

Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Constitutional Clarity and Reform

May 13, 2014 10:00 am

- I. Call to Order**
 - a. Members present: Brian Wilkey, Eden Davis, Vance Roper, Frank Male, Stephanie Patchett, and Guy Cole
- II. Introductions and Mission**
 - a. We are making some large changes moving forward. We will track these changes on the website under the rules committee. Membership, for example, is very disorganized and we would like to make sure that we have a procedure for deciding membership and voting rights.
 - b. Our mission is to...make changes to the by-laws and constitution and rules of regulations.
- III. Transparency Discussion**
 - a. Minutes
 - b. Work posted online
- IV. Our timeframe**
 - a. All four documents ready for ratification on the first meeting of the graduate student assembly. Goal is for elections done by the first week of September. Onboarding meeting before the first meeting, introductions, and then some breakout sessions (legislation, Robert's Rules of Order, etc.)
 - b. The goal is to get GSA members prepared to vote on the changes to the governing documents.
 - c. By Mid-July, we want to have a final draft done, because we want to distribute to Dean Lily, Gage Paine, current members of the GSA (13-14), get suggestions, meet again to incorporate suggestions.
- V. Plan for Reform**
 - a. How
 - i. One document at a time?
 - ii. One topic at a time?
 - iii. Two documents?
 - b. Brian: start with the Constitution, find places where changes need to be made or inconsistencies are detected. Make changes to make an internally reliable. Move on to the by-laws to bring into line with the constitution. One document at a time. Top down approach.
 - c. Stephanie: start with specific sections within each document. Compare documents section by section. Are there sections like membership that we could split up amongst the members to familiarize
 - d. Frank: One document at a time but one topic at a time. Election code is most easy to change. Look at the three, find conflicts, look at constitution first and amend other docs to be in agreement.

- e. Brian: Summary of plan of action: Start with the constitution, compare to the other documents section by section, but make changes only to the constitution to begin, make changes to the other documents secondarily. Motion to vote on this plan of action. Motion is seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

VI. Our method of correction

- a. Excel sheet and Word document
 - i. What is being changed (Article, section)
 - ii. HOW is it being changed (amend, delete)
 - 1. If deletion, is it because the document belongs elsewhere?
 - 2. If so, where?
 - iii. Track changes on Word document
- b. Constitution as a Google doc? Allows for collaboration without calling a meeting. We need to solidify a plan for this so that all changes are made according to our decision. We need to have a record of all changes, and disagreements, comments, everything.
- c. Vance: the changes should not be made until they are voted upon. Instead people can make comments on sections, so at the end of the comments we have a potential final option to vote upon. Official changes should be made in meetings. Suggestions can be made outside of meetings.
- d. Brian: Comments made on the document itself, also then reference a line number on a spreadsheet “I want to change this sentence (Line XXX), brief rationale for the change.”
- e. Stephanie: What about changes that are larger than line changes? Brian: perhaps we should tackle the membership section separately.
- f. Frank: Once we vote on a change, we should write a “therefore be it resolved”.
- g. Summary of suggested plan of action: Comments on the google document of the constitution, but comments will only refer to the excel spreadsheet where relevant information will be provided:
 - i. The following sections will be on the spreadsheet
 - 1. Change ID (Initials and number)
 - 2. Committee Member
 - 3. Existing Location
 - 4. New Location (if applicable)
 - 5. Existing Text
 - 6. New Text (if applicable)
 - 7. Other Document
 - 8. Other Document Location
 - 9. Rationale for Change
 - 10. Approved or Not Approved Section
 - 11. Therefore be it resolved
- h. Guy: two suggestions: create a unique ID, separate sheet for changes by ID.
 - i. New sheet will include:
 - 1. Change ID

2. Comment ID
 3. Committee Member
 4. Comment
- ii. Vance makes a motion to approve the plan of action. Motion is seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

VII. Committee Ratification

- a. Frank makes a motion to adopt a ratification procedure. Recommend we allow only one dissenting vote. The committee has to be approved by 5 of 6 members. Guy and Frank debate on four/six versus five/six.
- b. Motion is seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

VIII. Assignments

- a. Begin work on the membership section of the constitution.
 - i. Stephanie: Every year the list should be updated and published online. Should departments or individual programs be represented? Application should be able to go online and see if a position in their department is open. Apply directly online and only vote in the event that there is more than one applicant.
 - ii. Frank: HornsLink makes voting relatively easy.
 - iii. Brian: What of this do you want codified in the constitution, and what in the election code. (i.e. in the bylaws: elections are overseen by the membership director).
 - iv. Frank: most of the membership information is located in article 5 instead of article 2. The only change to the constitution in this case would be to the definition of member.
 - v. Brian: The senate of college councils and SG
 - vi. Brian: suggests striking section 2 from article 5. This suggestion is added to the spreadsheet. Brian will share the google doc and spreadsheet with the members of the committee.
 - vii. Guy: we might look at some constitutional amendments to incentivize increased membership. Rewards for full representation within a department. If you have a full set of representatives, you can elect an at-large member? Stephanie: Departmental rebates for full membership? There are no penalties for non-attendance. Brian: we rarely fund departments, we fund RSOs. We may want to say "no travel grants to underrepresented departments." Guy: that might serve as a good technique to advertise and increase interest among departments.
 1. Where would such a change be made? We might want to write that out offline.
 - viii. Brian: We should figure out the definition of the word member.
 1. Section 3 is a problem because it says that any grad student can vote.
 - ix. Vance: Members of the GSA are all grad students. Voting members are elected reps.

- x. Frank: Maybe we can strike section 3 from Article 2 and re-write to define members as such. This suggestion is added to the spreadsheet.
- xi. Frank: Section 4.1 Article 2. Change to convey that department reps are considered the primary voting members.
- xii. Brian: Section 5. Participants might be changed to Ex-officio members. Maybe strike section 5. Added to the spreadsheet.
- xiii. Frank: Section 6. Vance: suggests to strike section 6 entirely.
- xiv. Guy: We should re-write section 7 so as not to conflict with the Graduate student bill of rights.
- xv. Guy: We should rename section 7 to Graduate Student Involvement. Section 7.1. Involvement.
- xvi. Brian shares his Google Spreadsheet with the members of the committee to facilitate quicker editing. Brian thinks this committee is awesome.
- xvii. Do we represent post-doctoral fellows? This is a question that requires research within the accompanying documents. Frank will do some research to find out.

IX. Adjournment and Scheduling of Next Meeting

- a. June 4th for the next meeting.
- b. Eden will upload the minutes to the website.
- c. Next meeting: We will plan to have all suggested changes documented via the google doc and spreadsheet. We can begin voting on these changes.
- d. Vance motions to allow for teleconferences to be an acceptable form of attendance for meetings. Motion is seconded. Motion passes unanimously.