



# Graduate and Professional Student Association

The Pennsylvania State University  
315 HUB-Robeson Center  
University Park, PA 16802  
Email: [gpsa@psu.edu](mailto:gpsa@psu.edu)

GPSA Assembly Meeting | Wednesday, April 20, 2016 | 6:00pm | 134 HUB-Robeson

## I. Call to Order

- a. Meeting was called to order by the Executive Vice President at 6:02 pm.

## II. Roll Call

- a. Please see [Addendum I](#).

## III. Adoption of Agenda

- a. Moved to revise the agenda – appointments and elections placed before Bill #66-01 and Bill #66-02. Motion is seconded. Hearing no objections, the revisions are adopted.
- b. Moved to strike items iv, v, and vi from Elections. Motion is seconded, and hearing no objections, the revisions are adopted.

## IV. Approval of Minutes

- a. Hearing no objections to the approval of minutes, minutes approved as distributed.

## V. Open Student Forum

- a. Nothing to report

## VI. New Business

- a. **Appointments:** Previously appointments required candidates to express interest in the position and attend two meetings before appointment. With the new governing documents, the procedure has been streamlined so that the candidate now meets with the President and is then recommended to the Assembly.
  - i. **Mohammad Whaba: At-large delegate**
    1. Mohammad is a third-year engineering student.
    2. Question: what particular aspects of the organization are you interested in?
      - a. Wants to work on helping students within their home departments with the support of the GPSA
    3. Motion to approve by unanimous consent is seconded. Mohammad is approved.
  - ii. **Mahyar Hadighi: Arts & Architecture delegate**
    1. Not present
  - iii. **Jesse Scott: Judiciary**
    1. Jesse has been involved in GPSA for many years. He is a “prudent policy wonk;” his past work includes revising the constitution and bylaws.
    2. Question: What would you have done differently during the health care changes from three years ago?

- a. Several years ago there was a lot of discussion about health care, with the ultimate decision that it is better to pay more for high quality health care. The current health care situation is the result of Penn State history and national changes (Affordable Care Act, etc.).
  - 3. Motion to approve by roll call is seconded (See [Addendum II](#)). Jesse is approved.
- iv. **Christine Mosich: At-large delegate**
  - 1. Christine is a first year student in higher ed. She helped coordinate the dissertation boot camp this year with much success.
  - 2. Motion to approve by unanimous consent is seconded. Christine is approved.
- b. **Elections**
  - i. Delegate Run-Off:
    - 1. College of Agriculture: Neither candidate (Janet Ellsworth and Meredith Field) is present to speak.
    - 2. College of Engineering: Neither candidate (Arun Thatachary and Caitano da Silva) is present to speak.
  - ii. Graduate Council Run-Off:
    - 1. Andrew Bascom (College of Engineering): Not present.
    - 2. Keerti Prakash (College of Engineering): Keerti is interested in starting a management fellowship through the Smeal School of Business and feels working with the GPSA would help move this forward. Several other universities have these management “boot camps” that are open to students outside of the business school
    - 3. Marisa Woodring (Intercollege Degree Program): Not present.
    - 4. Shahrzad Jamshidi (Eberly College of Science): Sara is a math PhD student, and is heavily involved in her own department. She serves on the Student Initiative Subcommittee of the Climate and Diversity Committee in the Eberly College of Science.
    - 5. Wei Lu (College of Communications): Not present.
  - iii. Private ballots are distributed to the delegates. In the College of Ag run-off, Meredith Field is elected. Sara Jamshidi is elected to the Graduate Council. There is a tie in the College of Engineering run-off; the judiciary will discuss next steps for this seat.
  - iv. Speaker of the Assembly – a new position designed to hold the Assembly accountable.
    - 1. Responsibilities include:
      - a. Keeping track of committees and subcommittees; reaching out to delegates to find committee chairs; forming a steering committee.
      - b. Leading initiatives and editing legislation

