Graduate Student Organization (GSO)
Fall 2023 General Meeting 3
Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 12:30 p.m.
Location: Helma Constantine Forum A (209 A)

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Attendance** [establish quorum: 50% +1 of current membership]
3. **President's Welcome:** Clement Tochukwu Okolo
4. **President's Report**: Clement Tochukwu Okolo
   a. General Meeting Duration
      - The first two General Meetings dealt with timing difficulties, so General Meeting 3's time has been extended to see if it helps discussions on matters.
      - Another option was made available to go following our original time limit but have another General Meeting (Which would have been mandatory).
      - Discussion on the matter revolved around the idea of a strict 30 minutes of reports from the Executive Board and 30 minutes of discussion for future meetings.
   b. GSO Collaboration with ISC and the Graduate School (13-17 Oct., 23)
      - Immigration Workshop
         - VP Atif shares the tremendous turnout for the event alongside the better coordination between the ISC, GSO, and the Graduate School via Dean Mary Farmer-Kaiser.
         - President Okolo and VP Atif shared with the general committee the desire for the GSO to continue promoting and coordinating public events for any department or organization like the ISC.
   c. Executive Board Vacancy – Vice President
      - VP Atif is graduating this semester and is vacating the position of VPOGSO.
         - This was also shared at the final Advocacy Committee meeting as well.
      - The position was open to any member of the GSO General Council to nominate themselves or a fellow council member.
      - Responsibilities Include:
         - Serving as Chair of the Advocacy Committee.
         - Coordination with other members of the Executive Board for all documents and meetings.
            - Including the General Council, Advocacy Committee, and the GSO Executive Board's meeting with the Dean of the Graduate School Dean.
5. **Vice President's Report:** Faryal Atif
   a. In the opening of her final report, Atif shared the wonderful opportunity she felt while working on the Executive Board and running the Advocacy Committee.
      - Reaffirming any potential candidates' desire to nominate for the position.
   b. Advocacy Meeting Report
      - Three Concerns were brought to the Committee's attention.
         - Anonymous Report from the Kinesiology Department regarding the price of Childcare Facilities on campus courtesy of the Child-care Development Center.
         - Anonymous Report from the Computing Informatics Department regarding the status of Maternity/General Paternity Leave for Graduate Students and the retention of awards and position within a given department
   c. **Issue Three** was through a non-anonymous report in which said reporter presented at the final Advocacy Report of the semester.

- The reporter, Jennah Detraz, shared the full story of her time in UL Lafayette's Elementary Education Department in her attempt to graduate under the Special Education focus. In this attempt, many unnecessary difficulties hindered her progress to the point of needing to change Universities to continue her desired program.
  - A full version of her report is found in the [Third Advocacy Report](#)
  d. The report ended with a quick discussion on the issues presented.
    - As per representative discussion, the first two anonymous reports reflect common issues in America that universities are still trying to resolve.
    - The issues presented by Detraz reflect a problem that UL Lafayette is trying to address. Members of the committee agreed that the situation had been highly unprofessional and unfair to Detraz. President Okolo shares that there are two paths the GSO can move forward with. A letter condemning the unprofessional nature of the situation or to wait and see what further information, if any becomes known.

6. **Communications Report**: Tessa Rock
   a. Report on the Communications Committee Meeting of this semester.
     - Conversation revolved around potential programs and events.
       - Especially UL Lafayette's "BIG Event"
         - Further research found it easy to join on behalf of the GSO.
       - Other potential ideas included Scavenger Hunts, giving of Stress Toys, Kindness Days, etc.
       - All these also depend on funding, in which fundraiser ideas were also shared.
         - Any idea is open, excluding bake sales.
       - The major program was a series of surveys to determine what the general graduate student body desired regarding methods of contact or styles of events.
   b. Short discussion
     - Potential styles of fundraising include working with shelters for special Finals Weeks events.
     - The importance of planning these events early was shared as paramount to their success.

7. **Treasurer's Report**: Abdelrahman Garbie
   a. Status of current applications
     - Nine new applications
     - All deadlines for Fall 2023 Funding Applications have passed.
   b. Status of Old Applications and the $8,000.00 supplement.
     - The $5,000.00 supplement for travel did see use in that 12 applications were able to be funded but unfortunately due to spending constraints, others could not. This is a reoccurring issue that is being investigated by both the GSO Treasurer and the Dean of the Graduate School's office.
   c. By law Update— 'Programming' category
     - At the final Funding Committee meeting of Fall 2023, two by-law changes were discussed and shared with department representatives.
       - First was the concept that the Programming section is too vague and its name needs to be addressed to better convey its purpose.
         - The Funding Committee agreed the issue needs to be discussed further next Semester and over the Winter Break.
       - The second was a definite addition to a current by-law regarding applications for funds which would state:

- "Furthermore, applications must be specific to one funding category. Any single application that requests funding from more than one category will be outright rejected. Applicants must submit separate applications for each funding request."
  - This issue is still in discussion.

