

**GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**University of California, Los Angeles**

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**GSA Forum Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015 5:30 p.m.**

**Ackerman Viewpoint Conference Room**

Call to order: 5:32pm by Chiao-Wen

1. **Adoption of Agenda**
2. **Approval of Minutes from last Forum on November 4th, 2015**: Math & Physical Sciences motions to approve the forum meeting minutes of 11/4/15.
   1. Biological Sciences seconds the motion
   2. 11/4/15 forum minutes are approved with no changes.
3. **Statement by Milan Chatterjee**
   1. “We are having a sensitive issue here at GSA.” As a community, we strive for collaboration and communication
   2. As president, Milan wants to be sensitive to everyone’s feelings
   3. Miscommunication relating to the cabinet stance on a sensitive topic. Adapting a position would alienate a certain group or constituency of students
   4. Miscommunication for two reasons:
      1. Unusual request for funding of diversity event with the new vice chancellor
      2. Very tight timeline to pass the funding
   5. GSA has not had the opportunity to engage in face-to-face dialogue with concerned parties
   6. “I respect everyone’s opinion on this, all students. I want to work with the affected parties to make sure we reach a full and fair resolution. I want to prevent future miscommunications.”
   7. An allegation has been made that GSA has violated the first amendment
      1. Letter from American Center for Law and Justice passed out
      2. States that first amendment was not violated
4. **Statement by Andres Schneider**
   1. He and other cabinet members are flexible and open to dialogue. “We are all graduate students at UCLA…so we should keep ourselves to the highest standards possible when we deal with these kinds of issues.”
   2. We must be open and sensitive.
   3. We are not a political organization, not trying to create conflict. We are trying to reach a consensus in terms of what will be the best for the graduate student community.
   4. GSA is not an organization of political conflict. We are hoping to reach a consensus on these important topics. Thank you to everyone here today.
5. **Public Comments**
   1. Rahim Kurwa: handing out original emails received from Graduate Students Office
      1. Push for language that is “First Amendment tried and true”
      2. “The GSA will not limit the allocation of funding to any student group based on their opinion/position”
      3. Passing out copies of a petition signed by 130-140 students and letter published in the Daily Bruin by one of the cabinet members, detailing his experience.
   2. Yakoub Kureh
      1. “I am here to talk more about this funding issue”
      2. Extreme lack of transparency regarding this issue
      3. References letter of resignation by Mohannad
      4. “GSA cannot tie funding to any sort of particular viewpoint”
      5. “It is important that we have the diversity caucus…we could not have approached them or had a conversation before this event”
   3. Alexandra Holmstrom – Sociology, Campus chair for the union UAW265
      1. “I am here to talk about this same issue”
      2. “Our union has had a discussion about divestment. Most grad students in the union voted last year calling for divestment. That was a position that our union took. When this happened, it was very concerning for our union. We were worried that our union would be barred from participating in the diversity forum based on this position.”
      3. “I think that our role to play in this context is an important one and thus not being able to participate in the diversity forum is a big problem.”
      4. We voted to endorse the code change that Rahim called for
   4. Angelica – Chicana/Chicano Studies 4th year
      1. When I heard about this through various outlets I was very concerned as a student.”
      2. “I’m really worried for other diversity events that might happen. I want to know if I can be involved on my campus and get the involvement of my organization.”
   5. Michael Skiles
      1. We’ve seen Milan work tirelessly to improve the lives of grad students
      2. No reason to doubt his honesty, truthfulness, and integrity
      3. Marked with only professionalism and not the slightest hint of bias
      4. “Since this divestment issue is so sensitive, I think that taking any position would alienate a lot of students, which would work against the purpose of GSA.”
6. **Mathematical science comment- Ian Coley moves to extend public comments by another ten minutes**
   1. **Favored by majority, motion passes.**
   2. Kevita, Law student at UCLA
      1. She notes discrepancies in different accounts about what has happened. “The forum’s lack of awareness on how it is being represented and talked about is disturbing. The focus of this is not Milan. The key issue here is one of speech and association. In a series of communications, only one group was mentioned and targeted.”
      2. Neutrality can be used in a lot of different ways. Neutrality doesn’t mean preventing association
      3. I’m really concerned about the way these arguments have been framed. It is not just about one group, and yet one group was singled out
   3. Sarah, 3rd year law student
      1. This issue is very specific. A lot of students, myself included, feel very targeted. This is a very narrow issue, not going to affect a lot of things in the future.
