



Graduate Representative Organization

GC Meeting Agenda

Date/Time: 18:00 November 08th, 2021

Meeting Location: [Online, Zoom](#)

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- I. Call to Order and Agenda Review
 - A. Ona called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm
 - II. Approval of minutes from October, 25th 2021
 - A. Conor Bean (Poli Sci): *IN TEXT* Motion to approve the minutes
 1. Dani Bautista (Advocacy Co-Chair): *IN TEXT* second
 2. Yea: 21 Nay: 0 Abstain: 0
 3. The motion passes
 - III. E-board Report (Ona & Alex)
 - A. Voting on Proposed Coordinator Changes
 1. [Tenative Bylaw Changes - 10/25/2021.docx](#)

Alex: We're trying to define a starting and an ending date for coordinators, whereas right now it's still ambiguous. We're trying to attach the coordinators to an E-board member as a point of contact, just to streamline communication between the coordinators and E-board. We are trying to give coordinators voting rights at general council meetings to show appreciation for the work that they do. Coordinators do a good amount of work even though they're not technically listed as E-board numbers. Therefore, I think all these bylaws changes make sense.
 2. Discussion:

Vittorio: I have explain the reasons during the last meeting. And I would like to remind everybody that two third majority is required for bylaws changes, which means abstentions do count against it.
 3. Alex: Motion to vote for approving the changes to the bylaws.
 - a) Michael Wilkinson (Robotics MSE): *IN TEXT* second
 - b) Yea: 23 Nay: 1 Abstain: 0
 - c) The motion passes
 - B. Reviewing and voting on Joseph's proposed changes to the Conference and Travel Grant Policy (Michael)
 1. [Linked to Suggest Changes in Conference and Travel Grant Attendance Policy](#)

Michael: This is something that Joseph had proposed during last meeting. The vote did not pass for similar reasons as Vittorio mentioned that there were all abstains instead of nays on the vote. We also have significantly more voters this time so that's why I think it's reasonable to reboot. Currently, none of the members of my department would be eligible for any GRO-sponsored grant funding based on the current status of the bylaws because I have not been on the GC for more than half a year. On top of that, if any of them were to want to get travel funding didn't have to forcibly join the GC as per provision. So, I wanted to continue to propose a vote now since we have significantly more people and after further discussion on the amendment. The first amendment is that instead of having applicants must belong to a department that's been actively

participating in the GC over the past year, we change it to the department that is affiliated with the Homewood divisions of Johns Hopkins University. And likewise, repealing completely the second clause that if you're ineligible, then you're therefore forced to serve on the GC to receive this funding.

2. Discussion:

Alex: My only concern is whether the attendance to the GC Meetings will change.

Michael: I understand that concern. In my opinion, I think the majority of us are here to represent our departments not simply because of funding. I think the concern that members who already seem pretty committed might not show up is not as important as the number of people that are now being excluded because of these rules.

Vittorio: *IN TEXT* Over 400 students from AMS were excluded last year, even though I was a part of the GRO

Cyril Cook (Biophysics): I first became aware of GRO when I went to apply for travel funding and found out my department was ineligible because my representative hadn't been attended meetings. So that mechanism certainly is the reason why I ended up here. Just to speak to my own experience.

Veronica Wallace (Environmental Health and Engineering): *IN TEXT* As one perspective — I didn't even know about GC reps until my 3rd year. It's not widely advertised that departments have GCs, at least in mine

Michael: You might run into an instance where your whole department is excluded from getting this funding simply just from the ignorance of not knowing that this committee exists or that your rep has not been attending meetings. Given the fact that including my department did not really know that GRO GC Meeting was a thing and this was one of the requirements, you're punishing people who would not know.

Ona: I do see the point. It's a delicate balance here because these restrictions came to make GC Reps actually come to the meeting. Since we have many things that we need to vote on, we need a quorum. If we don't have a quorum for the meetings, we cannot vote on anything. That was my biggest concern, as well.

Amoh Tontoh (Heath and Wellness Chair): *IN TEXT* does the funding covers master's students?

Tatsat: Yes.