- c. Non-voting member of the Exec Board
- 2. Nominations:
  - a. Will Wright nominates Lily Hill. Lily was delegate of the year for the previous session and served on many committees.
    - i. Lily accepts the nomination.
    - ii. Prior to nomination, Lily accepts her election to Intercollege degree program delegate.
  - b. Colleen Unroe nominates Kevin Reuning. Kevin was previously a delegate to the GPSA before resigning out of frustration.
    - i. Kevin accepts the nomination.
    - ii. What changes did you want to see (during your previous time in the GPSA) that didn't happen?
      - 1. Wanted the GPSA to take on a more active role in advocating on behalf of graduate and professional students.
    - iii. Why are you opposed to social events?
      - 1. Not opposed to social events, but does not think they should be the primary focus of the GPSA.
- 3. Roll call vote is held (see [Addendum II](#)). Lily is elected.
- c. **Bill #66-01: By-Laws Amendment for Election Procedures** (see [Addendum III](#))
  - i. Many races are tied with candidates who have only received one vote – this creates a nightmare of run-off races.
  - ii. Question: Did anyone who received only 1 vote win the election because the seat was uncontested? Yes, this happened in at least two cases.
  - iii. Pros and cons of changing election procedures to 2 votes for a win
    - 1. A lot of people do get into GPSA through one vote, and they turn out to be great delegates.
    - 2. Someone might vote for someone because they see them as a good candidate, but not pass along that information to the candidate.
    - 3. The objective of the amendment is to cut down on eligibility – many of the people who receive one vote never respond to emails or are not interested.
  - iv. There is discussion about whether there should be changes to the amendment to include language that allows any candidate who responds positively to an email to get on a run-off ballot, even if they received only one vote.
    - 1. There is a motion to table the bill until the language can be finalized.
    - 2. The motion is passed with unanimous consent.

- d. **Bill #66-02: Constitution Amendment** (see [Addendum IV](#))
  - i. These are minor grammatical changes.
  - ii. Motion to approve the bill through unanimous consent. The motion is seconded, and the amendment passes.

## VII. Reports

- a. **Standing Committees:** Look out for an email from Lily. Every delegate is required to serve on at least one standing committee.
  - i. Student Affairs:
    - 1. Programming: Holds events throughout the year, including Grad Cup
    - 2. Grad Cup is being held on Saturday, April 23 from 7:30 (set-up) until 4:30-5pm.
      - a. Volunteers are needed for set-up, break-down, and during the day.
      - b. Volunteers get lunch and a free t-shirt, unless you are already on a team, in which case you get your deposit back.
      - c. There will be golf carts.
      - d. Parking is available at the law school.
      - e. After-party planning is currently underway (7-9pm at Bar Bleu)
  - ii. Advocacy:
    - 1. Charged with proposing changes to university policy. They will be writing resolutions and will be involved in issues like health care.
  - iii. Internal Development
    - 1. Responsible for amending governing documents (there shouldn't be many changes needed this coming year given the major revisions).
- b. **Liasons**
  - i. Student health insurance advisory board – Alison Franklin
    - 1. See [Addendum V](#) for complete report.
    - 2. The University is hiring student health insurance consultants.
    - 3. There will be more information in the newswire.
  - ii. Transportation services
    - 1. There will be new electronic equipment in the parking decks.
    - 2. Improvements include credit card acceptance and 24/7 access
- c. **Executive Officers**
  - i. Report from the President (*Kevin Horne*):
    - 1. Introduction – Kevin is a 2L who has been at Penn State for six years, and been involved in student government for five.
    - 2. There will be a retreat in May to discuss initiatives for the new year and what we want to get done.
    - 3. [Standing Order VIII from the Board of Trustees](#), Section IV defines the following roles for the student body:
      - a. Consultation by the President.
      - b. Communication with the Board.

