

## **University of California, Los Angeles Graduate Student Association Forum #5, Winter Quarter, Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 5:30pm**

Forum minutes taken by Elyse Brusher, GSA Director of Administrative Affairs

### **Week 6 Winter 2021 Agenda**

#### **\*Items to vote**

#### **5:30-5:40 Call to Order/Welcome Address**

Musibau Francis Jimoh (GSA VP of Internal Affairs and Forum Chair)

#### **5:40-5:45 Updates from GSA Leadership**

Letty Treviño (GSA VP of Academic Affairs)

#### **5:45-6:10 Forum Engagement**

Public Health Council and Arts & Architecture Council

#### **6:10-6:35 Forum Engagement**

Pouria Abbassi (Executive Director & CEO ASUCLA), Patricia Solomon (Student Union Division Manager at ASUCLA), Roy Champawat (Director of the Student Union--ASUCLA), Patrick Healey (Director of the UCLA Store)

#### **6:35-6:55 GSA Surplus Budget**

JP Santos (GSA President), Patricia Solomon, and Vuong Tran (Accounting Manager at ASUCLA)

#### **6:55-7:05 GSA Fee Referendum Presentation**

JP Santos

#### **7:05-7:15 Amendment to GSA Elections Code 6.7.1 and approval of GSA Elections Calendar 20/21\***

Akash Deep Singh (GSA Elections Commissioner)

#### **7:15-7:20 Recognizing ELTS as a single department in the Humanities Council\***

Yasmine Krings (Humanities Council Forum Representative)

#### **7:20-7:30 Changing the University of California Graduate and Professional Students Council organization status\***

Conner Philson (GSA Director of Community Partnerships)

#### **7:30 Adjournment**

Musibau Francis Jimoh

## LETTING PEOPLE INTO THE MEETING--5:30

### CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME ADDRESS--5:35pm

Musibau Francis Jimoh (GSA Vice President of Internal Affairs)

- Make sure to fill out the sign in sheet and include your email address→ this is how you will get the Amazon gift card. We will still email the claim codes when we receive them even if it is not tonight.
- Math and Physical Sciences Council: you need to elect a GWC-OC representative and email their information to the Director of Administrative Affairs ([administrativeaffairs@gsa.asucla.ucla.edu](mailto:administrativeaffairs@gsa.asucla.ucla.edu)) as soon as possible
- Please consider applying for Dinner for 12 strangers: <https://d12.alumni.ucla.edu/>
- Please complete this survey about the UCLA Community webpage: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeWN-OfE5KSqxb6lHyTrmRQ8ENjFM1l5E1HjEkVaR3kuEnqOg/viewform>
- Coming soon- a survey for graduating students asking for thoughts on a 2021 commencement. Know that we are meeting weekly and trying to develop the best in person or virtual option possible!

### UPDATES FROM GSA LEADERSHIP--5:40

Letty Treviño (GSA VP of Academic Affairs)

- GSA publications
  - Amira Hassnaoui has been working on this
  - We are hoping to open applications for this school year soon
  - Prepping for a relaunch of GSA publications in the next school year
- Academic Senate
  - Graduate Council voted unanimously to endorse JP's equity resolution and it is now being considered by the executive board→ we hope to soon have the endorsement of the academic senate
  - My team just submitted a proposal for getting rid of GRE as requirement for admission at UCLA
    - This will be a contentious topic and not under the Academic Senate's jurisdiction to decide
    - The hope is to get the Graduate Council's endorsement and have an official recommendation made to departments to eliminate it as a requirement and then bring it to the UC-wide Academic Senate
  - We are also working on policies to support students with disabilities→ more to come in week 9

- We are starting to develop a GSA history project
  - This effort is being led by Elyse Brusher and Julie Le
  - Reaching out to past GSA history leaders to understand what GSA has done in the past to build institutional knowledge and a network of graduate student alumni
- Feel free to reach out to my office with questions or to inquire about about open projects

## **FORUM ENGAGEMENT--5:45**

Public Health Council and Arts & Architecture Council

Public Health Council

Kathleen Kane (PHSC External VP and Forum Representative)

- We are trying to do a history project, similar to that of the broader GSA
- We represent the students at Fielding (5 departments) and offer 3 different degrees
- What we are doing this year:
  - Put together a new executive board
  - Publishing weekly “What’s Bruin” newsletter for our students→ information about professional development opportunities, fellowships, and social events
  - Regular general meetings (2 per term)
- Projects:
  - COVID relief for students→design competition to raise extra funds
  - Committees:
    - Survey committee that works with EDI office (focus group style)
    - New advocacy committee around services not sweeps in LA and with intermittent shelter
    - Social committee
    - Faculty executive committees
- In 2021:
  - Developing web presence
  - Working on professional development and advocacy opportunities
  - Social events for departments represented on council
  - Holding elections for the next executive board and ensuring a smooth transition