Veronica: Having departments understand that they have representation and all the reasons beyond just the funding could be important to emphasize to the student body the importance of having representatives in the GRO to express concerns beyond just the travel grant. *IN TEXT* I don't think that the main advertisement for GCs should be "come so that you can get travel grants for your department". Advertise it as "come represent your department for issues relevant to students in your department".

Matthew Morgado (Philosophy): If we accept these changes, should we also revise the quorum rule as well, i.e. how much counts as quorum?

Jo Giardini: *IN TEXT* If we see significant decrease without addressing quorum first, wouldn't we be stuck not being able to make changes? I understand the impetus behind this, but I suppose that in the absence of alternate mechanisms (coercive or not) for ensuring attendance I am somewhat ambivalent.

Matthew: *IN TEXT* ^ same. Maybe we could offer bonus funding for departments that send reps and set base level for all departments

3. 31 out of 38 people voted, among which, 27 people says they would still attend the GC Meeting without this restriction.

4. Ona: Motion to vote for the proposed changes to the conference and travel grant policy
- Yea: 17 Nay: 0 Abstain: 10
 - The motion doesn't pass.

C. Students receiving late payments

- Ona: The Tax Office is just overwhelmed with the number of approvals they must do especially for social security numbers of students. Julia (jbuick@jhu.edu) and Eric (earneklev@jhu.edu), who told us that students should reach out to them directly with any issues that they're having with late payments, and they're willing to investigate the issues personally. And they do want to process everything as soon as possible.

2. Discussion:

Jo: Just to clarify that there are issues with social security numbers being processed but that should not affect the late payment? Because I have spoken to many first-year students. Some American students were having this problem and they were told it is different from international students who have SSN issues.

Alex: I was wondering if GC reps are aware of this problem happening in other departments. Students could reach out to the GC reps and the GC reps could then either reach out to us or they could direct a student to us, so that we could get a person to handle the situation. And then if we know, for example, like there's a US student with a non-Anglophone name, and their payments getting delayed, we can elevate that as high as we can if we have some more information.

Conor: I've been directing students who ran into this problem to reach out to Renee or Christine. They use Twitter. Christine oversees the Homewood emergency funds. I'm nervous based on the number of people possibly looking at this problem. Do you know how much is left at that fund?

Ona: We can send email to Renee or Christine.

Conor: TRU is also working on a survey to map the spread of these problems, I can put people in touch with the survey creators if they know of this problem in their department

D. Transferring Budget for Lighting of the Quad Event

1. Alex: Lighting the Quad is in-person this year on December 3. For the GRO to support, we have to do a budget transfer from the Happy Hour budget to the Student Program budget. The reasoning for the budget transfers is that due to the lack of Happy Hours and a lot of hosted events that have come out of a student programming budget. We plan to provide 1 slice of pizza from Pizza Bolis through Foodify and 1 canned soda to each of 300 graduate students. In total, we need 38 pizza, 25 packs of soda, and 300 paper plates and napkins, which gives a total of $\$570 + \$500 + \$70 + \$20 = \$1,160$. We request transfer amount of \$1,300 to have a little bit flexibility.

2. Discussion:

Matthew: *IN TEXT* I forgot: Is anything being done with the Happy Hour money?

Alex: Not yet. We are going to have Happy Hour, but the portion for the first half semester is still there.

Harry Greenberg (Chemistry): *IN TEXT* What 12 pack of soda costs \$1.67 per can?

Alex: The price could be less than that. This is an estimate through search on the internet.

Veronica: *IN TEXT* Does this mean there is not funding for something else?

Alex: There will be about \$14k left to be spent on the spring Happy Hour event. So we do have enough money to support this event.

Isaiah: Our current event budgets falls into Happy Hours, Coffee Hours, and Student Programming these three categories. For intercampus events and orientation events, we have separate budgets. Almost all of Student Programming budget has been used this year, and this is the main reason why we need to transfer the money from Happy Hour.

Michael: *IN TEXT* Is 300 a reasonable count? Are there statistics from previous years that would say this is reasonable? I imagine a surge in post-Zoom people wanting to attend.