   4. Arielle, “Jewish student here on campus”
      1. Mentions being very frustrated by a lot of the comments made here today
      2. I have felt barred, marginalized from many diversity spaces on campus
      3. Very proud of the GSA’s move to neutralize these spaces and not marginalize specific student groups
      4. Thinks that this has become a bigger issue that it needs to be
      5. I hope that leaders on this campus work to create safe spaces on campus for students regardless of their belief systems
   5. Jonathan – PhD student in music department
      1. Within the Jewish students on campus, there is a diversity of opinions on BDS
      2. When a student governing body awards or denies funding based on the position of a student group—that is the opposite of neutrality.
   6. Kathy, 5th year neuroscience student
      1. Proud of the GSA’s work in the past few years to be fair and unbiased
      2. Disappointed in the language she has seen in the email correspondence
      3. The idea of a neutrality stance is not discriminating against any group based on political or religious affiliation at any time
7. **Officer Reports**
   1. Milan Chatterjee, GSA President:
      1. Thanks everyone for their civility and respect in making comments
      2. Had two important meetings with Gene Block and Janina Montero
      3. Issues with TA stipends not matching up with cost of living.
      4. In May, a study showed that most people are spending the majority of their stipends on housing
      5. Concern about huge increase in cost of housing, especially at Weyburn. Unclear where this money is going. Met with Heather Rosen and requested more transparency about this price hike and where the money is going
      6. “We don’t have a funding body for diversity events, we made an exception using cabinet funds.”
      7. Requested chancellor and vice chancellor to provide funding for student interest board/diversity events, waiting to hear back
      8. Stacey Meeker may be leaving when she finishes her degree in 1-2 years. Must make decision on the sustainability of her position. Usually a student position, but requires specific expertise. In talks to request funding to subsidize a full position
      9. Intro to Grad Slam presentation, to come later in forum
   2. Joel Lanzaga, Vice President of Academic Affairs:
      1. Updates across 3 different areas:
         1. Faculty and welfare committee:
            1. New high school being planned
            2. New faculty retirement plan to start July 2016
            3. Sexual violence and sexual harassment policy still under review
         2. Council of planning and budget
            1. Faculty salary/wages constructed in 2014 budget
            2. Concerns about how salary adjustments are being explained to faculty
         3. Grad council
            1. Proposal to establish a teaching professor title, unsure if it will create tension within faculty
   3. Andres Schneider, Vice President of External Affairs:
      1. Brief update on what is going on with Sage? Coalition
         1. Presented paper last year regarding graduate student visas
         2. Presenting paper this year advocating for agenda with different people in Washington DC to get legislation relating to mental health issues among grad students at the national level
         3. Advocating for research funding
         4. Thinking about issue of high school visa reform
   4. Chiao-Wen Lan, Vice President of Internal Affairs:
      1. Follow up on GSRC oversight committee
         1. Forming an oversight committee that will overlook planning for GSRC for the next three years
         2. Staff and faculty on the committee
      2. Upcoming event: GSSRC and UCLA Rec are cosponsoring grad student leadership dinner
         1. Flyers at the table
      3. Introduction to new GSA staff member Malia
      4. Met with Dean Garrell and two associate deans to go over student wellness survey
         1. Trying to implement survey across UC campuses
8. **Campus Life at UCLA: KREC Relocation Discussion: Mick Deluca and Michael Skiles**
   1. Mick Deluca: University has announced the institution of the Geffen Academy. The university needs to cite a location, and the Kinross Building was decided as the location.
      1. Kinross building originally constructed as a staging building, meant as a transitory staging space
      2. Hit critical mass a number of years ago when the hospital moved rehab back to campus, so the grad student recreation center shrunk down to around the size of this room
      3. When the police station moved, we were able to move into the space. Very proud.
      4. 6021 individual grad students used KREC more than 25 times this past year
      5. The academy says they will start with a phased in class in fall of 2017, so the facility doe not have to be relocated until September 2017
      6. Already looking at 4 zones in that proximity, maybe a different utilization of some university property in that area
      7. As the needs of grad students continues to grow, it is safe to say that overtime grad student housing will
      8. “In the next building, a full sized recreation center will be put in on the first floor of the new construction.”
      9. “We are by no means saying that grad students are not important. We all know that the quality of life for graduate students is critically important. Having an active and healthy lifestyle is critically important.”
