

GSO Meeting Notes

5:30, Wednesday, October 4th, 2017

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) 226

- **Introductions**
- **Associate Dean of GRS - Emily Barman**
 - GRS is interested in helping GSO and working with us
 - They want to know what our issues and concerns are related to improving the life and process of being a graduate student at BU
 - They have 2 Initiatives as a part of CAS Strategic plan that are relevant for us:
 - 1. Improving support for alternative careers
 - Department or college level support is of interest
 - 2. Improving diversity and inclusion
 - Focusing on recruitment and retention
 - GRS is interested in organizing more co-sponsored events with GSO
 - What kind of events could we plan for graduate students to help create a sense of community?
 - They could help support some of our new initiatives related to Professional Development and Social events
 - i.e. Red Sox game
 - They particularly would like to hear from us and get suggestions
- **Our response to Dean Barman**
 - We will continue to monitor the diversity committee
 - How can we be involved? The structure of their diversity efforts are ambiguous right now
 - The only clear action was that a provost position was created
 - We are going to be in communication with them
 - We could be involved on a committee
 - We would like to be involved in creating the curriculum
 - Suggestions:
 - Having a multicultural event would be helpful
 - Booths with food from different cultures
 - Should we fundraise?
 - We have been supported fairly well by GRS
 - Graduate Student Advisory Board – Provost Daniel Kleinman is also looking for feedback and Jessica and Sarabeth are on the committee and can be our voice
 - Oct 14th – Colloquium about fear in academia
 - Jessica will send a flier out
 - Panels:
 - How to get through a dissertation
 - Prepare for the job market as a scholar
 - What does it mean to be a marginal body in academia
- **Adam Kleinberger, Associate Ombuds**
 - Adam Kleinberger, the Associate Ombuds at BU visited the GSO to inform students about the services the Office of the Ombuds can offer graduate students. The office has two practitioners, Adam and University Ombuds Francine

Montemurro. The Ombuds Office talks with students, faculty, and staff about concerns and issues. The office is an independent, impartial, informal problem-solving resource. The office maintains strict confidentiality, and provides a safe place to have off-the-record conversations on issues related Boston University. They are there to be helpful, and it is a free service.

The Ombuds Office at BU follows four ethical principles: (1) independence, (2) confidentiality (unless imminent risk of serious harm), (3) impartiality/neutrality and (4) informality.

The Ombuds Office offers services like, help with student-advisor conflict, clarification of a policy or process, exploring concerns about unethical or inappropriate behavior, help with interpersonal conflicts, and advice on having a difficult conversation. The Ombuds is not authorized to receive notice of claims against the University, but the Ombuds can help you identify the formal channels you can use for this purpose.

Appointments can be made via email at ombuds@bu.edu or via telephone at [617-358-5960](tel:617-358-5960) or by walking into the office. More information including an FAQ can be found on the Office of Ombuds website at www.bu.edu/ombuds.

- Questions:
 - Are they open on the weekends?
 - They are generally open during normal hours and can talk on the phone, but they would also be willing to meet on the weekend if necessary for a visitor's schedule
 - They are not an emergency service – in these cases you should call the police or health services
 - What makes you different than counseling (i.e. behavioral medicine)?
 - Behavioral Medicine has backgrounds in health care. The Ombuds backgrounds are in conflict management, negotiation, etc.
- **Alex Yen, Representative for the GAAC – Graduate Academic Affairs Committee**
 - There have been 2 meetings of this committee and Alex would like to get input from GSO
 - The committee has ~8 people, 3-4 professors and 2 graduate students, staff? Dean Barman facilitates
 - Questions were brought up that were very relevant to us
 - i.e. Should graduate students keep their health insurance when on a leave of absence?
 - Everyone said yes very strongly, but these are very important issues we should be aware of and have a say in
 - Adding classes to the history department
 - Adding a new track to archeology
 - Also in charge of the academic conduct
 - Etc.
 - Emily oversees this, she is good at organizing the committee

- If there are concerns about previous points, she goes back and makes a new change and proposes the changes again
 - How can we collect opinions from GSO?
 - Alex can send the agendas as soon as they come out (unfortunately the meetings are in between GSO meetings and they only send out the agendas a week before, so we won't be able to have an in person discussion about the agendas)
 - Alex will also send us the notes from all of the meetings
 - Functionally how should we collect votes?
 - We probably want to see an example of an agenda before deciding
 - There could be a google form
 - Could send out a Google spreadsheet and add columns each time we vote on an issue
 - Does this overlap with the Graduate Advisory Board for the Provost?
 - We don't know
 - If anyone knows who else is on any of these committees, please let us know
 - Could we ask Emily for this?
- **Jacob Howe, Social Events Committee Chair**
 - There are 3 events planned:
 - Sam Adams brewery – October 14th
 - He will set up an event bright to plan it
 - Gardener Museum – October 28th
 - After we will go out for refreshments
 - Study Hall – November 8th
 - They will rent out a room on campus for the evening
 - Have coffee and snacks
 - “Misery loves company” and caffeine!
 - Other events?
 - American Studies and Art History – block party
 - Bay State block
 - Any graduate student can come
 - Alex Yen will email the information to everyone
- **Committee formation**
 - Professional Development
 - Our budget is essentially fluid on this since we can work with GRS
 - Questions:
 - What did it look like before, what are our goals, what are the responsibilities? Can we do a bounce house?
 - There will be subcommittees to directly plan events, so this role will be more management
 - Examples of events: Alternate career panel, 3 minute thesis
 - Bounce house is probably something for the social committee :)
 - Amanda Napior – Religious Studies – confirmed
 - Advocacy - The goal would be to find out what issues graduate students face and how we can help them

- It's been inconsistently done in the past
 - Role:
 - Send out surveys to hear back from the grad student community
 - Be in touch with other organizations
 - To make sure we work together and amplify each others voice
 - They might stay in touch with the committees graduate students are on
 - Questions:
 - What support would the person in that role have?
 - We have an initial survey with some issues and they could pick some of those first
 - We have contacts in the other groups to connect this person to
 - Whitney Geeker - Sociology
 - We will meet next week with these two committee chairs
- **Treasurer's Report**
 - On the books: \$30,911.65
 - Actual money we have available to allocate: \$3,793.98
- **Hurricane Disaster and Relief**
 - Jessica's family is from the virgin islands
 - They are not getting the same media coverage as Puerto Rico
 - It is a terrible situation
 - Donation hubs
 - Talking to local businesses and departments to set these up
 - People need money and food
 - Tell us if you think your department would be interested in participating
 - Service trip to Saint Croy, etc.
 - There is a Puerto Rican diaspora here, so they are getting a lot of focus
 - Jessica wants to bring some focus to the Virgin Islands as well
 - We will go to the FEMA equivalent for this issue to get funding for a volunteer opportunity to go help
 - We want this to happen in December, but maybe during spring break if it requires more time
 - Let Jessica know when you can go if you are interested
 - jssamuel@bu.edu (also on the GSO website)
 - If anyone has any ideas, please let her know
- **Graduate Student Coordinator for the Urban inequalities workshop – Whitney Geeker**
 - Hosted by the Initiative on Cities
 - Help students interested in inequalities or urban space issues to workshop their work
 - Every other week we read someone's paper and give them feedback, bring in speakers from outside of the university, go out to dinner and have individual meetings with them etc.
 - There is a workshop listserv

- They want this to be more interdisciplinary