

UMCES Graduate Student Council Meeting  
June 9, 2021  
2-3pm

In attendance: Anna Windle, Kia Ramarui, Claire Nemes (minutes), Amber Fandel, Alex Gibbs, Madeline (Maddy) Lahm, Sarah Jones, Daniella Hanacek, Amy Griffin

- 1) Introduction of new members
  - a) Transitioning:
    - Sarah Ann Jones, Maddie Lahm (replacing Amber Fandel & Alex Gibbs @ CBL)
    - JJ Johnson (replacing Claire Nemes @ AL)
  - b) Anna: Description of structure and roles of GSC for benefit of new reps.  
Transition will occur in July, at which point replacement reps will become official GSC members
  
- 2) USM Student Council (USMSC), Admin Council, COVID Communication Team Updates, DEIC Updates:
  - a) USMSC
    - i) Had May meeting since we last met. USM Chancellor Jay Perman and Vice Chancellor Patrick Hogan were available to answer questions- will start doing this more often for more transparency.
    - ii) Voted on new President (Yvonne Harper) and VP of Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs
    - iii) 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).
      - (1) Committees meet and discuss what sort of actions are being implemented across the campuses
    - iv) Regular meetings start back up in September
  - b) Admin Council Updates
    - i) Met in May
    - ii) Discussed UMCES Return to Campus Plan 2.5, Commencement
    - iii) Accreditation report (work in progress) will include changes in GSC bylaws; August deadline
  - c) COVID Communications Updates
    - i) UMCES Return to Campus Plan 2.5:
      - (1) Teleworking allowed, not required
      - (2) Proof of vaccination needs to be sent to [hr@umces.edu](mailto:hr@umces.edu). If not, employees must submit monthly COVID tests

- (3) For those unvaccinated, plan to have first shot no later than July 12th. Exemptions to requirement for religious or medical reasons only and should contact Lisa Ross
- (4) Work bubbles may be formed - request to Unit Director
- (5) Tour groups, outreach, renting public space not allowed
- (6) Volunteer interns/visiting scholars are allowed - must comply with testing policies/submit vaccination card
- (7) New employees hired after July (including students) must be fully vaccinated
- (8) If questions arise about vaccinations or any part of the Return to Campus plan, contact Anna and Kia so they can find out from Dave Nemazie et al.

d) DEIC Updates

- i) Climate Assessment subcommittee meets every Friday morning.
- ii) AGU survey is expected to begin in July. We are a pilot program, so no cost to UMCES (yay!)
- iii) Kardia Group listening sessions/one-on-one sessions (based on results of survey) expected to begin later. UMCES allocated funds for Kardia Group
- iv) Subcommittee organizing open DEIC meeting with representatives from each group so people can ask questions
- v) Anna and Kia trying to reschedule Community Building Workshop with Dr. Carlton Green (ODI at UMD). He has upcoming availability, and most students who filled out When2Meet form said late afternoons (3-4pm) were best. We are trying to organize a Monday 3-4:30pm workshop in the next few weeks (only 13 students registered of ~90 UMCES students total :(
  - (1) Hopeful that more people will attend a summer meeting when there are fewer academic conflicts

3) President's Monthly Meetings

- a) First meeting in April had theme of Professional Development and Networking
  - i) Handful of students (Anna & others), Fredericka Moser, Eric Davidson, Peter Goodwin attended (modeled off of meetings w/USM Chancellor Jay Perman)
  - ii) No anonymous questions submitted beforehand, but was a productive conversation
- b) Second meeting in May had theme of Outreach and Recruitment
  - i) Lora Harris, Alex Gibbs and Amber Fandel, Peter Goodwin attended
  - ii) Went well, no pre-submitted Qs (Alex had to devise questions on the fly)
    - (1) What is UMCES doing to retain / support students after recruitment?

- iii) Suggestion: Post calendar with topics (currently Lori usually decides the week of the meeting) - would facilitate involvement if students have an idea of subjects in advance
- iv) Suggestion 2: Allow students to suggest who they think should / could attend meetings (fellow students? admin?)
- v) Suggestion 3: Meeting minutes to disseminate thoughts, Qs, etc. after the meeting (follow-up)

