

University of California, Los Angeles Graduate Student Association Forum #8, Spring Quarter, Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 5:30pm

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

Week 9 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)

5:40-5:50 Updates from GSA Leadership

JP Santos (GSA President) and Letty Treviño (GSA VP of Academic Affairs)

5:50-6:00 AIGSA Petition to become a Special Interest Group*

Marina Perez (Finance Director of AIGSA)

6:00-6:20 Cuts to Graduate Writing Center Services

Kathleen Kane (PHSA President)

6:20-6:40 GSA Resolution for Spring 2021 Acknowledgement of GSA Presidential Service*

JP Santos (GSA President)

6:40-7:00 Oath of Office for GSA Elected Officers for AY 2021-2022

Akash Deep Singh (GSA Elections Commissioner)

7:00 Adjournment

Lewis Luo (GSA VP of Internal Affairs Elect and Forum Chair)

LETTING PEOPLE INTO THE MEETING--5:30

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

Musibau Francis Jimoh (GSA Vice President of Internal Affairs)

- This is the last GSA Forum meeting that I will be the Chair of and it has been quite a ride. Thank you for all that you have been doing for GSA this past year, students, administrators, and ex-officios. Karen, Mike, Patty Susan in particular, you have been so amazing this year.
- Please make sure to sign in to receive your GSA Forum gift card. You can also make a note if you would like to pass on it and we will save it for the next GSA Forum meeting.

UPDATES FROM GSA LEADERSHIP--5:40

JP Santos (GSA President)

- This is my last meeting as GSA President, so I just wanted to give an update on all of the things we have done this year and thank the people who helped us do it all. This year:
 - We advocated for increased equity
 - Established new graduate student welfare committee that allows us to give input to the upper levels of UCLA administration about student life
 - We got more orientation support and support for GPSA Week
 - We passed equity resolution for graduate and professional student services and we also passed this in USAC and the Graduate Council in the Academic Senate
 - We created a [GSA Resource flowchart](#) (please share widely with your colleagues)
 - We worked with Wescom Credit Union and ASUCLA to provide COVID relief (gift cards and meals through ASUCLA catering)
 - I was able to serve on a lot of committees and COVID task forces
 - Akash and I developed a mentorship of the year award
 - We partnered with the UCLA Ombuds Office to do a PhD survey of students who have advanced to candidacy to let faculty know what their experience is like doing research and this will be helpful for faculty in our departments
 - We established a UCLA Alumni graduate mentorship program that connects graduate students with alumni of graduate and professional programs
 - We worked to enact Grad Div reforms to improve retention of PhD students
- I also wanted to give a shoutout to directors in my office: Lewis Luo, Julia Tobin, Isaiah Samson, Carlisa Simon, Ben Seyfert, Alex Moore, Parth Chauhan, and James Feng
- Thank you everyone for helping us have a successful year!

Letty Treviño (GSA VP of Academic Affairs)

- We have been focusing on transitioning to the new officers

- We are still working on a process to eliminate the Incomplete notation on transcript that disproportionately discriminates against students with disabilities
 - Next steps: we need to get the undergraduate council on board
 - Though my term as VPAA ends today, I will be serving on the Academic Senate Committee until the end of the school year
- We are putting final edits on letter that will be sent to all academic departments about the ways in which the GRE is discriminatory to discourage them from requiring the GRE next year
 - Isabel will be taking this project UC-wide next year
- Look through GSA office report for more about what we have been doing this year
- Shoutout to Isabel Benvenuti and Amira Hassnaoui, the directors in my office this year

AIGSA PETITION TO BECOME A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP* --5:50

Marina Perez (Finance Director of AIGSA)

