

General Council Meeting Agenda: January 18, 2024

# General Council Meeting

1. Call to Order and sign in!

# Executive Board Reports

* 1. President Lacey Rzodkiewicz ([ldr27@pitt.edu](mailto:ldr27@pitt.edu)):
     1. Information on graduate student leave of absence from Rosemary on last page
     2. Upcoming elections:
        1. Available positions: President, Vice President, GPSG Representative, Teaching Award Chair, DEI Chair, **SUMMER RESEARCH GRANTS CHAIR (Work mainly in Spring and that is all)**
     3. Statement on unionization:
        1. Contact me to help!
        2. Currently on delay for a few reasons (approval from reps, assistance in wordsmithing, timeline)
        3. Representation will be by department – your department will not be listed on the statement if you are not interested

# Vice President Payne Bannister ([wpb20@pitt.edu](mailto:wpb20@pitt.edu)):

* 1. Faculty Advisor Rosemary Capo ([rcapo@pitt.edu](mailto:rcapo@pitt.edu)):
     1. Dietrich school is setting up setting up an artificial intelligence series with microinternships – deadline is tomorrow 1/19/2024 but it’ll be rolling until all five positions are filled. Not just for people who do science – they want a range of students. Check your email for Dietrich GAINS for more Information about this.
     2. Dietrich has a subcommittee now that will update the academic integrity policy to incorporate new things such as the use of AI in the classroom
     3. Improv activity 1/31/2024 6-7:30p – it's fun and an opportunity to hang out with other people!
     4. Looking for videographer for grad expo – contact Rosemary

# Administrative Assistant Christina Vega-Alemany ([asgso@pitt.edu](mailto:asgso@pitt.edu)):

# **Don’t forget to submit the purchase approval form prior to purchasing things to make sure you’re good!**

# **Please check our website or with myself/Lacey/Payne for deadlines for grants and/or reimbursements and also make sure to check your email for any information from us!**

# **I am available to help with SORC purchasing Tuesdays 10-12p (virtual) and Fridays 10-12p (in-person). Please let me know in advance if you need to purchase anything with SORC’s card!**

# **New snack ordering for meetings through SORC – SnackStop (pickup at Forbes Street Market) – will send an email about this because you need a business manager or president to do these orders**

# Internal Committees

# GPSG:

* + 1. Representatives: Lacey, Payne, Arnab
    2. All grads should now have access to fifth floor grad lounge in WPU by ID card now! If you have an issue, the front desk at WPU is to take a pic of your ID and send it to Panther Central to program/pinpoint what student codes are still missing
    3. Food drive for Pitt Pantry in January; competition to earn funding for school level GSO - late January through the end of February
       1. Total volume of food as well as individual items – different scoring methods
       2. Not just food but personal hygiene items will be accepted as well
       3. Pitt Pantry will send more information as well
       4. Top three schools awarded ($800, $500, $500)
       5. Interest in participation? Alternative fundraiser?
          1. **We have decided to donate the money back if we *are* awarded any money**
    4. Watch their event brite for upcoming events! Coffee hour and Penguins game coming up
       1. Coffee hour - $5 deposit that gets refunded after the event – usually a hot breakfast and free merchandise
       2. Penguins Game – tickets will be $50 lower section seats and includes refreshments – no date at this time
    5. They are recommending stipends to Provost’s office this month but they cannot disclose the information until April

# Grad Expo:

* + 1. Chair: Payne Banister
    2. The date is now March 28th (Thursday)
    3. Grad Expo in the afternoon (12-5p)
       1. 12-1p: Poster presentations
       2. 12-4: Abstract presentations
    4. Call for abstracts has gone out; seeking judges as well!
    5. Please, please, please, volunteer to help moderate if possible

# Teaching Awards:

* + 1. Members: Natalie Runkle (nataliebrunkle@gmail.com) (Philosophy), Alysha Lieurance (Anthropology), Caitlin Mace ([cbm49@pitt.edu](mailto:cbm49@pitt.edu)), Kathryn Carney (klc171@pitt.edu)
    2. Gearing up to send out their next announcement for FY24-25 awards
    3. **Seeking new members**
    4. Most of the work is a month or so in September-October to get the banquet set up and get awards out

# Committee for Diversity and Inclusion:

* + 1. Members: Mihir Khanna (Physics), Arnab Dey Sakar (Math)
  1. Summer Research Grants
     1. Chair:

# External A&S Committees:

# Healthcare task force: Allison Mahoney ([amm540@pitt.edu](mailto:amm540@pitt.edu))

# Have not yet met! Working to find out when their next meeting is

# Making recommendations to the Provost sometime in February

* 1. A&S Dietrich Council: DSAS Council, grad student reps
     1. Reps: Grace Naa Korkoi Amoah ([GNA16@pitt.edu),](mailto:GNA16@pitt.edu) Godspower Ubit ([godspowerubit@pitt.edu)](mailto:godspowerubit@pitt.edu)

# A&S PBC: DSAS Planning & Budgeting Committee, grad student reps

* + 1. Reps: Neel Patel ([NEP48@pitt.edu](mailto:NEP48@pitt.edu)), Edison Hauptman ([ERH129@pitt.edu)](mailto:ERH129@pitt.edu), Christina Vega-Alemañy ([CMV66@pitt.edu](mailto:CMV66@pitt.edu))
    2. No meeting has happened yet, will hopefully meet soon and provide updates.

