BU GSO – General Body Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 14, 2022

Time: 6:00 pm

I. Welcoming remarks by the President

   a. Join Slack Channel for GSO Reps:
      https://join.slack.com/t/bugso2021/shared_invite/ztobqpc210-gxJTsxWWkWL7n4ioaAfkiw
   b. Join the GSO mailing list: https://www.bu.edu/gso/join-our-mailing-list/

II. E-board Reports

   a. President’s Report
      1. Meeting with City Councilor At-Large Ruthzee Louijeune
         i. Mayor Wu has organized a rent stabilization committee. City government is working to do a better job stabilizing natural stable housing options and creating a dueling house program that will make it easier for home owners to expand on their properties. Mass Affordable Housing alliance is working to lower costs
         ii. If you’re interested in getting involved:
             1. Sign up for city council newsletters
             2. Look for internships or fellowships
             3. Email councilors with your research or ideas for change (they do read!)
      2. Potential upcoming collaboration with SAGE and Law School
         i. Trying to develop programs that would allow students across schools to meet and network
      3. Upcoming membership initiatives:
         i. Planning to organize presentations within department orientations
         ii. Planning Fall 2022 Grad Student Fair
         iii. Beginning work on the GSO Annual Report

   b. VP’s Report
      1. Description of the Proxy System (email monan@bu.edu)
      2. VP is providing general assistance to GSO initiatives and events
      3. Collaboration with Sasha B. Goldman from Professional Development and Postdoctoral Affairs (PDPA) – organizing a professional development event with
external speakers from other institutions and organizations, representing both industry and academia

i. If anyone has suggestions for prospective professional development/workshop events, let know. Looking for graduate students to serve on/help run workshop events

c. Treasurer's Report

1. Working with GRS contact (Janette Countryman) to get new and backlogged event/travel reimbursement requests processed

2. Hosted Domestic Students' Tax Webinar on Feb. 21 – modest attendance (approx. 10), but many requests to send slides and webinar recording (https://bostonu.zoom.us/rec/play/cbF2bPYW_smB1pbAWUBHTXqaGChAyuX9C-a11HNOSDKAY18QKdNbBdynZSHKrf6dTfrOK1EHi6uF4wR.TG6opS1iwXX9wqVr?_x_zm_rhtaid=167&_x_zm_rtaid=fbDysR_zTgetPWrAG9a9QA.1645499214000.cf67459e2cc12178599b3088b967520&autoplay=true&continueMode=true&startTime=1645484754000 Password: 8UB0R*hm)

   3. Upcoming:
      i. Expect higher volume of reimbursement requests this month because a lot of research conferences are going on
      ii. Plan to start discussing next year’s budget to get a better idea of what items to include (working with GRS)

d. Secretary's Report

1. COVID-19 Grant Petition ready to go
   i. Final approval – Vote: Approved.
   ii. Share with your departments
   iii. Timeline for delivery to administration – by beginning of April?

2. Archive request – trying to build out GSO’s archive both for organizational memory and for use in social media, etc. Request for longtime GSO reps to share any old photos or flyers they have, in either digital or physical formats.

e. Social Chair Report

1. GSO Pub Night on March 4 was success – all tickets were sold

2. Upcoming:
   i. Next Pub Night – March 25
   ii. Coffee chat by end of next month

f. Travel Grants Chair Report

1. $500 grants (looking into increasing possibly) for travel to conferences, travel to complete research, & other research items (flexible COVID-19 criteria; e.g., attending a skills workshop, remuneration for research participants)
   i. Eligibility: can apply even if have stipend, but should be from a department or program whose rep has attended at least 3 GSO meetings
   ii. Short application: 1,000 words total, 3 short prompts
iii. Google form application on the GSO website; DO NOT email applications to the GSO grant chair email (you can email questions)

2. Grant review deadlines: April 1, August 1, December 1; expenses must be incurred AFTER the award deadline and within 1 year (i.e., no expenses prior to submission can be reimbursed).