- American Indian Graduate Student Association is petitioning to become a student interest group
- Currently about $\frac{2}{3}$ of our members are students that are not part of the American Indian Studies Graduate Program. We are recognized as being associated with the aforementioned program and we are but we also have students who study in lots of other disciplines
- We hope to bring more awareness to native representation at UCLA and that GSA would help with this
- We are submitting a petition with over the 250 signatures of UCLA graduate and professional students necessary
 - On the petition we asked for some demographic information about which programs people were affiliated with and if they identified as indigenous so that we could maybe reach out to them in case they would like to be active members of AIGSA
- Motion to vote on the AIGSA Petition to become a Special Interest Group: Alex Chubick (BSC) and Lewis Luo (DSC)--Motion passed
- Call for a vote. 15 yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain
 - **Vote: APPROVED**

CUTS TO GRADUATE WRITING CENTER SERVICES--6:00

Kathleen Kane (PHSA President)

- I am still a bit new to bringing issues to the attention of GSA and using this body to discuss them, but at the end of March our GWC-OC rep brought to the attention of PHSA some projected issues with funding of the GWC.
 - Funding was cut by 50% this year
 - Student staff was cut by 33%
 - AY 2022-2023 budget is undecided
- There is not a lot of support for grant writing especially for Public Health graduate students (there is one person at the GWC who specializes in NIH grants and they are very busy)
 - We do have a class in Fielding that covers this but, it can be competitive to get into it
- Give all of this we are interested in talking about how can we ensure that there are sufficient resources and how we can support the GWC

Comment from Letty: I just wanted to add more information because I am the Chair of the GWC-OC. Kathleen is right. There is a budget cut for next year of the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) funding. The GWC is partially funded through graduate student fees that we pay every year-- $\frac{2}{3}$ of the budget is funded by SFAC fees. Every year, the SFAC committee comes together to determine where those fees go. It is made up of administrators and students (both graduate and undergraduate), but all of the voting members are students. There was a 50% cut last year, which will affect this coming year. SFAC is in the process of looking through applications right now, so we don't know what the budget will be for AY 2022-2023 Those budget cuts are not tied to COVID. SFAC funding was going to be reduced before COVID issues. That is tied to how much money we receive from the state legislature and the Federal Government. Our representatives set graduate students services as a priority for SFAC funding this year and that's the first time that SFAC has ever prioritized graduate student services, but there really isn't that much money. There is a little over \$1,000,000 in funding, but most of it is going towards making sure people don't lose their jobs.

Response from Kathleen: Thank you Letty, I think that touches on a lot of the points I had raised and I'm also curious if we open it up to everyone here to hear your ideas on how we can support these services and make sure that they are getting to the people who need them. It's hard to say if this is something that we should be tackling internally at Fielding or with the GWC.

Comment from Susan Ettner: Unfortunately those resources are under the purview of Student Affairs and not Grad Division, so I can't help...

Comment from Andrew McClure: I know that SFAC has been in a difficult position during the past few years and I don't think that is going to change in the immediate future. We are definitely looking for creative ideas for funding, but we don't have anything concrete to share right now. We will communicate with the GWC-OC when we have more updates.

Comment from Sarah Valdovinos: Your voices are powerful if this is important to you then I think this group holds a lot of sway in terms of advocacy.

Response from Kathleen: Thank you both for your input. I know that we aren't going to solve this right now, but it's really helpful to hear from you.

Comment from Jessie Lee: Schools internally might be able to better provide these resources because grad writing varies a lot based on the program. For example, we can't really utilize the GWC in the Law school and we are paying for this service that we can't use. So for this reason, I think individual schools might be able to better provide this kind of specialized help.

Comment from David Schaberg: There is a lot of justification for clustering support within disciplines. Working to get advocacy on the part of faculty on this issue and pointing out how important writing is to your success in your fields is important. Deans listen when faculty speak up.

Comment from Francis: Since we have a few minutes left before the next agenda item, I wanted to acknowledge Sarah Valdovinos' work at UCLA, as she is leaving--she has accepted a job at another UC. She has done so much for the GSRC and the GWC and I want to give her an opportunity to speak.

