



Graduate Representative Organization

GC Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 18:00 PM ET October 16th, 2023

Olin 305 and [Zoom](#)

I. Call to Order and Agenda Review

- Meeting called to order at 6 pm and quorum for the meeting confirmed by the Secretary.

II. Approval of October 2nd Meeting Minutes: [GC Minutes 10.02.23](#)

- Voting ID: 67
- Motion to approve by Gabriel, seconded by Satvik.
- Motion passes.

III. Ali's Departure: What this means and what the next steps are (5 min)

- Michael: As per the email you all should've seen by now, our co-chair Ali had resigned last week due to personal reasons. I will not go into further details to speak for Ali but we are grateful for his efforts throughout the time he had served as co-chair.

IV. TRU & GRO - how can we help each other? (20 min)

A. TRU UE will present on their main bargaining points with the university:

- Jhanvi and Jeff (representatives from the TRU-BC)
- Brief history of TRU:
 - 2014: TRU was established.
 - 2015: TRU launches healthcare campaign.
 - 2017-18: Parental leave for grads and vision + dental insurance. Result of this was the vision and dental insurance we currently have for grad students.
 - 2018: Unionization campaign launched.
 - 2019: TRU opposes enactment of JHPD.
 - 2020-21: TRU successfully led efforts for COVID relief and protections for grad students.
 - 2023: 97% of grad workers voted yes for union representation.
 - TRU is currently in the process of bargaining for a contract.
- Contract being the legal agreement binding the employer (JHU) with the employees (grad students) covering workplace rights and protections that cannot be violated by the employer.

- The Bargaining Committee is divided between both campuses and people from most divisions.
- Shannon Farmer (Lead Negotiator), Christine Kavanaugh, Mary Favret, Sabine Stanley etc representing the JHU administration.
- Bargaining points:
 - Living wage for all grad students.
 - Guaranteed on-time payment.
 - Protection and support for international students.
 - Safe and reliable transportation within Baltimore.
 - A lot of other items under discussion are broadly split between non- economic (workload, workplace safety etc.) and economic (fair wages, insurance benefits, office space etc.)
 - Economic action items not being bargained yet.
- Jeff: Supporting TRU would help not just PhD students but also Master's students. For example, over OIS staffing and improved response times, we have a well thought out plan on what we expect from the OIS. We want hotlines and deportation protections. If we win these, this will be a structural change for the entire university and will in turn benefit Master's students. For all that we asked for, the university is only agreeing to include timely response from the OIS in the contract.

B. Discussion on what we can do so that TRU and GRO can most effectively reach the goal of improving the graduate student experience:

- Michael: Admin usually responds saying legal implications for any issue that is currently being bargained for by TRU and while I can't argue on the spot as I don't know the intricacies and definitely don't want to double deal, I also want to know how we can help pressure admin to deliver on these without putting TRU in a bad spot.
- Jeff: If you've noticed a pattern, the admin will blame TRU for all sorts of inactions. The law says that you can't change any working conditions that are currently being negotiated in a contract. However, the University has made it clear that they have no issues changing working conditions, like changing our insurance plan etc. They're basically trying to draw a division between the TRU and GRO by blaming us for any sort of action you're pressing for.
- Sam (TRU): Another thing that's going on in the sidelines is that upon unionizing, TRU is a labor union protected by federal laws and is the sole bargaining entity for all PhD students in the university. So as per this law, admin is not supposed to enact an action item brought up by the GRO, which is also part of the bargaining contract for TRU. **Meaning they can't refuse us but accept another entity's request for the same action item and especially have that benefit only a section of graduate students (such as masters' students).** While they legally can't do so, the admin will get very close to doing this in order to weaken our power and weaken our stances.
- Jeff: In fact we have more leverage now that the admin is up to these tactics.
- Gabriel: When we bring up the issues you mentioned, they pretend to never have heard of these issues before. They acted like they're hearing issues about OIS for the first time and now we know that this is something that TRU has been bargaining for and so they've definitely heard of it before. What we really need to discuss is how TRU and GRO can

use each other to push for these items jointly as these are basic things needed for all graduate students.

