



Graduate Representative Organization
GC Meeting Minutes
Date/Time: 18:00 PM ET March 11th, 2024
Hybrid: Bloomberg 272 and [Zoom](#)

Meeting Slides:  **GRO GC Meeting 03_11_2024.pptx**

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Call to Order and Agenda Review
- II. Approval of [Feb 26th GC Meeting Minutes](#) passes
- III. TRU-BC (Jeff Davis & other members) (30-45 mins)
Discussion Focus:
 - A. Upcoming strike: details
 1. Strike pledge: tinyurl.com/tru-strike-pledge
 2. Michael: if the strike won't be authorized, and if the majority of grad students do not vote for it, what will happen?
 - a) 66% are expected to sign, so when it plateaus, we will follow up
 3. Is there a date set for the strike vote?
 - a) It depends on how many people sign up for the pledge, and the date hasn't been made public. It depends on bargaining, etc.
 4. Arman: What can be done in solidarity? How can others not in TRU both cope with and support the strike?
 - a) To foster solidarity, and if you want to offer support, on the TRU website, we have a [strike FAQ](#), which addresses all of these points.
 - b) Important: Make sure you're not a scab- that you don't go and step in to perform work that a striking worker would do.
 - c) Another thing to note: even if you have an hourly salary as an MA TA, you're still protected by labor laws if you are asked to take on responsibilities outside of your role, e.g. if you take on responsibilities of a striking worker.
 5. What about for RAs?

- a) That might require more communication with the PhDs in your lab.
 - 6. Michael: There's a lot of information. What would be the quick sales pitch to get people involved, signing cards?
 - a) If you want to get paid more, you need to strike. Admin is pitching 40k, which is below the livable wage in Baltimore.
 - 7. How long do strikes usually last?
 - a) The UC strikes lasted months, but those were much bigger- across the entire UC system. The newest contracts have been settled on even before striking, the threat was enough.
 - B. Bargaining updates
 - C. GRO-Admin updates: conference grants
- IV. By-laws change: Social Chairs stipend increase
- A. Increase to 250 hours (\$2800) per chair per semester (\$3500)
 - 1. Achievements and plans
 - a) Fall: Implemented biweekly special coffee hours, coffee hour collaborations with various offices around campus
 - b) Spring: Collaboration with offices: one every coffee hour (attendance: 120-150), GRO arts and crafts, GPSA week, happy hour this Friday
 - 2. Challenges:
 - a) Admin has reduced our budget this year
 - b) Reduced budget for happy hours from 1 per month to 3 per academic year
 - c) Increasing programming with a reduced budget
 - d) Work wise:
 - (1) Coffee hours: 2.5 hrs/CH, 2-3 hours of planning, ordering, emailing
 - (2) Happy hours: 3 hours/event, 5-6 hours of planning
 - (3) Non alcoholic events, 3 hrs/event
 - 3. Is this per person, or overall?
 - a) Per person.
 - 4. What was the increase from last year?
 - a) There was none. At the end of the spring semester, we requested an increase of 50 hours. But this wasn't a bylaw change, it only applied for that semester.
 - 5. Where does the money come from?
 - a) Once the GRO is assigned a budget, it comes from the overall budget. It comes from "the scrape"- 2-3% of homewood tuition. It comes from tuition dollars, at the highest level.
 - 6. How much is remaining in the budget this year?
 - a) 2500 donation toward coffee hours in exchange for LDL participation.
 - 7. How many happy hours have you had?
 - a) We have our first coming up this Friday at 1 PM.

