

Boston University Graduate Student Organization

Minutes

Monday, April 1, 2013

5:30PM – CAS 200

1. Announcements

BGLO

BGLO will host a mixer for Boston-area graduate students at Mead Hall in Cambridge. It will be held at 6PM on May 1. More information will be posted on the GSO Facebook page. The event will also be highlighted in upcoming emails.

2. Treasurer's Report

Nolan reported that we currently have **\$7376.41** available in the GSO account. This figure takes into spending commitments GSO has already made for upcoming events.

3. GSO Social Chair

Casey is thinking about ways to make pub nights more social. She would like to incorporate playing cards. When people find their playing card “match” they can come up and get a pair of free drink tickets. This would take place at the April 12 pub night.

Three options were sketched for this:

- normal pub night (funding already approved)
- all drinks linked to playing cards, and therefore free (requires an additional \$162)
- a hybridization that combines the two and requires further funding for drink tickets to use in conjunction with the playing cards (amount TBD)

Discussion centered on ‘piloting’ the hybridized format at the April 12 pub night. Regular drink tickets will be available for purchase, and cards will be used to encourage socializing for a free drink.

Concern was expressed whether this will routinely increase pub night costs. Reasons given for going this route in April included the desire to pilot this effort and having had fewer pub nights this semester than usual.

A vote was taken to approve an additional \$662 for the April 12 pub night. The vote passed.

There was also discussion about scheduling a pub night in early May.

4. Open Access

Steven Bhardwaj discussed interest from students in the Economics Department in advocacy for 'open access' following the death of Aaron Swartz.

Earlier this year, the Obama Administration issued an executive order that research funded by federal government must be openly available. There are varying "embargo periods" for STEM content and other content. As an executive order, this action is rescindable. Supporting the pending congressional bill – FASTR – could give this action (related to federally funded research) more staying power.

Ways to support open access:

- *As individuals*, students can sign petitions supporting FASTR and engage in other legislative lobbying.
- *As the GSO*, the organization could seek signatures and issue a public statement of support.
- *As part of BU*, advocacy can include lobbying the university to shift their open access policy from opt-in to opt-out. And lobbying the administration to publicly support FASTR.

It was remarked that, whereas some of the humanities students may find library issues pressing, students in STEM fields may find this issue of more immediate concern to them. Solidarity on both issues was encouraged.

In terms of FASTR, individuals are encouraged to pursue individual communication and advocacy with their elected representatives. Calls are probably most effective. GSO will field a letter at the next meeting for a vote. If supported by a vote, the GSO will submit a collective appeal to our legislators. GSO would also, concurrently, forward the letter to President Brown, requesting the University's institutional support for this cause.

In terms of BU, the suggestion was that an open letter be written advocating for improved/streamlined open access. The goal will be to increase awareness of the importance of this issue and break through institutional inertia.

Leila and Steven will form a sub-committee to work on this issue. Interested persons should contact Leila via gso@bu.edu

5. Library Petition

We currently have 520 electronic signatures and a collection of hard copy signatures. Since the last meeting, Leila reached out to the law school, SAGE, and other groups.

GSO will move forward with delivering the statement and signatures. Leila will keep everyone apprised as the submission unfolds.

6. GSO Seminar Series

The next Seminar Series will be held at 6PM on Thursday, April 11. It will take place in the Life Sciences Building. There will be four featured speakers.

An email will go out shortly with more details.

7. Co-Sponsored Events

Leslie reported that Chris Conz (History Rep) requested an additional \$100 for the recent African Studies Graduate conference, for which he is the lead organizer. The GSO previously supported the event for \$400.

When those monies were approved a statement was made that the organizers could re-approach GSO for an additional \$100 if it was required.

The event was this past weekend. Catering on Charles costs and rules around outside catering delivery and required presence of catering staff pushed the total costs of the meeting to +/- \$300 over budget. Therefore Chris requested an additional \$100.

While those assembled could not recall previously approving funds for over-charges after an event, the 'top-up' request was received prior to the event.

The discussion centered on two actions. First, citing the costs of holding events at BU, Leslie suggested raising the amount that GSO is willing to approve for co-sponsored events from its existing ceiling at \$400. Discussion settled on raising the limit to \$1000, understanding that whether the amount of funding approved nears that ceiling will remain the discretion of the GSO. It was affirmed that the current 40%-of-budget restriction should remain.

Concern was expressed that this might invite budget inflation, but it was felt that this would be evident upon inspection of event budgets. This led to the suggestion that the Co-Sponsored Events application be revised for clarity and ease of review.

Votes:

- A vote was held to raise the Co-Sponsored events limit from \$400 to \$1000. This will need to be changed on the website and online application.
- A vote was held to approve an additional \$100 for the African Studies conference. This vote passed.
- After discussion of GSO having the money to support interdisciplinary events of this sort, a second vote was held to authorize Leslie to communicate to Chris that GSO is willing to reimburse up to \$200, if departments or other entities are unable to meet the shortfall.

8. Other Business Discussed

Briefly, there was conversation about voting at the next meeting to roll operational funds into travel grants so that is more robustly support.

It was also stated that GSO should seek further funds from the Deans Office on the basis of the high numbers of applicants last semester.

It was also mentioned that GSO receives travel funding requests for research trips. It was stated that GSO should, perhaps, consider a separate (and smaller) travel grant program for this purpose. Given other funding available, this would probably be limited to travel within the US rather than international trips.