- c. Participation in the Deliberation of the Faculty
  - 4. There are two pillars to the GPSA:
    - a. Programming (mixers, winter gala, Grad Cup)
    - b. Advocacy (the more important pillar; advocates for initiatives; GPSA reps sit on more than 50 university boards)
- ii. Report from the Vice President (*Marina Cotarelo*):
  - 1. GPSA is very involved with new student orientations, so you can expect to see an email about helping with that sometime in July.
  - 2. The orientations require coordination with the GSAs of individual departments/programs.
- iii. Report from the Secretary (*Anne Whitesell*):
  - 1. Send anything you want to see in the Newswire to [gpsanewswire@gmail.com](mailto:gpsanewswire@gmail.com)
  - 2. There should be one final newsletter going out before the end of the semester.
- iv. Report from the Treasurer (*Sid Agrawal*):
  - 1. Thanks to Ayla for helping ensure a smooth transition of power.
  - 2. GPSA needs to submit a show cause budget by July.
    - a. Look for an email about next year's budget priorities.
    - b. There will be an online vote.
- v. Report from the University Faculty Senate (*Azita Ranjbar*):
  - 1. See PowerPoint for complete notes.
  - 2. Student life committee reports postponed until Fall 2016.
  - 3. To address what types of resources are needed to LGBTQ students at all Penn State campuses, the University will be conducting focus groups.
    - a. This will include data collection at the branch campuses, which generally have fewer resources than University Park.
    - b. If you are interested in becoming involved, let Azita know.
  - 4. Mental health:
    - a. Syllabi going forward should allow for excused absences with a note from CAPS.
    - b. There is a new fee structure to subsidize CAPS.
    - c. Additional resources will be used to train RAs, hire new CAPS staff, and expand CAPS office space.
  - 5. There is an effort underway to unionize graduate employees. This would provide a legal bargaining unit to provide representation, protections, and resources to graduate employees.
    - a. Hasn't there been discussion of bringing grad students to at least pay level 12 in order to provide a living wage?
    - b. Yes, Morteza has been working on this through the Grad Council for quite some time.
- vi. Report from the Chair of Grad Council Student Caucus (*Brad Sottile*):
  - 1. The Graduate Council passed the recently proposed "goals" for all graduate degree students (see [Addendum VI](#)).

2. At the May meeting, the VP for Research and members of the Senate Committee on Research will meet with the Graduate Council to discuss collaboration in graduate education and research with faculty at the Commonwealth Campuses.
3. The idea of a coursework-only MA or MS has been floated. Instead of writing a thesis, the student would participate in a capstone seminar.
- vii. Report from the Chief Justice (*Jeremy Johnson*):
  1. There are still vacancies in Arts & Architecture, Communications, Earth & Mineral Sciences, and Smeal.
  2. There are also three at-large delegate seats still open.
- viii. Report from the Speaker of the Assembly (*Lily Hill*):
  1. Look for an email about signing up for committees.
- d. **Report from the Board of Trustees** (*Allie Goldstein*)
  - i. Agenda is released two weeks prior to the meeting. The next meeting is May 6 here at University Park.
  - ii. July 21 and 22 there will be a meeting in Wilkes-Barre.
  - iii. Alumni board of trustees' election run until May 5 at 9:00am, so please vote if you can!

**VIII. Comments for the good of the order**

- a. A big thanks to Brad Sottile for his service to GPSA and his work on the Grad Council!
- b. Ayla proposes that everyone go downtown for drinks following the meeting.
- c. This meeting had food, but most meetings will not. Typically though, attendance tends to drop off in the second half of the year. We may want to consider bringing food back to encourage attendance.

**IX. Adjournment**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Whitesell

**Addendum I. Attendance**

P	present
A	absent
E	excused absence
L	present, late arrival
W	present, left early

**Executive Board**

President	Kevin Horne	P
Vice President	Marina Cotarelo	P
Treasurer	Sidharth Agrawal	P
Secretary	Anne Whitesell	P
Faculty Senator	Azita Ranjbar	P

**Graduate Council**

Brianne Pragg	P
Morteza Karimzadeh	A
Alison Franklin	E
Carol Rogers-Shaw	L
Shahrzad Jamshidi	P

