

University of California, Los Angeles
Graduate Student Association Forum #1, Fall Quarter
Wednesday, October 18, 2017, 5:30pm

Forum minutes prepared by Marie Chen, Assistant of Director of Communication (Media Chair)

Edited by Sherry Lin, Director of Communication

CALL TO ORDER - 5:30pm

Alexander Fung – Vice President of Internal Affairs

“Welcome! It’s nice to see you guys again. If you look at one of this, you will see a giant packet of paper. I am not a fan of papers, but this is all the information for you to refer back in regards to student council and associations. The whole two hour today are very packed. Please bear with us. If you have any questions, please definitely raise your hand anytime. We will answer your questions.

If you look on the second & third page of the packet, you will see the agenda for today’s forum. This time, we would like to ask if there is any request for changes of the agenda.”

Michael Skiles – President

“The representatives of the Armenian Graduate Student Association (AGSA), Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA), Chinese Scholars & Students Association (CSSA), and International Graduate Student Association (IGSA) would like to have a discussion with us about their representation of their organization in the GSA body as well as budgeting. So, I would move to amend the agenda to include this discussion as such at 6:30pm, while moving other items back.”

- Voted. Adding student interest boards discussion at 6:30pm

QUICK INTRODUCTION TO GSA

Alex F. – Vice President of Internal Affairs

“We understand that some of you are new. Therefore, we will spend the next 10 minutes to go over quickly on the overview of GSA. So you can tell your friends and family on what do we do in GSA.

GSA has two branches of government: executive branch that is composed of elected officer and appointed directors and staff. And we have the forum, which is the legislative branch. We also have four student associations and two housing associations for graduate students.

GSA has three cabinets: Presidential, Internal Vice Presidential, and External Vice

Presidential. (The structures of presidential, IVP, and EVP cabinets are posted on the website). (The responsibility of each elected officers are listed in the constitution, posted on the GSA website).

And the forum. We meet three times a quarter. The forum comprises 13 academic councils and four student interest boards. All of these will be available on the GSA website under the forum tab. Before we move on, any questions about GSA?

I hope the introduction was helpful. Now we move on to the Robert's Rules, which will be presented by our President, Michael Skiles.”

ROBERT'S RULES of ORDER TRAINING

Michael S. – President

“Thank you, Alex. Robert's Rules can help manage any debate on approval of any decisions. These rules can be daunting at first, but these rules can ensure that each member of the meeting is equally participated and things are getting done.

So first piece of advice, if there's anything that you would like to achieve, but you don't know how to do so, just raise your hand and you will get called on. Say 'calling in for an inquiry' and just ask us about how we are going about on certain subject. We will then answer accordingly. The same goes with if you are having a hard time understanding what is happening. You can ask any of us to explain. This is your government and we want to hear what you need, so that everyone can participate meaningfully. A couple of key things to clear out: if you want to consider an item where you want us to do something (e.g. amend a code or approval of a proposal). You can do so by saying 'I move that (description of what you want to do)...' and then once someone seconded such proposal, a discussion is then conducted in a formal forum meeting. It is important to have the motion on the table so that other motions can be all considered together. After the discussion, we will have a vote on the topic. If the motion gets passed on vote, a debate will be conducted based on such motion. If the motion failed, we will then turn back to the proposed motions and back to discussion. If the debate is going around and taking too long, you can raise your hand and say 'I moved to call a question.' We will then consider whether or not we should end the debate. If 2/3 of everyone voted on to end the debate, then it means that the original item goes into immediate vote. If 'to call a question' fails, then we move back to continue the debate. We look forward to work together here.”

Alex F.

“Thank you, Michael. The next item on our agenda is ASUCLA introduction. We would like

to invite the members of the ASUCLA to come up and introduce themselves.”

