

GPLC Meeting Minutes 2/25

1. Welcome/emails question

- a. Check into SPH not getting the email

2. Introductions of Exec Board: Kira, Lauren, Carl, Sasha, Tess

- a. We are still looking for members for the board
- b. Particularly looking for someone on the Med Campus
- c. We will send out application with minutes

3. Existing Committees

a. Comm Ave

- i. Section of Comm Ave between BU bridge and packards corner is going to be redone – committee there to advocate for grad students/liaise at community meetings (goal to get bike lanes included – successful)
- ii. Chair wants to dissolve/close committee
- iii. Move to suspend, seconded
- iv. Vote – 10 in favor; 0 opposed
- v. **SUSPENDED**

b. Fit Rec Membership

- i. Issue for young alum and part time students membership was prohibitively expensive; However – there is a \$40 membership for young alum for 2 years and \$25/month for part time students; this info to be shared on GPLC website
- ii. Move to close, seconded
- iii. Vote – 11 in favor; 0 opposed
- iv. **CLOSED**

c. Fit Rec Auditing

- i. Fit Rec classes are prohibitively expensive; Via FitRec website – you can sort by adult **recreation** – they have various classes listed on the website; through their registration process you register (without credit); \$100-\$300 for a semester's worth of classes; this info for how to register to be shared on GPLC website
- ii. Question about the difference between Full Time and Continuing Study – this issue primarily applies to PhD students who are done with coursework
- iii. Committee previously stood as information gathering
- iv. Possibility of getting free classes? Committee to get data, petition departments and petition individual schools/provost to get free classes
- v. Move to suspend, seconded
- vi. Vote – 11; 0 opposed
- vii. **SUSPENDED**

d. PhD Funding Model, Andrew Henry, Religion

- i. 3 main goals:
 - 1. Fight for more pay equity within departments; difficulty fixing that because it is something that works department by department because of funding
 - 2. Try to loosen restrictions about how outside funding is dispersed when students receive outside funding, the department would

redistribute the funds that student would have received: results – if you do win an outside fellowship you can keep as much of your original funding up to a pay ceiling of \$33,000 (approx..)

- a. What they did learn – almost everything is negotiable; encouragement to go to the department chair or the dean if you are receiving outside funding and argue for your ability to keep both sources of income
3. Loosen restrictions on outside work; currently under the fellowship agreement - no work at all allowed off campus and students cannot earn more than 5% of funding on campus/year; this issue is still in process (a lot of push back); university's argument against working off campus is that if you work a job outside of campus is that you will be slowing down your progress
 - a. Questions about how the humanities/fellowship works and possibilities for working outside the department
 - b. Need to survey departments – to find out how many people are funded from the department and how much, how many people are taking outside jobs (whether or not the department is aware of people taking these outside positions and if they are in support of it in certain cases)
- ii. Summer funding as a possibility – currently available but competitive
- iii. Survey of info to bring up at GSO
- iv. Move to continue, seconded
- v. Vote – unanimous
- vi. **CONTINUED**
- e. **ID Replacement fee** – brought up to Tim Barbari, exemption for ID fee, information to be shared and push at provost level that the fee should be waived when ID is stolen; there is a way to solve ad hoc (this info to be posted)
 - i. Move to continue to work with Exec Board to work with the University to have the fee waived when ID is stolen, seconded
 - ii. Vote – unanimous
 - iii. **CONTINUED**
- f. **Dental Plan** – background research on what other schools are doing for dental plans; main issue – there isn't dental insurance available to grad students; there is a discount program through dental school, which is open to the public and provides 10% off services; this info needs to be more transparent to students; and the actual plan isn't very affordable so it definitely needs some work if it is going to be the option for students; Plan to get something through BU that would be less expensive than what we might get on our own
 - i. **Research on top 50 schools/MA schools** – based on data – most seem to offer some sort of dental plan, many MA schools (Harvard, MIT, Brandeis) offer plans
 - ii. **Cost** – unclear on how each school structures agreement with insurance providers; Princeton, least expensive, \$72/year for dental insurance; some exceed over \$1000 for family plan; wide variance – cost will be secondary issue because unknown what school's agreement with provider is