Arts & Architecture Council

Amira Hassnaoui (AAC VP and Forum Representative)

- Our council represents 3 departments
- We have been through a lot of transitions over the past few months (new president)
- Working on smoothing over transitions and building institutional knowledge

- We want to make better use of our budget and increase transparency about how GSA operates, especially financially
- We want to provide a space for advocacy and be mindful of work/life balance
- An announcement from my role with GSA publications: If you are an editor or belong to a journal across campus, let your colleagues know that we are rebuilding GSA publications and working on having a very accessible and efficient application process for the office of GSA publications.
  - An email will be sent out soon with all the information you need about GSA publications
  - GSA publications is much more than just a funding source

### **FORUM ENGAGEMENT--6:05**

Pouria Abbassi (Executive Director & CEO ASUCLA), Patricia Solomon (Student Union Division Manager at ASUCLA), Roy Champawat (Director of the Student Union--ASUCLA), Patrick Healey (Director of the UCLA Store)

Pouria Abbassi

- Vision of ASUCLA:
  - Student-led organization
  - Creating spaces to support the graduate student body
  - Providing entrepreneurship with a purpose
- Structure:
  - 4 entities: GSA, USAC, student media, and student-run enterprises
  - GSA plays an important role in setting priorities for ASUCLA
  - ASUCLA is separate and independent from UCLA in terms of our operations
  - Students outnumber career employees 8 to 1
- COVID Relief:
  - We support GSA financially→ we were able to donate funds that we received for COVID relief under the PPP loan to GSA to be used as we see fit
  - Student government services have support distribution of COVID relief funds to graduate students
  - Working with WesCom to provide additional COVID relief funds to graduate students
- ASUCLA Advocacy
  - Identify resources available to graduate students→ taking advantage of LA community resources and continuing state-wide advocacy
  - Supporting GSA referenda
  - Advocating for unemployment of ASE's to activate benefits

Patricia Solomon

[psolomon@asucla.ucla.edu](mailto:psolomon@asucla.ucla.edu)

- Student Union Services
  - 5 students centers on campus
  - Ackerman Union is still open to support services like the pharmacy
  - Developing pandemic-related protocols as we expanded population on campus
  - Continuing to work with student groups for protocols as they look to return to their office spaces in Kerckhoff Hall
  - We also support student government (accounting)
- Event services:
  - Focusing on community support
  - Served as voting center on campus
  - Supporting students in virtual and hybrid events
- Marketing services:
  - Worked with GSA to create a highlight video to showcase the engagement GSA has on campus

Patrick Healey (Director of the UCLA Store)

- Philosophy:
  - Cost and availability of academic materials→ we want to support your academic success and offer low-cost materials
  - We continue to evolve on how we offer materials
- Departments are different in their needs
  - We reach out directly to departments to understand these needs
- We will soon be applying to provide CalFresh/SNAP benefits at the store located in the Ackerman Union
- Computer technology:
  - We have a department located in the Ackerman store that can help with technology (not just sell it)
  - We are partnering with WesCom for loans for technology purchases (36 months, 0% interest).
    - You can get more information about this on the ASUCLA website
- Bruin Custom Print
  - Located in the Ackerman Union on A Level
  - Can help with the purchases of licensed products→ certain rules that have to be followed when using the UCLA logo
- Food services

- Campus restaurants operated by ASUCLA
- Supporting basic needs initiative→ you can order from ASUCLA catering
  - Contactless delivery from ASUCLA facilities
  - There is an app you can download to do this

Pauria Abbassi

- COVID-10 Impacts & Response
  - 70% drop in revenues
  - Expansion of remote services
  - Health Sciences Store has remained open
  - Pursuing new services and enhancing current services
- Trying to bring value to campus community
  - Communicating with groups on campus about their needs
  - Trying to be more sensitive to social justice issues
    - Several initiatives in progress to support student affairs in establishing a new Black Resource Center to be located in Kerckhoff
    - Social media presence

Question Amira: IT serves have been very helpful during the pandemic. Is borrowing a laptop or wifi hotspots still an option?

Response Patrick: That is done through the UCLA Library and they are still doing this.

Comment from Letty: If you are a TA your department is legally required to provide you with the equipment you need to teach.

