

MINUTES
Graduate Student Association Meeting
2007-2008 Academic Year
August 27, 2007

I. Childcare Initiative

Denise Domizi discussed a petition that is circulating to let the administration know this is an important issue as faculty, staff, and students are all affected by it. According to her research, 25% responded had kids and 25% had considered having children during graduate studies. The benefits committee had previously looked into it, but the administration chose not to follow their recommendations. It's tough juggling work, school, and kids especially since the McPhaul Center only has 53 spots. There's a critical shortage of childcare in Athens. Other peer institutions offer year-round child care and of some of them are subsidized. Childcare has a direct effect on the completion and completion times of graduate degrees. On-campus daycare can have an effect on recruitment and retainment. Having better childcare opens the door for more student diversity. UGA is a member of the Partner for a Prosperous Athens. Sign-up and pass out petitions, attend rally, posters to be put up. When filled up, mail the petition to them right away. There is a rally on Thursday, September 27, Tate Plaza, 2:30-3:30pm where the petition will be circulated to President Adams. For more information go to their website at www.ugachildcare.org.

II. Introductions

A. Welcome

The new GSA officers this academic year are President Wesley Burnett. He's a Ph.D. student in College of Agriculture. Matt Gore is Vice President. He's a first-year MPA student in SPIA. Jess Nakaska is the GSA Secretary. He's a second-year Ph.D. student in International Affairs in SPIA.

B. GSA Orientation and Reception

Special thanks to Matt Gore, Jess Nakaska, Susan Nordstrom, Chase Hagood, Tony Snodgrass, Alani Taylor, Philip Brown, Noel Heim for volunteering. 350 people showed up for the reception which was catered by Chick Fil-A. Next year the reception will include a vegetarian option.

C. New GSA Website

The GSA website has been re-designed to make it in line with other UGA websites. Using the same template the site is now easier to navigate. There are also a new set of links and Wesley Burnett's blog is available to read. Information is available there which explains what GSA does and its responsibilities which include representative, service, and social components.

III. Student Health Insurance

A. Graduate Students

Mandatory plan and voluntary plan in place for certain graduate and international students. It appears that the health insurance may stay with the status quo. Wesley Burnett has been in contact with other Georgia universities. He also talked with Associate Vice President of Human Resources Tom Gausvic about the healthcare plan. He has asked the Department of Human Resources to produce a VODcast to help explain how the health insurance works, how it came about, and where it's going. Ideally, these measures will help to advance the discussion and inform students about the issues regarding student health insurance.

B. Graduate Student Travel Funds

Currently, there is not enough allocated for graduate and professional student travel. These students need to go to conferences to advance their academics and professional careers. If UGA was to allocate additional graduate student travel funds in the university budget, this could be administered through the Graduate School. There is a meeting with Provost Mace scheduled for Friday, August 31, 2007 to discuss this issue.

C. Graduate Student Facility

Graduate student needs are different than undergraduate needs. Virginia Tech University, for example, has its own place. President Wesley Burnett talked with University President Adams who was receptive to the idea of us having dedicated space somewhere on campus. This might include study center and a lounge area. Wesley is on the Tate-2 Advisory Board. Different sources have indicated we'll have very limited space in the new building.

D. Powers of GSA and Student Government Association (SGA)

There is a meeting with VP of Students Affairs Rodney Bennett to discuss this issue on Tuesday, August 28, 2007. There needs to be a clear delineation of powers between the two organizations. In the past, it's rare that SGA made decisions without GSA input. There is no existing conflict between these two organizations—this measure is purely informational.

E. Getting the GSA word out

Wesley will arrange to contact Graduate Coordinators within different departments around campus to improve involvement and turnout for GSA.

IV. Additional Information

Vice President Matt Gore will sit on the Executive Committee in which Wesley has a class conflict with. President and Vice President talking about re-structuring the GSA constitution. They will have input from graduate students and others and follow all the established guidelines for making any changes to GSA constitution. It is hoped that through grad school, motivated juniors and seniors might get involved with the GSA. Wesley and Matt are going to the national GAPS conference which they

joined individually; the Graduate School has very graciously offered to fund the President and VP's trip. Check out the organization at www.nagps.org. The goal is to speak with other graduate students and student advocacy organizations from around the US.

V. Committees

It is in the GSA constitution that committees must exist. There are three committee sign-up lists, please sign-up. The first of these is the Issues/Advocacy Committee. Email questions/concerns so that we can bring it up in university-level meetings. We need to get on these early. We will delegate specific issues to those interested in certain committees. The other two committees are Social/Service Projects and GGSIC. Reminder to Representatives to sign-up on the representative roster.

VI. Budget

This year's budget has decreased as a result of changed policy on allocation of monies to various student organizations. We spent \$1000 spent on orientation, while serving 350 people food. Anything extra will be carried over to the socials.

VII. Future Events

A. Service Project

There is a Service Project on Saturday, September 22, 2007, 11:00-1:30pm set up with the Northeast Georgia Food bank which provides services to needy families in Northeast Georgia. We will provide more details about its location in Athens later.

B. Graduate Student Social

The Graduate Social is on Saturday, October, 20, 2007, 11:30-2:00pm at Lake Herrick. It will be held during the day to attract students who don't usually attend socials. The field is reserved. Families and children are welcome and yes, there will be a vegetarian option for food.

C. GSA Meetings

Next GSA Meeting is on Monday, September 24, 2007, 6:30pm, SLC Room to be announced after September 6th. An email will be sent through the listserv with the exact location. The GSA Meeting is set for the 4th Monday of each month.