

GSO – Special Session

Meeting Minutes

08/22/22

Present: Arcadia Ewell (President), Meghan Townes (secretary), Monan Ma (VP), Hafsa Arain (travel grants chair). Reps: Makenzie Coker, Connor O'Brien, Danielle Williamson/John Fallon, Jordan Pickard, Kelly Geyer/Jae Hyung Sim/Kate Finnerty, Pol Pardini Gispert, David Long, Gizem Kaftan; Other BU grad students: Lina Kroehling, Patrick Koval, Matt Tracy, Alexandra Lion, Quan Nguyen

Time: 6:00 pm

I. Welcoming remarks by the President (5 minutes)

II. Updates on Unionization efforts (10 minutes)

1. The union effort at BU **will go public September 2** - this means that we will announce our intention to form a graduate student union. We will also start asking grad workers to sign union authorization cards to petition the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to put our union formation to a formal vote
2. As of August 16, over 1300 graduate students at BU have been assessed, with over 95% expressing support for the union. We have 120 union representatives - over 70 from 19 CAS depts alone
3. The union-created MBTA petition, with 700+ signatories, led to the additional 1.5% increase in stipends announced by the provost in July

III. Background to a GSO Statement

1. [MIT](#) and [Harvard](#) student governments have written statements in support of the right to unionization and negotiation at their respective universities
2. We are aware that, historically, the university has presented GSO and the [Graduate Student Advisory Board](#) as alternatives to unionization. BU's [Task Force on the Future of PhD Education](#) was also formed in the spring in response to growing graduate student pressure over questions of working conditions and pay but will not produce a report/recommendations until the end of 2022-2023 school year
3. In our May GSO general meeting, we discussed how the union and the GSO offer different types of student advocacy and focus on different aspects of the graduate student experience at BU. There is a benefit to a collaborative, rather than antagonistic, relationship between the two groups
4. Statement would not be published until union becomes public (9/2 or after)

IV. Review of requested statement (15 minutes)

1. We, the Boston University Graduate Student Organization (GSO), make this resolution in support of the right of graduate workers to unionize and pursue collective bargaining and **in full support of the Boston University Graduate Workers Union campaign**. During the graduate worker unionization campaign at MIT, their Graduate Student Council (the equivalent body to Boston University's Graduate Student Organization), wrote in support of the [effort](#): "We know the limits of current advocacy channels. The only way

to secure transformative change ... is for graduate student-workers to unionize and fight for a strong contract.” We agree, and affirm our support as graduate student advocates for all efforts to improve the lives and working conditions of Boston University’s graduate student body.

2. Suggestions and edits were made:

1. We, the Boston University Graduate Student Organization (GSO), the official representative body of students in the Graduate School for Arts and Sciences, make this resolution in support of the right of graduate workers to unionize and pursue collective bargaining. ***We are in full support of the Boston University Graduate Workers Union campaign.*** During the graduate worker unionization campaign at MIT, their Graduate Student Council (a similar body to Boston University’s Graduate Student Organization), wrote in support of the [effort](#): “We know the limits of current advocacy channels. The only way to secure transformative change ... is for graduate student-workers to unionize and fight for a strong contract.” We agree, and affirm our support as graduate student advocates for all efforts to improve the lives and working conditions of Boston University’s graduate student body.

V.Vote (5 minutes): 100% approval. GSO has approved release of statement.

VI.Closing remarks by the President (5 minutes) – statement will be released once the union has gone public on September 2, 2022