

UMCES Graduate Student Council Meeting
August 24th, 2020
12:30pm-2:00pm

1. Introduction to Annie Rappeport, USMSC President
 - Clarify USM- show map of USM institutions.
<https://www.usmd.edu/institutions/map/>
 - USMSC meetings are once a month and are live streamed on Youtube
 - Website:
<https://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/StudentCouncil/index.php>
 - YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFE54xlptsRLSkDUSK2vD2Q>
 - Annie (at College Park): Overview of USM student council (vs. UMCES GSC)
 - UMCES/UMCP resources generally shared or similar, but other institutions may have very different resources
 - Ex. student crisis funds, ability of UMCP to email all grad students
 - System-level: Best practices surrounding reopening, shifts, night work, etc.
 - USM council: Board of Regents, higher-level type stuff (IRB, freezing of tuition and fees)
 - Student civic engagement!
 - Anna: Explained structure of USM across Maryland
 - Board of Regents: supposed to be “objective” – different stakeholders who care about education in MD (K-12 AND higher ed), primary focus is higher ed but viewed as interconnected. All-volunteer (but invite-only); there are also staff (full time) working with the BOR. Now two student reps (1 voting member)
 - Students can send in a request and make a public comment at one of the BOR meetings if they want (ex an agenda topic you’re really interested in.) Student regents are very approachable, too
 - USM Student Council meetings are live-streamed (held 1x/month) and can be viewed later if interested
2. GSC Shared Google Drive
 - Anna, Kia, Amy (and still Christina and Christine) are Managers, Claire is Content Manager (will remain secretary). Rest of GSC are Viewers
3. New student orientation- Kahoot activity
 - GSC members will organize an interactive activity during the ‘Creating a Community at UMCES’ section at the New Student Orientation on Friday, August 28th from 11:00-11:30am
 - Anna and Kia will begin with an overview of GSC, and then we will all participate in a Kahoot survey asking these questions:
 - What lab are you associated with? (will lead to conversation about labs, different research, etc)

- What foundation are you in? (Will lead to discussion about courses)
 - What is your ideal quarantine “house”? (Will lead to discussion about what people like to do, personalities, etc)
 - Discussion, courses, professors in each foundation and lab
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 - Christine Q: Is the orientation for all MEES or just UMCES? Any new students at IAN? (They sometimes get missed on email notifications)
 - Amy: UMCES student orientation (morning), rest of MEES will be added in the afternoon
 - Amy:
 - Will send GSC the full agenda; get on a few minutes before GSC portion begins
 - Would welcome feedback about creating a better sense of community at orientation; hard to do over Zoom!
 - Redoing student handbook – new sections
4. USMSC, MEES Program Committee Updates- specifics include voting, MEES Colloquium, Issue Study Group courses, comprehensive exam guidelines
- USMSC meeting 8/16/20
 - Training meeting for new USMSC members
 - Maryland Youth Advisory Council rep – more undergrad involvement; Anna might try to get them involved (ages 14-22)
 - Dr. Nancy Shapiro, Associate Vice Chancellor & Special Assistant to the Chancellor for P-20 Education gave an inspirational talk at the USMSC meeting on 8/16/20.
 - *“You are a once-in-a-hundred-year generation of leaders. You’ve arrived at the scene of a perfect storm. The world is heating up, glaciers are melting, oceans are rising and heating. The society is being ripped apart with respect to historic structural racism and social injustice. technology is like magic but is a double-edged sword. The pandemic is raging. the power is in your hands to create the future that you want to live in. So you, as student leaders, have an incredibly important responsibility to live the life you want to live, to choose leaders you believe in and to become leaders in your own right.”*
 - Nancy is creating a Civic Engagement Student Leadership Committee to encourage students to vote and get out the vote
 - Anna has volunteered for this committee; also is planning to send out email to all UMCES students on deadlines, how to vote, etc. (will send draft email to GSC for feedback)!
 - We would like to ask Dr. Shapiro to come talk to students during the all student body meeting during MEES Colloquium
 - MEES PC meeting 8/14/20
 - Virtual MEES Colloquium- hosted by CBL (via Zoom). Date TBD.

- All student body meeting (run by UMCES GSC) - want to discuss voting, ISG topics
 - ISG- MEES is interested in getting student input about ISG topics for future semesters. Encouraged students to reach out to faculty to see if they would be willing to teach on a specific topic. Spring 2021 course list was due last Friday. Fall 2021 courses are due Dec 1, 2020.
 - Usually have 2 per semester; course list is due way in advance
 - Amy: Environmental Justice ISG should be offered this spring (College Park) – lots of students will probably take this! / Also: Synthetic Biology and Biodiversity Conservation
 - Send out a google survey to collect information from students before the student body meeting and then can discuss at the meeting?
- Comprehensive exam guidelines- Graduate Faculty Council are still editing, and then they will send them to MEES. Might ask for student feedback.
- Has been a particular concern for Environment and Society foundation; Dennison says that their comps follow the format of all other foundations (whatever that format may be)