Comment from Sarah: I feel really humbled being able to be in this space with you all and I have worked closely with Letty, Francis, and JP on a lot of different initiatives and I know that I have seen the rest of you here and in other spaces. I feel really grateful for my time at UCLA. You are being left in good hands with Andrew. Through the advocacy of GSA, focus on services has really shifted. This is my second to last graduate student meeting and it's a good way to close out.

Comment from Andrew: To echo what Sarah said about graduate students services and the momentum you have created, we thank all of GSA for helping to push all of this forward. I will be stepping in in an interim role and look forward to working with you all. If anyone is interested in posting a goodbye message to Sarah then please do so at <https://padlet.com/sarahsfarewell/2021>

Comment from Susan: Sarah played a critical role in Grad Division before working with Student Affairs in EDI and in Professional Development. I met her as an Associate Dean and she is so fantastic and patient. We were so sad when she left but grateful to be able to continue working with her. UCI is so lucky to have you, but you always have a home here. We will take you back anytime you want to come back. I know you will have an amazing career.

Comment from Mike Cohn: I had the honor of being a part of Sarah starting her student affairs career--she had an internship at SOLE. We wanted to hire her, but we couldn't because of our budget. We were happy to see her in different roles at UCLA. We hope to see her again at UCLA. All the best Sarah!

Comment from Karen Hedges: I have really appreciated our partnership and camaraderie and you and I bringing graduate student needs to the forefront. To everyone on this call, it is all about Sarah because she has been the champion of the GSRC. If you don't know Sarah, just change the word to GSRC.

GSA RESOLUTION FOR SPRING 2021 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GSA PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE*--6:20

JP Santos (GSA President)

- It's really important to acknowledge the administrators and faculty that work so hard to advocate for graduate students. We might not agree all the time, but they are supportive of us as graduate students and I want to thank the people who took the time to listen to our concerns this year.

This Spring 2021 GSA President Service Awardees are:

Staff/Admin/Faculty:

- 1) **Monroe Gorden Jr.**, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs
- 2) **Brittany Pannell**, Community Director – University Apartments South
- 3) **Christine Wilson**, Executive Director, Strategic Planning Initiatives
- 4) **Karen Hedges**, Deputy Director, Campus Life
- 5) **Patty Solomon**, Senior Division Manager, Student Union Services

Students:

- 1) **Lewis Luo**, Dir. of Discretionary Funding
- 2) **Isabel Benvenuti**, Dir. of Academic Senate & Academic Affairs
- 3) **Isaiah Sampson**, Dir. of Diversity, Inclusion, & Community Engagement
- 4) **Gaby Barrios**, Graduate Student Rep, Student Fee Advisory Committee

- 5) **Elyse Brusher**, Dir. of Administrative Affairs
- 6) **Julie Le**, Assistant Dir. of Administrative Affairs
- 7) **Akash Deep Singh**, Elections Commissioner/Attorney General
- 8) **Letty Treviño**, VP of Academic Affairs

Comment from Susan: Your success as graduate students is the success of the entire university...you're the bedrock of both the research and teaching missions of UCLA... Now we just need to figure out a way to communicate the importance of graduate education to the California voters...

- Motion to vote on the Resolution for Spring 2021 Acknowledgement of GSA Presidential Service: Melissa Haller (SSC) and Alex Chubick (BSC)--Motion passed
- Call for a vote. 15 yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain
 - **Vote: APPROVED**

OATH OF OFFICE FOR GSA ELECTED OFFICERS FOR AY 2021-2022--6:40

Akash Deep Singh (GSA Elections Commissioner)