ASUCLA INTRODUCTION

Roy Champawat, ASUCLA Executive Director

“I will introduce some of the staff as well. First I would like to say good to see you all at the beginning of the school year. ASUCLA is by far the largest student association because it is the combination of both undergraduate and graduate student associations. We are student-run. This organization is majority run by students as board of directors. And we are very proud of that because it is really rare for universities. We focus on contemporary students and their values and needs so that we can be constantly evolutionary. It’s really a value a process. So the other things are how are team bring support in terms of operations. For some of the academic councils, you are in different campuses, so this may not be directly related to you. But we have some staff here who can support you. So here is David, our student government accounting division manager this year. He can help through reimbursement and budgets. We do checks once a week. We need proper student signatures for the forms. Raymond Juarez is the student union division manager who operates offices in this complex. Any after-hour or any access to the offices or buildings and/or any problems that you would like to point out, Raymond and his staff is in charge of that. And Jessica Alexander is the Student Government Services Manager. She can help the governments with things like computer access.”

GSRC and GWC INTRODUCTION

Christine Wilson, GSRC Executive Director

“Hi everyone, I am Christine Wilson. Come to Graduate Student Resource Center to talk to us, share with us. We are relatively responsive.”

Valerie Shepard, GSRC Assistant Director

“I am excited to meet you all. The GSRC is located in the B1 level at the Student Activity Center (SAC). If you haven’t seen it, please drop by. It is your space. It was a student activity center that opens 9am – 5pm on weekdays. Part of our mission is to aggregate a healthy learning environment for graduate students. We do our best to support graduate students’ success. We have a program committee for graduate students to attend relevant workshops. We also are in charge of helping student organizations. Feel free to reach out to us.”

Marilyn Gray, Graduate Writing Center Director

“We are an initiatives that started by GSA. Our main service is the 1-on-1 writing

appointments. We hire staff from across campus to have diversity. We also have workshops. Feel free to contact our office about it. We also have dissertation and thesis boot camp programs. One thing about eligibility: everyone can use GWC while they are registered. We also allow incoming graduate students to use our services the summer before school starts. We also help with grant writing. Usually we have more programs during the summer, such as resume workshop. If you are an international student, there is also ESL program that can assist you. GWC is your resource on campus.”

UCLA SOLE INTRODUCTION

Mike Cohn, SOLE Director

“Welcome back, everyone. My name is Mike and I am the director of SOLE, which stands for Student Organization Leadership and Engagement. I am here for two reasons today. One is that my office provides advice to GSA along with almost all registered student organizations around UCLA. First, we have 1200 organizations registered this year, which is more than any other schools in the nation. About 150 or 175 organizations are fully dedicated to graduate students. About 50 are for both undergraduate and graduate students. And the rest are for undergraduate students. If you are interested in starting a new organization or register from the last year, you have to do so by this coming Friday by 5pm. Go to www.sole.ucla.edu to begin the process. Most importantly, we have a whole-day event on Friday October 27th, which is specifically for student leaders, providing workshops that we believe are most helpful to student leaders on campus. We try to have the event interactive and hope you can learn some skills. Feel free to come by at our office too.”

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Alexander Fung, Vice President of Internal Affairs

“If you are receiving the forum emails, previously I have emailed about information on how to obtain your academic council funding. Please flip to the document of the GSA constitution. We have weekly budget report on our website under the tab of financial document, which will be posted every Monday. This report also shows how much the academic council is funded. So, if you look through the budget report, you will see some of them say graduate students on top, while some of them have departmental sector on top, indicating the amount of money each department is allocated for each academic year. Right now, we are doing a final count of enrolled graduate students. The amount that is allocated to your academic council is based on the number of enrolled graduate students in your program. Around 40% of GSA funding goes to academic council for the program. Another 25% will be wire to the

budget report.”

Question from forum member “Do we get roll over on the budget?”

Alex F. “Will confirm with Student accounting.”