Alex: 300 is a reasonable count. The number is taken from the registration for Coffee Hour.

Matthew Morgado (Philosophy): *IN TEXT* Is the Lighting of the Quad a grad-only event? Or do undergrads also come? If it's open to undergrads as well, how do we make sure only the grads get the pizza, assuming that's what we're trying to do?

Alex: This event is open to everybody. But there will be a GRO booth, pizza and soda will be only available to graduate students.

Isaiah: Grad students have a red square around their photo ID.

3. Alexander Helms (Co-Chair): *IN TEXT* Motion to approve the transfer of \$1300 from happy hour line item to student programming in support of lighting of the quad
 - a) Cyril Cook (Biophysics), Tatsat, and Dani Bautista (Advocacy Co-Chair: *IN TEXT* Second
 - b) Yea: 23 Nay:0 Abstain:1

E. University policy regarding trans students and SIS (Jo)

1. Ona: For request search, if a preferred name is used, the preferred name is in place of the first initial legal name as search result. Otherwise, the preferred name will be displayed in parentheses next to the legal name.

Jo: Renee has not provided any ideas on how to move things forward. Currently, the SIS system has no means to recognize the names. Using preferred names means a lot to trans students who have changed their names from the names they were assigned at birth. They are some students who are able to get their names changed, however, that is not an arduous process for many trans students, especially students who are international from areas were having access to gender transition. Hopkins currently provides no information on how limited ability on getting a name change done through SIS if you're under those circumstances. There is a limited preferred name function that students can use. In addition to the preferred name, it prevents any students from having any right to privacy. As an instructor, I find it quite distressing that my students are immediately evident to my identity by virtue of the SIS system. I think this is an issue of equity that moves well beyond a graduate student wants.

2. Discussion:

Michael: I don't understand why the other system use the legal name other than the financial department.

Ona: The university says that the system is extremely hard to change, but they are working towards this. She emphasizes the complexity and did not dive into any details.

Conor: According to Renee, this sounds like a problem regarding update SIS. Also, this has been a long-standing problem that they have been aware of.

Alex: Renee did mention that she works with Demery from the Office of LGBTQ Life. That could be our next step to reach out to Demery.

Jo: *IN TEXT* Some more information for those interested here:

<https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2021/10/trans-students-and-allies-protest-university-policies>

F. Upcoming Club Event Planning Meeting

1. Alex: I had a meeting with John Lynch, the University's Chief Risk Officer. We're able to speak to him in more detail about what the university is approving for events, for example, what kind of loose restrictions and guidelines are. We wanted to hold a meeting for any graduate student clubs that are looking to plan events. If the event is not approved by John, we can give reasonings and justifications for that. We'll send out an email after the meeting with a zoom link, date, and time. You can submit questions to the email by Friday, November 12. Just ask us questions about whether you think your bid will be approved or not. Because speaking to John, there's a lot of caveats for him. A plan is very important, too. We just want to be able to communicate this effectively to everybody to make sure all the grad clubs are holding events that they want to and that they're still able to within the Universities of COVID restrictions.

G. Upcoming GC election of Graduate Involvement Chair

1. Ona: Our previous Graduate Involvement Chair, Joseph Choy, has resigned. We will be having another election soon.

H. Reminder about New Student Center Feedback Meeting

1. Ona: The meeting is on Tuesday, November 9th, from 5 to 7 pm, and on Wednesday, November 10th, from 11 am to 2 pm.

IV. GRO Group Recognition

A. Graduate Student Communication Organization at JHU

1. Alexander Helms (Co-Chair) : *IN TEXT* Our Advisors said we can recognize AAP groups, provide funding, but AAP students are not given voting rights or representatives at GRO Meetings
2. Aly Hill shortly re-summarized her speech from last GC Meeting. The primary purpose of these discussions is to provide GSCO members with knowledge of communications research and expertise from faculty representing the six concentrations in the MA in communication program.

