GRO Meeting Minutes

5/14/19 – Levering Great Hall

Meeting Co-Chairs: Eugenia Volkova & Elliot Wainwright

Secretary: Shane Arlington

Meeting called to order at 6:07. No quorum at the time, so the agenda was revised to go through non-voting issues first.

1. Representatives from the Hopkins Kicks Butts
   1. Searching for a graduate representative for a tobacco policy working group.
   2. The group wants a more restrictive tobacco policy on campus, and it has been an SGA initiative for many years. However, there are many stakeholders involved and therefore it is a long process.
   3. There was a survey in 2013 which went across all eight campuses, including graduates and undergraduates. All schools apart from KSAS and WSE graduate students were in favor of banning smoking. For those groups, it was a 48% for a ban to 52% against, so it was close. A committee was therefore formed.
   4. This committee was to design an implementation plan for a smoking ban across the Hopkins campuses. The group includes undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff to discuss what the plan should include, how is should be implemented, et cetera.
   5. The group’s activities were paused in 2015, mostly due to differences in opinion on implementation and how violation of the policy would be handled. Secondarily, there was a delay in figuring out a smoking cessation vendor for assistance for those affected by the plan.
   6. **Question:** The slides say that the recommendations did not include strong enough enforcement measures – whose opinion was that?
      1. The representative was not certain, but will follow up by emailing the Chairs with information. It was the representatives opinion that it was due to disagreements on enforcement mechanisms.
   7. In 2018 a new survey was released by the SGA in collaboration with HKB, a professor from Homewood and a professor from the medical campus. This showed 43% for a smoke-free campus, and 37% were for having designated smoking areas – this gives a total of 80% in favor of having more restrictive smoking rules. This led to an SGA bill in 2018 saying that they want a more restrictive policy.
   8. In 2019, the university convened a second working group with similar goals to the prior group. First they need to find the smoking cessation vendor.
   9. **Question:** It says it is for students, faculty, and staff? How comprehensive is that for say contracted staff?
      1. The representative believes that the goal is to include those kinds of staff as well, IE that security, cafeteria workers, et cetera will be included and involved in the working group.
   10. The second goal of the working group is to determine the appropriate enforcement mechanisms, and the third is to determine an implementation plan and timeline. The working group wants representatives of each stakeholder group to be involved in the process. The group is spearheaded by Dean Ruzicka.
   11. **Question**: Who is Dean Ruzika, and why can she send a designee? Can other people do that?
       1. Her first name is Swetha. Presumably she can send a designee because she has a higher level of demand on her time. Elmer points out that this is not abnormal for all committees on campus of this type.
   12. **Question**: What will the final result of the working group be? Will it be a recommendation or an actual policy?
       1. It will be a plan for a more restrictive policy and its implementation. The committee believes that what they support will likely be enacted.
   13. **Question**: Will the outcome of this working group affect all of Hopkins, or just Homewood?
       1. The representative thinks it is just for Homewood. The Treasurer points out that the medical campus is already smoke-free. The information from the 2018 survey was only for Homewood.
   14. **Question:** Do you already have a sense of the administrations stance on this?
       1. The administrators on the working group seem to be in favor of implementing a smoking restrictive policy, but there are other administrators who are not necessarily in favor.
   15. The social chair recommends that the GRO appoint a representative. The social chair motions that the GRO appoint one of the advocacy chairs to join the council. **The motion was amended to be that a member of the executive board be appointed to the working group. Seconded.**
       1. **The motion passes with three abstentions.**
   16. **Motion to approve the minutes. Seconded.**
       1. **The motion passes with three abstentions.**
   17. To verify that there was quorum for elections, a roll call was taken. Full voting quorum is present.
2. E-Board Elections:
   1. Shane Arlington (Parliamentarian) acts as election officer, Elliot Wainwright (Social Chair) assumes secretary duties.
   2. Shane explains the voting procedure.
   3. **Motion to vote via show of hands.** **Motion carries**. 0 Against. 2 Abstentions.
   4. Welcome/Guide Chair nominations: Daniel McClurkin, from the English Department.
      1. Daniel is elected as the Welcome/Guide Chair.
   5. Summer Sports Coordinator nominations: Kyu Sang Han, not present in the meeting.
   6. **Motion to allow the E-board to choose the Summer Sports Coordinator.** 
      1. **The motion is seconded.**
      2. **The motion asses with 3 Abstentions.**
3. Two representatives came to speak on stipend changes for Summer Instruction Contracts.
   1. The contracts were sent out a month late, which is common for this body. There was confusion in the language of the contracts about the ‘course planning stipend,’ which is supposed to be a cancellation fee if the course is cancelled due to low enrollment. It has in the past been around $800. This afternoon the representative confirmed that there will still be a $800 stipend in those cases, however the contract is still very vague and does not that it will be the same going forward. The contract simply says “in the case that the course is cancelled, you will not be paid.” It appears that this has not been a part of the contract for several years.
   2. These representatives want this to be enshrined in the contract such that graduate students do not need to be concerned about this issue going forward.
   3. One representative has been here for 8 years and has never received a raise for these contracts. However, due to undergrads revolting at a proposal to include a $100 fee for summer intersession courses, these courses are now cancelled much more frequently and early.
   4. Both representatives have had their courses cancelled after they began enquiries about this issue, despite the fact that other courses with lower enrollment are still being offered.
   5. The representatives request that the GRO state that they request this $800 stiped be enshrined in the contract.
   6. **Question**: What kind of approval happens before the courses are approved? How much oversight occurs before approval?
      1. There is a lot of oversight. They have multiple reviews within department and from the office in charge of the courses.