Comment from forum member “Another thing to add on the council allocation: if you would make sure and review the discipline that will represent your council, if there’s something missing, and if there’s any new discipline that needs to be added to or are obsolete in your council, try to (at least a week before the next forum) email those item to Alex because those are what we need to finish the allocation and because it is based on the actual enrollment and the actual shape of current academic discipline. We need that from you and you will then need to vote to validate it once we have all information. That is what we need to renew that remaining 25%. And about the council carry over, it will be identified at the same time, which you will then know the full amount allocation you get for this year.”

Michael S.

“You need to be on the look-out on the program in department. Which council should represent what groups of graduate students is important.”

Alex F.

“This is important. If you are applying via the discretionary fund, your amount is going to show on this report. The pages of the report will get longer throughout the year. If you flip after the 22 pages of budget report, you will see a document that was sent via email before, which shows the instruction to obtain reimbursement. GSA falls under ASUCLA. ASUCLA uses reimbursement system. This two-page instruction should help you with the reimbursement process. It has to physical receipts for the reimbursement. My experience is to always have a photocopy of the receipts before you submit the actual physical receipts just in case something has gone wrong. For academic councils, you should also include an approval form.”

Parshan Khosravi

“For cases like lost receipt or spent cash but without receipt. There’s a method, but not preferred nor recommended.”

Alex F.

“You will see a 21 digit account for all academic councils. And you have to have GSA signatories on the forms. The budget report would show the amount. Section 16 is for academic councils and GSA for signatory signatures. It usually takes 5-10 business days. Can take up to 14 business days. Go to GSA website and then go to Student Government Accounting, and then scroll down to GSA-SGA handbook. You can use the document as references. SGA Check Register can be used to check your status, but once access the document, remember to change the date to the current time to find 2017.”

Member of the forum “SGA Problem REQ Register will list some forms that cannot be processed.”

Parshan K.

“Most of the time your status of the check will be shown on the website under those links”

Michael S.

“You need to show clear evidence that you are authorized to spend the money. Prove with minutes, account number assigned by council directors, also the last things were the signature of the President (Michael Skiles) and VP Internal (Alexander Fung). We have the mindset that if you already gotten approval from you academic council or the discretionary funding director, we will usually just sign the form unless there are some clear red flag.

Alex F.

“Please go to page 5 of the packet. Open hours of GSA office. We have finance director under VP Internal Office who is to assist me with such matter. Feel free to contact Tanya Honey.”

Approval of new GSA appointment

Michael S.

“Internal and External Vice President Cabinet all went through competitive selection process conducted by the executive officers for these appointments. I move the forum to approve the appointments.”

➤ Motion to discussion

“Any questions?”

Member of the forum: “why multiples names being assigned to more than one positions?”

Michael S.

“Sometimes it is required by the codes of the council to appoint people. For instance, for the academic meetings, Vice President of Academic Affairs are required to be involved as the Council Graduate Representative. Also, in order to be a member of some boards, you have to be a member of another board. But the one rule that we do follow consistently is that we never appoint one person to more than one stipended position.”

Member from the forum “Are these appointees self-selected? Or nominated?”

Michael S.

“We put applications online and advertise via email for eligible candidates to apply. The executive officers conducted the interviews and evaluations to determine who to appoint.”

- Voted. Approved of new GSA appointments

DISCUSSION AND VOTING ON COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS

Michael S.

“At the last forum of the year, we had a discussion led by the commissioner of elections on recommendations of how to improve the election process. Because this discussion is not proposed earlier on the agenda during the last forum, the forum was unable to hold such discussion. However, the forum did have a formal consensus that the best way to reassure that all graduate students are informed clearly that they can run for student government. For example, have the election and its publicity earlier. The consensus of the forum then was that in order to make sure everything does not go in vein, the elections commissions should already be meeting in the fall quarter to begin planning, while historically it did not meet until winter quarter. In order for the election commissions to meet in the fall quarter, the commissioners should be active. And at the last forum meeting, we appointed Justin Gelzisher as our election commissioner. Justin and the forum formally agree that Justin will start working in the fall. In the GSA code of 6.4.5., the election commissioner is not a part of the GSA cabinet and the position is only for two quarters (i.e. winter and spring quarter). So, we are considering amending code 6.4.5. to adjust the election commissioner’s terms into three quarters (fall, winter, spring) and adjust the budgeting for the extra \$1,300 in the fall quarter so that the election commissioner can be stipended during fall quarter. I move to do so.”

