

UMCES Graduate Student Council Meeting
April 13, 2021
2-3pm

In attendance: Anna Windle, Claire Nemes, Tan Zou, Amy Griffin, Taylor Armstrong, Daniella Hanacek, Amber Fandel, Kia Ramarui, Alexandra Gibbs

- 1) USM Student Council (USMSC), Admin Council, COVID Communication Team Updates, DEIC Updates:
 - a) USMSC
 - i) Had Feb, March, April meetings since we last met. Highlights include voting to support the FUTURE Act, Special meeting with Governor Hogan's team, USMSC Town Hall
 - (1) Future Act - Amber and Christine have worked closely with other campus leaders to develop the bill. President Goodwin and Dave met with sponsors. Updates from Amber:
 - Objective: coalition of students from USM to push all higher institutions in MD to reach carbon neutrality by 2035 (sponsors in MD General Assembly - House and Senate)
 - UMCES voted in support of this
 - Bill died in committee.
 - Pres. Goodwin and Dave Nemazie were in support (with amendments, due to funding concerns)
 - Try again next year!
Also: Anna & Kia have some concern about accurately representing the perspectives of all students at UMCES (ex. surrounding collective bargaining - abstained from voting "as UMCES")
 - (2) Special USM Student Council Meeting with Governor Hogan's team- Anna and Amber attended a special USMSC meeting last week with Governor Hogan's Chief of Staff and legislative team.
 - (a) Unfortunately, not much time to talk about actual bills!
 - (3) On Thursday, April 22 at 6PM, the USMSC will host the first-ever town hall--"[One Year into a Pandemic Together](#)". This Town Hall will open dialogue with a diverse panel to hear from guest speakers and students across USM in addressing the impact of COVID on students, challenges and successes over the past year, and the way ahead. USM chancellor Jay Perman will give remarks
 - (a) Opportunity to submit questions about how USM is handling covid (submit ahead of time)
 - (b) Encourage students at our respective labs to attend
 - (4) USMSC President (Annie) asked Kia and I if anyone on the UMCES GSC would be interested in an executive role (President, VP of Graduate Affairs) on USMSC. This is a nonvoting role, so UMCES would have two other voting seats (currently Kia and Anna)

- (5) USMSC has six committees: 1) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, 2) Communications and Marketing Committee, 3) Government Relations Committee, 4) Student Affairs Committee, 5) Student Fees Committee, 6) Mental Health Committee. If you would like to join one of these committees and work with other students at different institutions on these topics, please let Kia and Anna know and we will put you in contact with the director of that committee (you don't have to be a voting member). Amber is currently on several of these committees
 - ii) USM is working with their legislative team to see if they can make the vaccine required for all students.
 - (1) Currently ~6 other universities have done so (mostly private)
 - (2) Might be trickier than standard vaxx requirements b/c coronavirus vaccines only have emergency use authorization, not full FDA approval
- b) Admin Council Updates
 - i) Meeting in March with Exec Council, lab directors, etc. Anna brought up the issue of getting a separate GSC Policy approved (continuation from Christina). Right now, text about the GSC is in the GA policy, but since not all UMCES students are GAs, a separate GSC Policy should be created. Also, the current UMCES GA Policy requires revisions to reflect changes since the last update in 2012. Anna will put forward revised policy and procedures documents to the VPE office for review, and then to the Administrative Council for approval and posting to the website.
 - (1) GSC Bylaws: Amy G and Larry approve. GSC Policies: must be approved by executive council
 - (2) Amy and Larry will discuss and try to update soon, especially GA policies (mainly employment policies: leave time, hours worked, etc.)
 - (3) What needs to be mandatory in letters to grad assistants vs. what are recommended / optional
- c) COVID Communications Updates
 - i) Conversation about the state exploring the legal authority to require vaccinations on campus (w/Dave Nemazie)
 - (1) UMCES is encouraging it but reminder that it is a personal decision. Caution about making people feel pressured and potential repercussions.
 - ii) monthly testing requirement has been eliminated if you've been vaccinated
- d) DEIC Updates
 - i) Anna & subcommittee of DEIC tasked with finding an external group to conduct cultural climate assessment (first step before implementing trainings). After consideration, the subcommittee narrowed down the list to 2 potential partner organizations:
 - (1) American Geophysical Union (AGU) is currently engaged in a 3-yr project entitled "Catalyzing Cultural Change in the Sciences with

New Resources and Tracking Tools,” funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. For this project, AGU is collaborating with the National Center for Professional & Research Ethics (NCPRE) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to extend the NCPRE’s powerful SOURCE work climate survey tool to include issues of sexual harassment. AGU/NCPRE has proposed to expand their survey with several additional questions addressing gender/race/ethnic issues specifically for UMCES, and we will serve as a pilot program for their project free of cost (woohoo!) The survey can be administered in the summer of 2021, as early as July. → will generate immediate, actionable information that can be used in conjunction with data / trainings / sessions from the Kardia Group (get people thinking)

(2) The Kardia Group has deep experience working with geoscience communities. They have an impressive track record bringing institutional change to universities and organizations across the country. The Kardia Group has proposed to carry out a series of “listening sessions” over a 1-week virtual site visit. One-on-one opportunities are also provided for those who are not able to participate openly in a group session. The Kardia Group will provide written summaries and a recommendation report to UMCES leadership and the DEIC, for subsequent distribution to the UMCES community. Their proposed cost is \$26,000 and they could begin their work in Spring 2021.

