

PGSO Minutes Spring 2016

Our Spring session started out with some Medici's pizza, so I thought this would be an appropriate time for me to let you all know that this is definitely the most delicious pizza in Hyde Park, and any of you planning future events including this pizza have my full endorsement.

Ok moving on from my pizza preferences, our meeting began with a unionization-centered discussion led by Sian Beilock, faculty member of our department, and also Vice Provost for academic initiatives.

As you should probably be aware of by now, there is a possibility in the near-ish future that graduate students at UChicago will be voting on whether or not to unionize. This is a really big deal! In a union, we would obtain a collective right to bargain and things like TAing, stipends, healthcare, and other policies could be regulated differently. There are pros and cons to this that mostly depend on how our specific union would be organized, which is entirely unknown at this point in time. You may now be asking yourself, "why should I care if this is so up in the air?"

This is why:

Currently, graduate students at PRIVATE universities are not considered employees or workers. We are strictly considered students and have been denied the right to unionize under the National Labor Relations Act, unlike students at PUBLIC universities that have unions regulated under state laws. However, Columbia University and the New School are petitioning the National Labor Relations Board to overturn this policy and enable unionization of graduate students at private universities. In the case that this happens, we will potentially be brought to a vote on whether or not to unionize ourselves, and this vote could happen very quickly (~ a few weeks after the decision). **Whether or not you vote, if the majority vote to unionize, you will be included in the union. You should care about your vote and take the time to educate yourself and decide how you think your rights should be regulated as a graduate student at this school (if not for yourself, for future graduate students!)**

Here are some materials to educate yourself:

Comprehensive Wikipedia page (don't act like you're above using Wikipedia) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graduate_student_employee_unionization

An empirical paper that quantifies the effects of unionization: <http://ilr.sagepub.com/content/66/2/487.short>

NYU currently has the only graduate student union recognized by a private university, so we should learn from their example too: <http://www.thenation.com/article/nyus-graduate-student-union-just-won-historic-contract/>

There are also briefs that have been submitted to the NLRB by Ivy schools and by the AAU. I was only able to find the Ivy brief and don't want to provide biased information, but if someone finds the AAU brief let me know and I can send both of them out.

What is PGSO doing to stay involved and take action? Nicole Burke and Tom Gijssels are our new representatives that will be attending meetings of the current UChicago grad unofficial union, Graduate Students United (<http://uchicagogsu.org/>). We are also planning on having future discussions and debates about this so stay tuned!

...to the surprise of no one, the union talk with Sian took an hour, and post-union discussion took another 15 minutes, so we will try to be quick with committee updates...

Academic life committee:

~35 peeps responded to the survey on student-faculty advisor relationships, they are now putting togeths results for discussion.

They also sent out a survey about sona issues/subject recruitment and are meeting to figure out results and a plan of action for that too.

Professional Development Committee:

See Hyesang's emails about an event on Friday called GRADUCon: it lasts all day and provides **breakfast, lunch and coffee**. It requires a \$5 registration at graducon2016.eventbrite.com, you can get reimbursed for it if you submit receipts to our treasurer Jesse Bregant (jbregant@chicagobooth.edu). Three Psychology Department alumni are participating in several panel discussions and will also be available for one-on-one conversations with students and postdocs:

- Liz Majka (PhD'14), [*Teaching at Liberal Arts Colleges*](#) (10-11:20AM)
- Bari Wiseelman Schulman (PhD'04), *Careers in User Experience Research and Design* (11:30AM-12:50PM)
- Sasha Cervantes (PhD'13), [*Your First Year as Faculty*](#) (2-3:20PM)
- Plus: check out [panels related to careers in industries where psychology alumni have had success](#): Consulting, Financial Services, Communications, etc.

Social Committee:

Events in the works this quarter:

- Going to a show at the new improv theater in HP next to Jimmys called the Revival Theater. Tentative date is 4/20.
- Point night instead of pub night: dinner and fun timez hanging out at The Point now that spring is kind of here! Social committee won't be providing drinks due to laws about alcohol in parks, so consume at your own risk.
- Ché is talking to grad students in the Neurobiology department about planning a joint event that sounds really fun..... it is expensive though and we will be pulling leftover funds from reserves so if you have any complaints you need to speak up..... Aren't you wondering what the event is? this is literally how long Ché took to explain the event in our meeting.....isn't this annoying?.....Ché, get over yourself this isn't YOUR event it's OUR event, ok?.....OMG HOORAY THE EVENT IS WHIRLY BALL AND IT'S GONNA BE GREAT I'M SO PUMPED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Softball games will be announced soon! Also social committee is filing for a divorce from intramural sports organizing in general, and this will be sorted out later in elections.

Diversity Committee

Talk to Carlos for more details about the Diversity Advisory Council and look out for a campus-wide survey on climate focusing on diversity, inclusion, and equity that will be open ~18th-29th of this month!

Travel and Research Committee

Just made decisions from the winter funding cycle, look out for announcements about the spring funding cycle. Remember you have to go to 2/4 PGSO meetings to get funded.

Other announcements:

- **First year BBQ coming up!!!** TIME/DATE TBD, there are rumors of cohort Olympics??!! (go third years, best cohort)
- Don't forget about the PGSO google docs in general (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B-tdgzUK1LAbMzdJQkxiYXhGS3c>), but especially this form for filling out TA Reviews: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Xnud5yOFCgZoFTb0-6MGlmtkyB9jS4M9wlR-FrXXVRo/edit?usp=sharing>
- Heather and Carlos are going to a meeting of the Dean's Advisory Council for SSD that is focusing on pedagogical training, get in touch with them if you have any comments. They also meet about topics such as diversity inclusion, barriers to graduating on time, adequate working conditions, etc. so if you are interested in getting involved email them.
- Jesse sent an email out about changes for reimbursement protocol. I'm pasting it here for everyone who didn't read it: *Anyone planning an event (that you will be using PGSO money for), let me or Heather know as early as you can when you have worked out a rough plan. Just give us a brief description of the event, the number of people you expect (a wild guess is fine), and a rough budget estimate. There are two reasons for this: (1) You will get reimbursed more quickly! If we know about the event and its budget in advance, we can submit proposals to our funding source in advance, and then when you submit your receipts, no additional time needs to be used up on approvals! (2) It will help us plan more & better events! More advance notice lets us budget more efficiently,*

which means I can give you better estimates of how much money is left, so you can find more ways to spend it! :) It's a win-win! Faster reimbursement, and more events paid for by PGSO!

- We will be hosting elections at the end of the quarter so think about any positions you would like to run for or committees you would like to join!

OK I'M FINALLY DONE PHEW. Happy Spring Quarter Everyone!

Love, Secretary Kelly