

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 may 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 they 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 in 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