   7. **Question**: Have prior years had a clause about the cancellation stipend?
      1. No.
   8. **Question:** How far have you two (the representatives) gone in pushing this issue?
      1. Both representatives have discussed this with their department chairs. They have been somewhat appeased that they will get the stipend this year, but there is still no formality. The difference between how departments are helping *with* the office in charge of the courses. They have been in contact with Lori Henley at the office of Summer and Intersession Programs.
   9. **Question:** Was a reason given for your courses being cancelled?
      1. Not really. The day after inquiring about this the courses were cancelled. Officially this is due to “low enrollment” but there are many course still with enrollment below what these representatives had.
   10. **Question**: Does the money come from home departments?
       1. It all comes through the Office for Summer and Intersession Programs.
   11. **Motion to have the GRO support there being language put into these contracts to include the provision for this course-cancellation stipend to support transparency and further to empower the e-board to act in support of this matter.**
   12. Amendment to the motion on the floor: one of the two chairs will be the liaison to assist in the meetings.
   13. **Amended motion: have the GRO support language being put into these contracts to include the provision for this course-planning stipend and to support transparency as well as to have one of the GRO chairs act in support and join in meetings with the representatives.**
   14. A point is made that we are a bit premature here, we have not heard anything from the people in charge of the programs to understand where the money is coming from et cetera. The Chairs will be meeting with the GRO advisors and can discuss this at that point.
   15. **The motion on the table is seconded.**
   16. There is a question if we can split the motion.
   17. A statement is made that we should make a statement to ensure that we are proactive in supporting the graduate students.
   18. A comment is made that leaving the language vague is fine for this situation.
   19. **Question:** How do we know where the money for the program comes from?
       1. We do not know, however there is strong belief that we should
   20. **Motion: have the GRO support language being put into these contracts to include the provision for this course-planning stipend and to support transparency as well as to have one of the GRO chairs act in support and join in meetings with the representatives.** 
       1. **Motion passes with 3 abstentions.**
4. Student group recognition
   1. How group recognition used to work was that new groups would come to the GRO, work with GRO on their constitutions, and then go to SLI to get approved. Now that has been reversed, which limits our influence. For instance, all SLI-approved groups get SLI benefits (can book rooms, et cetera) and are only barred from applying for GRO group funding.
   2. The GRO discussed standards on group recognition a few years ago. Now SLI has gone completely around the GRO and essentially ignores us. It is something that the GRO will be discussing and considering during the following semester.
   3. There are also several groups which went inactive during the semester, which will then need to go through our processes again. These groups will be inactive for the summer, but then can go back through becoming active again next semester.
5. Funding request from Indian Graduate Student Association
   1. Event is at the end of August. It falls before the first GC meeting, and thus this is the only chance for us to approve the event.
   2. The event is a welcome event for incoming new graduate students. They want to “bring India” to the Homewood campus. They will have volunteer performances. They expect ~120 people at the event. They are asking for $1000, mostly for food. The event will be an open mixer, it will be open to all students, and is cross-departmental. They expect over 100 graduate students.
   3. The event will come from next semester’s group funding.
   4. **Question:** What kind of attendance have you had in the past?
      1. They had this last year and had approximately 100 attendees. They expect more this year because last year’s event went well and there will be returning students attending as well as new students.
   5. **Motion to fully fund the event.**
      1. **Motion Seconded.**
      2. **The motion passes with 4 abstentions.**
6. Summer initiatives: focus points for the e-board for the summer.
   1. The e-board would like the authority to appoint two paid coordinators to help the e-board, the “intercampus coordinator” and the “wellness coordinator.”
   2. It is pointed out that the GRO has recurring events or has pre-approved events which would require these to occur.
   3. **Question:** Why were these not accepted as floating chairs?
      1. The vote to determine what chair positions were on the executive board this year were performed online, and therefore there was no chance for people to explain why certain positions would be important to include. This led to a close vote.
   4. **Motion to allow the e-board to create these coordinator positions and to fill them.** **Motion seconded. The motion passes, 3 abstentions.**
7. May 2019 GRO Wellness Hike
   1. Hike to Harper’s ferry on the 18th of May, leaves campus at 9AM returns at 5PM. The total cost is $634.20, or $26.43/head. Most of the cost comes from the vans. Food for the participants account for much of the rest of the cost.
   2. There can be 24 students involved, a significant increase from previous events.
   3. **Motion to fund the event up to $700 with funds from the social chair budget or the guide budget. Motion seconded. The motion passes with 3 abstentions.**
8. Open discussion on how departmental representatives will be selected.
   1. Over the summer, GC reps should look out for emails about a survey on how GC representatives are chosen, we ask that you please respond to that survey.
   2. Similarly, GC reps will receive emails asking for information about who will be their departmental representative for the coming semester, we ask that GC reps please help the GRO by responding to that email as well.
9. Representative from ecrLife ambassadors program.
   1. A program with representation through 20 countries with a goal to gauge mentorship for graduate students and early career faculty. The survey takes 5-7 minutes and wants to get a sense of how often people meet with mentors, what those meetings entail, et cetera. The survey has been sent out previously, but we are asking that GC representatives send the survey on to their departments to help incite more responses.
   2. The survey would like as many responses as possible before June 1st, but will likely be open later (perhaps until July 1st.)