Council of Graduate Students General Assembly Meeting Minutes

The Whole Coffman Union February 2, 2011

1. Meeting begins at approximately 6:00pm
2. Jeremy Wang and Pamela Weisenhorn give an introduction to COGS
   a. Call for a show of hands of who is new to GA Meetings
      i. Many hands raised
   b. Read the preamble of the COGS Constitution
   c. COGS Represents:
      i. All students in good standing in programs within the Graduate School or any successor unit at the U of M
         1. Voting Members listed (see Bylaws for additional information)
      ii. Pamela gives a definition of the GEC: Graduate Education Council it’s a group that makes policies that effect graduate students: e.g. course changes, changes to requirements, policies on examination committees, and roles of Directors of Graduate Studies etc.
   d. Information on participation:
      i. Even if you can’t vote you can bring up issues that you or people you know are dealing with
      ii. To find out if your program has a representative and an alternate email cogs@umn.edu
   e. We are also trying to develop a sense of camaraderie among colleges
      i. Let everyone in the college have a quick discussion of college level issues
   f. Time for people in delegation to discuss issues in their college
3. Delegation reports
   a. Kathy Nelson: Academic Health Center
      i. There has been an update on the health care plan issues: there may be some changes to the dental care plan for Grad Assistants. Additional information to presented to GA as it is known
   b. Brianne Byers CEHD
      i. Discussed ways to increase student involvement among students in the College of Education and Human Development
   c. Matt Clark: CFANS
      i. St Paul GA Meeting requested
      ii. Issues of distribution of funds different now that the Graduate School has dissolved
      iii. Want to follow schedule more rigidly during the GA meetings
   d. Pamela Weisenhorn: CBS
      i. How to balance interactions with the Dean of the college and how to get both campuses represented at the college level
   e. Brooke White CSE
      i. Discussed meetings with the Associate Dean to assure graduate student representation at the college level
   f. Carlos EcheverriaHumphrey
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i. Curious about representation of international students in COGS

ii. Wants to have English language classes that are necessary to bring students to English proficiency to be graduate level (5K or higher) and count towards graduation credit

   g. Kevin Staneck CLA
      i. Concerns about budget cuts and the affect this has on the number of faculty

4. Jeremy will send out an e-mail to the COGS delegation leads to have a meeting to discuss the position

5. Devin Driscoll
   a. Vice President for Student Services: Jerry Rhinehart will make a brief presentation
      i. VP Rhinehart passes out handouts
      ii. Student Affairs is somewhat unusual in that most graduate students spend most of their time in their department, but VP Rhinehart wants graduate students to be aware that there are programs that your student service fees pay for that you can support you

1. Aurora Center: women and others affected by sexual assault
   a. Have graduate student interns and peer support

2. Boynton Health Services: largest unit in Student Affairs
   a. Ed Allenger who was the director of Boynton has left; looking for a new director
   b. John Finnegan will be the head of the search committee

3. Career Programs: many graduate students don’t get enough career support; they are working to and interested in expanding this program

4. Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity: deals with the bad things that can happen in academic

5. Recreational Sports: rec center in Minneapolis is being expanded; it will be doubled

6. Student Conflict Resolution Center: graduate and professional students use this a lot; can advise you on how to deal with any conflicts with your advisor, department, etc.
   a. Have put out a survey on civility and bullying within departments
      i. E.g. Faculty who do not behave very well towards graduate students
      ii. This survey is trying to raise the awareness of this issue

7. Student Union and Activities

8. Counseling Services
   a. Provide dissertation support groups

9. Student Legal Services
   a. Will represent you if you’re in trouble: e.g. identity theft, landlord/tenant issues
b. Time for questions for VP Rhinehart
   i. Question from Scott Petty: wants to know the feasibility of doing post-care surveys on patients who were seen by Boynton
      1. He has had very bad experiences at Boynton and found complaining difficult
      2. VP Rhinehart will look into this and pass information onto Devin
   ii. Any additional concerns should be passed to Devin

6. Agenda/Minutes
   a. Motion to approve minutes from 12/3/10 meeting
      i. Correction to the first page: will fix plants ➔ plans
      ii. Motion approved by voice vote
   b. Motion to approve agenda
      i. Motion approved by voice vote

7. Devin Driscoll report on Awards:
   a. Applications for all awards are online
   b. 20 travel grants will be awarded of up to 600 each
   c. COGS leadership award: 5 students, 1 main winner and 4 runners up
   d. Outstanding Faculty Award
      i. People were very excited about this award
      ii. It’s a good opportunity to recognize the good faculty
   e. The awards will combined into a single event Monday April 25th 4PM in the Campus Club
      i. We will also present the new COGS officers then

8. Blue Ribbon Commission Report
   a. Will be presented by the Provost at the next Regents meeting
   b. Each college created a report and presented it to the Provost
   c. Would like to have a large student presence at this meeting

9. Melody Hoffman
   a. If you have any questions for Jerry Rhinehart e-mail cogs@umn.edu; they will bring them up at the next meeting
   b. We have been doing a great job filling committee vacancies
      i. Student Conflict and Resolution Center
      ii. Parking and Transit
      iii. One Stop Committee
      iv. Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)
      1. We are going to appoint Kathy Nelson to this position
      v. Student Legal Services

10. Jeremy Wang
    a. We have funds available for college delegations to have events to recruit people from your college
    b. We worked with the graduate school to have funding for this
11. Ben Fink (Report given by Devin)
   a. Our recent resolutions are wending their way through University committees
   b. The Grad Parent Absence Resolution passed

