

# BU GSO – General Body Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 2, 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](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. Currently working on GSO Annual Report from 2020-2022 – nearly finished
2. Upcoming:
  - i. Planning to organize presentations within department orientations
  - ii. Planning Fall 2022 Grad Student Fair
  - iii. Meeting scheduled with Provost Kleinman to discuss parking rates

#### b. VP's Report – also sharing report for International Student Relations Chair

1. Regarding visa renewal issues and international travel due to US consulate closure for students from Ukraine and Russia
2. Int'l Students Relations Chair Stan Debruyn has met with new ISSO contact, Shannon Gerber, to discuss funding for students who can't return home over summer. Affected students should be in touch with their deans, as there is help available for housing, summer jobs, etc.
3. Working with ISSO to create new information package for new students

#### c. Treasurer's Report

1. Working with Janette and Anna (our new GRS contact) to process reimbursement requests from PhD students. Fewer requests than anticipated.
2. Met with Arcadia last Monday to discuss the proposed GSO budget for next year
  - i. [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kUFwtp\\_Dw3YIVk0VwCiWjJJD55kQ9PlzpiJtQMT0tag/edit#gid=726665380](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kUFwtp_Dw3YIVk0VwCiWjJJD55kQ9PlzpiJtQMT0tag/edit#gid=726665380)
  - ii. If you have any questions or comments about the draft of the proposed budget, please let me know

#### d. Secretary's Report

1. Archive request – trying to build out GSO’s archive both for organizational memory and for use in social media, etc. Request for GSO reps to share photos of current or old events
2. Currently pulling old documents, presentations, newsletters, etc. from BU’s main website to build out GSO’s Google Drive Archive

**e. Travel Grants Chair Report**

1. April 2022 applicants updated
  - i. Noticeable increase relative to recent cycles during the pandemic:
  - ii. 45 applications (28 conference, 17 research)
  - iii. 16 applications funded (9 conference, 7 research), with great diversity across the departments of GRS represented in the winners
2. Will continue discussions with GSO e-board, GRS, and incoming chair (Hafsa Arain) around increasing grant budget and award amounts
3. Next grant cycle = August 1, 2022 (for travel/expenses occurring between August 1, 2022 and ~late August, 2023)

**IV. Old Business**

- a. Updates on housing following Arcadia’s meeting with administration:
  1. There has not been a uniform across the board rent increase. Instead, some rents have increased but others were reduced. This, of course, reflects expenses. More broadly, graduate student housing is the midst of restructuring. Responsibility for graduate student housing has moved from BU Real Estate to Housing. As part of that, the office is doing a number of things including:
    - i. Covering all utilities as part of rent. This contrasts with the current state where students cover their own utilities;
    - ii. All units will have data ports and WIFI included in rent. In the current state one or the other are not available in 1/3 of graduate student housing;
    - iii. All units will be furnished;
    - iv. It will be possible to use financial aid to cover housing expenses;
    - v. It will be possible to submit applications for grad housing digitally (not just in person).
  2. Discussion:
    - i. Q: Does the inclusion of utilities explain the current housing increase? A: Not uniform increase, but where an increase occurs that is more likely due to inflation.
    - ii. President: Administration is looking to form a council to look at the future of PhD students at BU, including questions about stipend amounts, living costs, etc. This will be a longer-standing organization intended to address these

concerns. Unclear what make-up of this committee will be. Discussion – any “future of the PhD” council should include PhD student reps

- b. Updates on unified student organization following meeting with Provost Kleinman and Dean Ellmore
  - 1. It may not be feasible for our organization to simply open membership to everyone (due to budget constraints); some schools already have representative bodies, so unclear what relationship between those and wider GSO would be
  - 2. Moving forward, we plan to initiate conversations with other student-led representative organizations to assess interest in a graduate student council that would bring 1-2 reps from each of those groups together monthly to discuss common issues. Problem is funding (would some funding come out of constituent groups’ budgets and administration match?) and the fact that not all 17 graduate schools have similar bodies.
  - 3. This is a slow-moving process but progress is being made. President will continue working on over summer.
  - 4. Discussion: Seems somewhat bizarre that existing student groups would have to provide funding, particularly since not all 17 schools have organizations to pull from
- c. Social chair elections
  - 1. Candidates: Bharat Gogineni and Ayshwarya Venkataramana
  - 2. **Vote:** 15/15 For Ayshwarya Venkataramana

## V. New Business

- a. Meeting Locations for next semester: In-person, hybrid, or Zoom?
  - 1. Discussion: Staying hybrid/Zoom allows for students researching or traveling to stay involved and connected. Also, no idea what fall will look like COVID-wise.
  - 2. **Vote:** 9 Hybrid / 4 Zoom / 2 In-person.

## VII. Closing:

- a. Contact the GSO at [gso@bu.edu](mailto:gso@bu.edu)
- b. Contact GSO president, Arcadia, at [aewell1@bu.edu](mailto:aewell1@bu.edu)
- c. [Schedule a private meeting with Arcadia](#)

## Attendees:

GSO EBoard attending: President, Arcadia Ewell; Vice President, Monan Ma; Secretary, Meghan Townes; Treasurer, Krishna Ammini; Travel Grants Chair, Josh Fox-Fuller

Attendees: Ayshwarya Venkataramana, Curtis M. Snyder, David Merrick Long, Florian David Bodamer, Guangmei Liu, Maggie Boyd, Makenzie Coker, Sarah Lewinger, Max Laitman Chapnick, Liz Neill, Arden Radford, Peter Kotiuga