

Advocacy Meeting Minutes: 2-8-2023

Start Time: 4:05

End Time: 4:55

Total Duration: 50 min

Attendance: Clement Okolo, Mary Pritchard, Benjamin Vidrine, Stacy Calhoun-Grosch (she/her), Romy Zingraff, Ahmed Hossain, Jeremy LaBorde, Faryal Atif, Elizabeth Boyd, Mary McMahon. **10 total**

- Personal Check-In Survey: <https://forms.gle/BHN7ZTqt9BAWhJN76>
- Advocacy Committee Bylaws Overview
 - Specific Purpose
 - The Advocacy Committee is responsible for the advocacy of graduate student's issues at University of Louisiana at Lafayette and work with official University channels to resolve the problems affecting graduate students personal and academic achievements at UL Lafayette.
 - Examples of things we can reflect on include community nutrition, cultural sensitivity, healthcare, inclusion and diversity in STEM, LGBTQ+ community, parent and family needs, sustainability, and transportation.
 - Objectives
 1. To effectively communicate to graduate students, UL Lafayette, and the community at large and bring their concerns and voices to the council.
 2. To advocate the students' concerns in the General Council meeting and recommend policies or actions to resolve them.
 3. To write to official University channels and work with them for the resolution of any affairs affecting the graduate student's life and academic achievements.
 - How we Advocate for you
 - One of the most important things we do is to represent the needs and concerns of graduate students to the university administration.
 - The GSO president serves on the University Graduate Council, the Graduate Appeals Committee, as well as other administrative committees the Dean of Graduate School deems appropriate.
 - Graduate students meet regularly each semester to discuss issues that are important to graduate students.
 - How to Report
 - All Graduate Students are encouraged to report all concerns they have on our online advocacy form or email GSO@louisiana.edu
- Fall 2022 Overview
 - Financial Assistance and other aid

- Emergency fund
https://lafayettec.az1.qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV_7NHtrm72gKcvKWp
- For food assistance, the Swipe Your Hunger program provides meal swipes:
https://ullafayette.sodexomyway.com/explore/swipe_out_hunger-
- Loans offered through the Office of Financial aid.
- F-1 non-immigrant graduate, undergraduate, and Intensive English Program (IEP) students are already enrolled in insurance plan unless waived, if a student is struggling with finances, waving this option could reduce expenses, however, with lots of risk if you are not enrolled in another insurance plan. www.wellfleetstudent.com
- One can also apply for graduate assistantships, or apply for a job on campus through the Handshake app
<https://louisiana.joinhandshake.com/login>
- More ways to help through the care network
<https://studentaffairs.louisiana.edu/dean-students/students/care-network>
- The GA from the Office of Diversity talked about their programs:
 - James Jackson Community of Scholars
 - <https://diversity.louisiana.edu/engage/james-jackson-community-scholars>
 - ALLIES
 - <https://diversity.louisiana.edu/learn/project-allies>
 - Women in STEM
 - <https://diversity.louisiana.edu/womens-leadership-conference>
 - First-generation students
 - <https://diversity.louisiana.edu/learn/first-geaux>
- The Guilbeau Center in Griffin Hall has computer software and hardware open for students to use from Monday to Friday 9-5 pm not including staff lunch breaks from 12- 1.
- Upcoming Events:
 - Women's Leadership Conference happening March 16th, 2023.
 - Non-Gendered restroom map available, credits to the Office of Campus Diversity and the School of Architecture and Design.
 - Heritage Quilt displayed at the Hiliard Museum (Students can go for free on Wednesdays)
 - Celebration of Black History Month February 23, 2023
 - Minority Exhibition 2023; Rising in Design located in the Fletcher Hall Lobby throughout February, Monday-Thursday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

- Spring 2023 Mission:
 - We will do more questioning to figure out why graduate students do not use our online advocacy form and if this method is effective.
 - We will emphasize the needs of low income, transfer, out-of-state, and international graduate students.
 - Insurance especially for family coverage
 - Transportation
 - International Student Housing
- Action Brainstorm:
 - Do we want to hold a town hall to discuss issues graduate students face with administrators in charge of these concerns?
 - Town Hall: The purpose of town hall meetings is for local and regional officials to hear the community's views on public issues. There have been no specific rules or guidelines for holding a town hall meeting. The format of the meetings can vary.
 - The gender-neutral sign installed on 5th floor of Griffin for the staff bathroom has been removed.
 - Advocating for a cost-of-living adjustment for GA's: due to the pandemic, inflation of everyday goods and rent has increased drastically. This makes it tougher to live off the salaries they currently offer, which haven't increased in 2 years.
 - Insurance used to cost \$700 and has increased over the past 2 years. It is possible that a law was passed to not require insurance for international students- according to Coordinator for French Dept. We will double check this information. Local GA's do not automatically have health insurance, so this is an issue for them as well.
 - For the next meeting or event during Graduation Appreciation Week, we will discuss ways of getting healthcare coverage at a cheaper rate.
 - For department email lists, you can make a contact list through outlook email or create a Microsoft Word document where you can copy and paste all the student names in the blind CC portion of the email. The latter is a great way to reduce effort in case you have a larger department.
 - Emailed Advocacy PowerPoint to all Department Representatives.