3. Questions or interested in serving on the review committee: gsogrant@bu.edu

IV. Old Business

a. Follow-up on E-Board Compensation
   1. Potentially compensating E-board members raised in Fall of 2021.
   2. Purpose: to encourage interest in pursuing an E-board position and to encourage dedication to position once elected. To create comparable structures to other GSOs in Boston (currently we are the only school that has unpaid positions)
   3. GRS has indicated that we could provide non-service stipends for E-board members – available for both domestic and international students, doesn’t interfere with existing stipends, split into two semesters
   4. Discussion: Does E-board feel would be more obligated to GRS/administration if paid? Concern since GSO does advocate for graduate students against the administration at times, and that’s important not to lose. (Response: No. Once GRS releases funds, GSO has control over how to use. E-board would not feel any more obligated than currently do with fellowships, stipends, etc. for research and teaching). Would these funds come out of GSO overall budget and therefore would they take away from other projects or travel grants? (Response: Yes, they would come out of existing budget, but there has been an overage every year, so the funds shouldn’t affect other programming)
   5. Vote: Are you in favor of compensating E-board and Committee Chairs? Approved
   6. Vote: What amounts are appropriate? Approved
   7. Next steps: President will work with GRS to determine how to move forward

V. New Business

a. Forming Committees
   1. Members needed for:
      i. Travel Grants Committee
         1. Assist in reviewing travel grant applications
      ii. Social Committee
         1. Assist in planning and executing social events
         2. Assist in managing all GSO social media accounts
      iii. International Student Relations Committee –
         1. Assist in finding resources for international students
2. Assist in planning and executing events for international students
   iv. Orientation Committee
      1. Assist in creating the GSO presentation for orientations
      2. Assist in attending and presenting at orientations

2. Benefits: low-time commitment; get more involved with GSO, engage in service opportunities that are great for the resume, meet other students in and out of GSO.
3. Sign ups: https://forms.gle/DJZd1M4b3oBUYkoZ6

b. Opening GSO membership
   1. Reasoning: Currently, we are unable to fund or offer voting rights to non-GRS students. Yet, we have many students from outside programs in our Eboards and attending meetings. Opening membership would allow other programs to elect representatives (as we currently do) and increase our funding.
   2. Have discussion with Dean Jeffries-EL and Provost Kleinman. They are in favor.
   3. Vote: open membership to be university-wide. Passed. 20/20 in favor
   4. Next steps: President will pursue next steps with Dean, Provost, GRS

c. Formal organization name change
   1. With membership low, and confusion regarding our organization a name change to “Graduate Student Government” has been proposed. GRS has expressed that it is within our power to make this change
   2. Discussion: Have heard from some students that can’t call selves government if don’t have representation from every college/program not government if don’t have rep from every college/program. Should we wait to do this until we know that this is going to be a representative body?
   3. Votes: Approve formal name change or wait: Majority vote to table
   4. Next steps: tabled until GSO membership opened up

d. Concern regarding grad student parking fees
   1. Issues:
      i. Costs for parking permits are extremely high ($580 in Spring, $493 in Fall)
      ii. Students only allowed to park in 3 lots from 7am-11pm. Students need to exit Agganis by 5:30pm on dates of events.
   2. Provost Kleinman is open to discussing parking
   3. Discussion: Agree that parking is very expensive and our lots are far away from the buildings we work in. Due to low stipends and high housing costs in the area, it’s hard for many students to live close to school or even public transportation, so it seems unfair to make parking so difficult/expensive as well.
   4. Vote: Move forward via meeting or formal email to Provost. Approved.

e. Supporting Ukraine
   1. Do we know of any current initiatives to support BU students affected by the war in Ukraine and/or if we know of any students that have been affected?

f. Recommendations for Spring Programming
1. Suggestions for Social Events – Maybe different type of activities rather than eating or drinking
2. Suggestions for Professional Development Events - CV workshop, will re-do professional headshot shoot when weather gets warmer.
3. Google form available here for advocacy: Suggestions for Advocacy work

VII. Closing:

a. Contact the GSO at gso@bu.edu
b. Contact GSO president, Arcadia, at aewell1@bu.edu
c. Schedule a private meeting with Arcadia