee of a follow up meeting**s and reasonable channels to pursue relevant issues and get traction within the various divisions
5. **Concerns related to essential employees –** continued provided transport for personnel who are required to be on campus/travel between campuses; continued hazardous waste removal

The folks we have met with so far cannot necessarily enact change on their own. We are trying to make sure that all of the deans and people in decision-making positions are getting feedback consistently from the top down (the vice provosts) and from the bottom up (graduate students). Therefore, the objective so far has been to come up with a concise list of objectives and principles we think that all persons involved can agree upon to base collective action on.

There was a question: has there been discussion for extra consideration relating international students?

The co-chairs respond that there has been discussion relating particularly to international student issues, particularly relating to allowing students to maintain their visas. This issue is certainly on all of the minds of the relevant decision-making personnel.

A comment was made that many of the issues which are now highlighted by the COVID-19 situation relate to persistent and long-term challenges at the university. There has been a sense in trying to get action on these issues that the ball just gets passed on – IE the middle administrators say that they are not in control, but so do the upper administrators. A focus of this advocacy should be to get clear answers on who can make these decisions and can take action – with guaranteeing extended funding for KSAS PhD students being a key issue among them.

Eugenia clarified that we are pushing for larger institutional changes that underpin these challenges.

A comment was made from the Chemistry representative that there seems to be a persistent view that once people are back on campus everything will be ‘back to normal,’ but since purchase orders for consumables and materials have been stopped, some labs may take several months to really be back to functioning as normal. In departments where the funding comes from a mixture of departments and PIs depending on time during degree, where would extension funding come from (departments, grants, schools, endowment)?

Eugenia responded that our advocacy has been focused on getting a guarantee that funding will be extended by one semester for all students. What we have heard so far is that due to the decentralization of funding at JHU, it will be handled on a division by division and potentially department by department basis. So far as we know, the current funding structure seems like it will stay as it is, even if more funds are provided to the individual divisions.

Shane commented that the endowment has significant restrictions on how the funds can be used.

An anthropology representative commented that we should not be shy in advocating for our needs.

Eugenia highlighted that we have gotten some feedback already on which divisions will be allowing pass/fail for graduate/undergraduate students. Part of the delay came from the Provost’s office and the Academic Council disagreeing. WSE is giving the option of pass/fail for all students, where KSAS will be on a department by department basis.

There was a question on how this will work for cross-registered students (WSE students in KSAS classes).

The co-chairs did not know the answer, but will pursue answers to that question.

Eugenia noted that the counseling center is going online. A question was posed as to how prescriptions will be handled. The co-chairs are not certain but will follow up on that concern as well.

Elliot noted that Maryland issued a stay-at-home order for the state, effective at 8PM tonight.

* 1. **GRO-TRU Report on Graduate Student Concerns**

This was discussed in part A.

* 1. **Concerns raised by graduate students for the agenda**
     1. **How long will graduate student funding last?**

This was discussed in part A.

* + 1. **Shifting to an optional pass/fail grading system?**

This was discussed in part A.

* + 1. **Transitioning the JHU Counseling Center to online?**

This was discussed in part A.

1. **Open Discussion & Questions**
2. This was discussed in part A.

No additional matters were brought to the GC. Shane thanked the GC members for attending the meeting and setting record attendance since September 2017.

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 07:35 PM.