

GRO GC Minutes

Date: 05/06/2019

Location: Great Hall, Levering Hall

Minutes taken by: Eugenia Volkova

**1. Motion to approve the minutes. Seconded. Passes.**

2. E-Board Report

- a. End of the Year BBQ. End of the year BBQ on May 16th. Either outdoors (lawn) or indoors (Glass Pavilion).
- b. Communication Policy regarding election proceedings
  - i. Keep elections statements professional, not personal

3. Statement by the Social Chair (Elmer Zapata Mercado) - emailed to the secretary account. Included below verbatim.

a. Dear members of the General Council,

For the past three years I have served the GRO as the Social Chair. I have done my work with pleasure. During the discussion of the election for this coming year's Social Chair, several claims and statements were made about my person and my character, and I will like to address these statements today. Two weeks ago, there was a troubling part of the carried elections, that happened when the elections official, someone who is supposed to be impartial in this process, took the floor to make statements in favour of or against candidates. This compromises the integrity of the process. I learned the day after the election that a current co-chair accused me of making a racist comment to him. I was very confused, and immediately followed up to find out what he believed I had said. It quickly became clear that he misheard a comment I made nine months ago, and chose not to give me the benefit of the doubt by asking me if he had heard correctly. I have seen him many times in social and professional contexts in the nine months since then, and would have appreciated the opportunity to correct the misunderstanding in a more timely, and far less public, way. I am ready to let all of this go, and move on with my career. Before I do that, I would like to express my belief that such actions by members -- and particularly by the leaders -- of a professional body like this one are unprofessional and reprehensible. No one in a professional role of this nature should have the right to defame and/or slander the name of a colleague without attempting to directly address it within the professional context first, and without giving the colleague in question the opportunity to defend themselves. At this time I would like to acknowledge that I have learned how my behavior, my tone, my way of talking, and sometimes my poor choice of words, can make some members of this body uncomfortable. To that matter, I would like to offer some clarification. The intention of my words was never to attack, shame or belittle anyone here. I have a tendency to speak with intensity, even with people that I agree with, that I believe is largely due to my cultural upbringing. Speaking passionately, and perhaps aggressively, is considered normal in Puerto Rico, and I only recently came to understand how

this violates norms here. The fact is, I agree with the fundamental views of most people here, even when I have different ideas on how to approach them. One of the things I have loved most about being in the GRO is the opportunity to freely exchange ideas with others who had different perspectives, but I am sorry that I often engaged in that exchange with a demeanor that implied my disagreement was personal. From my end, I will make a sincere effort to alleviate these kinds of misunderstandings in the future, by being more conscious of my tone and demeanor. I hope that if in the future my tone or behavior comes across the wrong way, that members of this Council will be sympathetic to my cultural background and afford me an opportunity to explain myself. With the admirable cultural and political diversity the council represents, I think it is all the more important that we are able to work together to prevent future misunderstandings in this way. I would like to add that I will be proud to continue to support the GRO's mission when needed. Thank you for your attention.

1. **Motion to move by show of hand voting. Seconded. Motion Passes.**
2. Comments will be limited to personal knowledge and how well the candidate can perform in this position.
3. Administrative and Funding Chair:
  - a. Nominees: Jaime Martinez Grundman, 4th year PhD in Biophysics
  - b. Ideas for next year: travel grant policy revision, get jhu accounts for relevant accounts.
  - c. Jaime is elected.
4. Communications Chair:
  - a. Nominees: Benj Shapiro (does not accept the nomination), Wangui Mbuguiro (self-nominated), 3rd year PhD in BME
  - b. How to you see the confluence of social media? Twitter is a great way to get quick information out that is happening and connecting to other organizations. Are you willing to work with the current E-Board on the current communications policy.
  - c. Wangui is elected.
5. Graduate Involvement Chair:
  - a. Nominees: Michael McCreary (3rd year in Comparative Thought and Literature)
  - b. Tara Ghazi (3rd year in Psychology and Brain Science). Homewood Graduate Board Member. 1 meeting per semester.
  - c. Tara is elected.
6. Health Concerns Chair:
  - a. Nominees: Benj Shapiro (current Health Concerns Chair) PATH Committee, main achievement has been increased support for graduate student parents. Healthcare communications tools for a new portal for creating new payment information, enrollment, so that you don't need to use SIS. Graduate Student Emergency Fund.
  - b. Benj is elected.
7. Security Concerns Chair:

- a. Nominees: Stephanie Saxton (1st year PhD in Political Science Dep), Ashwin David (2nd year MS in ChemBE)
  - b. Steph is elected.
- 8. Professional Development Chair:
  - a. Nominees: Weichen “Dora” Liao (5th year PhD in Environmental Engineering)
  - b. Dora is elected.
- 9. Summer Sports Coordinator:
  - a. Nominees: Kyu Sang Han (nominee,
  - b. Move to delay the summer sports coordinator position and allow . Seconded. Passes.
- 10. Welcome and Guide Coordinator Chair:
  - a. The GC can approve the legislation of power.
  - b. Motion to have an electronic vote for this position.**
  - c. Advise against this since people will not have the chance to express themselves to the whole counsel. Because not everyone has the same opportunity to express themselves verbally or in written language.
  - d. Agreed, it’s a strange situation, but we are looking for another option. We could ask people to upload a video for if someone is not present in Baltimore.
  - e. Option: do just a summer appointment because that’s exactly what happened in the last meeting. So that is an option we could look at.
  - f. Benj is the only person who has done this position before, he could also help to take care of it for organizational reasons.
  - g. Elmer: You created this position 4 years ago and you did it voluntarily, so if the social chairs are willing to take care of it, it would be better and we don’t want to give power to the E-Board to elect an E-Board member.
  - h. Are we able to pre-allocate hours for a social chair or a welcome and guide coordinator over the summer? Hours over the summer would be deducted from the year.
  - i. Are our social chairs here over the summer? Maansi is not in Baltimore, since it was emphasized how much work a Social Chair is over the summer.
  - j. Jaime: We could try to have an election next meeting.
  - k. Motion that, on the condition that we do not reach voting quorum next week, we establish a temporary appointment position, to be elected by the E-Board, of 10 hours for the summer semester for the Welcome Coordinator Position. These funds are to be deducted from the standard fall hours for the position. Seconded. Passes.**
  - l. Can we vote tonight to allow an appointment by an E-board if we do not have a voting quorum at the next meeting.
- 11. End of the Year BBQ
  - a. May 16th, tickets are first come, first serve, so make sure to purchase tickets before they sell out.
  - b. We will have greek food, vegetarian food. Alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages. There is a DJ and a photo-booth.

- c. If you have an organization in your department, please promote the event.
  - d. Is the Facebook Event Up? No, but we can make it.
12. Prateek Statement
- a. All my comments have been factually accurate. I have never hidden anything or misheard anything. I stand by what I said.
- 13. Move to adjourn. Seconded.**