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

The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM by Eugenia, once a quorum was achieved. The format of the meeting was explained

1. **Approval of Minutes**

**There is a motion to approve the minutes from 03/30/2020.**

**The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken, and the motion passes with 24 votes for and one abstention.**

1. **E-board Report (Eugenia and Elliot) [60 min]** 
   1. **GRO-GSA-TRU COVID-19 advocacy for graduate students** 
      1. **Vote on principles document distribution**

Eugenia explained the background: the GRO, the GSA (Graduate Student Assembly) from the School of Medicine have been working with leadership from Teachers and Researchers United. TRU and GSA leadership have already approved the documents. We are also in discussions with the leadership of two graduate student organizations from the School of Public health to get their approval and sign on.

Eugenia opens the floor to discussion and questions.

Elliot made a quick comment that a lot of labor has gone into constructing this document from the leadership of the three engaged groups (TRU, GSA, GRO). He outlined the fundamentals of the document, and explained that it would be preferable for the documents to be voted on in full.

A comment was made by the Biophysics representative about some of the time-to-degree caps, where phrasing was confusing: the only affected people by the 9-year cap will only affect people who started this past August. Further, there may be some legal issues relating to providing extended health insurance, which is one of the demands in the documents.

Eugenia provided some clarification about the health insurance – some provisions for these kinds of extensions are already in place for some schools. However, there are limits to what can be extended. This is something that the co-chairs have been actively discussing with the.

**There is a motion to approve the principles document and distribute it to the Homewood graduate student body.**

Elliot commented relating to the healthcare: we know that it may be a gray area with the legal restrictions. We should view this document as a statement of ideals that the University should strive to achieve, regardless of how challenging it may be.

There is a proposed grammatical amendment to modify the motion to the following:

**There is a motion to approve the principles document and distribute it to the Homewood graduate student body. The GC grants the Executive Board license to make minor grammatical changes to the document, if necessary.**

It was accepted by the proponent of the motion, and the revised motion was then seconded.

**The amended motion is voted on. The vote passes with 24 in favor.**

* 1. **TRU Letter Writing Campaign**

TRU is asking for graduate students to reach out to the administration personally by writing letters to various administrators. TRU distributed a document explaining why this campaign is important, along with a sample letter. The request that was made for the GC to consider is that we distribute this letter writing campaign information more broadly such that

**There is a motion to endorse the TRU letter campaign, for GRO to send out letter campaign to the entire Homewood graduate student body and encourage their participation.**

Elliot commented that this seems to be a way to promote bottom-up advocacy, where the meetings that the executive board is actively participating in is more of a top-down approach.

**The motion was seconded.**

**A vote was taken, the vote passes with 23 in favor and one abstention.**

* 1. **Testimonial survey to grads**

Part of the letter-writing campaign idea is to get specific instances of how students are affected to be considered by the administration. We also want to survey students to get testimonials so that we can provide aggregate data to the administration as well. The co-chairs would like to request that the GC provide input on what the survey will cover, and further that they delegate authority to write and distribute the survey to the graduate student body.

Elliot added his support for the This survey would likely be based partially on a survey made by the GSA, which included questions about the following: satisfaction with communication relating to COVID, if students are still on campus, what kind of transport they are using, if people are able to self-quarantine effectively, what kind of support structures students have, whether they have met with their advisors relating COVID. Eugenia noted that

The Physics and Astronomy representative spoke in support of the survey – particularly regarding confusion related to COVID communication and what the actual policies being enacted are. For instance, many students facing end-of-funding situations are really unsure what is going to happen to them. If we can quantifiably demonstrate that the responses so far are confusing and problematic for students, it will help a lot with the advocacy efforts.

**There is a motion to give the E-board license to create and distribute a survey (in collaboration with other organizations if desired) regarding the impact of COVID-19 and associated university response/policy on graduate students**

**The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken, and the vote passes with 22 in favor and one abstention.**

* 1. **Counseling & wellness online during COVID**

Eugenia shared information that was provided by Vice Provost Shollenberger in response to many questions.