3. Alex: *IN TEXT* Motion to approve Graduate Student Communication Organization at JHU
 - a) Yea: 20 Nay:0 Abstain:1
 - b) The motion passes
- B. Johns Hopkins University - National Association of Black Physicist
1. Sirak Mekonen: The purpose of our chapter is to assess professional social networks for black students and underrepresented minorities not only open to Johns Hopkins University and the Physics and Astronomy Department but also open to all other departments. We hope to develop leadership and organizational skills as well as networking and to help increase the number of African Americans in our department, as well as in other departments. We want to foster a space for black students to discuss ideas openly and we're working with Morgan State University, UMBC, and Howard University to create a regional National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) chapter, which we can advance this idea and increase the diversity not only in our department but also in these Universities.
 2. Discussion:

Michael: What percentage of the current Physics and Astronomy undergraduate cohort is black?

Sirak: I don't know the specific number, but there is only one undergraduate student in my department.
 3. Alex: *IN TEXT* Motion to approve Johns Hopkins University - National Association of Black Physicist
 - a) Michael Wilkinson (Robotics MSE) and Conor Bean (Poli Sci): *IN TEXT* Second
 - b) Yea: 23 Nay: 0 Abstain:0
 - c) The motion passes
- C. GRO Funding Requests
1. Johns Hopkins Product Management Club
 - a) Tatsat: I think it's a good program. But 100 participants may violate the University's COVID-19 restrictions.
 - b) Aniket Borole: 100 was an estimate of students. There won't be restrictions on registering for this club – it will be similar to other management club or consulting club. We had a conversation about ministering to some different branches in a city. Some people who are interested in product management know about it, but not exactly what it entails or what the job is about. So we think this would be a good opportunity to introduce this in more detail and in a more technical manner because we saw that consulting club has done awareness connects to insert many professionals and give them some aspect of what consultants do and competitions to get them in touch is happening in consulting. Similarly, we add a product management club to the same thing. We will have speaker events, where speakers from reputed organizations such as Microsoft, Apple, American Express, come to our clubs. Recently, we partnered with two startups - one is Personick and the other one is Kessel Run. They reach out to us to help them work on their product project. We have our members on this project to give them extra exposure about product project works or how a product initiation starts, how you develop a product, how you take customer feedback into consideration, and how to design executables. We have more than 100 students subscribed to our mailing list, and we have about 35 members actively involved in our current events. Therefore, we are looking forward to scaling this operation. Currently, we are restricted to the Homewood campus. Last month, we expanded our footprint into the Healthcare business and we received good participation from there as well.

KeFan Zhuo: *IN TEXT* what are your plans to spend these money?, On study materials or anything else?

Aniket: We plan to spend \$950 for a marketing event to attract students and provide them with food boxes. We plan to get some pre-packaged 6-inch sandwiches and cookies.

Matthew Morgado (Philosophy): *IN TEXT* So do you expect something like 100 students to come? at least as a max limit?

Aniket: We expect more than 200 students to come. 100 is an approximated number because we saw many students come to the Life Design Lab events. We are just going to purchase 100 packages of food for them. And we do not expect them to come all at once, we may have multiple events.

Alex: This event is similar to Hoptoberfest in that there will be no registration and students come to the table and pick up the food box if they are interested. So there would be no congregating with the food would be given after the discussion.

c) Matthew: *IN TEXT* Motion to vote to fund \$950 for the Johns Hopkins Product Management Club.

(1) Michael: *IN TEXT* second

(2) Yea: 14 Nay:0 Abstain: 13

(3) The motion does not pass

V. Discussion I: Hopkins PD and the GRO

A. Alex: Having this discussion is because we fear that there's a time window for us to have an influence in the structuring of the organization and we don't want to be just cut out because we flatly oppose. Perhaps we can have a poll to see where all the GC members sit in relation to this issue.

B. Discussion:

Jo: I see no reason why our desire to have a voice in the process should mean that we amended our position in the email which Brandel Bard sent to the entirety of Johns Hopkins on October 13. Some of my most important relationships have been with those who are critical of the police. Indeed, I have often found that those are the strongest objections to policing have the potential to be the most instructive in our growth and improvement. I think that it is actually imperative that we stand by our position. He has said publicly that he intends to work with people who are critical and who are opposed to the extension of policing. It is our duty to hold him to that and to show and to make him prove that he is interested in incorporating critiques if he plans to go forward with the formation of the force. I would also like to say that four years ago when Johns Hopkins initially went through the procedures towards forming its police force, they said that they were going to do this certainly the activism of students, community members, faculty and staff delayed this for several years. I see no reason why them saying that. It's certainly going to happen now means that it is inevitable, especially given that the formation of the force remains dependent on state legislature where there are currently ongoing motions that would potentially remove Hopkins's ability to pursue this policing work.

