

COGS General Assembly Agenda

Thursday, November 29th 2007
President's Room Coffman Union @ 5-7pm

5pm – Dinner (Sawatdee)

5:15pm – Meeting begins

Approve October GA Minutes

- Minutes were unanimously approved.

1. Speakers

UMPD – Sgt. Eric Stenemann

- Synopsis: Increase in email alerts have generated a response amongst student body, alerts are made even if the event was technically off campus, as long as the victim is a student.
- U of M crime statistics are for on campus events only (not including Dinkytown or Stadium Village).
- Minneapolis police force are short officers, so U of M police respond to nearby incidents, i.e. the 35W bridge collapse, currently in a large budget hole.
- Questions addressed: “Campus police assist Mpls officers, do they get reimbursed for the cost?” No. U of M police assist in areas that are associated with the University (leased or owned property, locations where students and faculty work nearby), the U of M officers have statewide arrest rights (like a state trooper) and have access to Mpls radio activity so they can respond to nearby events. Campus police may be there first and make the initial report, but Mpls Dept often handles it from there.
- “If I see a car window smashed out, should I report it?” Yes. You may or may not have been the first to see it and/or report it, but the dispatcher will let you know if there are any officers on the way. It is important to be aware and make note of these things, you might be there first one on scene.
- Conclusions/reminders: Be aware of your surroundings, look up and pay attention to who is around you, perpetrators often go for the folks who aren't paying attention. Call in suspect behavior, better to be safe than sorry, don't feel safe and cozy just because you are on campus.
- Use the campus “Blue lights”, emergency poles with strobe lights alert dispatcher right away, with the touch of a button.
- Use the campus escort service.

Carla Carlson – UMore Park

- Copies of handouts are available through COGS

- 5,000 acres in Dakota County to be developed, owned by the University for over 60 years, land was originally used for WWII smokeless gunpowder production, 1 plant operated by 20,000+ employees for ~9mo, other plant never operated, all the concrete is still there, tons and tons of it.
- 2822 acres of additional property to be bought by the state DNR, called Vermillion Highlands, in conjunction with the stadium, held in perpetuity for University research as well as open space for recreation and possible tourism.
- In 2005, the Board of Regents came up with a strategic plan to 'add value' to the property and to best steward the land. Three options were proposed, the 'add value' option was chosen.
- A University founded community has never been attempted before
- Public listening sessions and discussion forums have occurred in Rosemount as well as on both Twin Cities campuses, more will be scheduled along the way.
- First, gravel will be extracted, opportunity to reshape the land.
- All planning will be done with Rosemount and the Metropolitan Council, included in the next 'Comprehensive Plan'.
- Site will be assessed for contamination from WWII plants by US Army Corp of Engineers along with MPCA and U of M.
- Questions addressed: "Will agricultural research programs currently using the acreage in UMore Park be compensated once their research has to be moved?" Currently research is occurring on ~600-900 acres, 1000 acres on the Vermillion Highlands property will be set aside to replace lost research acreage. The number of faculty working out there will increase from ~38 to more like 308 and the variety of research happening will dramatically increase, including agricultural sciences and much more research from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- "Are there other communities similar to this?" No. Vancouver, BC and Denver, CO have similar communities but none are quite like this with an academic mission from a land grant University.

2. Officer reports

- **State Legislature (Matt Kaplan, not present)**
 - Recently met with state senator on Capitol Hill about some general financial concerns from students, will be meeting again, please voice your concerns and contact Matt Kaplan for more details.
- **Film/Social Committee (Geoff Hart, not present)**
 - Committee has met once, please email Geoff Hart with any questions or ideas.

3. P&R Council

- **Report of Executive P&R Council**

- All degree program proposals were approved.
- Much discussion regarding the new collaborative theses proposal, general vote of confidence to continue developing idea (i.e. intellectual property rights concerns)
- Resolution was written in Biological Sciences P&R to support graduate student representation on the UMore Park Advisory Board.

