Council of Graduate Students
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 20, 2009
(Minnesota Commons Room, St. Paul Student Center)

1. Call to Order

President Mandy Stahre called the meeting to order at 5:49 pm. Approximately 65 people were present.

Ms. Stahre again asked that all COGS Program Representatives, alternatives and other interested people join the COGS Program Representatives Google group. This group can be accessed from the “COGS E-Mail Lists” link on the COGS Web pages.

Ms. Stahre solicited additional COGS Senator alternatives.

The minutes of the September 22nd meeting were approved, with the correction of one person’s name.

2. Reports from COGS Caucuses

Ms. Stahre reported that COGS has funding from the Graduate School to support COGS Caucuses.

Master’s Student Caucus

Devin Driscoll wondered which master’s programs are currently sending Program Representatives to COGS General Assembly meetings. He noted that the graduate school reorganization is likely to affect master’s students and funding, but the precise effects are unclear. Anyone interested in the master’s caucus should contact Devin at drisc118 <at> umn <dot> edu.

Graduate Student Parent Caucus

The graduate student parents caucus is jointly sponsored by Community of Scholars Program (COSP) and COGS. The parent’s caucus plans to identify interested graduate student parents (graduate students with dependent children), form a support group, identify needs of graduate student parents, and report their findings back to the COGS General Assembly. The Student Activities office has expressed interest in this caucus. Anyone interested in the graduate student parents caucus should contact Brittany Lewis, lewis965 <at> umn <dot> edu or Kelvin Choi at choix137 <at> umn <dot> edu.

College of Biological Sciences Caucus

Pamela Weisenhorn reported several activities within the College of Biological Sciences (CBS) that should be of interest to CBS graduate students. Ms. Weisenhorn suggested that students
ought to be aware of changes that are being made to the teaching assistant selection process within the CBS. Also, she advised that CBS graduate students should be aware of and take advantages of opportunities to be on college committees. Pamela noted that committees charged with examining and narrowing the scope of priorities have been created in each college at the request of Provost Sullivan. Graduate students ought to ensure that they are represented on these committees. Anyone interested in the CBS caucus should contact Pamela Weisenhorn at wise088 <at> umn <dot> edu.

International Students Caucus

The international students caucus hasn’t yet met. Anyone interested in this caucus should contact Matt Burgess at burg0408 <at> umn <dot> edu.

Academic Health Center Caucus

Mandy Stahre reported that the Medical School reorganization will affect many Academic Health Center (AHC) graduate students. Mandy will send out e-mail soliciting participants in the AHC caucus. Anyone interested in the AHC caucus should send e-mail to Mandy at stahre <at> umn <dot> edu.

Charlie Billington reminded students that all graduate students are welcome to participate in COGS caucuses, not just COGS Program Representatives.

3. COGS Updates

Mandy provided an update on COGS activities.

AHC Long-Term Disability Insurance

There is now general agreement that AHC graduate students should not have been involuntarily included in the AHC long-term disability (LTD) insurance program. The charges for LTD insurance are being removed from AHC graduate student accounts. Mandy noted that this episode illustrates that graduate students can successfully effect changes in University policies that affect them.

Graduate Assistant Health Insurance

The transition to the new service provider for the graduate assistant (GA) health plan continues to cause problems for some students. Complaints about the GA health plan should be sent to George Green (Associate Dean of the Graduate School) at green007 <at> umn <dot> edu; please copy your e-mail to cogs <at> umn <dot> edu. The Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Committee has been unresponsive to graduate student complaints. Mandy will meet with George Green and discuss graduate student concerns about the GA health plan.
Meeting with Provost Sullivan

Ten COGS Executive Committee members met with Provost Thomas Sullivan on September 30th. The COG Exec Committee members requested that graduate students have a voice on the Academic Issues and Student Administrative Processes work groups. Provost Sullivan promised that the work group chairs would contact Mandy to discuss graduate student participation. Mandy will schedule a follow-up meeting with Provost Sullivan to discuss the recommendations of the work groups. Send e-mail to Mandy if you would like to attend this meeting, (although there is room for only a limited number of students).

Dean of Graduate Education

The new Dean of Graduate Education is expected to be announced by November 1st.

4. GAPSA Update

Open Access

Open Access is the notion that journal articles should be made freely available on the Internet. A resolution on Open Access was introduced, and tabled, at the last GAPSA meeting.

