UMCES Graduate Student Council Meeting
March 8, 2022
1:00-2:30pm

In attendance: Anna Windle, Kia Ramarui, Amy Griffin, Ricky Arnold, Alan Williams, Tan Zhou, Bruna Sobrinho, Ben Malmgren, Daniella Hanacek, Sarah Jones, David Garcia

1. Welcome prospective GSC members -- Anna
   a. Kia and Anna’s terms as GSC reps and Chair/Co-Chair will be up in July, so there will be some turnover coming up
   b. There are several people interested in serving on the GSC from HPL, so we many need to have a vote

2. UMCES degree programs/certifications -- Ricky Arnold
   a. Education strategic initiatives from 2019 included entering into K-12, informal learning, collaborations, innovative programs to enhance diversity, etc.
   b. In 2020, UMCES funded a market research study that showed environmental sciences was a growth field, talked with employers to learn what skills were desirable in the future workforce
   c. Since 2020:
      i. Established professional certificates on EdX platform (Massive online open courses (MOOC) growing), also working with other USM partners
      ii. Proposed master in environmental management (MEM) degree and other graduate certificate programs
      iii. Still working on other stuff like courses where you can earn micro-credentials (would appear on transcript), digital badging (example: C++ badge, add to LinkedIn), etc.
   d. Current status as of 2022-- have several courses offering digital badges with so far a lot (hundreds to thousands) of learners, globally
   e. Feedback from GSC:
      i. Are badges universal? Would the average employer know what they signify? Do they hold weight, like a degree does?
         1. Ricky: it’s unclear what the meaning of these would be in academia, but in industry these badges may be more meaningful
         2. Ricky: badges would be on LinkedIn and/or transcripts
      ii. Who would teach these courses? How/would they be compensated for teaching these courses?
         1. Ricky: People outside of UMCES are paying ($100/course), which is a revenue model that could incentivise faculty to contribute to the course development and teaching ⇐ not a lot of money coming in, but it is still a revenue source. They are still working on the details of this...
iii. How do we ensure that the badge actually means people know the skills? This could reflect poorly on UMCES
   1. Ricky: need to make sure there is scrutiny in awarding the badges, so we are not giving badges when people didn’t actually gain the skills
   2. Ricky: also particularly challenging when students are outside of UMCES community, we don’t have the same trust/relationship as we would with an UMCES student ⇐ something to think about

iv. There are issues with currently offered UMCES courses having low attendance -- would non-UMCES students enrolled in programs like the MEM be required to take UMCES courses (boosting enrollment)?
   1. Ricky: depending on the program, students may take UMCES courses as long as the meet the prerequisites for the course (like a foundation course)

3. Updates from USMSC, Admin Council, DEIC, MEES PCC, UMCES PCC
   a. USMSC
      i. Generally getting feedback on a lot of student related bills in the Maryland General Assembly
      ii. Next meeting (3/13/22) w/ Chancellor Jay Perman
   b. Admin Council
      i. Meeting Thursday 3/10/22 to discuss the campus climate assessment results with the two groups who were involved
   c. DEIC
      i. Will present the results of the campus climate assessment with the entire UMCES community at the next open DEIC meeting (4/1/22)
   d. UMCES PCC
      i. Kia sent out surveys to all students. Students (n=10) indicated they were interested (no no’s) in half semester courses
      ii. Suggested courses related to skills (e.g. Python, field skills)
      iii. Other courses students interested is pedagogy in science
      iv. One hesitation: already an issue of filling classes, so adding more classes may exacerbate this issue

4. GA Stipend committee -- Kia
   a. Main goal- discuss how labs were going to meet goal of rising GA stipends
   b. Been decided - nonIMET students get a raise. Goal moving forward is to keep all labs at the same rate. GA III will eventually all receive $32,500.
   c. Directors agreed that all stipends will be raised over the next 1-2 years.
   d. Discussed how faculty will cover raises in their grants
   e. How is this going to go up? In phases, at the start of a new fiscal year? ⇐ Kia will double check this...

5. GSC Budget -
a. Need to find a good way to spend the money
b. Ideas: paying for speakers to come and give webinars, etc.
c. Email Anna and Kia with ideas/feedback
d. How do we know what is an appropriate way to use the funds? Amy will check with Larry if there are any guidelines, rules, parameters, etc.

6. Faculty Mentor Award
   a. Call for nominations sent out last week, nominations due in April
   b. Need to form subcommittee from GSC (1 rep from each lab), to evaluate nominations and select winner
   c. Tentative subcommittee members: Sarah (CBL), Daniella (HPL), (nominating) JJ (AL), (nominating) Majeed (IMET)
   d. Once the nominee is chosen, reach out to Amy to get the actual award ordered

7. Other updates
   a. Statement of Mutual Expectations -- Amy
      i. Not all students interact with advisors in the same way
      ii. This is a 2-part document with a list of questions
          1. 1 part is more geared towards employment
          2. 1 part is more geared towards the mentor-mentee relationship
      iii. Questions are related to communication style, lab tasks, expectations, etc., and are designed to start/assist the conversation
   b. New student appointment letters -- Amy
      i. Standardized letter for all UMCES students, regardless of lab
      ii. Includes information like how to maintain full-time status as a student, terms of GA employment, salary and benefits, vacation, etc.
      iii. Made up of two letters-
          1. appointment letter - sent when student gets accepted
          2. terms of conditions - sent when a student accepts