- Satvik: Why can't masters students be represented by the TRU? I thought it was for all grad workers.
- Jhanvi: So PhD students are paid by the university while the Masters students pay tuition to the university.
- Satvik: But master's students are also RAs or TAs, so we're also technically employees of the university.
- Jhanvi: It's just that historically it's been difficult to prove that master's students are employees of the university.
- Sam: That aside, we also had to settle on a smaller bargaining population in order to get to unionization as if we included as much of the graduate population as possible, admin would have tried their best to not let us get to this stage. **Even now, it's not just master's students but also other graduate students like students in the MD-PhD program who aren't considered employees in their MD years. So there are a lot of technical intricacies that led us to choose this population to represent in our union. While we're at this stage, we do wish to advocate for master's students and we can support the GRO in their efforts for this.**
- Michael: I definitely don't want our advocacy efforts to interfere with your ongoing bargaining, especially on common items. Our efforts for advocacy, while not as legally binding as what you're bargaining for, still have had positive outcomes and we don't want to leave master's students in the dust.
- Gabriel: Releasing a joint statement to support TRU will not leave out master's students as we choose to support them especially in common structural action items that will benefit all.
- Michael: As the GRO we have more access to admin as Christine and Renee are GRO advisors and there's always this connection on that aspect. But to be honest, I am nervous about bringing up items that are currently being discussed by TRU.
- Jhanvi: I think it's better that you voice that concern when you talk to them so that they know that you are aware of double dealing and the practice being illegal.
- Michael: I'd love to put you all in contact with our advocacy chairs and continue this channel and dialogue so that we have a direct line of communication. Thanks again for taking time to present your efforts to us.
- Jeff: I'd also liked to be contacted by master's reps here to hear their take on our efforts so far.
- Gabriel: **We can also start a draft on our joint statement of support and have it sent out in 2 weeks after GC approval.**

V. **Group Funding Requests (10 min)**

- Michael: Just some general rules for new reps: we can only cover up to 90% of the event's costs and we can't fund events that have alcohol. Logistics will be vetted by our funding chair.
 - A. IGSA - Durga Puja and Vijayadashami Celebrations (\$800)
 - Garba Night event date 23rd October. Represented by IGSA VP Kaizen Nathani. Event will be a collaboration with the undergrad Hindu Student Council. Already

received \$500 from CDI and requested \$800 from the GRO. Expected participation: 300 people. Ticket price would be \$8 per person.

- Kaashvi: What about other fixed costs that depend on attendance, like dandiya?
- Kaizen: Other props would be covered with miscellaneous items and dandiya came out to be too expensive.
- Motion to approve the full amount and seconded.
- Voting ID is 68.
- Motion passes and the event will be fully funded by the GRO.

B. LCSR GSA - PhD Applications Guidance Workshop (\$400)

- Represented by Lidia Al-Zogbi. Event plan is to support students applying to the PhD program. Panel will be current students from CS, Mechanical and electrical engineering departments. Expecting 60 attendees. We plan to send it to just ECE, CS, Mech and robotics students for now. Event dated Nov 2 and located in Hackerman.
- Michael: So the main criteria for GRO to fund an event is if the event is open to all graduate students. So can we expand the admission criteria to students from other departments as well, but have the limit to 60?
- Mihir: Will the workshop be focused for PhD in only these programs?
- Lidia: No we will be covering for general PhD application guidance etc. but the panel is obviously more experienced with LCSR related departments.
- Motion to approve the amount and seconded.
- Voting ID is 69.
- Motion passes and the event will be fully funded by the GRO.

VI. Discussion and Vote on Emergency Co-Chair Election (10-30 min)

- Michael: As per our by-laws, if any of the co-chairs, secretary or treasurer resigns, we have to elect this position in the immediate next GC meeting. As the notice of resignation was too close to this GC meeting I wanted to discuss with the GC on how we want to go about this. Just one criteria is that co-chair can only be a prior GC member so the population that is eligible will be the same.
- Satvik: If the pool of applications can't change, will it really benefit if we push it to the next GC meeting?
- Lakshmi: I think before we answer that, can Michael handle the workload well until the next GC meeting as he will be the sole co-chair until then?
- Michael: I will survive as I will have help from other EB members stepping in. I also don't want to pressure folks that don't feel ready to run for this and can manage for the next 2 weeks.
- Kevin: It is a big responsibility to be a co-chair and we might need to give people some extra time to think about this.
- Gabriel: People can even ask Michael what the commitments are and we might have more people wanting to run if we push it as well.
- Lakshmi: Would this be considered a by-law change since we won't be following the by-laws? Cause in that case we'd need an additional quorum on that.
- Michael: Not really, the by-laws aren't mandatory and it's up to the GC to decide how much to follow this.

- Motion to postpone the co-chair election to the next GC meeting. Seconded.
- Voting ID is 70.
- Motion passes.
- Michael: Please reach out to me if you're interested and I will be honest about the role.

VII. Updates from E-Board (10 min):

A. Feedback from Meeting with Dean Favret : [Accountability Document](#)

- Gabriel: We had only 3 attendees but it was helpful to talk about important items. Ali wanted them to implement a teaching sensitivity training to faculties as well. We also asked her help in supporting efforts to improve OIS. **We have now put together an accountability document to keep track of all the items we've discussed and how much progress has been made by the admin on that.**

B. Security Concerns: Transportation Survey (Yu)

- Yu: I just sent a document to discuss with the transportation office so all reps are welcome to add and edit this document.