      10. Commitment to providing as good or better amenities for grad students in the coming years
   2. Questions by Michael Skiles
      1. It took over $2mil in student recreation fees to get KREC built.
      2. Passed out document “UCLA plans to close grad student gym to make way for faculty high school”
      3. We are concerned that we won’t get an adequately located gym
      4. Seems like the administration has no idea where a new gym will be
      5. There will be a considerable amount of downtime where grad students will ave no gym of there own and will have to walk all the way to Wooden
      6. 22 minute walk to Wooden Center from Weyburn, not feasible for busy graduate students. This means a lot of people will be skipping working out altogether
      7. KREC is considerable less crowded than the “overcrowded” Wooden Center
         1. Grad student concern about sharing locker rooms with/working out in front of the students that they TA for.
      8. Weyburn Commons building is currently the primary location for social events, also smaller than KREC and crucial study space. Thus would not work to
      9. Request that the new REC center be placed in a comparably convenient location
         1. Suggests Warren Hall but worries about parking
      10. The new rec center should be funded by Geffen’s $100mil donation and not student fees (which have already gone to funding KREC)
      11. Asks how the university intends to fund this new building, are grad students going to be stuck once again bearing the bill
   3. Mick Deluca response:
      1. Over the course of 10 years, a resolution has been endorsed that money would be held in reserve so that graduate students would not have to pay an additional fee to fund KREC. No additional fees were charged to grad students at all
      2. Quite confident with the guarantee that no student fees will go into a new rec center
      3. The funding source will be the university
      4. The gift was to the university
      5. The university takes major gifts in lots of capacities
      6. When we look at replacing and displacing things, this will have a university funding that offsets this
   4. Michael Skiles questions:
      1. Were you involved in this decision to close KREC and open the Geffen Academy?
   5. Response - I was made aware of the announcement a few days before it was made. There has been a longstanding desire to add a junior high/high school to UCLA.
      1. It was not my decision; I did not have a vote. I was aware of the decision. It will mean the relocation of a lot of university services. The needs of graduate students are well-known on campus. We want to meet the needs of today’s grad students.
      2. KREC would take up administrative space in Weyburn Commons if it was ultimately relocated there.
   6. Michael question – Is there a chance that there might be some time between when KREC closes and the new gym opens? Would you agree that Wooden is often crowded and that a 44-minute round trip walk is restrictive?
      1. All planning at the current moment is around zero downtime. He cannot make promises on this, but that is the current goal.
      2. Also added satellite facility this year for undergrads to reduce foot traffic at Wooden.
   7. Opens floor to everyone
      1. Androulla Hadjikyiacou: will Lot 32 be shut down or impacted by this decision?
         1. Mick – Lot 32 is the future metro stop and thus is very valuable land. The ground parking is really a placeholder.
      2. Anonymous grad student/KREC user: “whether or not you use KREC, this gym was several years in the making and GSA spearheaded this project. It worries me that the decision to close this gym was made without communication with any grad student associations or individuals. GSA received no advanced notice of this decision. That is one big problem, this is not just about KREC. This is the administration making a unilateral decision about grad students without even token communication with grad student groups. This is the first direct contact/communication the administration has had with any grad students about KREC. For me, the email from Chancellor Block read like ‘congratulations! We are closing your gym and building something not for grad students.’ The lack of even token communication says to me that UCLA doesn’t care or even think about grad students. The lack of communication worries me deeply. If you don’t care about KREC, I would still be worried about whatever grad student resource you care about. Will someone from the administration address the lack of communication?”
         1. Mick Deluca response: Firstly, it was a donor announcement and it said the Kinross building. It was the announcement of a gift and a new initiative, not a statement of importance. I am here to tell you that it will be KREC. I will pass your question along.
      3. Milan interjects – there may have been another senior process that Mick Deluca was not aware of
      4. Ryan – second year grad student: The goal is to have zero downtime, do you mean that we will have a comparable facility as soon as the current facility closes? Is there a set date for KREC to close?
         1. Mick Deluca response: I mean that we will use KREC until the last possible moment. We are trying to open the doors of the new facility as soon as KREC closes its doors. There is no concrete date set for KREC to close. The school is set to open Fall 2017, but with a small class of around 60 students, so KREC may able to stay open even during this initial stage, as such a small class may not necessitate the use of the whole building.
      5. Anne Blackstock-Bernstein - Education department faculty did not know about the decision until the press release came out. It is not just us who are being affected and we are not the only ones in the dark.
      6. Michael Skiles – there is no excuse for taking over the building that currently houses KREC.
      7. Hector – medical student 1st year. Similar sentiments as Ryan. Concerned about where grad students are going to go to work out. Wooden is both awkward and inconvenient. Suggests giving temporary gym access to grad students to LA Fitness on Wilshire or extending Wooden’s hours as a way to mitigate the challenges of a transition with downtime.