Comment from JP: Make sure to reach out to ASUCLA through Patricia if you need/want support especially with event services because it is available to everyone, not just GSA leadership.

Question from Amira: As you know, we are in the situation where our home space has become office space and this is a challenging transition. Should we reach out to ASUCLA or our respective departments for help setting up home offices?

Response from Pouria: You deal with the department to resolve this and then we will provide equipment to departments. We are here to support you in whatever way we can and part of that is advocating for graduate students and we can add our voice to yours.

Comment from Susan Ettner: If you're having ongoing issues, you can also reach out to the Graduate Division and we can try to help mediate a solution too.

Question from Francis: How much funding from GSA goes into supporting ASUCLA?

Response Pouria: Overall, only 4% of our operating budget comes from student fees (\$66 per year from each student).

Response Roy: This is by far the lowest cost you see for student unions at research universities. We do not lean on fees unnecessarily.

Question from Francis: Considering the impact of COVID on the ASUCLA budget, how much can GSA give to help offset this?

Response Pouria: We really appreciate that offer and will come to you later about this. Anything that you can do to convey to UCOP how important ASUCLA has been to you as graduate students would be appreciated as well as using ASUCLA services.

### **GSA SURPLUS BUDGET--6:35**

JP Santos (GSA President), Patricia Solomon, and Vuong Tran (Accounting Manager--ASUCLA)

JP Santos:

- There are two parts of the GSA budget: we have the Central Office Budget and Council Budget
- There is no favoritism in the councils
- The GSA President does not choose how much each council gets→ It is based on enrollment
- You get 75% of your allocation in May and then you get the remaining part of your regular budget in the Fall
  - Now, in the winter, we are voting on the carryover (the funds councils did not use from last year)
    - It is our responsibility to spend this money because students are going to be graduating and it's not fair for us not to use their funds for this school year
- Suggested use for funds→ COVID relief:
  - Wescom and UCLA gave GSA \$7000 for COVID relief that we want to use for:
    - Delivering meals to grad students in Westwood (half of the money)
    - For students who are not in LA? \$50 ASUCLA gift cards (other half of the money)
  - ASUCLA helped GSA get some money form PPP loan (another \$7000) for this relief fund, which we are contributing to the above proposals

- Maybe your **councils to contribute to these initiatives as well** and support the student body

Question from JP: How much of the \$38 fee per year for the students goes to councils?

Response from Patricia: \$5.50 per quarter (\$38 per year)

Response JP: So half of this fee goes to the council budget and half to the central office budget.

Comment from Rajashree: 1 Idea: EGSA is shipping care packages out to students who fill out surveys, so our value should drop by a lot soon.

Comment from Patricia: Tonight we are voting on the carryover from last year. Because of COVID it took a bit longer than usual for us to calculate this.

Question from Amira: when it comes to money, it's a sensitive issue. People are worried that they would only get the 75%. There has also been a fluctuation in the budget. If there is anything we can do to clarify this budget thing, we want to do it.

Response Roy: Some councils are clear cut. We don't get the official enrollment numbers until we are in fall quarter, so that's why we do the 75% thing. The balance will not necessarily be the other 25% because enrollment numbers fluctuate.

Comment Letty: We could do an infographic explaining how GSA is funded and add that to the GSA website.

- Motion to vote to approve these appointment pass: Alex Chubick (BSC) and Amira Hassanaoui (AAC)--Motion passed
- Call for a vote. 20 yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain
  - **Vote: APPROVED**

## **GSA FEE REFERENDUM PRESENTATION--6:55**

JP Santos

- Graduate Student Association Funding Initiative
  - Because of inflation, we are not able to do as much as we used to be able to do with the same amount of money (we lose \$13,000-\$14,000 each year=2 GSA directors' salaries)
  - We would like to add this to the ballot for GSA elections in April
    - In week 9, we need to vote to put this on the ballot.
  - It would adjust the quarterly fee to compensate for inflation
    - We want to increase the gradually fee by \$4.25 (to \$17 from \$12.75 per quarter) starting Fall 2021 and \$8.49 (to \$21.24 per quarter) in Fall 2022



Question from Jacob Green: Didn't we say that most councils have a large budget surplus? If this is so, why are we raising more funds?

Response from JP: Even though the councils aren't using their fees, the Central Office is and needs more funds.

Comment from Mike Cohn: I think it's important in the referendum to make it clearer how councils are funded and what the central office is.