Nancy Sims, the University’s copyright librarian presented information about Open Access. She noted that libraries have been at the forefront of supporting Open Access. Open Access is an approach to disseminating scholarly information. It posits that scholarly information, particularly journal articles, should be freely available to the public online. Furthermore, there should be a stable, online copy of journal articles that people can freely access. One approach to providing this access is to create repositories; these are typically created by universities, professional societies, or government institutions. It is also important to understand what Open Access does not mean. Open Access does not mean that no one can profit from research and publication. It does not mean that content is not peer reviewed. And it does not mean that authors must pay to have their articles published (although some Open Access journals do have an author fee).

The benefits of Open Access include:

- Authors’ publications are more visible and more accessible to a larger audience
- Open Access articles are cited at a higher rate than articles that are not available through Open Access
- The publication cycle for Open Access journals is often faster than for traditional print journals
- Researchers find that international collaboration is often easier

A number of open questions about Open Access remain:
• Over the long term, who will pay the costs of publication? Note that newspapers are facing similar challenges. Several universities, including Harvard, M.I.T. and UC Berkeley, pay the authors’ fees for students and faculty who publish in Open Access journals.
• How will publishing in Open Access journals affect tenure review? Will departments assume that Open Access publications aren’t peer reviewed?
• How will Open Access affect professional societies, which often fund their activities with the proceeds of journal subscriptions?

Ms. Sims’ position is funded for two years. She is available to provide advice to authors about Open Access, copyright issues, and negotiating with publishers.

In response to a question, Ms. Sims noted that traditional journals provide an important service: ink on paper remains the best means of preserving written material.

The GAPSA Open Access resolution was introduced. Tim Salo suggested that the resolution ought to be split into two resolutions: a specific resolution that supports the proposed Senate Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) and another, more general resolution that supports Open Access and perhaps recommends actions by the University. He moved that the resolution be tabled; the Assembly approved tabling the resolution.

An informal poll of the Assembly indicated widespread support of Open Access within COGS.

Due to technical difficulties, the General Assembly was unable to view Ms. Sims’ slides, but the presentation will be available on the COGS Web site.

National Association of Graduate-Professional Students

Mandy Stahre and Keith Harms will attend the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) national conference November 14-18 in Lincoln, Nebraska

Student Association for Graduate Education

Charlie Billington will attend the Student Association for Graduate Education (SAGE) conference in Seattle, Washington.

5. University Committees

Charlie Billington reported that he is still seeking volunteers to serve on several University committees. He will publish a list of committees that still have openings.

Jennifer Corcoran reported on the activities of the Advising Work Group. The work group has questions about the benefits of department-level surveys of advising quality. Anyone with input should contact Jennifer at murph636 <at> umn <dot> edu.

Mandy reported that the University Senate Finance and Planning Committee is focusing on the fees, particularly those billed by the colleges. Questions have been raised about how the fees are
justified, how they are used, and why they continue to rise. The Committee will examine whether the fees should simply be rolled into tuition. Many graduate students receive tuition waivers, but these tuition waivers do not cover fees. As a result, some students have difficulty paying for these fees.

The Policy & Review (P&R) councils are starting to meet.

6. **COGS Biennial Survey**

COGS will conduct its biennial survey this spring. The survey questions need to be revised. COGS needs volunteers to help with the survey. Student Activities has signed a contract with Student Voice, which conducts surveys of students. COGS will most likely use the services of Student Voice to support this year’s survey. Anyone with questions for, questions about, or suggestions for the survey should contact cogs <at> umn <dot> edu.

7. **Upcoming Events**

Frank Warren, the founder and creator of PostSecret, will be on campus Friday, October 23rd.

The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) is offering $10 tickets to events at the Ordway Theater and Ted Mann Concert Hall. Details will be available on the COGS Web site, <http://www.cogs.umn.edu/>.

8. **Spring Jam**

This year, Spring Jam will be shorter and include a broader range of activities. Potential new activities were discussed briefly.

9. **COGS Elections**

Elections will be held for two COGS executive positions at the November General Assembly meeting:

- Vice President of Finance
- Vice President for External Relations

10. **New Business**

Raphi Rechitsky announced that the Emaciated Gopher, a new graduate student publication, is looking for submissions. The Emaciated Gopher will host a public meeting on health care on Thursday, October 29th at 12:00-1:15 in 303 Coffman Union.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18.

Respectively submitted, Tim Salo
Updated 11/19/09