

Graduate Student Senate
Friday, October 16th, 2020
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Zoom

Notes

Quotes: *If we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own need for language, ask yourself: “What’s the worst that could happen to me if I tell this truth?”*-Audre Lorde

1. 5. Ice-Breaker: How do you feel is the best way to overcome challenges in life?

In attendance:

Dewin Hernandez (Director)
Sonia Kwak (Finance)
Marquise Griffin (Programming)
Kelly Sankowski (STM)
Charles Codner (GSCA)
Illse Bellido-Richards (GISA)
Frank McCarthy (GMA)
Violeta Epstein
Christina Vlahos
Rebecca Brigham

2. Updates from GSA and OGSL

Director of GSA

Dewin asked the Senate to think about what speakers we can bring in or what larger-scale events we can have. He said Marquise would speak more about what this might look like in his update.

Next, Dewin shared that he met with the Provost Advisory Council about COVID testing and increasing testing, specifically for grad students. There will be communication going out soon on this subject.

Dewin also met with Tom Mogan about a racial justice forum. The forum is interested in having grad students to participate. Dewin also announced an upcoming meeting with the Civic Engagement Committee and asked the Senate to let the GSA know if any leaders would like to be part of this committee.

Finally, Dewin announced he would be emailing each Senate leader to do 1-on-1 meetings regarding the monthly President’s Report.

Director of Finance

Sonia shared with the Senate that she's been working with treasurers and assisting them in understanding the guidelines related to COVID and programming.

Sonia also mentioned that most P-Cards had been distributed, but SABSC is working with the bank to get the rest ready as soon as possible.

Finally, Sonia announced that the GSA Grant Applications are now closed, and she will be receiving and communicating with the grant recipients over the next few weeks.

Director of Programming

Marquise presented the Senate with a potential collaboration opportunity for October 26th from 5-6 pm, a Halloween-themed event called Monster Mash. The event will be a virtual social time for grad students to do Halloween activities. The Monster Mash will be a Horror Movie trivia, costume contest to increase social media engagement, and tickets to a virtual haunted house in Salem.

Marquise also announced the first Friday Fireside Chat happening after the Senate meeting from 2-3 pm. The Chat will be a conversation between Marquise and Dr. Billy Soo, Boston College's Assistant Provost, and recorded.

After Marquise spoke, Frank McCarthy, representing the GMA, asked if there is a Google doc for sharing marketing material. Frank suggested it would be helpful to have a streamlined way of sharing material with others and increasing collaboration in programming. Marquise said he would follow up on Frank's suggestions to facilitate more collaboration and info sharing.

Director of the Office of Graduate Student Life

Carole Hughes joined the meeting to share some updates from Grad Student Life and University Student Affairs. In regards to Frank's question about increasing communication, she mentioned that overall communication at the university has been taking longer.

Next, Carole shared that the Office of Grad Student Life is working with GSA and the undergraduate Office of Student Involvement and Campus Activities to co-sponsor an event featuring Michael Barbaro, host of the *New York Time's The Daily* podcast. The event will be **on Tuesday, October 21st, at 7 pm.**

Carole also suggested for the Senate that instead of doing many programs, maybe the Senate should do fewer programs, with more concentrated focus, to bring in lots of people at once.

Finally, Carole mentioned that University leaders are having discussions about Thanksgiving break, with a major announcement coming soon giving students the option to leave campus and remain home for the remainder of the fall semester.

3. Senate Updates:

After Carole concluded, Dewin asked the Senate leaders if there were any updates they wished to share. Frank mentioned that GMA and CSOM were making a Patagonia apparel sale. He also shared that FLAAG officially launched, with Dewin leading the committee group to push for policy change.

Regarding programming, Frank announced the GMA is bringing a speaker, Speaker Amy Cuddy, in November, and he will be sharing more information with Marquise.

Frank also mentioned that the GMA has been considering opening up a snack bar in the graduate lounge and was wondering how this might work given the COVID restrictions.

Frank's primary goal is to know that GMA is still present and will use the funding they have to support them.

No other Senate leaders had any updates to share.

4. Nine Whys Activity

Dewin led the Senate in a "Nine Whys" activity designed to facilitate thinking regarding what's essential for the Senate, especially during a crisis. The activity was intended to lay the groundwork to inform the Senate's course of action and ignite momentum for collaborating and taking action to support grad students. The Senate broke out in pairs to interview each other with nine questions to generate thinking about why each team wants to be a leader and what motivates their leadership.

Following the activity, the Senate returned as a group and agreed that the Senate's significant role should be to provide structure, support, and community to grad students, especially for navigating the pandemic. The Senate should also use its resources to advocate for grad students and show them they belong to BC.

5. Identify Agenda items for Next Senate Meeting.

The last five minutes of the meeting were used to identify some agenda items for the next Senate meeting, which will be on **Friday, November 20th, at 1 o'clock**. Dewin instructed the Senate to email him with any agenda items they might have missed.