- V. Vote: [Floating Chairs for EB 2024-25](#)
- VI. By-laws change: Floating Chairs stipend increase
 - A. Increase from 175\$ (12.5 hours) to 350\$ (25 hours)
 - B. Comments: this seems like less than the minimum wage.
 - 1. We were told you are volunteers, not workers: you get a fellowship amount.
 - C. Motion passes
- VII. Vote: GRO Spring Formal Approval
 - A. Tentative venue: Lord Baltimore Hotel
 - B. One big change: not allowed to have open bar events anymore. With the budget we've worked out, it's 4 drink tickets per person.
 - 1. Technically more cost-effective to do open bar.
 - C. Within transloc homewood range
 - D. Last years formal:
 - 1. Sold 450 tickets at 25% per ticket
 - 2. Engineers club
 - 3. Limited space and choppy flow
 - 4. Lesser food and bar service
 - 5. Management was unprofessional, making it a non starter
 - E. Budget estimates
 - 1. Requesting \$25000
 - 2. Saturday april 20th, 8 to 12 PM
 - 3. Sell 500 tickets at 43\$ per ticket
 - 4. 4-hour hors d'oeuvres and dessert service
 - 5. 4 drink tickets per person
 - 6. DJ photography, and violinists
 - 7. Formal attire required
 - 8. Ballroom and mezzanine
 - 9. Michael: Can you explain the jump in ticket price from last year?
 - a) Last year only 300 Homewood students were allowed to go, because 150 went to SoM, nursing
 - b) Ratio of homewood students is much more; this year only 50 of the tickets are non-homewood.
 - c) School of Education might also pitch in.
 - 10. April 2nd tickets might go live.
 - F. Other details
- VIII. Vice Provost (Rachelle & Sabine) Meeting Updates
 - A. Conference grant budget increase
 - 1. Around 100 applications per cycle, and can only serve ~4 students.
 - 2. Asked if the university can take this forward. Could this start at a school level?
 - 3. TRU: We didn't request a specific fund for this
 - B. Timeline:
 - 1. WSE is willing to start MA fundings immediately
 - C. Will: louder, what was their status?

1. They agreed it shouldn't come from us in the first place. We just didn't get clearly how much budget they'd be willing to provide for this.
2. Sabine said it was her top priority, and didn't need any additional items from us
3. Executive Board Updates:
 - a) Social chair:
 - (1) Upcoming social events
 - (a) Intercampus
 - (i) DC trip: march 31st
 - (ii) Spring formal: April 20th
 - (b) Homewood social:
 - (i) Happy hour: March 15th
 - (ii) Coffee hour every tuesday: not during Spring break
 - (c) Health and Wellness
 - (i) Arts and crafts event
 - (ii) Mental health 101, april 20th
 - (2)
- D. Monthly Summary (February): Call for Volunteers
- E. GRO Town Hall Final Updates
 1. This Wednesday, 5-7 PM, Glass pavilion
- F. KSAS Dean Favret: New Meeting Date March 14th at 12 pm
- G. Preview of upcoming weeks: Admin Meetings and GRO events
 1. Elections: March 25th (Co-chair, treasurer, and orientation summer sports coordinator election)

IX. Focus Group Updates (5-10 mins)

A. Focus Group Leads

1. Lab safety
 - a) Lab safety survey to be sent out this week
 - b) Departments with wet labs at the Homewood campus
 - c) Biology, biomedical engineering, biophysics, chemistry, chemical and biomolecular engineering, electrical and computer engineering, environmental engineering, EPS, material science, physics and astronomy, PBS, robotics
 - (1) Qualtrics survey
 - (2) Anonymous
 - d) External issues/emergencies
 - (1) Building issues, no instrumentation available, gas leaks
 - e) Internal issues/emergencies
 - (1) Accidents that happened in the lab setting and were managed internally
 - f) Near-misses
 - g) Reporting info
 - (1) Knowing how to report/failed to report past accidents
 - h) Improper lab practices in the lab

- i) Feelings safe in the workp[lace
- j) Lab equipment necessary for research
 - (1) PPE/other materials
- k) Proper storage of hazardous chemicals/biologicals
- l) Proper handling of old and/or hazardous chemicals/biologicals
- m) Emergency equipment ready to use
 - (1) Fire extinguishers, eye wash stations, emergency showers/first aid kits

2. JHPD

- a) Meeting with Dr Bard and Public Safety Team

3. Available space

- a) Considering sending out survey to figure out what problems students are facing
 - (1) E.g. permanent storage space, social space, permanent study space
 - (2) Communicating with departments individually to figure out what works

B. Reminder for [Sign up link](#)

X. Open Discussion & Questions

- A. Please sign the strike pledge!

XI. Vote to adjourn passes