Comment from Letty: On the Central Office end of things our teams are overworked and underpaid. And I'm still getting 20-100 emails a week from students asking for more help. We need more bodies to do the work and advocacy that our students are asking us to do. And there are many more students that dedicate their time but are not compensated for their passion for student advocacy.

Comment from Francis: We've been asking people to volunteer in the IVP office since we can't pay them.

Response from Roy: The Central Office pays for Student Government Accounting (SGA) services. You might want to specifically increase the Central Office portion of the fee and not the council portion.

Question from Jacob Green: Has anyone spoken to the Union in regards to this increase and how it might affect out of pocket fees for TAs?

Question from Conner Philson: Don't our departments pay these GSA fees for us? (Unless we're on fellowship). And isn't the UC is facing budget hardships? So would this just not further drive a negative feedback? I also agree with Jacob. Anyone chat with the TA Union?

Question from Kathleen: Is this document available somewhere online for us to share with our academic councils?

Response from JP: This will mostly affect people who are not working as TAs or GSRs. Some faculty might complain about the increase in the amount departments have to pay for people who are TAs or GSRs.

Response from Francis: I will put the referendum in the supporting documents folder that is shared with you.

Response from Letty: What do you mean about talking to the TA Union? They would not necessarily have jurisdiction over this because it is not tied to TA salary.

Question from Jacob Green: Would the funds raised primarily be used to raise the salaries of the officers present in this meeting?

Response from Letty: Nope, our salaries are a separate issue. The overall funds would increase.

Response from JP: I have to share this now because Mike Cohn needs to send this to UCOP soon.

Comment from Letty: But the Central Office would be given additional funds to work with. So we could pay our volunteers with that funding, or have more discretionary funds for student orgs, or more funds for events, or melnitz movies.

Comment from Roy: The student body needs to consider the value of purchasing power and what the Central Office can do with the increasingly limited resources it has.

### **AMENDMENT TO GSA ELECTIONS CODE 6.7.1. AND APPROVAL OF GSA ELECTIONS CALENDAR 20/21\*--7:05**

Akash Deep Singh (GSA Elections Commissioner)

- Elections open on February 11th and applications will be online.
  - Send an email to Elections Office and you can add students who will support your nomination (you need 25)
- Nominations are due on March 11th
- We need people running for every position and we would like to have more than one person running for each position
- We want to get at least 25% voter turnout, which would be a dramatic increase from what we have seen in past years.

Question from Kathleen: Do you have a blurb we can send out to constituents?

Response from Akash: Tomorrow or the day after, we will send out a Bruin post.

Question from Alex: It would help to draft an email template that councils can use to publicize elections and I can help with that.

- Motion to vote to amend GSA Elections Code 6.7.1: Alex Chubick (BSC) and Vikranth Jeyakumar (EGSA)--Motion passed
- Call for a vote. 18 yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain
  - **Vote: APPROVED**
- Motion to vote to approve GSA elections timetable: Alex Chubick (BSC) and Vikranth Jeyakumar (EGSA)--Motion passed
  - Call for a vote. 19 yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain
    - **Vote: APPROVED**

## **RECOGNIZING ELTS AS A SINGLE DEPARTMENT IN THE HUMANITIES COUNCIL\*--7:15**

Yasmine Krings (Humanities Council Forum Representative)

- Over the summer the departments of French & Francophone Studies, Germanic Studies, Italian Studies, and Scandinavian Studies merged to form one department: European Languages and Transcultural Studies (ELTS). The Humanities Council would like to recognize them as one department.
- Motion to vote to recognize ELTS as one department: Alex Chubick (BSC) and Kathleen (PHSA)--Motion passed
  - Call for a vote. 18 yes, 0 No, 2 Abstain
    - **Vote: APPROVED**

## **CHANGING THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS COUNCIL ORGANIZATION STATUS\*--7:41**

Conner Philson (Director of Community Partnerships)

- UC Graduate and Professional Council is like GSA across UC campus
- They are currently 501c4 nonprofit and want to change to a 501c3 nonprofit organization, which is for education related nonprofits. I am not sure of the history of why they were a 501c4 organization, but we have to vote on this
- Either way, it's tax deductible, but the 501c3 designation would give us more flexibility to operate closer to the UC students.
  
- Motion to vote to change the UC Graduate and Professional Students Council Organization Status: Amira Hassnaoui (AAC) and Yasmine Krings (HSC)--Motion passed
  - Call for a vote. 18 yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain
    - **Vote: APPROVED**

## **ADJOURNMENT--7:44**

Musibau Francis Jimoh

- Motion to adjourn: Rami Bata (SBA) and Jordan Patricio (GSNA)--Motion passed