

# **Boston University Graduate Student Organization**

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## **Minutes**

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

5:30 – 6:30 CAS 253, Gabel Museum of Archaeology

### **1. Announcements**

**Adam Iaizzi** welcomed representatives, encouraging them to sign in and create a name tag.

**Aviva Cormier** announced the treasurer's report, which contains \$3,307.44 in uncommitted funds. This amount reflects the allocation of the spring travel and research grants. This amount will also roll over into the next fiscal year, but Aviva suggested the GSO allocate the money in order to maintain the same budget in the next year.

### **2. Elections**

Secretary, **Kristen Edwards**, will be stepping down at the end of this semester. Sarabeth Buckley was nominated. Adam motioned to elect Sarabeth as the secretary for Fall 2016. The motion passed.

### **3. Kim Randall: Mandated Reporting**

Kim Randall, the Title IX Coordinator, was absent from this meeting, but Adam informed attending GSO representatives that all teaching fellows at Boston University are Title IX mandated reporters. If a teaching fellow witnesses or hear of reports of sexual harassment, they are required by law to inform the university about it. Most of the GSO representatives were not aware of this, and most agreed there should be more transparency and information provided. Teaching fellows should know the process of reporting, the responsibility to report (particularly when it comes to one's peers), and who to tell.

Representatives should address questions for Adam to forward to Kim Randall's office. Adam will reschedule this meeting for the fall.

### **4. Co-Sponsored Event: BU Graduate Conference on Religious Studies**

Andrew Henry, from the Religious Studies department, approached the GSO requesting \$825 for the second annual BU Graduate Conference on Religious Studies: "Protest, Public Religion, and Social Change." The topic for this year is interdisciplinary, and many students from departments

outside the religious studies are involved in the organization of the conference. The event is expected to garner over 100 participants, and will be run like a typical panel-style conference. They hope to get a faculty key-note speaker from New England. Their budget is larger than last year's conference due to the increase in expected turnout. For more detailed information, view the co-sponsored event application:

[https://drive.google.com/a/bu.edu/file/d/0B\\_3aAgaHwbk3MjFpa3NEZkVIYjg/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/a/bu.edu/file/d/0B_3aAgaHwbk3MjFpa3NEZkVIYjg/view?usp=sharing)

Adam noted that while the conference will be held next semester on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the new rolling budget allows the GSO to fund events that occur early in the fall semester. There was a motion to fund the entire \$825 request. The motion passed.

## **5. GSO Survey Results**

The GSO representatives discussed the results of the graduate survey circulated a few weeks ago, in order to come up with ideas on how better to serve the BU community. Below are some of the main issues that came up from the survey:

1. Better health insurance and dental coverage: Students on the medical campus receive the PLUS plan, which includes better coverage, particularly for child care. Students at the GRS are required to pay an additional premium. Other students complained that coverage options need to be more flexible, particularly in terms of spousal insurance.
2. Library: There were complaints about the building, the access to journals, and some of the borrowing policies.
3. Restrictions for outside employment: GRS teaching fellows are not allowed to hold employment elsewhere while employed as TFs.
4. FitRec classes: Many students remarked they were too expensive, despite the fact that the GSO solved this issue last semester. The policy has always existed that students can take FitRec courses for zero credits, but students were not aware of this. The fact that this issue came up in the survey attests to the need to increase communication between the GSO and the student body.
5. On-Campus living: Living on-campus is too expensive, and more affordable options should be made available.

The representatives considered ways to make the GSO more transparent between the departments and the student community. The following ways were suggested to solicit feedback: an FAQ section on the website, a submission form for complaints/problems, and open forums for students to raise issues and concerns. One representative suggested looking to the Graduate and Professional Leadership Council as an example for handling these issues. When an issue is raised at their meetings, they form small groups that work to seek solutions, rather than leaving it to the entire group to organize.

Another issue that arose was the need to have a larger presence with departments and help the BU community understand what the GSO does. Many students were unaware that non-representatives could attend the meetings. It was also unknown if all departments in the GRS

currently had a representative. After a brief poll, it was determined that most students present began attending meetings as representatives after being recruited by their department's graduate student organization. It was agreed that the GSO should be more adamant about recruiting representatives from departments each year and encouraging the general population to attend meetings.

#### **6. Professional Development Event Committee**

Based on the results of the survey, many students would like the GSO to plan professional development events. Adam suggested the creation of a Professional Development Event Committee. The following representatives volunteered: Andrew Henry, Darcy Gordon, Aviva Cormier, and Getty Lustilla. Andrew Henry was nominated as the committee chair. Adam volunteered to assist with networking to other organizations that set up events like this, such as GWISE. Adam motioned to allocate \$1,000 for this committee to use towards an event in the fall. The motion passed.

#### **7. Allocating Remaining 2015 – 2016 Budget**

After funding the Professional Development Committee and the Co-Sponsored event, the remaining 2015 – 2016 budget was about \$1,387. The GSO voted to fund one travel grant and one research grant alternate from Fall 2015. The remaining budget of \$387 will roll over into the next fiscal year.