#### 4) Meet and Confer

- a) June 21st at 2 PM
- b) Meet and Confer is an open discussion with administration- alternative to collective bargaining. More info in [USM Fact Sheet](#)
  - i) Option for students & adjunct faculty - not structured / formal negotiation like collective bargaining. Opportunity to discuss concerns, needs, demands more casually with administration
  - ii) In Graduate Student Policies
- c) "Currently, the UMCES GSC meets with the Vice President for Education, Vice President for Administration, the head of HR, and the Assistant to the Vice President for Education on a yearly basis in June to hold our annual Meet and Confer meeting". Anyone else we want to invite?
- d) Minutes from 2020 can be found on [website](#)
  - i) Talked about graduate assistantship policies, collective bargaining, mutual expectation documents, lab code of conducts, service work expectations
- e) Anna wants to bring up the topic of a GSC budget
  - i) When Anna first became chair, tried to register UMCES GSC as a registered graduate student organization through College Park (to be able to have a budget - ex. hire speakers, provide small scholarship awards, etc). Since not all UMCES students are MEES students we couldn't. MEES GSO possibly can? But... the budget these groups get comes from student fees (and UMCES students have College Park student fees waived) so it wouldn't be totally ethical to get a budget from something UMCES students don't pay for...
  - ii) Would like to be able to pay for speakers, workshops for students
    - (1) DEI workshops, science communication workshops, etc.
  - iii) Looked into what similar universities/lab GSOs do. See spreadsheet [here](#). Amounts vary widely and typically come from student fees
    - (1) Salisbury - GSC members get stipends!!
    - (2) UMD GSG prez gets stipend / assistantship type \$
    - (3) VIMS - allocates money directly to GSA
  - iv) While UMCES has no extra money to spend right now, think it's important to bring up - would like to discuss at Meet and Confer
  - v) If anyone has friends at other universities who are involved in grad student organizations, we'd be interested to hear from them!
  - vi) Where does \$\$ come from for other initiatives?

- (1) Potential issue of charging student fees (could it come from grant / assistantship funding source? What about students who are self-funded; would it be a hardship and could they receive a waiver?)
- (2) Amy will share list of potential topics with President Goodwin & Lynn Rehn to discuss at Meet & Confer
- (3) Other topics that GSC would like to bring up:
  - (a) Inconsistent application of Mutual Expectations documents (some advisors have embraced this, others blow it off)
  - (b) Kia: Keeping track of academic milestones and professional development - required forms
  - (c) Alex: Send out an anonymous survey to all students to allow them to suggest topics we should bring up at Meet & Confer
  - (d) Kia: Service work expectation or requirement; discussion vs. action
    - (i) Major barrier to action (esp. DEI activities)
    - (ii) Real service burden (esp. on women, people of color, earlier career researchers, etc.)
    - (iii) Monetary compensation might motivate involvement and deliverables

## 5) GSC Feedback

- a) Questions from new members?
  - i) JJ: Is there a list of the findings / conclusions from the last Meet & Confer meeting so we can see what they addressed vs. what they didn't? (Amy says not yet, but she will compile)
  - ii) New members are encouraged and welcome to attend upcoming M&C, but not required to
- b) General frustration about the progress we can make with student-led initiatives versus institutional bureaucracy
  - i) Kia: Is it appropriate to ask for updates / results / progress at M&C? Can we brainstorm ahead of time what we actually want to get out of this meeting?
    - (1) Ex. Mutual Expectations document - timeline for making this a requirement (mandate needs to come from admin)
    - (2) Anna: A challenge is that our requests often fall on the 2-person Office of Education (i.e. Amy and Larry), which makes it harder to get things done
  - ii) JJ: Can we make this Meet & Confer meeting 2x per year (first: bring up issues, second: discuss progress)?

- iii) Kia: roadblocks (we can make a lot of progress on ideas and policy, but then we encounter barriers when it comes to official approval) ← bureaucracy
    - iv) Amy: What about meeting in fall with Amy, Larry, GSC Chair and Co-chair as a specific follow-up to M&C?
  - c) Results from anonymous survey Anna sent out (n = 4 thus far)
    - i) Maybe lengthen meeting if we continue to meet bimonthly (to ensure sufficient time to discuss all topics) - 1.5-2h
    - ii) Good progress on many initiatives (improvements to website, code of conduct, representation on committees, etc.) but wish we'd been able to do more (see above)
- 6) Updates on ongoing tasks (Ombuds, website, code of conduct), upcoming student opportunities
  - a) Student opportunities:
    - i) Monthly meetings with President Goodwin and leadership team - sign up to attend
    - ii) Next DEI meeting (open to everyone) is this Friday, 6/11 - encourage folks to attend
- 7) Other updates:
  - a) Applied Env Science Course
    - i) Kia is rep on programs & courses committee (PCC) - will bring up concerns about anonymity, etc.
- 8) Topics we didn't get a chance to discuss (postponed until next meeting):
  - a) Code of Conduct updates
  - b) Ombuds position updates
  - c) Student section of website (Amber & Amy)
  - d) 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 multiple students