(a) Would be organized to ensure that everyone is able to contribute (ex. Listening groups that are student-specific, staff-specific, etc.)

ii) Subcommittee thinks carrying out the Kardia Group listening sessions first will “prime the pump” for the AGU/NCPRE survey, prompting UMCES employees to think deeply about these issues before filling out the survey. The combined result will be greater than the sum of its parts and will provide a strong foundation for future UMCES DEI efforts, at a very reasonable cost. Larry sent proposal to Executive Committee, waiting to hear about a response.

(1) Exec Council meets this week? (will be an agenda item)

2) Faculty Mentor Award- choosing subcommittee

a) We have received three nominations (Two CBL, one HPL)

b) Four member committee

i) Committee will read faculty mentor award material and pick a winner the week of 4/18

ii) Need to meet this week and decide on an award winner ASAP to get things going for Commencement

3) Shared Governance Survey

a) Discuss responses (summarized in slides)

- Difficult to answer this survey because of the structure of UMCES & confusion over unit-level versus UMCES-level
- The unit-level is what we have more direct experience with and affects our day-to-day operations
- Need disambiguation over what shared governance means at the unit level versus at the institution level (i.e. does “senior administrator” mean lab director or UMCES president / VP / other roles)?
- Hard to get information / communication / input from students; current people on the GSC aren’t being informed / incorporated as student rep on discussions and meetings at their lab levels
- Encourage adding “student updates” item to faculty meeting agendas
- Add to shared governance policy - introduce GSC as points of contact at the lab unit level (need to write this down), particularly when there is turnover
 - Anna & Kia can bring this up at next Admin Council meeting

4) Transitioning GSC members

- a) Amber, Alex, Claire, Daniela (?), Taylor (?)
- b) Folks who are leaving have the responsibility to find a replacement to fill their positions
- c) If no one else from your lab can or wants to serve, GSC members can serve for a 3rd year

5) Updates on ongoing tasks (Ombuds, website, code of conduct), upcoming student opportunities

a) Ombuds -

- i) Does cost of survey with Kardia group preclude the cost of an Ombuds position?
- ii) Amy is working VERY HARD to push this through
- iii) Working group: student rep (Taylor), staff rep, Lori Stepp, Amy Griffin

b) Student section on website (Amber & Amy):

- i) Amy G - mockup website
- ii) Break into “prospective” and “current” student sections with USEFUL information that’s easy to find (confusing so far, mostly for prospective students)
- iii) Working with Amy Pelinski

c) Code of Conduct - shared with GSC to look over; will be presented to Executive Council (4/15?)

d) Student opportunities:

- i) Monthly meetings with President Goodwin and leadership team - sign up to attend (theme this time: Professional Development)

- ii) Community building workshop: “Who am I? Who are We?” Led by UMD ODI’s Director of Diversity Training and Education, Dr. Carlton Green.
 - (1) Sea Grant did this w/ODI and said it was a very positive experience! Encourage members of your lab to attend
 - iii) Next DEI meeting (open to everyone) is this Friday, 4/16 - encourage folks to attend
 - e) Next professional development workshop? Topic on professional conduct and communication (ex. with advisors, funders, public) - Amber organized one last month; Kia & Christine K organized previous one with Nina Lamba from REEF
 - i) If you have ideas for PD workshops, please reach out to folks (ex. faculty at your lab) and think about organizing if you think it will be useful to
- 6) Other updates:
- a) Daniella wanted to bring up tax question at HPL
 - b) Amber - ethical concern about Applied Environmental Science MEES course (Tom Miller & Carys Mitchelmore): Final reports from previous year’s class were used without consent of students (with names still attached) during the most recent class; objective was for students to analyze the success / efficacy of these reports
 - i) Conflicting UMD policies about intellectual property
 - ii) Carys will pass along to UMCES PCC to discuss
 - iii) This is a good reason to always provide feedback on courses when you have the opportunity!
- 7) Ad hoc discussion of student concerns over DEI issues at UMCES
- a) UMCES is not making the improvements in retention and recruitment of diverse faculty and students that it needs to in order to achieve its staged goals or be on par with other institutions
 - b) Students are frustrated by lack of progress and think that we probably value this more than upper administration at the UMCES and unit levels
 - c) Concerns that service is still not being valued as highly as scholarship, meaning a disproportionate burden on women and people of color to serve on committees, work to implement institutional change
 - d) What can we do as a GSC to advocate for change?
 - i) Continue this discussion at the next GSC meeting
 - ii) Alex: Publish demographics on UMCES website
 - iii) Anna: Meeting w/ Dr. Green will be a good opportunity to discuss, collect responses, and present them to the DEIC (as a letter with GSC signatures, perhaps?)
 - iv) Can we as a student body or GSC apply for grant funding that would enable some of the DEI initiatives that we want to see?

Action Items:

Next GSC meeting:
Meeting adjourned 15:30