* Is the counseling center accepting new students during COVID-19?
  + If the student is still in MD or a state that has waived their licensure requirements, the counseling center is open to new patients
  + If ongoing tele-therapy is not feasible, the center will provide services for immediate crises as and continued remote support until a relationship can be built with an outside provider
  + If the student is in crisis they can still call the Counseling Center for support and after hours will be connected to an on-call counselor.
* What are wait times for being referred out?
  + Generally less than one week
* How is online counseling going so far? Is Hopkins planning to expand its online capabilities for counseling? What is currently offered?
  + The counselling center is providing tele-therapy (video format) to current patients who are situated in states where this is legal
  + All students who had existing appointments were contacted and offered tele-therapy
  + There are additional online modules, such as those on SilverCloud
* Will psychiatry workers also be acting through tele-medicine?
  + The contract psychiatrists are still providing services by phone or other tele-medicine platforms pursuant to all applicable state laws
  + The existing policies which require that students receiving medication continue to see a therapist at least once every 3 months
  1. **Internships & Professional Development during COVID**

Since we know some internships are being cancelled or postponed, we have spoken to Roshni Rao about what support is available. There is a new page on the PDCO office website for internships, Handshake still has internship offers available, PeopleGrove is now live and functional and will help find internships. PHutuers will still have a lot of programming for job searches. Farouk Dey is circulating a list of internships as well.

Elliot requested that the GC vote to distribute this material via email, ideally co-sponsored by Roshni Rao.

**There is a motion to have the GRO distribute material relating to internships and professional development during COVID-19, in collaboration with Roshni Rao, if possible.**

**The motion is seconded.**

**A vote is taken, and the motion passes with 24 in favor and one abstention**

* 1. **GRO budget Utilization for Grads in COVID efforts**

We can use this money in new ways if we can demonstrate that it is somehow related to the original intent of funding. There have been some ideas

* + 1. Funding Lyft codes for travel related to COVID volunteering, front-line work, or essential travel
    2. Funding food for distribution in some equitable way, such as a raffle or lottery. The food could be distributed via various delivery services and we could have some kind of virtual dining sessions for those involved
    3. Provide materials for making cloth masks to students

Eugenia covered some of the limitations, such that we cannot donate the funds, we cannot give gift cards, we cannot take materials/merchandise meant for on campus use and distribute them for use at home, and we cannot roll over our funds.

There was a question regarding the mask distribution: would that count as the providing material for use at home?

The co-chairs clarified that they are not certain, but should get clarity on that question tomorrow.

There is a comment in the chat in support of subsidizing Lyft codes. There was a question as to whether we are certain that is allowable.

Eugenia clarified that it is not clear yet – the co-chairs will push for it and ask; we should know tomorrow.

There is a question whether we can make donations to the campus food bank, since graduate students are the main users?

The co-chairs are not certain, but will inquire about that option.

There is a question as to whether the GRO could “hire” local restaurants in the main neighborhoods where graduate students live to provide some number of meals and students would be able to go and pick up the meal following CDC guidelines. If that is plausible, it seems like a good way to support students and local businesses.

Multiple people comment that they support this idea.

Elliot spoke in support of the idea of supporting both students and local businesses.

Eugenia noted that to make this ‘inter campus’ we may have to require that the students who get food have some kind of Zoom call to eat the meals together and turn it into a social/intercampus event.

The social chair commented that one challenge may be that a lot of the vendors we have decent access to are outside of the area immediately adjacent to campus.

There is a suggestion of a weekly trivia event (or similar) where the winner of the event gets a food related prize which they *could* then donate to front line workers if they so choose.

A comment was made in the chat that “Walsh Trivia has an excellent online format right now and is run by a JHU alumni - it's a possible use of the social budget”

Eugenia responded that it is possible for us to do this in some ways, however if the money was not already designated for “prizes” we cannot change the designation of the funds to be for prizes, even if those prizes are food.