C. Intercampus: Boo Bash (Satvik)

- Satvik: We're the last of the schools to open registration but this event will be in Turner on Oct 27th.
- Michael: Is registration open on our end?
- Satvik: Other schools opened it but we haven't opened ours yet. Hopkins groups are controlled by other schools so they might have opened it for us as well.
- Michael: We might want to close registration on our end before we advertise. What's the limit for Homewood grads?
- Satvik: 99 I think, but it might be less than that.

D. Professional Development: LDL/GRO/ISAH first collab event

- Michael: Alice isn't here as she's the president for ISAH as well and they meet at the same time as us but just wanted to share that the first collab event was very successful and we hope to see more of this from our professional development chair.

E. Funding Chair: Conference Grants (Mihir)

- Mihir: We haven't released the conference grants yet as we're still confirming eligibility.
- Michael: To reiterate, the eligibility is determined through the attendance of reps in spring 2023 GC sessions so please keep this in mind and **keep voting on the voting form as that is our primary record of attendance.**

VIII. Grad Groups and Points of Contact (2 min)

- Michael: We want to publish a list of all grad groups on the GRO website. The idea is that we give grad students a list of all grad groups. There is a similar list for undergrads on hopkins groups but we don't have that yet. **Please send in whatever grad groups you are aware of to the GRO email.**

IX. Open Discussion & Questions

- Rep: I'm a new rep and was just wondering if there's a shared calendar to keep track of things?
- Michael: We do have a calendar for social events.
- Rep: No for meetings specifically.
- Michael: We do have a calendar for all GC meetings and you can embed it to your personal calendar. Another thing I wanted to ask if having all the voting IDs listed helps?
- Rep: Yes.
- Rep: It would also help to tell us what happened in the previous GC meeting so that we're up to date on things.
- Michael: Lakshmi can talk more on this but **we're planning to do a meeting summary for every GC meeting so that it will help people who couldn't attend.**
- Lakshmi: Just wanted to confirm whether you'd need me to send this both after a GC meeting as well as before the next GC meeting?
- Gabriel and Michael: Just after the meeting would be fine.
- Alex: **Just wanted to bring this up again but all reps can use this [form](#) to get a survey out to different departments to get an idea about the current sentiment amongst grad students in your department. You can even make QR codes linking this form and print it across your department building so that we can engage with as many grad students as possible.**
- Gabriel: The idea is for reps to use this template and change it for your own department before you send it out.

X. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn.
- Voting ID is 71. Motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

XI. Voting Results

Voting Motion ID	66	67	68	69	70	71
Motion	To approve the statement on Israel-Palestine conflict	To approve the minutes of 10/2	To approve the full funding amount for IGSA Durga Puja and Garba Celebrations	To approve funding for LCSR GSA	To postpone the election for Co-Chair to the next GC meeting	To adjourn the meeting of 10/16
Anthropology	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Applied Mathematics & Statistics (AMS)	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
History of Art	Abstain	Yea		Yea	Yea	Yea
Biology	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Biomedical Engineering (BME)	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Biophysics	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering		Yea	Yea	Yea	Abstain	Yea
Chemistry	Abstain					
Civil Engineering						
Classics		Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Cognitive Science			Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Computer Science	Abstain					
Economics	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE)						
Engineering Management						
English		Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Environmental Health and Engineering (formerly DOGEE)	Abstain					
EPS (Earth and Planetary Sciences)	Yea					
Modern Languages and Literatures (Formerly GRLL)	Yea					
History		Yea	Yea	Yea	Abstain	Yea
History of Science and Technology	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Comp Thought and Literature		Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Information Security Inst			Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea

Materials Science & Engineering	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Mathematics						
Mechanical Engineering	Yea	Yea	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea
Near Eastern Studies (NES)	Abstain	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Philosophy		Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Physics and Astronomy						
Political Science	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Psychological and Brain Sciences	Abstain	Yea	Yea		Yea	Yea
Sociology		Yea	Yea	Abstain	Yea	Yea
Writing Seminars						
Robotics	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Co-Chair 1	Yea	Yea				
Co-Chair 2						
Secretary	Yea	Yea	Yea			
Treasurer		Yea	Yea	Yea	Abstain	Yea
Admin & Funding						
Social 1		Yea	Yea		Yea	Yea
Social 2	Abstain					
Advocacy 1	Abstain		Yea		Yea	

Advocacy 2				Yea		
Communications						
Diversity						
Graduate Involvement Chair	Yea	Yea	Yea	Abstain	Yea	Yea
Professional Development						
Intercampus Co-ordinator						Yea
Intercampus Chair		Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	
Summer sports coordinator						
Health & Wellness	Abstain	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Security Concerns Chair		Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea
Yea	9	28	29	26	27	29
Nay	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abstain	16	1	1	2	3	0