Alex: The rationale behind the meaning of motion was when Michael was going to reach out to another University Police Department, it was denied because GRO remains opposed. From a procedural end, I don't feel comfortable having discussions with the university or negotiating with the university if we remain politically opposed.

Conor: I also would firmly be against amending it. I don't like the idea of us thinking that the GRO in any capacity has a negotiating power on this or that what little negotiating power we have is increased by weakening our stance. The last time the GRO had security concerns, a dedicated E-board member was dismissed unilaterally by the university from further conversations, then was the temporary VP of security Connor Scott. The university is not going to negotiate with us. Being open to having a constructive dialogue on this especially after the clear stance that the GRO has taken in the past and the more general student body including the undergraduate representative organization took in the run-up to this. It'd be much more interesting in pursuing matters that are electoral level, which the GRO did last year in terms of reaching out to different representatives who were making legislation in the Maryland House and Senate.

Michael: The idea is that it'd be nice to keep our position of being opposed while still having the ability to have conversations with organizations like the police accountability board and other boards that might influence the way this is formulated if they do go ahead. Because there was the

issue of last time which I ended up having the conversation on my own behalf, not on behalf of the GRO. If we're going to continuously run into an issue of we can't have conversations with relevant groups, we can try to voice our student's concerns about these things with appropriate groups simply because every time we say we're firmly against this and therefore we do not approve anyone talking to various groups on this matter. You can have opposition to it but still the ability to speak with various groups on behalf of GRO in trying to mitigate any possible fallout that could happen from the situation, and it seems to be being presented as a dichotomous. I don't think it has to be that way.

Jo: *IN TEXT* Michael wasn't allowed to have a conversation with someone on the GRO's behalf—and this conversation was to be with someone who has no relationship to Johns Hopkins or Baltimore—this seems quite a distinct matter than working with people at Johns Hopkins about security matters.

Douwe (hist of science): *IN TEXT* I've brought the PD issue up with the students in my department (History of Science and Tech) and we are unanimously of the opinion that the GRO should remain firmly opposed to the PD, precisely because of the reasons that Jo mentioned
Matthew: *IN TEXT* We could frame the statement as saying something like: *It's much better to not form private police, rather than form it. Thus, JHU shouldn't form private police. If JHU does form private police, it should disband them.* That said, if a private police were formed, then it would be better for them to be subject to x, y, z restrictions, rather than no restrictions or restrictions a, b, c. So, if a private police were formed, and the GRO couldn't disband it, then the GRO should and will advocate for restrictions x, y, z.

Jo: *IN TEXT* I would like to motion that the GRO invite JHU professors Stuart Schraeder and Vesla Weaver to present and take questions on policing with the GC.

Naveed Riazat (Mechanical Engineering) and Matthew Morgado (Philosophy): *IN TEXT*
Second

Alex: They didn't respond the first time

KeFan Zhuo: *IN TEXT* I also have a concern about the funds that would be used to form private police, If there is a possible tuition rise this could be a problem

- VI. Discussion II: Default mode of voting during GC Meetings (Michael)
 - A. Michael: I propose to make every vote a secret vote to avoid bias.
 - B. Tatsat Banerjee (Funding & Admin Chair): *IN TEXT* This should be a by-law change vote, right?
 - C. Ona: That may cause difficulty for in-person voting. We can vote in the next GC Meeting.
 - D. Isaiah: We can write in papers and let the secretary count.
- VII. Open Discussion & Questions
 - A. Louise summarized successful intercampus event of bowling. Expecting 300 students for the skate event this Friday.
- VIII. Adjournment
 - A. The meeting adjourns at 7:46 pm.