4. Resolution

- **UMore Park**

- Questions addressed: “Should the resolution include plans on how to elect the student representation?” Discussion: no, but we should have an idea of how to answer the question if it were to be raised. Will depend on the number of student chairs given/available, idea to include one chair per P&R council.
- “Should the title state: UMore Park Student Chair Position, or UMore Park Student Representation?” Discussion: yes. Friendly amendment was made to address this change.
- Vote: unanimously voted to approve as amended.

- **Sudan Child Abduction**

- U of M Daily and MPR have made reports about the issue.
- U of M Human Rights Program is seeking to get more support to put pressure on the Sudanese powers-that-be to take action.
- Abductees are children stolen to become children of other adults, not slaves.
- Want to support non-violent means to getting back the children.
- Questions addressed: “What will the resolution accomplish?” Increased coverage and awareness as well as increased numbers of people who support the cause. Also, having COGS support will help other, more political, entities put pressure on the powers-that-be.
- “What about the fact that this is a fees-receiving non-profit entity?” This is a non-partisan issue and our right as students to be a part of political discourse, less than 5% of time dedicated to this sort of political cause is acceptable.
- “What is COGS history involving this sort of political issue?” Not sure, will look into this.
- Friendly amendment proposed to change the *Be it Resolved* portion of the resolution to read: “*Therefore, be it resolved* that the University of Minnesota Council of Graduate Students (COGS) declares accordingly that COGS is a member of the Save Yar Campaign housed in the University of Minnesota Human Rights Program and supports the following program actions:” and the remaining text to be contained in sub-bullet points.

- Vote: unanimously voted to approve as amended.
- **CTC Herbicide Use**
 - U of M Landcare sets and enforces the lawn care standards for all campus lawns.
 - CTC can't legally do anything about the practices on their lawns because they are obligated to a contract with U of M Landcare, which isn't up until 2010.
 - 2,4-D is used broadcast every Fall and Spring, everywhere on both campuses, including selected hotspots.
 - Alternative methods to 2,4-D are more expensive and spot treatments have been rejected by U of M Landcare due to increased manual effort and cost concerns.
 - Resolution is not meant to micromanage U of M Lawncare, its to protect the safety and health of U of M students and their families.
 - Current CTC Board not doing so well internally at the moment, not as a result of this issue. Previous Board supported this issue and action for change.
 - Discussion/concerns: Appears as though we are trying to circumvent the CTC Board. This issue is complicated and involves multiple parties; we should not pass a resolution until we know all the facts. Motion to form a subcommittee to investigate:
 - "This resolution be referred to a committee selected by or appointed by the COGS President, and that this committee research the underlying issues, communicate with all the relevant parties (including Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative (CTC) Board, the CTC Grounds Committee, the CTC Sustainability Committee, the CTC Manager, and the University of Minnesota Lawn Care), summarize their findings, and make a recommendation to the whole Council."
 - Spraying is scheduled again for this May, we need action asap.
 - Motion to form subcommittee and table the resolution vote: 7 yay, 19 nay, and 3 abstentions, motion failed.
 - Motion to reject current resolution wording in the *Be it Resolved* section and proposed new wording as follows:
 - "Be it resolved that the Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative Board of Directors and the University of Minnesota work together to eliminate the use at Commonwealth Terrace of herbicides that are potentially harmful to humans."
 - Motion to change *Be it Resolved* vote: 8 yay, 21 nay, 0 abstentions, motion failed.

- Friendly amendment proposed to eliminate the *Whereas* statement: “U of M Landcare has provided no evidence that the presence of weeds is a health risk or hindrance to proper development of children.”
- Vote: 20 yay, 4 nay, and 5 abstentions, approved as amended.

5. **Old Business**

- No old business

6. **New Business**

- Volunteers are needed for a very important Graduate Student Survey Steering Committee, Caroline Hilk is heading the committee, please contact her for details.