➤ Second to Discussion

Members of the Forum asked if the election commissioner is present at the forum. Yes.

“What plans do you have in the fall? What do you plan to do during the fall to get ready for the elections later in the year?”

Justin Gelzisher

“Thank you for the question. When I applied for the position, it was my honor to be a part of GSA this year as a 3rd-year graduate student here at UCLA. The three words that I have are quality, service, and dedicated promises. And I will try my best to have a fair election and include as many people as possible. There are two major components that are not focused on last year. 1. Communications. To improve this, I have an idea of producing YouTube videos, educating and documenting the process of students’ actual voting (on how to vote or on what to expect if running for positions in GSA). And we hope we can have transparency of the election process. 2. Time. Reach greater audiences and hopefully have the largest turnout in election. I am honored to serve on GSA.”

Member of the Forum: “I work closely with elections every year and about 8 years ago, GSA had shifted that having the board of directors serve also in the fall. Especially some graduate programs (e.g. law school) are in semester system. For semester system, the elections are held not mid-spring quarter, but very early of spring quarter to accommodate the semester system. So, to not have extra, it does put extra burden on the election commissioners.”

Another member of the forum: “I was involved last year. The issue of timing is definitely affecting due to the difference of quarter and semester systems. We really didn’t have much time to pace out our process. I think this is a great thing to start early.”

Another member of the forum: “I have another question for Justin. Another issue of election is that during winter quarter, the recruitment was not ideal. And I hope that by extending your term, you can improve the process of recruiting. So, how would extending your term help on that?”

Justin G.

“Just because you are given more time, it does not mean that the election itself will be more productive. Starting soon can help us reach out to more candidates in different departments.

We would like to try using social media such as Facebook, which will allow the process more successful. I agree with you that it is challenging to get people out. We would like the process to become sustainability and can be passed on.”

Michael

“We anticipate that there will be an additional **\$94,000** in surplus this forum at the next meeting. Most of the fund is budgeted during the last forum of the school year (in spring). But a lot of the budget is carried over from previous year (\$94,700) that has not been budgeted yet. And we would hope that the stipend for the election commissioner’s fall term will be considered. This time we have 9% of turnout for the election.”

- Voted. Approved for extended term for election commissioner.

STUDENT INTEREST BOARD DISCUSSION

Michael

“I believe they perform a very important function for graduate student community. Last year I worked with Alex for the IGSA. This year I am working my great friend Ernesto to start a new student interest group for Latino/Hispanic community. Long ago GSA has acknowledged that student will need group with special identities. Not just as a representation, but an advancement in the growth of the community for them.”

Christian Green, BGSA President

“I am in my second of my graduate program. For today’s focus, I would like to ask you all to vote for a higher allowable amount. Right now we are only allocated \$1,500 a year. This is not enough. We are looking forward for \$1,000 per quarter, including the all other GSA such as AGSA, CSSA, and IGSA. I would love for us to discuss about it if you have any questions. What we care is inclusion and diversity.”

Public Health Chair: “\$1,000 per quarter from your request. Is that a total for all student group or for each group?”

Christian G.

“per student group. Therefore, it will be \$4,000 per quarter.”

Social Science Chair: “could you talk about the events that you will consider doing?”

Christian G.

