

Meet and Confer 2022

28 June 2022

Meeting Summary

Attendees: L. Ross, A. Griffin, L. Sanford, A. Windle, M. Alrefaei, D. Hanacek, J. Johnson, D. Hanacek, T. Armstrong, I. Viruet, L. Rehn

Opening

- Griffin described the Meet and Confer policy from the USM and how this was the main meeting of the Administration and GSC and Graduate Assistant Representatives.
- Students introduced themselves and described their time on the GSC. I. Viruet will most likely be the 2022-23 chair.
- A. Griffin to check 2021 notes for specific wording on M&C

Agenda Items

- A. Windle discussed accomplishments of the GSC for the last two years, including:
 - Set up an election system to nominate new GSC rep
 - Posted all GSC meeting minutes (2020-2022) on GSC website for all students to be able to view the meeting summaries
 - 2020-Sep 2021- Planned a community building workshop with UMCP's Office of Diversity and Inclusion which led to conversations about an external group facilitating a cultural climate assessment for UMCES; ideally would like more student engagement here
 - Summer 2021- UMCES GSC and MEES GSO met with the Office of Education and instructors of Applied Environmental Science course in an effort to voice student concerns about the structure of course. This led to instructors redeveloping the syllabus.
 - The course evaluations showed improvement; the VPE Office will be meeting with the course instructors to review the evaluations and pinpoint any consistent feedback that may need addressing.
 - Summer 2021- Anna and Amy G. met with UMCP's International Students and Scholar Services (ISSS) Office to establish a relationship with this office in order to better serve our international students
 - Dec 2021- Established MEES comprehensive exam guidelines. Can be found on this UMCES website.
 - Hosted first ever UMCES Student Body meeting in Fall 2020 and 2021
 - Helped to re-establish MEES Graduate Student Organization (GSO)
 - Hosted three professional development webinars
 - NOAA Career Panel (July 2022)
 - Writing a budget and budget justification for a grant (November 2020)
 - Obtaining grant funding (February 2021)
 - Obtained a \$5,000 GSC budget from CA. The incoming GSC will need to plan what funds can/should be used for
 - Lynn approved up to \$5000 per year again for 2022-23; depending on what the GSC does, depends on how it is paid.

- All commitments should be run through Beth Pinder and Lynn at CA before solidifying what we are doing to ensure it follows all State rules
- **Almost Accomplished by the GSC, but still in need of administrative support:**
 - Bylaws & Policies and Procedures (can be found on [GSC website](#))
 - The GSC has updated the GSC bylaws which were approved and are now up on the GSC website
 - The GSC has finalized a new stand-alone GSC Policy and Procedures. Waiting for Administrative Council to approve.
 - Larry to bring this up at the Administrative Council meeting in the coming week.
 - The GSC has updated III-7.11 UMCES Policy on Graduate Assistantships. Waiting for Administrative Council to approve.
 - Office of the Attorney General will need to review these changes
 - **Larry to bring this up at the Administrative Council meeting this coming week.**
 - It is a judgement call for whether they feel the policy needs to go to the AGs Office to ensure it is in line with the GA policy
 - **Action Item: make sure policy has no links**
 - Spring 2022- GSC and Office of Education created a new Statement of Mutual Expectations form. The form includes two sections- one for graduate assistants and supervisors and one for mentees and mentors. Most UMCES advisors are both a supervisor and mentor so both sections should be filled out and submitted annually.
 - Forms are currently on the website and under the Graduate Education Google Drive for advisors
 - Official roll out of the SME will be fall 2022
 - Established Principles of Conduct (can be found [here](#))
 - HPL and CBL have hung up metal signs with the Principles of Conduct in campus lobbies.
 - It would be great if AL and IMET could do the same.
 - Claire, a past GSC rep, started the Principles of Conduct
- **Ongoing Tasks for the GSC and Administration:**
 - GSC will work with Amy Griffin to bring back bimonthly newsletters.
 - GSC and A. Griffin will review newsletter topics the last 15 minute of each GSC meeting
 - GSC will work with Amy Griffin to update Student Handbook
 - A. Griffin to work with the GSC on reviewing portions of the handbook for 2022-23
 - Student Stipend Committee- Anna and Olivia Pares (IMET) serve on the student stipend committee. More to come from Office of Education.
 - UMCES student stipends will be a tiered structure topping out at \$32,500 for PhD candidates, with a \$1,000 differential between each level, by July 1, 2023. We agreed that these increases will be considered to include the state-awarded 3% COLA on July 1, 2022, since all recommended percentage increases are greater than 3%.

- UMCES will move to a 2-level GRA stipend structure, eliminating the GRA I level for first year students with a BS degree.
 - **Student stipends will be discussed more at the Administrative Council meeting**
 - Would be ideal if a current GSC member would cycle onto this committee
 - Ombudsperson- GSC and Office of Education are working together to create Ombuds office- more to come from Office of Education soon.
 - A committee has been working on a viable ombuds program over the past 6 months
 - Proposal has not changed substantially
 - We are hiring a consultant this summer to help us get the program off the ground
 - The consultant will serve as the ombuds coordinator at the beginning of the program to ensure we are following all protocols
 - We are looking for 6 volunteers (2 staff, faculty, and students) to get trained in August and have the program ready to go for fall 2022
 - T. Armstrong has been the GSC student rep on the committee
 - Modeled on the VIMS program that Taylor discussed with us.
 - Everyone will be formally trained
 - Paid outreach/tours: HPL students get paid \$25/hour for outreach, \$50 for a weekday tour and \$70 for weekend tours. The GSC is having discussions to see if this can be consistent across all labs.
 - FRAs have overload payments come through at HPL as well
 - Labs are the ones who fund these programs and it is different from each lab
 - Students who have concerns should bring this up at the lab level
 - The GRA policy outlines that full-time GRAs are allowed to work up to 10 hours above their assistantship.
- **Pending education items to be worked on in 2022-23 in conjunction with administration:**
- The GSC and Office of Education are working together to clarify which University of Maryland College Park services/offices UMCES students can use or access. We are also having conversations on if UMCES students should pay partial mandatory fees in order to utilize UMCP resources.
 - Larry to look into partial fees with UMCP; students are opposed to paying these fees
 - It is worth clarifying what students can or cannot due
 - UMCES has expanded, size wise, since the agreement has been in place.
 - In the meantime, use the services at UMD as a UMD student.
 - **Larry to follow up with the UMD Dean's Office on mandatory fees**
- The GSC would like to create a 1 pager describing collective bargaining, meet and confer, and collective bargaining rights bill that can be distributed to students when/if the bill comes up again or needs to be voted on.
- The GSC would like to increase transparency of Central Administration (CA) so students know who's who in CA and the Executive Council and can learn about UMCES Shared Governance.
- Increase student involvement- Ideas:
 - Provide GSC chair and co-chair with stipend
 - Create an administrative assistantship where a student gets paid to work halftime on student administrative things.

- Encourage students to join the GSC at orientation as a way to get involved immediately (might be good to have some new perspectives)
- Assistantships:
 - Have temporary approval of assistantship to help in the VPE Office; students agreed we should leave it flexible.