- iii. Email from Grad school asking for above information (i.e. – what peer institutions offer)
- iv. 2005 was first year that BU did not provide something more comprehensive with dental (switched to current system)
- v. Possibility of providing employee option to Graduate students
- vi. Plan of action now: collect first hand experience stories, and demonstrate how “student discount plan” does not contribute to financial savings and that the dental school provides this discount program to the public
- vii. Move to continue, seconded
- viii. Vote – unanimous
- ix. **CONTINUED**

g. Credit/Debit Card at GSU, Zoe Plympton, Law School

- i. GSU eating establishments don’t take credit cards/debit cards; reached out to Tim Barbari about options available – push back from university is cost to having systems and transaction fees; at one point there was a debit/credit card system for tuition that was revoked because of extremely high amounts of fees
- ii. Trying now to reach out to dining services about how substantial the difference in fees would be for this and after that want to look into providing a survey to students to see if something like \$.20 more per item would be something that students would be interested in? Or at least to reintroduce debit cards which don’t charge fees
- iii. Also want to look at whether other universities in the area offer in terms of debit/credit card payment systems
- iv. Issue of outside contractors
- v. Move to continue, seconded
- vi. Vote unanimous
- vii. **CONTINUED**

4. New issues

a. International Students

- i. Email from a student who is an international student, new policy that changes the wording of teaching fellowships that can’t exceed 20 hours per week, her concern that her student visa would be compromised because the visa won’t allow for 20 or under
- ii. Tim Barbari says that they intentionally use the same language in fellowships as the international visas for this reason – up to and including 20 hours is fine for visa
- iii. Over the summer international students are allowed to work up to 40 hours (when students are not on full time status)
- iv. Will be posted on GPLC website
- v. Move to be shared, seconded
- vi. Vote unanimous
- vii. **CLOSED/Share**

b. Language Classes

- i. Auditing language classes – concern that unless you have a personal relationship with professor auditing classes is impossible (according to this student)
 - ii. Move to email her back, seconded
 - iii. Vote unanimous
 - iv. **EMAIL student back**
- c. **TA vs. TF Funding**
 - i. Difference in compensation for TA/TF funding without any explanation and having the same responsibilities (in certain departments – linguistics)
 - ii. Question about the disparity between schools/departments – there is variation and some schools have TAs and TFs that have very different responsibilities and therefore different funding
 - iii. Move at the University scale to standardize the naming of positions and tie that into the funding model and implement that across the university; Document that describes what each job entails pending
 - iv. Check with Tim about how new policy with all this information is standardized (may end the need for investigation into this)
 - v. Move to defer the specifics of this particular issue to the GSO, seconded; and Move to bring this up with Tim
 - vi. Vote, unanimous
 - vii. **DEFER to GSO; Bring up with Tim Barbari**
- d. **Graduate student w/dependents**
 - i. Surveyed grad students about cost of education/living for those who have dependents; Harvard, MIT and UPenn have additional fellowships available for grad students with dependents (Penn's is privately funded, MIT is "institutional bluff"); GWISE sponsored an info session about the benefits grad students have that are associated with having dependents (maternity and paternity leave)
 - ii. Question of if it is worth exploring this at the university level, lobby or recruit an outside source to have some kind of fellowship/scholarship available to graduate students with dependents; look into this and determine if this is something that BU could provide to grad students – through other university examples of actual financial support
 - iii. How many graduate students are there with dependents? Would be question to send out on the survey...
 - iv. Move to establish committee, naming Kyle Hansen as chair
 - v. Vote. Unanimous
 - vi. **PASSED, Kyle Hansen as Chair**
- e. **Basic vs. Plus Plan**
 - i. Comes from Tim – conversation around basic vs plus plan as default for health insurance plan (med campus is automatically enrolled in plus plan, CRC isn't); concerns about having basic plan to be the baseline plan; idea is that the plus plan will be the base line for the entire grad student body with the option to opt out of plus plan for basic which would add some sort of credit to your stipend

1. The university would now pay 80% of the premium for either plan whereas now they pay 100% of the basic plan and if you want to upgrade to plus you have to pay 100% of the additional cost of the premium out of pocket
- ii. The movement would be to form a committee so that they could be the contact person for when this conversation comes back to us (there wont be changes in the plan or legwork for GPLC to do in terms of gathering data)
- iii. Concern about paying for the extra premium out of a pre-taxed healthcare account
- iv. Move to make this a committee and make Soren Hessler a committee chair, seconded
- v. Vote, Unanimous
- vi. **PASSED, Soren Hessler as Chair**

5. Final Comments/Close

- a. Med Campus issue – communication issue with multiple schools doing the same types of events over and over again

ASIDE: Suggestion to send out one survey to all graduate students for baseline information – gather questions from all the committees that need to get info and send out one to everyone for details

ASIDE: Tim Barbari –Assoc Provost for Grad Affairs – mostly his response is if these issues important to grad students and you put in the work to show that it should be supported (survey the student body, show who wants it and why); he needs as much information as possible so that he can go to the University board and make the case