“Definitely. Speaking of only BGSA, this year we will have thanksgiving theme event for those students who are out-of-state. We will have a Thanksgiving dinner for them. We will also have toy drive in January. In winter, we will have a retreat. In March, we will have a finance-wellness program. We try to have one event per month according to our BGSA Constitution. We tried to do fundraising to cover the costs, but we would love to have help from our colleagues in GSA. Here I represent all the other student interest groups and would like to ask you all for the \$4,000 per quarter per group allocation.”

Alex F.

“To add to that. I was the president of the IGSA last year, not anymore. We only had \$1,200 last year. We pretty much spent that all at our kick-off event. After that, we have to pay out of our pockets. Graduate students have limited time, so it’s hard for us to go booth at Bruinwalk to sell donuts or TV taping for fundraising.”

School of Medicine Chair: “Where did you come up with the number \$1,000 per quarter?”

Christian G.

“Originally we were thinking about \$1,500.”

School of Medicine Chair: “I just want to get a sense of the amount. Is it because of the size of the membership that justifies the \$1,000? Or?”

Christian G.

“Pretty much yes. We have 600 members right now in BGSA.”

School of Medicine Chair: “Does all other student group also have 600?”

Christian G.

“They actually have more.”

Parshan K.

“I am also adding one thing. So the numbers right now has not been updated for years. In the past, the budget was for the groups to have a lot of events throughout the year. As we know now, \$1,000 can hardly support one or two events. So, to speak to the point of financial point,

they might need more to support their programming.”

Member from the forum: “Two things. One is that when GSA sponsors special interest groups or registered campus organizations, they made a commitment to provide support. On the other hand, this is not automatic. This is raising the limit that they can utilize, but they still have to apply for GSA discretionary fund and be approved and allocated. Not every group will go for \$1,000 per quarter because they might not have that many activities that quarter.”

Michael S.

“It’s very worth doing this. We don’t want to restrict the student interest group on what they can do. In terms of \$1,000 per quarter, what is the possibility of allocating \$3,000 per year?”

Christian G.

“Yes that makes more sense to have \$3,000 per year for us to pace through the year instead of limiting only \$1,000 per quarter.”

Michael S.

“I move that the forum commence passing the surplus budget this quarter to allocate the necessary fund to offset the anticipated increase in expenditures, which is that each student interest board should be entitled to receive up to \$3,000 per year.”

➤ Discussion on Michael motion

Parshan K.

“Student interest groups need to plan what to do (programming). And they will apply through the discretionary fund. At the end of the quarter, the discretionary fund will report back to the forum on what exactly the student interest groups did with the fund.”

Alex F.

“In order for the student group to be disqualified, the vice president of the internal affairs has to approve that as well as the forum.”

Social Science Chair “I agree. In order to use the fund, they have to have an application justifying the expense and purpose of events. There’s clearly going to be a lot of oversight done. We should have a portion increase in the discretionary fund to help with this change.

Increase in cap of what the student groups can apply to from \$800 to \$1,000.”

- Voted to end discussion.
- Voted on approval of the increase of budget/allocation. Approved.

GSA PRINTER BUDGET ALLOCATION

Michael S.

“The machine was since 2008 is pretty much broken. And a new printer machine will be needed. The expected cost will be \$1,500 for the leasing plus the printing. We are leasing the printer with a rate of \$99/month. 2,500 pages of printing per month.”

- Move onto next thing on the agenda

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORTS

Michael S.

“We have accomplished many things this past year. We have the new Kinross Recreational centers. More housing options for graduate students. Work with parking on campus. We need to stay aware of all the challenges the students are facing. In the next week or so, we will have free printing services for graduate students in south campus. We also work on bringing undergraduate and graduate students together as a coalition. We hope also incorporate staff, homeowners, and faculty in the Westwood area to work together. Another victory is the GSA central office using old furniture from hammer museum to stay sustainable and green. Over the summer, we got the UC to agree with more Uber/Lyft drop off zones on campus. Also, parking services got screwed due to over-permitting. We already talked to the parking services. So, if you paid for the pay-by-space or got tickets, you can get a refund.”