5. Updates from DEIC

- Claire – Logistics, primary areas of focus, still working on goals and charter to structure efforts but plan to open meetings to full UMCES community in the near future. Several working groups have met to discuss particular topics (including implicit bias training – see below). Need for more information and feedback from UMCES community to guide efforts going forward.
- Anna and Kia have met with Dr. Carleton Green, Director of Diversity Education and UMD's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Working with him, Lora Harris, and Nick Coleman (other student rep on the DEIC) to first send out a cultural climate assessment (anonymous survey) to gauge opinions about diversity at UMCES. Then, we will try to plan a workshop or training event for all of UMCES.
 - Dr. Green did a program with AAUW (American Association of University of Women) – “baseline training” at CBL
 - FIRST need basic demographic information and campus “cultural climate assessment” / how people feel UMCES is doing
 - Need to have a third party/external organization called the AVARNA group (Lora has worked with them); Anna has requested an estimate of cost
- Other Qs for GSC members from Claire:

- Seminar speakers = differences in how these are coordinated across labs; opportunity to push for diversifying speaker lineups?
- How are you creating community at your labs?
 - HPL = Victoria Coles = reading groups via Zoom / maybe UMCES-wide ones? Someone would need to facilitate; gets challenging
- Are student representatives allowed at faculty meetings? Should we formally request this as a GSC if people aren't comfortable asking for it on their own?

6. Delegating ongoing GSC related projects

- Anna: There are quite a few ongoing projects that I'd like to ensure get done as the GSC chair. I want to delegate GSC members to work on certain tasks for the remainder of the semester to ensure they are all completed.
 - Tasks:
 - Update bylaws, policies and procedures- Anna and Kia
 - Update GSC handbook- Anna and Kia (basically done – Amy)
 - Review of UMCES website- *1 person* with Amy (Amber)
 - Work on organizing student resources, cleaning, updating
 - Adding list of funding sources (MEES, UMCES)
 - Needs to be more user-friendly for both prospective students and current students
 - International student resources - Daniella and Tan
 - Collecting information from international students at all labs
 - Make lab specific international help sheet / FAQs
 - Update international student info in UMCES student handbook
 - Ongoing effort that Pinky started
 - Graduate Legal Aid workshops = thru UMCP; should all be available to students
 - Christine: Broad resources / topics versus specific to local areas
 - Diversity initiative- Anna and Kia (other volunteers too)
 - Cultural climate assessment, setting up a workshop/training, recruiting POC students
 - Ombuds- Taylor and Alex
 - There is a draft plan in place, needs to get pushed along
 - Work with Larry and Amy to get this approved by Exec Council
 - Christina & Amy have been working on this: Needs approval by Executive Council; ALL universities in the system should have an ombuds person
 - Lynn, Larry, Mike Wilberg, Amy; Amy drafted proposal; sent to Executive Council

- Formal grievance policy (HR) versus informal / advice person to help with those issues = ombuds
 - Someone at all the labs trained for this; also student mentors in place on a rotating basis
 - Annie – can get input of people at other universities in the system to vouch for the importance of this
 - Training = costs \$\$
- Code of conduct - Claire
 - DEIC is making code of conduct – can use this
 - Distribute and display in all campuses/lab buildings
 - Get template from CBL
- Discussion of fee waiver and access to TerpWare software products: confusion between what we are “allowed” to download and conflicting information from Tim Canty (MEES), student handbook, etc., versus what is in the fee waiver statement that UMCES students sign
- UMCES has software licenses so TerpWare access may not even be necessary, but we need clarification. Amy will look into this

7. COVID check-in

- Any confused students?
- After testing, send in your test results to HR (but you probably won’t get confirmation of receipt)
- Daily survey: will be emailed each day, but only fill out if you’re planning on lab and/or fieldwork that day
- In all instances, you still need permission from your lab director before you can go on campus – contact them directly to coordinate

8. Any other updates?

- Amber - Disability access concerns
- Current protocol: Students referred to the Accessibility Office at College Park
- College Park staff were unaware that UMCES exists and that we are dispersed across the state
- College Park Accessibility Office needs improvement:
 - Training on chronic illness (UMCP asked some insensitive questions...)
 - Information on accessibility office in welcome information (i.e. in student handbook), if this is the most appropriate channel
 - Someone to talk to through UMCES or campus to facilitate connection with UMCP Accessibility Office / help them navigate the process
- Maybe we shouldn’t be working with UMCP – Amy G usually tries to sit down with a student or call UMCP on their behalf to secure accommodations
- Amy will look into this and try to find out more

9. Amber & Christine – MARYPIRG

- Maryland Student Climate Action Coalition (MSCAC)
- Working with students primarily at UMCP, but all USM – all Maryland public universities
- Push for zero emissions for 2030
- Want support of all USM student government organizations – including UMCES in particular (letter of support from GSC)
- UMCP has carbon neutrality plan, but other universities don't
- Amber will draft a letter of support for GSC to edit / comment upon and sign
- General statement of support (petition) will go to all UMCES students

Meeting adjourned 2:10 p.m.

Next meeting: Next couple of months / early November