

Graduate Student Advisory Council

November 4, 2009 12:00 PM

3108 Blair Hall

Meeting Minutes

Officers Present: Amanda Fountain, Meghan Glow, Kate Hale, Madeline Landes, Zach Thuring

Advisors Present: Bill Elliott

Graduate Assistant: Jiwon Sung

Members Present: Laura Castelon, Anne Coats, Melissa Helregel, Rajesh Jenne, Karlien Lang, Jessica Martin, Kristine Murphy, Elieen O'Rourke, Millie Parikh, Jeanna Probst, Bridgett Purdy, Narooz Soliman, James Thompson, Lindsay Wieland, Jeremiah Yokley

Guests: Aaron Hacker (PLS Graduate Student): Discuss Student Insurance

I. Kate - Parking Update

A. Kate explained the current system for Graduate Student Parking in comparison to schools similar to the Size of Eastern, such as Western Illinois University and Murray State University. Kate found that some schools use a tiered system for parking that is regulated by credit hours while others have a flat fee regardless of credit hours.

B. Kate will formulate a spreadsheet to provide a comparison of data that she has accumulated to evidence the parking issue and serve as a component of research-based change.

C. Members supported the following two routes to move forward on the parking issue:

i. Doudna Faculty Lot becomes the Staff/Graduate Student lot

1. This lot would allow graduate students with graduate assistantships for the semester to be entitled to park in this staff lot only

a. Graduate Assistants are considered staff because they do receive waivers from the university for their service to EIU

b. Graduate Assistants are on the EIU payroll and receive checks from EIU just as faculty members/civil service members receive.

c. Numerous Graduate Assistants on campus assist/teach undergraduate classes, as staff members do, and often find it difficult to find spaces to park in student lots when trying to get to the class they assist with.

2. This lot was designated because of the numerous empty spaces that it often has

ii. Fee Reduction

1. Graduate Students would pay a percentage less than the upperclassman rate.

The percentage less for graduate students should be equivalent to the percentage difference between the parking fee between the underclassman and upperclassman parking fees.

2. With this option, graduate students would still be parking in student lots on campus but the cost is the difference.

D. On either route, GSAC is willing to compromise and negotiate suggestions and adjustments in regards to parking.

E. *Parking Committee*

- i. Members decided to move forward on the parking issue and formulate a committee to work with Kate to address this issue. Anyone interested on assisting Kate on the parking committee please contact her at kbhale@eiu.edu
- ii. Meetings for the committee would be once every three weeks for approximately 30 minutes
- iii. Members of the committee would assist in drafting a proposal to Dean Augustine on the parking.

II. Zach – Program Committee Results (provided members with updates from the program committee meeting held two weeks ago)

A. Finals Crunch Brunch

1. Food, music, movies, fellowship the night before finals week
2. Usually held in Klehm Hall
3. Posters will be distributed to members and posted on campus by GSAC officers and members with the logistics closer to this date.

B. Graduate Student Soiree

1. Social activity that allows for GSAC members to get to know one another, socialize about graduate studies and research, and increase GSAC visibility.
2. Event is also open to other graduate students on campus
3. Event will be held once a month at Marty's on the Friday of the same week as the general GSAC meeting at 4:00 p.m.
4. Flyers will be created by Amanda and will be posted on appropriate bulletin boards around campus with the exact dates so everyone has the opportunity to participate.

C. **Volunteer Activities/Charitable Organizations**

1. The key to power and influence and to gain support from the community is GSAC visibility and allowing members to get to know about GSAC and its purpose. Volunteer opportunities allow for GSAC to get their name out there while still helping a good cause.
2. Bridget presented some volunteer opportunities that she had researched and made contact with. The results from her research are as followed: Catholic Charities, Teen Reach, Food Pantry, and Project Hope Family Adoption for Christmas.
3. Zach has been in contact with Rachel Fisher, Director of EIU Community Service and will bring back three final opportunities for the general members to vote on.

4. Options for this activity may include: Doing one activity as a group or dividing GSAC members into interest groups and doing multiple activities
5. Volunteer opportunities must be ones that do not require a lot of money to be put into as GSAC does have financial boundaries. However, it was noted in the meeting that our time is just as valuable as money and many opportunities do exist in our community
6. Other options include: Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army, Working at a soup kitchen.
7. Amanda mentioned EIU Health Services is in need of volunteers to work shifts for H1N1 Flu clinic at the end of November. Sign-up for shifts at Health Services or contact Amanda at aefountain@eiu.edu for more information.

