



Graduate Representative Organization

GC Meeting Agenda

Date/Time: 18:00 October 11th, 2021

Meeting Location: [Online, Zoom](#)

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- I. Call to Order and Agenda Review
Alex Helms (Co-chair) called the meeting to order at 06:05 pm.
 - II. Approval of [minutes from September 27th, 2021](#)
 - A. Alex H *IN TEXT* Motion to approve the minutes
 1. Tatsat Banerjee (Funding and Admin Chair), Conor Bean, Michael Wilkinson, Veronica Wallace, Harry Greenberg, and BSK GARGEYA *IN TEXT* second
 2. Yea: 20 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1
 3. The motion passes
 - III. E-board Report (Ona & Alex)
 - A. Policy Review
 1. [Link to Suggested Changes to Conference and Travel Grant Policy](#)

Tatsat: There are three major changes, and a few modifications regarding the timeline and party differences in rewarding sections.

Alex: Most are grammatical changes. The largest modification is updating the timeline for the travel grant.
 2. Discussion

Conor: Is it a retroactive change; that is, is there some sort of outreach that needs to happen with people who've received the travel grant but haven't had the travel grant processed yet?

Tatsat: We can still process travel grant by the end of August. After September, travel needs approval. But what we really need is the name and the email address of the student's advisor.

Calvin: Does the reimbursement timeline changes? What would happen if we missed the deadline? Is there a deadline for GRO to get money back to the students?

Tatsat: The deadline changes to 60 days before the conference starts. We are making sure of two things: 1. trying to revise the deadline because we started to pay for most of conferences 3-4 months earlier; 2. trying to make sure nobody is getting a tax deduction on this. I will continue to process the reimbursement even if it was over time.

Joseph: I would like to propose repealing Part C and D of Article 5.2. Especially, Part C requires the applicant to belong to a department that actively participates GC meetings. I

don't think it's fair to force or punish students from departments who may not have a GC Rep.

Michael Wilkinson (Robotics MSE): *IN TEXT* As someone who represents a department who just recently got a rep, I back Joseph's statement

Alex: This policy does not speak about the policy. Let's vote on the current changes.

Conor: Suggests moving the review of the Joseph proposed part to the next GC Meeting.

3. Motion

- a) Alex H: *IN TEXT* motion to approve the changes in the GRO Conference Grant Program Policy
- b) Michael Wilkinson (Robotics MSE) seconded
- c) Yea: 17 Nay:0 Abstain:7

IV. Social Chair Update (Rashi and Vinay)

A. Upcoming Events

Rashi: Weekly coffee hour recently got approved. Casino night with 4 different games will be on Oct. 16th. Bollywood dance workshop on Oct. 23rd. Pumpkin Spice Latte , board games, and video games for Halloween week. We are also planning an aquarium trip for students.

Michael: We can make the Halloween event more inclusive as making a joint event for Halloween and Dia de los Muertos. Aquarium may get pushback due to ethical problems.

Alex H: We also recently get approved by having meeting in the Levering Lounge.

Alex Y: Are we going to be inside all the time?

Ona: The Coffee Hour will be split into two time slots, and limited number of students needs to sign up for the spot. This would be in the Levering Lounge. We need to be sure that everyone is spaced out.

From Conor Bean to Everyone: 06:31 PM

V. GRO E-Board Elections

A. Floating Positions

1. COVID-19 Concerns Chair

a) Position Description:

- (1) Be responsible for the continued monitoring, advocating of concerns, dissemination of information, and garnering of graduate feedback relating specifically to COVID-19 and its continued effect on the graduate population.
- (2) Be the primary point of contact for graduate students with concerns directly related to COVID-19.
- (3) Correspond with the administration and other graduate student organizations on policy and actions deemed necessary to protect graduate students during and following COVID-19.
- (4) Be paid for no more than 25 hours per academic year.

b) Nominees:

- (1) Divyasree Sasi Kumar

c) Result of the election:

- (1) Divyasree Sasi Kumar was elected as the Health & Wellness Chair

VI. Open Discussion & Questions

A. Grad Sentiment Around Campus

Alex: We noticed a lot of stress and burnout from students, and we would like to have our GC Reps to share your thoughts and feelings. We would bring feedbacks-and suggestions to the administration.

