

Boston University Graduate Student Organization

Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2014
5:30 – CAS 200

1. Announcements

Evan Judd, GSO President, opened the meeting by welcoming attending GSO representatives.

The deadline for the **GSO Travel Grant Application** is set for Sunday, May 4th at 11:59 p.m. The research travel grants will also be due at this time.

The **BGLO** would like GSO representatives to consider participating in network events, organizing, and brainstorming ideas for future events. All those interested in getting involved should email the GSO.

2. Treasurer's Report

The organization's operating funds of the remainder of the academic year are **\$6,347.45**.

3. Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation

Tim Barbari, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs, visited to update the GSO on the draft changes to the Childbirth and Adoption Accommodations, which has been viewed by the GSO, GMSSO, and the Council of Deans and Student Life and Policies Committee (a subcommittee of the University Council). The current draft will be reviewed by Faculty council at the April meeting.

The new draft changes are as follows:

- (1) Written forms are now recommended for the policy. This solidifies the document, clarifies the start and end dates, and indicates who the primary care giver will be during the time of leave.
- (2) Clarifies that if both parents are BU graduate students, their leave time cannot overlap
- (3) Due to concern about deadlines and the flexibility of time in the last draft, the current draft indicates that the primary care giver has up to a year to take the leave, any time up to the semester following the semester in which the birth/adoption too place.

(4) In regards to the requirements outside of formal coursework, the new draft indicates that individual programs should be reasonable in terms of deadlines and other requirements.

Tim opened the floor for discussion and questions:

Q: There was discussion last time about qualifying the definition of some involvement with work while on leave such as studying for qualifying exams, maintaining research, writing, etc. Has that been addressed in the current draft?

A: It has been amended in the current draft. Currently the language reads that the deadlines and required work outside of coursework should be taken into consideration by individual programs. Since this is an accommodation and not a leave of absence, it indicates reduced research responsibilities, while still maintaining the status of a registered student. Often, students choose to take a leave of absence due to medical complications, lack of time, stress, etc.

Q: Is this intended as a back-up plan in case the advisor is difficult?

A: Everyone has the right to take the accommodation, and it omits the advisor problem. The student would notify the chair of the department and the process is no longer a negotiation, just a notification. Students who are here with grants would also follow a similar process. Money is currently being set aside for replacements that would need to fill in for people while they are on leave.

Q: Do you anticipate any issues about the current draft passing?

A: The makeup of the University Council is basically the entire Faculty Council and the Council of Deans. These people will already have seen it along the way, and any problems and/or issues should be amended prior to voting. Funding issues are being discussed through the Provost and Deans.

The draft will move to the Graduate Council in two weeks. The University Council's first reading and comments will happen in April, with a second meeting for voting in the first week of May. If voted through, the childbirth and adoption accommodation will go through immediately since it is not an academic policy.

Tim also notified attending GSO representatives of an email asking faculty, staff, and students to complete a brief survey about International Students at BU. In the past few years, the international student population has skyrocketed and the Provost office is seeking ways to better service this community through cross-cultural understanding, housing issues, addressing self-segregation and communications, as well as acculturation. There will be town hall meetings in the future months, and they would like to have feedback by May.

4. Socially Responsible Investment Committee

Nolan Little, GSO representative on the advisory committee to the trustees, asked the attending representatives for feedback in regards to the university's investment in companies that make guns for civilian use. Currently the university does not have any investments in gun investors, but the council is proposing a policy be put in place to avoid investing in gun manufacturers until the 1994 federal assault weapons ban is re-instated.

Q: Why are they proposing a ban if the policy will be reconsidered?

A: The committee didn't want to make this an argument that "guns were bad" as it was too political, so decided to focus it to assault weapons instead. The committee did not want to turn it into a Second Amendment issue, but the language is still quite political.

Q: Who are they considered with offending by making the issue political? What are the consequences?

A: Some people who give money to endowments might not want their money to be invested in things like this. The blanket policies, like this one, make people more comfortable putting their money into the school.

Q: What happens when the assault weapons ban is not re-enacted and something else is?

A: This was attempted last year. Nolan brought this up at the last meeting, but it wasn't addressed. He will bring it up again at the next meeting.

Q: The phrase "Assault weapons" is essentially a meaningless phrase, basically meaning features that are added to a gun. What is the point of attaching this to the ban? Why not say we are anti-gun investment?

A: Currently BU is not invested in civilian gun manufacturing, but is invested in military-issued weapons. Why are we even considering this when we still invest in companies that make weapons?

The next meeting is in early April. Look for an email for further information.

5. Non-Agenda Items

Pub Night

Kasey Aderhold, GSO Social Chair, asked for another \$1000 for another pub night on Thursday, March 20th.

Kasey motioned to fund the pub night; Nolan seconded. The motion passed.

GPLC

Leila Haery notified the GSO representatives of a newly formed council, the Graduate and Professional Student Leadership Council, which serves as a unified body of student representatives from all graduate schools from Boston University. They will work directly with Tim Barbari on issues and topics that affect all students at the university. Elections will be facilitated by the GSO for members on this council. The first town hall

meeting will be March 18th at 5:30 in CAS 522 with Tim Barbari. They will discuss what the group is and share ideas about how to hold elections. The first formal meeting will be held in April.

National Association of Graduate Professional Students

The GSO has been contacted about registering for the year and attending the annual conference for members. The GSO was a member in years past, but has not registered since before 2012. With university registration, students may attend a lobbying day, the annual conference, and participate in a health insurance buy-in offer for universities without good policies. The cost of institutional registration is \$500 per year.

Is this something the GSO wants to revisit? The GSO stopped giving money to the organization because of the high cost of registration and the low attendance by BU students.