There is a comment that it seems like the administrations concerns with distributing food as ‘not a social’ event does not make sense. Do we have clarity on what the administration is really thinking in this regard?

Elliot responded: relating specifically to the social budget: according to the administration, there has to be some kind of social interaction involved in the utilization of the money. He requested that the GC provide the E-board with the authority to make financial decisions relating to these re-distributions.

**There is a motion to have the e-board do their thing.**

**The motion is seconded.**

There is a proposed grammatical amendment to revise the motion to the following:

**There is a motion to allow the executive board to have authority to utilize the remainder of this year’s GRO budget in ways that fall in line with the existing budget line items, support the community, and support as many graduate students as possible.**

The proponent of the motion accepts the amendment.

**A vote is taken on the as-amended motion. The vote passes with 22 in favor and two abstentions**

* 1. **Forthcoming meetings with administration**

The co-chairs asked if there were any questions relating to the following meetings:

* + 1. **Advisors Christine, Rennee, Laura (April 14th)**
    2. **VP’s Nancy Kass & Stephen Gange (April 15th)**
    3. **Vice-Deans Matt Roller & Sri Sharma (April 21st)**

There was a question as to what the content of meeting number 3 is. The co-chairs repond that an agenda for that meeting has not yet been set; but since the GRO will be distributing a lot of advocacy-related documents following tonight’s meeting, it is unclear what the content will be, but it will likely relate mostly to these advocacy efforts.

* 1. **SPARC Updates**

The GRO received some updates from the JH-Suicide Prevention Awareness, Response, and Coordination group. They are hoping to make a Wellness blog with material related specifically to COVID. The Counseling Center is now offering online workshops, and a Homewood ‘drop in support space’ is also in the works. The Counseling Center is still offering individual services for students, The Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program has updated information available online, and they have held some events online.

* 1. **Other ideas for advocacy**

The chairs open the floor to comments and questions related to advocacy at this point.

A comment was made by the ChemBE representative: since the GC is meeting infrequently and the next meeting will relate mostly to voting on new E-board members, it may be useful to grant the E-board the authority to handle these advocacy efforts without necessitating GC review.

There was a period of discussion on the idea – support was provided by other GC members.

**There is a motion to grant the Executive Board authority to author, vote on, and disseminate material relating to COVID-19 advocacy efforts without GC review.**

**The motion is seconded.**

**A vote on the motion was taken, and the motion passes with 20 in favor and 3 abstentions.**

1. **GRO Operational discussion [15 min]**
   1. **Floating Chair vote results**

The floating chairs will be

Health and Wellness Chair

COVID-19 Concerns Chair

Graduate Involvement Chair

Intercampus Chair

The definitions for most of these positions is already reasonably thorough. However, if people have specific recommendations for these positions, please provide them.

* 1. **GRO election procedures**

We will be having GRO elections online for the first time. We will advertise all of the positions over the next two weeks, and will have elections at the next meeting – ideally for all positions, but the most important to elect are the Co-Chairs, Secretary, and Treasurer such that the GRO continues to function. The advocacy and COVID-19 concern chairs are also going to be important.

We will have candidates provide statements in advance, including answers to some questions pre-provided. We will use a different polling method for the elections to make sure that the elections are secure. It seems like there will not be a closed discussion session for each candidate.

Shane commented that we can have closed discussions by moving people into/out of the waiting room.

The biophysics representative suggested that this may be the time to change our policy of having people out of the room for these discussions. As was the case last year, people can be criticized and not provided a means to defend themselves.

The political science representative commented that if we move everyone out of the room, they would not be able to vote for some positions where they would be eligible to vote. Further, the excusal of people is currently within the bylaws, so we would need to temporarily or permanently amend the bylaws.

Shane clarified that the intended principle would be to use the waiting room in the way that we would normally use the antechamber – IE where the candidates would be ‘excused’ from the portions of the meeting.

There is a comment from the Physics and Astronomy representative that we should follow the bylaws unless we supersede them, but that the principle of the closed door discussion is for an open and honest discussion of a candidate, not for the candidate to be further involved in the decision by debating statements made.