12. Emily Combs
   a. Provided a description for the changes to the bylaws
   b. Explained reasons to update the bylaws
      i. To reflect current practice
      ii. To reflect changes made to University and COGS structure
      iii. To clarify the language
   c. Changes made:
      i. Who can vote
         1. Clarified this area
         2. Only Committee members who were selected by COGS can vote
      ii. Changed one position name from “VP of External Relations” to “VP of University Relations”
   d. Added additional leadership positions
      i. Director of events (voting)
      ii. College delegation leads
      iii. Historian
      iv. Assistants
   e. Voting
      i. Added ability to ask for a roll-call vote
      ii. Made clear when a paper ballot is required
      iii. Deleted “important issue” language
      iv. Made quorum necessary for official business
   f. Other
      i. Added language for if President and Vice President both resign
      ii. Added GEC Chairs and deleted P&R chairs
   g. Question from GA Member:
      i. What is the policy if both the president and the vice-president resign?
         1. Exec Committee appoints a new president who the GA has to approve
   h. Motioned to approve bylaws; passed unanimously

13. Tim Salo: Constitution Changes
   a. Main goals of the Constitution changes were to:
      i. Clean up language; make things consistent
      ii. Make language consistent with SUA rules
   b. Motioned to approve the constitution
   c. Passed unanimously

14. Devin Driscoll
   a. Nadeem Chaudry was the old VP for Finance; can no longer run
      i. Opened floor to nominations
Qian Chen is running for VP of Finance

1. Masters in Humphrey
2. Also getting a degree in Statistics
3. She has been acquainted with the position by Nadeem and Devin
   a. 4 reasons to vote for her
      i. Education
         1. She has a bachelors in Finance
         2. Working on a degree in statistics
      ii. Used to be an accounting intern
      iii. Passionate about COGS
      iv. Would be good to have an international student on the Exec Committee

iii. Closed nominations
iv. Motion to vote by voice; passed unanimously

b. Will be having 2 meetings with current exec for recruitment of next year’s exec committee in late March; more details to follow

15. Henning Schroeder: Dean of the Graduate School
   a. Discussion restructuring and how we have replaced the 6 Policy and Review councils with the Graduate Education Council
      i. The GEC has 14 Faculty members and 3 student members
      ii. At many other Universities, the 3 students cannot vote, but they can here
   b. The restructuring process means that the colleges will have more power
      i. This should result in increased efficiency and transparency
      ii. There are representatives for each college and each intercollegiate program that meet with the Graduate School monthly; they are supposed to communicate proposed change to their colleges
      iii. In order to assure the legality of all changes, there is a Policy Review Committee (Mandy Stahre is on this committee)
         1. Goes through all existing policies and figures out how to adapt them to the new framework or if they should even be kept
         2. For example, the policy on committee members has been changed; it is on the University’s Policy Website and the graduate schools transition webpage
            a. E.g. Committee Chair must be a tenure track faculty member, addresses conflicts of interest
            b. They are trying to fast track the policies that are most needed
      iv. It is very difficult to transition everything from Graduate School to the College
      v. We will soon get an e-mail welcoming us into the colleges because our records will be stored there and we will graduate out of there
vi. Group of Emerging Presidential Leaders has volunteered to help with communications to the graduate students and other people that the transition effects

vii. Assembly on Improvement, Evaluation and Review of Programs
1. April 18; 2 national leaders in program evaluation will be there
2. It is an internal way to improve the program with very strong student participation
3. We should come with our comments and concerns
4. Considering forming student focus groups where these topics will be discussed

viii. Call for questions
1. Setting up of these councils to review programs; is there a deadline on this?
   a. Until now the Graduate School hasn’t really dealt with how to improve graduate programs
   b. April 18 will be the kickoff of a campus wide initiative to evaluate and improve programs (hopefully)
2. Jeremy Wang: last year Jeremy was on a graduate studies committee in his department; there was a concern that the movement of responsibilities from the graduate school to the colleges was going to be excessive especially for the administrative staff. Has this been true?
   a. This concern has been voiced repeatedly; the graduate school has been trying to address this by looking at the number of person-hours devoted to each activity
   b. The graduate school staff has been engaged in helping colleges with these issues
   c. The concern has been lessening over time
   d. A lot of the student-administrative processes will eventually be put online further reducing workload
3. Pamela Weisenhorn
   a. How are changes in policy being communicated to graduate students besides being put on the transition website and policy page?
   b. All policies go through the GEC
   c. There is a comment period on all policies; we are all notified of them
   d. We don’t hear about them through other means, e.g. DGS
   e. College Representatives aren’t always communicating as well as ideal
      i. Emerging Leaders Team is trying to help them communicate better
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f. Make sure that the DGS and the DGS Assistants know what is going on

4. Student suggestion
   a. Maybe add information there to the MyU Portal about changes to the University

16. Updates on GEC and Collegiate Rep Meetings
   a. We have 3 GEC Reps: Kimi Johnston, Jarrod Call, Pamela Weisenhorn
      i. We need 2 alternates; all 5 can attend but only 3 can vote
      ii. E-mail cogs@umn.edu if you’re interested
   b. Collegiate Rep Meetings
      i. Students are now allowed to attend these meetings
      ii. We will publish the dates on our google calendar
      iii. E-mail cogs@umn.edu if you want to go
   c. Henning Happy Hour
      i. We will be headed up to the Campus Club
      ii. We do this once or twice a month
      iii. Henning is the Dean of the Graduate School; we want to build a relationship with him
   d. Social Media
      i. Like us on Facebook
      ii. Follow us on Twitter
      iii. Follow the Google Calendar

17. Motion to Adjourn
   a. Approved at 7:24PM