8. **Old Business**
   a. GSO Zoom Account Update
      - The GSO Premium Zoom Account is now active and will be fully operational in Spring 2024.
        - Included is the option for an anonymous Poll Vote which may lead to further discussion and refinement of future legislation.
   b. Software Funding Requests Update – **Complete Survey; Deadline Nov 29, 2023**
      - In conjunction with Graduate School, the GSO created a survey on the types of software graduate students have applied for. The survey is intended to find out which software is desired and cross-check with various graduate departments to see if the software programs have already been paid for.

9. **New Business**
   a. Vote—Funding Applications for General Meeting 3
      - Motion to reject the new travel applications for General Meeting 3 due to lack of funds.
        - Seconded and Approved
      - Motion to reject Research and Supply applications due to lack of required documentation.
        - Seconded and Approved
      - Motion to approve four remaining R&S applications.
        - Seconded and Approved
      - Motion to reject programming application due to the applier exceeding their $500.00 allotment for GSO Funds in Fall 2023.
        - Seconded and Approved
   b. Vote— GSO Vice President
      - The floor opened for nominations.
        - Treasurer Abdel Garbie Runs unopposed.
        - "As the new Vice President of the graduate student organization at UL Lafayette, I am committed to improving academic resources, workshops, and mentorship, while fostering an inclusive and supportive campus environment. Your ideas are essential as we work together to enhance our graduate experience and build a stronger community." – GSO VP Garbie
   c. Vote – GSO Treasurer
      - Needs to be filled due to Treasurer Garbie's Movement to GSO VP
      - The floor opened for nominations.
        - Representative Precious Batubo of Geosciences runs unopposed.
        - "I'm honored to be voted in as the new GSO treasurer. I'm excited that I get to be of service and help to my fellow grad students and contribute to the growth of GSO" – GSO Treasurer Batubo
   d. Vote— 'Programming' by-law update
      - This vote did not occur due to the Funding Committee's decision to continue the discussion on the exact vocabulary of the change.

e. Vote – Letter from GSO to the Graduate School regarding the Jennah Detraz situation or to allow an investigation to continue.
- The motion to allow potential investigations into the issue to continue was seconded and approved.

10. **Other Advocacy/Concerns/Questions**
   a. Communication and Funding: Not all GSO funds are exhausted.
   - Concerns still exist regarding the lack of communication over the semester.
     - For funding, especially first-time funding applications.
   - POGSO expressed the wish for representatives to get in touch with their departments to hold discussions on the matter.
   b. PR Election Postmortem
   - Due to nomination constraints, the GSO Public Relations Officer Position was opened to the general graduate student body.
   - Complaints shared to the GSO Executive Board courtesy of the organization's Faculty Adviser, have prompted a proposed change of vocabulary to the Constitutional by-law presented here:
     - Current Statement: "Graduate School Senators (SGA) shall not be considered part of the Executive Branch of the Council unless they hold an elective office within the Council."
     - Proposed Statement: "Graduate School Senators (SGA) shall not be considered part of the Executive Branch of the Council."
   - Complaints about the election process post-election were discussed with the GSO General Council.
     - Issues revolved around the factor of SGA Senators being disallowed from GSO Executive Board positions due to GSO Constitutional By-laws.
     - Feelings of a divide between the SGA and GSO were discussed, with the concept of more SGA Senators applying for their given departments.
   - Further discussion revolved around how to resolve the communication issues present in the GSO, especially regarding the sharing of information for funding applications between graduate students and their department's GSO representatives.
     - Proposed solutions included the inclusion of the GSO Representative approving an application on top of the student's advisor.
     - GSO representatives give a short presentation every Fall to incoming graduate students about what is required for anything related to the GSO.
       - PR Officer Rock shared the idea of generating a template presentation for the GSO Representatives to update in accordance with their department.

11. **Announcements**
   a. Graduating this semester? Please pick up your GSO graduation stole.
   b. After this meeting, the GSO President will follow up via email to Reps with notes you can relay to your departments' students.
   c. Representatives are responsible for finding a successor and ensuring that they understand their responsibilities [see By-law]

12. **Adjournment [2:30 PM]**