GSA Meeting Minutes
August 25th, 2015
Meeting: 6:15 pm
102 Tate Hall.

I. Call to Order – Angela Uriyo
II. Approval of April Minutes (Angela)
III. Exec Board Reports (if any)
   - Monica – Social Media Call
   - Carrie – Grant cycle report and budget, full update to come in next meeting
   - Angela – Call for Committee membership amongst General Council membership.
   - Ken – Welcome to new and old members
     - Graduates student bill of rights, working draft going on right now. Call to new
       entrants to caucus, email to mugradbor@gmail.com if interested.
     - Grad student experience task force – committee being put together including an
       international student on the board.
     - Call to join FGR on social media to share information and keep appraised.

IV. Open floor with Dr. Rubin Leona, Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Studies and
    Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Graduate Education at the UM System.

Dr. Rubin - Apologized for communication breakdown [don’t quote] during the last 2
weeks. Information on the removal of insurance subsidy was not passed across as it
should have been. The problematic delay from the time of MU’s appraisal on the law
from the IRS to implementation was done to create a safety-net as the issue was handled
on a collaborative front with the IRS. Up till today, the IRS has not rescinded the ruling.
The Chancellor has reached out to political affiliations on the matter. For the next year,
health insurance subsidies have been reinstated.

- Floor opened to questions, [don’t quote]: -

Q: Edward Ramirez (Bio Dept.) – With subsidy re-establishment, is the fellowship money
   still taxable?
A: Dr. Rubin – No, it stays as is, but we can expect that something will be different next
   year. This of course is a problem with the IRS, due to non-taxable refunds.
Q: Will the subsidy continue next year?
A: Dr. Rubin – We don’t know for now.
Q: Anahita Zare (Chemistry): If IRS changes the decision, will there be any changes to the
   status quo at MU?
Q: Anon: What are the other universities affected?
A: Dr. Rubin - U. of Iowa, New Mexico State, LSU, Alabama, North Texas, they compiled so as not to shoulder the risk of fine, although most of these schools have a smaller number of affected students.

- Other issues addressed include:
- .25 FTE status from next year.
- The need to have only the very best students and faculty by refocusing funding hence the 50% tuition waiver for .25FTE beginning next Spring.
- Q: Jessica Anders (AHA) – So how does this impact smaller Dept.?
- A: Dr. Rubin - Stipends are market-driven, so dept. set the price. The goal is to increase stipend and eligibility of new entrants for those stipends.
- 28 hours work cap within the UM System, this separates students and employee status. At employee status, most benefits including subsidy will be retracted.
- Q: Tina Matin (Physics) – Where does the money come from? Grads are the cheapest labor out there.
- A: Dr. Rubin - Adjuncts are actually cheaper and can cost less, but the university is dedicated to building grad students in training and experience, as per a research university. Q: Is it okay to treat all departments homogenously, even with their different statuses financially?
- A: Dr. Rubin - Can’t speak for academic levels but depts. regulate stipends based on the number of undergrads they are teaching. Quite frankly that’s where the money comes from.
- Q: Tunde Ojewola (CAFNR) - Feels faculty should pay based on relatively higher professional experiences of PhD students, it only feels fair.
- A: Dr. Rubin – Remuneration differentiation was done last year for doctoral students by 10%, but this cannot be done for all grad students. And even with grad levels there are differences, of course STEM students earn more that is the way it is.
- Q: Matt McCune (GPC) – How would this work if we had a union?
- A: Dr Rubin - It would require a more centralized model of funding grad education and pull back money from academic departments for that.

V. Old Business.
VI. New Business/General Council Reports
VII. Announcements –
    Matt McCune on GPC Coffee Talk, RCAF Grants and other business.
VIII. Adjournment -- motion to adjourn – Angela Uriyo, GSA VP.