D. Graduate Expo

1. Zach explained to general members that the Graduate Expo is held in the Spring of each academic year and is meant to highlight graduate student research through presentations and poster sessions by both EIU graduate students and graduate faculty members.
2. Jiwon provided Zack with a brochure and materials from last year's Graduate Expo that were obtained from Lori Henderson in the Graduate School.
3. Floor was then opened for ideas of future Graduate Expo. The Ideas were as followed:
 - a. Opening participation in the Graduate Expo to other schools
 - b. Opportunity to see what other graduate students in the area are doing in the various fields of research
 - c. Symposium style that is more conference oriented and open to regional schools in the area.
 - d. Cost and incentives to participate in such a program by regional schools were discussed
Examples: Include dinner, prizes for competitors, fees to attend
 - e. Competition Philosophy
Increase EIU student research because competitive and would lead to increased motivation and enthusiasm
4. Length of Graduate Expo
 - Must be four days in length to accommodate schedules of presenters and graduate coordinators of each of the individual colleges within the University.
5. Inclusion of Fine Arts Department in Graduate Expo
 - Accommodate the styles of presentation at the Expo to adapt to the research and creative activities that exist within the fine arts department

- Time set up for readings or areas set up for specialized music presentations.
6. Graduate Expo Surveys
 - Gain feedback from both graduate students and graduate coordinators on what they want to see at the Expo and what they have liked/disliked about the Expo in the past.
 7. Create an opening/ kickoff to begin the Graduate Expo
 - Increases moral and enthusiasm
 - Provides More structure to the event
 8. Local Business Letters
 - Kate provided Zach with the letter she distributed to local business members to contribute to the Graduate Expo.
 - Drafting and planning is beginning now by the GSAC Executive Board to ensure plenty of time for support to be gained.

III. Aaron Hacker - **Student Insurance**

- A. Aaron was a guest at the GSAC general meeting whom offered information on his research and conversations with Dean Augustine and other, Lenny Hedins in Financial Aid, regarding the coverage and cost of insurance for EIU graduate students.
- B. Aaron was asked to speak on the issue on behalf of GSAC member Trish Miller.
- C. Aaron provided members with a handout on the current coverage costs and limits at EIU in comparison with those of other schools in the state.
- D. Aaron also discussed the use of outside agencies vs. in-house coverage that varies between EIU and other schools in the area and the effect this potentially has on the EIU graduate student population .
- E. Aaron discussed the timeframe issues that graduate students face and times that they are not covered with graduate student insurance at EIU.
- F. Aaron discussed the low coverage limit offered by the EIU graduate student plan and the dependent coverage limit offered by the current EIU plan.
- G. Proposed Options:
 1. Increase Coverage or decrease student fees for graduate student insurance
 2. Change covering agency/current health plan for EIU graduate students
 3. Graduate Assistants are offered the option to purchase a staff plan
 - Included with staff because we do receive paychecks as staff members do from the university
 - Time is contributed to EIU education just as staff members provide
 - Graduate Students are a low-risk group in general so premiums would decrease because of this addition.

- H. Amanda did note that EIU Health Services does offer many services to students at a cheaper rate GSAC should compare fees with those of other universities as well
 - I. Bill Mentioned that Dean Augustine has been given the information on this issue and has already spoke with Aaron regarding the progression of this issue.
 - J. More information in this regard will be discussed at the next GSAC Executive meeting.
- IV. Amanda: **Public Relations Committee**
- A. Amanda shared that there is currently a new poster policy in place for EIU
 - B. Information on this was obtained by Amanda and was also published in the Daily Eastern News (DEN)
- V. Kate: **Transcript Fee**
- A. No fees will be abolished because these fees fund faculty salaries.
- VI. **Meeting Times**
- A. Bill presented information he received from Dr. Veal regarding a proposed meeting time change to accommodate her schedule and ensure her participation in the meetings as she is a GSAC advisor.
 - B. Dr. Veal list her availability as:
 - Monday: 2-4 pm
 - Tuesday: 12-2 pm
 - Thursday: 12-2 pm
 - Friday: 12-4 pm
 - C. Bill volunteered to send an e-mail to all GSAC members that contained a summary of potential meeting times and dates for the remainder of the Fall semester. This will allow members not in meeting attendance to provide feedback on what works best for their schedules.
 - i. Once the remainder of the GSAC general meetings have been sent, GSAC Executive Board meetings will then be scheduled accordingly.
 - ii. Look for an e-mail from Bill regarding upcoming meeting dates and locations.

Minutes by Madeline Landes, GSAC Executive Board Secretary