Michael: The paranoia about COVID-like syndromes, mask slipped situation, and traveling make me feel judged. I understand the general situation, but think this paranoia makes privacy my concern.

Matthew Morgado: *IN TEXT* On a positive note, I get the sense that students are happy that COVID-19 transmission rates are low. Could be misreading the room, though.

Harry Greenberg (Chemistry): Some of our first- and second-year students concern about the communication requirement in the department

Michael: *IN TEXT* Side note, I like the idea of off campus events. There are so many restrictions on on-campus events (grab and go, limited size, etc) it makes it not very sociable (and again the paranoia sets in sometimes)

B. New Mandatory COVID-19 Testing for Grads

Calvin: A lot of us think the mandatory test is not necessary because 100% of faculty and staff have been fully vaccinated, and over 95% graduate students have been vaccinated. According to CDC, there is less than 0.01% chance of a breakthrough infection. In addition, it created an extra burden for us to get it tested.

Joseph: Self-service COVID test may be available in more locations. I don't know if that might help alleviate some of the problems, while still addressing health concerns.

Calvin: My main point is why Hopkins follows stricter requirements than the CDC guidelines.

Bianca Corpuz (Earth & Planetary Sciences): I understand that these weekly COVID tests are inconvenient which I totally agree. COVID isn't a deadly disease, and some individuals may not be fully vaccinated, and those who are vaccinated like myself are compromised and so the vaccine doesn't really mean all that much sometimes. So, I think it's important to think about others. And holidays are coming up, so I think it's for everyone's safety. Maybe there could be more testing sites that are more convenient for people so it's not so much of a hassle, but I don't think they're completely unnecessary.

Bill Sun (AMS): All the sites have limited time access. I am very busy, and it is easy for me to miss my appointments. However, I still got a test result after I missed all of my appointments last week. I would also like to suggest reducing the frequency of the test.

Calvin: JHU takes the stance of a preponderance of evidence. There have been no indications and no evidence of transmission, either in the classroom or in a laboratory setting. I understand that is a really scary disease, but...

Alex Y: I agree with more self-service stations. It has been six months since many people got vaccinated, so the antibody titers are going down. The vaccine may not be as effective as we once thought now.

Joseph: If we cannot change the rule, we can make the testing more accessible for students.

Calvin: I would be in favor of taking it at home and dropping it off. If we make it easier, people will be less upset about the testing.

Conor: I strongly support Alex Y. And my biggest point is that this is out of line with CDC guidelines.

Joseph: *IN TEXT* motion to continue discussion next week.

KeFan Zhuo: *IN TEXT* Yes, I also think there should be a survey.

Calvin and Harry seconded in text

Yea: 20 Nay: 0 Abstain: 0

The motion passes

C. Hopkins Police Force

Alex: The main point from topic Sebastian was going to prepare some slides talking about the coalition of policing. Ona and I will be meeting with Dr. Branville Bard Jr., the new VP of Security, at the end of the month. We discussed at that last meeting we're still firmly opposed to the creation of a police force. But it seems like the police force is going to be created. So again,

we're soliciting kind of feedback and comments on how people think we should best impact the kind of creation via organization.

Michael: Ideally GRO would be opposed to the formation of the private police force but given that it's going to happen probably regardless of what we do. One suggestion that I have just as coming from a public university that had a private police force is that making sure that the police force is equipped or has the proper oversight to perform their job without having to constantly reach out to the public police force. The reason I say that is because I was in the University of Alabama. And often, if the Alabama PD had to get involved, the intervention and the situation was worse than if the private PD involved. When the private PD didn't have the proper resources or oversight, the public PD often resulted in significantly worse outcomes. So, I prefer that we don't have a private police force because I understand the ramifications of that but if that is going to be the case, I think we should try to make sure that they have the resources they need to perform their job correctly, not just like enough manpower or whatever but perform their job correctly and have proper oversight.

John Soltis (Physics and Astronomy): We could ask Hopkins how to prevent abuse

Bill: We can suggest making the police force ~~is~~ diverse enough.

Alex Y: We could ask the administration to clarify the position, duties, and so on.

Michael: *IN TEXT* The general vibe was that the private police force cared more about student wellness, the public force cared about getting the arrest (often at more aggressive costs) This is because they had a lot of training on student affairs and interaction and interacted with the students a lot

VII. Adjournment

- A. The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.