Rebecca Katz

“Three main components in my job. First is filling up all the positions on the academic council. 65% of them are new. Second is that to encourage the representatives actually show up and attend meetings. \$100 gift card to help with contingency. Higher success rate. Finally is to maintain open communication with the representatives and speak to the general graduate student body.”

Alex F.

“We have helped with new student groups to form (e.g. HLGSA, HKGSA). We also have new initiatives such as GradFamily, Global Evening, and GradCafe. We just hope to provide more support to the graduate students. We have weekly IVP cabinet meetings and the details

are posted online. I would like to pass 1-minute to Josh Mayer, our Administrative Affairs Chair.”

Josh Mayer

“Priority is to fill all the spots in our committee. We aim to help with any student initiatives.”

Parshan K.

“I have a 2-page officer report in the packet. Feel free to look at them. I also sent out email in advance, which hopefully can be more efficient. We did advocacy and any issue that have interests. I will bring those to you.”

DISCUSSION ON UC STUDENT ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Parshan K.

“Over summer there were a lot of things happened. We started considering going back to UCSA on the membership. There is no fee attached. Hopefully you have seen my update. And here we have Becky calling in, representing UCGC (UC Graduate-Professional Council). We will have a conversation right now.”

Becky Grady, Interim President of University of California Graduate-Professional Council

“As he mentioned, I am student at UCI. I am the Interim President of UCGPC. We represent all each UC campus’ graduate students. It’s statewide. There were concern and issue that were brought up. We tried to separate graduate students as an identity that is different from undergraduate students since we have different needs. We split UCSA into two divisions, one for graduate students, and the other for the undergraduates. The alternative for this was to form an independent organization from the UCSA since the split did not work out. Now we have UCGPC as an independent body. There are certain things in UCSA that we can no longer utilize. We will need all graduate students to vote for this to make this happen in the UC system. We have nothing against UCSA, but we just think our advocacy and representation is not enough. We will be a success and it’s a great opportunity. We also do not want to lose the voice from UCLA students. I don’t know the structure of UCLA, but I would like to have your support and would love UCLA to be in the table.”

Parshan K.

“One huge concern is whether or not UCLA is on the table as a voting member. We will be participating in the conversations, but we will not be voting until UCLA has enough

confidence in the new organization.”

Becky G.

“Our budget has not developed yet, so we understand. One thing is that if you agree, we will send a charter and if signed by the majority of the students, and get you all to understand and approve. If this didn’t work out, the door is not shut off. We would like to see if there are any other opportunities for graduate students. I will come up with the budget and charter for you.”

Parshan K.

“Two things to make decision on: First is to whether if we want to stay in UCSA (membership fee). Second is whether if we want to be a voting member in UCGPC. For now we would like to wait until we see the results of UCGPC. We might ask you about this and hope you can consider and think about these two ideas. We want the best for our organization, especially to stay sustainable. My motion is to wait until we see the results. Of course we can have alternative motion.”

Member from the forum “why should we wait? Why we are not involved as a voting member? You are saying that voting symbolize a sense of trusting and believing the organization.”

Member from the forum “we have to take into consideration of all UCLA students. Undergraduate also depends a lot on the graduate student body. Have faith in our EVP and go with his goals and visions.”

Member from the forum “UCSA still have a lot of power in voting on important matters. I don’t see for now that we should leave. And there are many things that UCGPC has not established.”

Member from the forum “For now, are you asking us to vote on whether or not to rectify your decision?”

➤ Vote on tabling the motion. 16/0/0

Member from the forum “Please have a clear list and table and all of options posted clearly. Especially with pros and cons. It will be really helpful for us to understand what we will be voted on.”

Parshan K.

“We will put together a presentation.”

Alex F.

“We are running out of time. Next time we will have better time planning to have more time on discussion. We apologize about this.”

ADJOURNMENT 7:51pm

Total time of Forum meeting 2:20:48