**Judiciary**

Chief Justice	Jeremy R. Johnson	P
Associate Justice	Jesse Scott	P

**Assembly**

Agricultural Sciences	Maridel M. Reyes	P
Agricultural Sciences	Meredith Field	A
Communications	Jared Lagroue	A
Dickinson School of Law	Eunice J. Kim	P
Dickinson School of Law	Fallon Dungan	P
Dickinson School of Law	Jordan D. Morris	P
Earth and Mineral Sciences	Eden Kinkaid	A
Earth and Mineral Sciences	Kelsey Brain	A
Eberly College of Science	William Wright	P
Eberly College of Science	Brian Conway	P

Eberly College of Science	Erica Schwalm	P
Education	Xulu Zhang	P
Education	Colleen Unroe	L
Education	Jinhee Choi	L
Engineering	John McKay	P
Engineering	Matt Krott	P
Health and Human Development	Austin Barrett	P
Health and Human Development	Samuel Masters	A
Information Sciences and Technology	Anthony Pinter	E
Inter-Collegiate Degree Program	Brittany Banik	P
Inter-Collegiate Degree Program	David Dopfel	P
Inter-Collegiate Degree Program	Lillian Hill	P
School of International Affairs	Jennifer Gibbs	P
Liberal Arts	Kevin Reuning	P
Liberal Arts	Robert Zuchowski	P
Liberal Arts	Kyler Sherman-Wilkins	L
Smeal College of Business	Steven Di Grazia	P/W
Smeal College of Business	James Fan	P
Smeal College of Business	Tyler Stanchak	A
At-large	Mohammad Whaba	P
At-large	Christine Mosich	P



**Addendum II. Roll Call Votes**

Y in favor  
 N opposed  
 A abstained  
 - Not present

<b>Delegate</b>	<b>Jesse Scott Confirmation</b>	<b>Speaker of the Assembly</b>
Maridel M. Reyes	Y	Lillian
Meredith Field	-	-
Jared Lagroue	-	-
Eunice J. Kim	Y	A
Fallon Dungan	Y	Lillian
Jordan D. Morris	Y	Lillian
Eden Kinkaid	-	-
Kelsey Brain	-	-
William Wright	Y	Lillian
Brian Conway	Y	Lillian
Erica Schwalm	Y	Lillian
Xulu Zhang	Y	Lillian
Colleen Unroe	-	Kevin
Jinhee Choi	Y	A
John McKay	Y	Lillian
Matt Krott	Y	Lillian
Austin Barrett	Y	Lillian
Samuel Masters	-	-
Anthony Pinter	-	-
Brittany Banik	Y	Lillian
David Dopfel	Y	Lillian
Lillian Hill	Y	A
Jennifer Gibbs	Y	A
Kevin Reuning	N	A
Robert Zuchowski	Y	A
Kyler Sherman-Wilkins	Y	Lillian
Steven Di Grazia	Y	-
James Fan	Y	Lillian
Tyler Stanchak	-	-
Mohammad Whaba	-	Lillian
Christine Mosich	-	Lillian

Addendum III. Bill #66-01

Bill/ # 66-1

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)  
The Pennsylvania State University**



of the 66th Assembly  
[April 20, 2016]

*Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,*

**[By-Laws Amendment for Election Procedures]**  
**[Amend the Bylaws to provide for a larger vote threshold on write-in votes]**  
(Decided: [ Y / N / A ])

1 **Nature of the Situation:**

2

3 While participation in the GPSA is always desired, and recognizing that many delegates who  
4 have been loyal, and very productive members of the GPSA have been elected through write-in  
5 campaigns; there should be a higher bar for election to the GPSA than a single write-in vote.

6

7 **Recommended Course of Action:**

8

9 Amend The Graduate and Professional Student Association By-Laws to add a new item in  
10 Article VI – Election Procedures

11

12 M. All write-in candidates must receive two or more votes to be considered valid. All candidates  
13 receiving less than two votes will not be considered for election to either the Assembly or an  
14 Executive Board position.