         1. Mick “I assure you that the planning will be with you and for you. We are open to any alternatives and accommodations. As we move forwards, we may have a committee that works with us on this. I am more than happy to meet with anyone.”
9. **Grad Slam: Sonya Gavin**
   1. Last year was the first grad slam in April 2015
      1. Very last minute decision for us to host this past year
   2. Campus wide competition for grad students to present their research in 3 minutes or less. Developing skills to communicate to stakeholders, donors, your family about the type of research you are using
   3. 10 preliminary rounds, semi-finals, finals
   4. 58 students representing 34 programs participated
   5. This year, trying to increase participation by humanities/North Campus students
   6. This year, providing more training and workshops – how to present, small group coaching, public speaking overview, etc
   7. Prizes:
      1. All finalists get certificate of participation, $50 gift card
      2. 1st prize - $3000 stipend, travel expenses to compete in UC-wide Grad Slam.
      3. 2nd prize - $2000 stipend
      4. 3rd prize - $1000 stipend
      5. Audience choice prize - $500 stipend
   8. Jean Paul Santos 2015 winner
   9. More than 50 judges and more than 20 campus partners
   10. GSA was instrumental as a partner last year, in talks with Milan to continue and expand partnership this year
   11. Latricia Rogers: we need your help in marketing this event. In January there will be a kickoff social (co-hosted with GSA), still looking for a venue. Info session later in January. Application for event due January 25th, 2016.
   12. Andres suggests having faculty members and advisors tell their students to attend
   13. Marketing and outreach beginning now. Preparation workshops (by trainers and presenters on campus, also reaching out to Los Angeles Goodman Center to recruit more coaches) will take place over three weeks in February. Final Grad Slam competition March 3rd, co-programmed with GSA, to be in the James West Alumni Center
   14. If you don’t participate, still great to attend and support.
   15. Milan reminds councilmembers that they will be instrumental in soliciting participants for Grad Slam.
10. **General Discussion: Parking Situation on Campus: Andrea Hadjikyriacou**
    1. Parking at UCLA is not just inconvenient, it is a safety issue
    2. Graduate students have been pushed to lots 4, 7, 8, 11, and 3 (and likely others) that are very far from relevant buildings.
    3. This is a recent issue for South Campus grad students, and a longer standing issue for North Campus grad students
    4. The displacement from parking structures closest to research centers was ostensibly caused by staff/faculty complaints of “overflow” in closer lots
    5. The top level of Lot 2, one of the close lots, is empty nearly every single day
    6. As an R1 institution, UCLA receives a lot of funding from research grants. Grad students work long hours and are often leaving campus late at night, which can be a safety risk.
    7. Grad students are treated like students and not employees in terms of parking status.
    8. Administration suggestions are unsatisfactory: moving car to closer lot after 4:30PM is not feasible for busy grad students. Also inconvenient and untimely to call an escort service every single night. During special events, grad students are further displaced from their paid permit spots to accommodate guests coming to campus.
    9. There is a lot of grad student support, petition with 347 signatures
    10. Further steps include talking with department chairs for faculty support, getting crime statistics and UCLA PD escort services statistics, and presenting petition to UCLA Transportation and Parking Services.
    11. Note than anthropological grad students are allowed to choose which lot they want to park in.
    12. Andrés asks what is the optimal solution to this problem. Androulla responds that she wants grad students to be able to park as close as possible to their workplaces as a matter of safety and convenience. Andrés suggests asking for overflow statistics.
    13. Building more parking structures might help this issue. Suggestion of Tiverton House as a viable parking location.
11. **Quick announcement from Math & Physical Sciences Council – requesting name change: Ian Coley**
    1. Legislation to update and amend the MPSC departments
    2. “The action is literally changing the names to the right names”
    3. Ian Coley with MPSC moves to make these changes, Richard Thai with Social Sciences seconds the motion. The motion carries.
12. Motion to pass the code change that was presented during the Public Comments section.
    1. Chiao-Wen asks whether the forum wants to make the decision right now or moves to table it. Math & Physical Sciences motions to make a decision whether to vote on code change at this Forum. Majority voted to table this issue until next GSA forum.
    2. The making of the motion must initially come from a forum member, not an audience member.
13. Chiao-Wen moves to table the approval of this allocation of these funds until a fuller appreciation of the issue is reached.
    1. Ian Coley seconds the motion. It passes with a majority vote.
14. **Adjournment:** Chiao-Wen motions to adjourn the meeting.
    1. Dentistry rep seconds the motion
    2. Meeting is adjourned at 7:21PM