# A&S Grad Council:

* + 1. Reps: Oluwasegun Amoniyan ([OMA55@pitt.edu)](mailto:OMA55@pitt.edu), Turki Alturaifi ([tma53@pitt.edu](mailto:tma53@pitt.edu)), Laura Beghini Chelidonopoulos ([laura.chelidonopoulos@pitt.edu](mailto:laura.chelidonopoulos@pitt.edu)), Si Wang ([SIW34@pitt.edu)](mailto:SIW34@pitt.edu), Akira Pinto ([akira.pinto@pitt.edu](mailto:akira.pinto@pitt.edu))
    2. Turki sent notes:
       1. We have hired a clinician exclusively for Dietrich grad studies – working to finalize where their office will be – mental health services specifically for the Dietrich grad students – as soon as that information is ready, Rosemary will update
       2. 3-minute thesis – present your entire thesis in 3 min – cash prizes

# University Council on Graduate Studies

* + 1. Rep: Robert Marshall ([rrm72@pitt.edu](mailto:rrm72@pitt.edu))

# Old or Unfinished Business:

# Emergency funds-how to distribute as a grant?

* + 1. PLEASE HELP ME-If I receive no volunteers this meeting, we will simply release this as a supplemental fund for academic materials, first come first serve
       1. Will be any expense you can put on a research grant: technology, books, journal subscriptions, streaming services, etc.
       2. Will be available in the Summer as well

1. New Business:
   1. Should we have the university do an actual audit with UPMC?
   2. Can department funding be used to reimburse other things like books, academic expenses and other things? **YES!**
      1. **If you want to fund travel/vehicle rental, please contact Christina or Lacey about that before you spend the money.**

# Announcements:

* + 1. <https://discord.gg/T6kWFFQ8tJ>
    2. If you’re still not a member of the Discord server, now is a good time to join!

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| From Office of the Provost:  The University’s leave policy is stated in [Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh](https://catalog.upp.pitt.edu/content.php?catoid=224&navoid=23028) under *General Regulations, Statute of Limitations*. It applies to all graduate and professional students at Pitt and states:  “Under special conditions, graduate students may be granted one leave of absence. A maximum leave of two years may be granted to doctoral students or one year to master’s students. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance, recommended to the dean by the department, and approved by the dean. If approved, the time of the leave shall not count against the total time allowed for the degree being sought by the student. Readmission following an approved leave of absence is a formality. “    The question of insurance coverage for a medical leave is in [Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, and Graduate Student Assistants (TA/TF/GSA) Academic Regulations](https://www.gradstudies.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/assets/TATFGSAAcademicRegs6-1-22.pdf) under Accommodations. It is flexible by design since each illness or physical incapacitation is different:  “In the event a TA, TF or GSA needs an adjustment to the expectations of their appointment due to a serious illness or physical incapacitation, the TA, TF or GSA involved should receive their stipend and tuition for a length of time to be determined by the dean’s office.” Also note as stated in these regulations under Health Insurance Coverage, TAs, TFs and GSAs receive individual health insurance at no cost during the terms of their graduate appointment.    From Philippa Carter, DSAS Director of Academic Affairs/Ombudsperson  Approved leave of absence: requires a signed approval as noted above. During the leave of absence, because they are no longer registered students, they will not have access to University resources and benefits. This means that once on leave, they will not continue to receive university paid health insurance, but will have the option to continue the same health insurance through COBRA (though it would be at a slightly higher rate). The other option would be to find other health insurance coverage. Once a student is no longer registered, they should receive an email notification that the email system no longer recognizes their Pitt email address as primary. To continue to use and access that email a request must be processed by their department to have the account switched to a sponsored account. The Department Graduate Administrator can assist with this. Once re-registered as a student the account will automatically switch back to a primary account.    Upon completion of leave, unless returning within two terms, the student must reapply for readmission to the University of Pittsburgh. However, readmission is guaranteed if returning within the approved period of leave, and no application fee is charged. In addition, the statute of limitations is extended for the approved length of the leave. An approved leave of absence does not guarantee funding. Departments do honor the guaranteed years of funding to students who return from a leave of absence. Departments will generally give students on leave a date by which they must indicate they are returning so that they can plan accordingly for funding. It’s important to reach out to the department Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Administrator at this point. If a student does not return at the end of an approved leave, then their readmission is not guaranteed and is subject to approval from the department. |