15

Respectfully submitted,

[Kevin Horne, President]

President \_\_\_\_\_ Affirm Veto

The Graduate and Professional Student Association

Addendum IV. Bill #66-02

Bill/ # 66-2

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)  
The Pennsylvania State University**



**of the 66th Assembly**  
[April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016]

*Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,*

**[Constitution Amendment]**

**[Amend the Constitution to ensure stylistic consistency]**

(Decided: [ Y / N / A.])

- 1 **Nature of the Situation:**
- 2 The Graduate and Professional Student Association strives for consistency within the content,
- 3 style, and grammar. This bill seeks to refine the Constitution.
- 4
- 5 **Recommended Course of Action:**
- 6
- 7 Amend The Graduate and Professional Student Association Constitution as following:
- 8
- 9 Article III Section B currently reads:
- 10 Postdoctoral students shall be Associate Members. Associate members may not hold office,
- 11 preside, officiate, vote, officially represent, or solicit funds on campus on behalf of the
- 12 organization.
- 13
- 14 **Proposed course of action:**
- 15 Postdoctoral students shall be Associate Members. Associate Members may not hold office,
- 16 preside, officiate, vote, officially represent, or solicit funds on campus on behalf of the
- 17 organization.
- 18
- 19 Article V Section F currently reads:
- 20 The Assembly shall elect a Speaker of the Assembly at the first meeting of its term. The Speaker
- 21 will set the agenda for the Assembly and act as its chief officer on issues of organization and
- 22 communication. The Speaker must be an elected or appointed delegate. In the event the Speaker
- 23 does complete their term, an election for the Speaker will be held at the immediate following

1 meeting.

2

3 Proposed course of action:

4 The Assembly shall elect a Speaker of the Assembly at the first meeting of its term. The Speaker  
5 will set the agenda for the Assembly and act as its chief officer on issues of organization and  
6 communication. The Speaker must be an elected or appointed delegate. In the event the Speaker  
7 does not complete their term, an election for the Speaker will be held at the immediate following  
8 meeting.

9

Respectfully submitted,

[Kevin Horne, President]

President \_\_\_\_\_ Affirm Veto

---

The Graduate and Professional Student Association

## **Addendum V. Health Insurance Liaison Report**

### HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE:

1. Aetna Student Health Insurance rates will increase by ~9% for next year (2016/2017)
  - An annual increase of \$272 (paid over 9 months)
  - Total Yearly Premium: \$3,296
2. New requirements for waiver standards for International Students will be in place for 2016/2017 academic year
  - Stay tuned to the GPSA website for updates and more details!
3. Aetna Student Health Insurance will no longer offer continuation/gap coverage with our health plan
  - Individuals can now sign-up for continuation of insurance on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace
4. According to current interpretation of ACA law, GA's'/RA's'/Fellows' status (i.e. students versus employees) and the ability for the University to provide graduate students with a subsidy has been called into question.
  - The university considers us “students” and look at the money that they give us, via stipends, as scholarships, but the Government with regard to this law sees us as “employees.”
  - Issue: Employers are no longer allowed to provide employees subsidies to buy individual insurance via the ACA Exchanges.
  - As law is currently interpreted, the university would be incurring penalties for providing student employees with a subsidy starting in Fall of 2017.
  - Currently, administration and concerned parties are looking into this law and advocating for it to be interpreted differently so that subsidies can be given to students without incurring a penalty.

## **Addendum VI. Scholarly and Professional Goals for All Graduate Degree Students**

The goals for all graduate degree students enrolled in the Graduate School at Penn State are to:

1. Demonstrate appropriate breadth and depth of disciplinary knowledge, and comprehension of the major issues of their discipline;
2. Use disciplinary methods and techniques to apply knowledge, and – if appropriate to the degree – create new knowledge or achieve advanced creative accomplishment.
3. Communicate the major issues of their discipline effectively;
4. Demonstrate analytical and critical thinking within their discipline, and, where appropriate, across disciplines; and
5. Know and conduct themselves in accordance with the highest ethical standards, values, and, where these are defined, the best practices of their discipline.