The Advocacy co-chair spoke in support of removing people from the room for discussion. We are all individual thinkers, but removing people can provide social cues that change how people think. Discussion should be limited to getting information from the candidates, because beyond that we open the door for bias to be transmitted from one member to others.

The biophysics representative responded that his proposal was not that the candidate should not be part of a larger discussion, but that when an accusation is made against a student, the candidate should have a chance to defend themselves.

The Physics and Astronomy representative responded that if an accusation is made a against a candidate, the GC should seek clarification from the candidate. She is fully in favor of having an open discussion such that everyone can share ideas and thoughts.

It was noted that the current ballot software in consideration would be for an entire ballot at once.

Shane noted that this would need some bylaw adjustment, as we follow a drop-down election method.

The biophysics representative supported the idea that we follow drop-down elections, as otherwise when someone is willing to run for multiple positions it is problematic.

Shane will spearhead looking into voting software

**There is a motion to reduce GC quorum by 5 until the beginning of classes in Fall 2020.**

**The motion is seconded.**

There was a question that

**A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passes with 23 in favor.**

Elliot wanted to discuss a temporary suspension of the bylaws to make sure that we can hold online election votes if we fail to meet quorum.

Shane commented that he believes that this is already feasible per Bylaw III.1.9. Nobody disagreed.

1. **Letter to the Eisenhower Library - Modern Languages and Literatures Request [15 min]**

The co-chairs shared a letter from representatives from MLL to the Library regarding emergency lending system to provide physical books that the University does not currently have. They want to request that the library purchase the books, and mail them directly to the students who requested them.

There is a question from the Biophysics representative if there would be a way for contactless pickup (such as them being left in a lockbox for students to pick up).

A response from an MLL student: we are talking specifically about books that are found, during the course of research, that are not part of the collection and would need to be purchased by the Library. The request is for, rather than the normal acquisition channels, can the library directly send these books to the students who need them. The students would be financially responsible for the books until the stay-at-home order is released and can return the books to the library. The representative provided some updates on the wording of the letter as it was modified by the graduate student group responsible for it this afternoon. The students are confident that the librarians involved are supportive of this idea.

**There is a motion to have the GRO sign the letter and send it to the appropriate authorities.**

**The motion is seconded.**

Question from the co-chairs: Is there any precedent for this kind of action?

Response from MLL: so far as we know, there is no precedent at JHU. We have heard that other universities are moving forward on programs like this, but do not have formal confirmation of that yet.

Eugenia asked who the appropriate authorities are, to the best of their knowledge.

MLL responded that they are not certain – they have heard that the finance folks related to the library are those who are currently holding up progress. The Dean of the library would need to be involved, butt beyond that we are not fully certain who it would be. Part of what we want the GROs help in is in determining precisely who those people are.

**A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passes with 24 in favor.**

1. **Open Discussion & Questions**

A question was asked if we have heard if graduate students are having issues with internet access?

The co-chairs have not heard any particular concerns but are generally aware of some kinds of issues. If people have information on these kinds of issues, please share. Also, if anyone has any suggestions on how those challenges could be addressed, they would be appreciated.

It was suggested that the survey the GRO puts out include questions relating to reliable internet access.

There was a comment from the AMS representative: the Zoom meeting setup for these meetings require the Zoom app, which may be a problem for anyone who does not have administrative access to the device they are using for the meeting. This was not previously an issue.

Eugenia noted that they upped security for this meeting. They can decrease it for future meetings if necessary. We will ask all GC members and all candidates if they might have issues with this current format.

There was a question as to when the open positions will be advertised.

The co-chairs responded that they will send them out soon, but will be dealing with the advocacy issues first.

The co-chairs asked for any additional items that the GC may have. Seeing none, the thanked those in attendance for their participation, encouraged strong turnout next meeting for elections, and reminded the GC that any concerns, questions or suggestions would be welcomed by email.

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43PM.

Note: Non GC members present during the meeting Benjamin Peak (MLL student) and Zvezdana Ostojic