- I would like to thank the outgoing executive officers of the GSA: JP, Francis, Letty, and Neda. Thank you all for a successful year. Now the newly elected GSA officials will take their oath as it is written in [section 6.10.2 of the GSA codes](#). Before you take your oath, I would like to invite you to introduce yourself, your major, and your favorite place to eat in LA.
 - Musibau Francis Jimoh, GSA President Elect
 - My name is Musibau Francis Jimoh, but I go by Francis. I am a third year PhD student in the Material Science and Engineering Program at UCLA. My favorite spot to eat at UCLA is this Prussian restaurant in Westwood.
 - I Musibau Francis Jimoh do hereby solemnly pledge to uphold the duties and responsibilities of my position as an Officer within the Graduate Students Association at the University of California, Los Angeles. I also faithfully affirm my dedication as a member of the GSA, to uphold my duties as a GSA Officer over those in any other student organization, and promise to adhere to the issues and concerns of all graduate and professional students at UCLA. I will also represent, to the best of my ability, the credibility and integrity of all members of the GSA to all other organizations, entities, and other individuals. This oath I have taken of sound body and mind.

Comment from Akash: Congratulations, Francis! You are now the President of GSA.

- Lewis Luo, GSA Vice President of Internal Affairs Elect
 - My name is Lewis and I am a third year dental student at UCLA. For my favorite place to eat in LA, I would say somewhere in KoreaTown. I like Korean barbecue
 - I Lewis Luo do hereby solemnly pledge to uphold the duties and responsibilities of my position as an Officer within the Graduate Students Association at the University of California, Los Angeles. I also faithfully affirm my dedication as a member of the GSA, to uphold my duties as a GSA Officer over those in any other student organization, and promise to adhere to the issues and concerns of all graduate and professional students at UCLA. I will also represent, to the best of my ability, the credibility and integrity of all members of the GSA to all other organizations, entities, and other individuals. This oath I have taken of sound body and mind.

Comment from Akash: Congratulations, Lewis! You are now the Internal Vice President of GSA.

- Neda Ashtari, GSA Vice President of External Affairs Elect
 - I'm Neda and I am an MD/MDP student and Chipotle is my favorite food no matter where I am.
 - I Neda Ashtari do hereby solemnly pledge to uphold the duties and responsibilities of my position as an Officer within the Graduate Students Association at the University of California, Los Angeles. I also faithfully affirm my dedication as a member of the GSA, to uphold my duties as a GSA Officer over those in any other student organization, and promise to adhere to the issues and concerns of all graduate and professional students at UCLA. I will also represent, to the best of my ability, the credibility and integrity of all members of the GSA to all other organizations, entities, and other individuals. This oath I have taken of sound body and mind.

Comment from Akash: Congratulations, Neda! You are now the External Vice President of GSA.

- Isabel Benvenuti, GSA Vice President of Academic Affairs Elect
 - I'm Isabel and I am a third year PhD student in Spanish & Portuguese and my favorite place to eat in LA is Sushi 101.
 - I Isabel Benvenuti do hereby solemnly pledge to uphold the duties and responsibilities of my position as an Officer within the Graduate Students Association at the University of California, Los Angeles. I also faithfully affirm my dedication as a member of the GSA, to uphold my duties as a GSA Officer over those in any other student organization, and promise to adhere to the issues and concerns of all graduate and professional students at UCLA. I will also represent, to the best of my ability, the credibility and integrity of all members of the GSA to all other organizations, entities, and other individuals. This oath I have taken of sound body and mind.

Comment from Akash: Congratulations, Isabel you are now the Academic Affairs Vice President of GSA.

Comment from Francis: Before I turn things over to Lewis, I just wanted to give a shout out to the IVP office: Felicia, Julie, Sunny, and Elyse have been so fantastic working on GSA Forum and all of our other projects. I specifically wanted to thank Felcia because we meet every week on Fridays and then she gives me a list of things to do on Monday and keeps me on task. She is the heart of the Internal Affairs Office.

ADJOURNMENT--7:00

Lewis Luo, GSA VP of Internal Affairs

- Motion to adjourn: Alex Chubick (BSC) and Melissa Haller (SSC)--Motion passed