 

General Council Meeting Agenda

19 September 2023

General Council Meeting

1. **Call to Order and sign in!**
2. Executive Board Reports
	1. **President Lacey Rzodkiewicz (ldr27@pitt.edu):**
	2. Vice President Payne Banister (wpb20@pitt.edu ):
	3. **Faculty Advisor Rosemary Capo (**rcapo@pitt.edu**):**
		1. For health insurance, apply to student emergency medical fund through student affairs. If you are anticipating significant medical expenses, contact Vice Provost Godley directly
		2. If you are enrolled by October 15th, coverage will be retroactive to September 1st.
		3. Office of Provost hosting career design workshop — 8 sessions beginning next week. Includes resume building, interviewing, preparing profiles, exploring careers, etc. Still open
		4. Range of programs through Humanities Engage
		5. TC Squared program involves transformative collaborations — idea is to nurture interdisciplinary research — Workshop October 27th — Development of project proposal where winner gets $2k
	4. **Associate Dean Woo**
		1. Held events with Center for Creativity over Summer to bond with students and staff and encourage creativity and wellness — Help get outside of class/lab
		2. Over the last year curriculum reviews have been changing. Students within the departments are apart of the evaluation process to help improve the culture and academics in the school.
		3. Health care:
			1. Dean Woo compiled complaints and concerns from those in the Dietrich School and passed those on to the upper-level administrators (unsure who upper-level admins are — a mix of anyone above Dietrich) in order to make them aware of how health care changes are impacting students/staff
			2. Could have been done in a much more transparent way
			3. Administration rolled out medical hardship assistance fund in response.
			4. Administration are being trained on the medical hardship assistance fund — reach out to them if you are unsure if your situation counts for the fund
			5. Medical hardship assistance fund covers $4200 out of pocket maximum
			6. Do not be afraid to ask / reveal some information so that the people who administer this medical hardship assistance fund are able to help properly
			7. Unsure at the moment of the review process for the medical hardship assistance fund — there is a group of people who is working on it
			8. Using the medical hardship assistance fund can be on an ongoing basis as bills come in — again, refer to administrators in charge of the funds with specific questions
			9. Medical hardship assistance fund coverage is through August 31st, 2024
			10. There is one health care insurance plan for students — There are problems with UPMC themselves where they have appointed Graduate students vs regular student plans listed, but it is all the same
			11. As for rationale for health care changes, unsure, but possibly rising costs and longterm viability
			12. Hardship fund applies for chronic conditions — unsure about the longterm for students with chronic conditions
			13. Call HR with questions instead of emailing — they answer phones
			14. Medical hardship assistance fund does not have a budget as far as we know right now. For now, we assume they are giving out as much as they can.
		4. Stipends and Ranges
			1. Stipend rates and ranges are set by the provost office
			2. Departments have different policies around equity and paying, etc.
	5. Administrative Assistant Christina Vega-Alemañy (asgso@pitt.edu):
3. Internal Committees
	1. GPSG:
		1. Representatives: Lacey, Arnab, Payne
		2. Meeting is this Thursday, 21 Sept, at 12h30 in WPU 548
			1. QnA with Vice Provost Godley and Dean Panzella at 1h30
	2. Grad Expo:
		1. Chair: Payne Banister
		2. Members:
		3. Members needed! More members = better planning and opportunity for room expansion and more participants
		4. Grad Expo around March 17th
	3. Teaching Awards:
		1. Chair: Natalie Runkle (Philosophy)
		2. Members:
		3. They meet in the fall to give out the awards
		4. 14 Applications have been submitted and are being reviewed
	4. Committee for Diversity and Inclusion:
		1. Chair: **Arnab volunteered to chair the committee**
		2. Members: Mihir Khanna (Physics), Yujin Jang (English), and Vuk Vukovic (HAA)

**If you are interested in getting involved in any of these committees, please reach out to Lacey, Payne, or Christina!**

1. External A&S Committees:
	1. A&S Dietrich Council: DSAS Council, grad student reps
		1. Reps: Rebecca Matehca (rmm159@pitt.edu), Yasha Kaushal (yak39@pitt.edu)
	2. A&S PBC: DSAS Planning & Budgeting Committee, grad student reps
		1. Reps: Haoran Hu (hah164@pitt.edu), Caitlin Dahl (cmd166@pitt.edu), Sinan Doğan (sid22@pitt.edu)
		2. **Follow up with Jennifer Sedecky if you have questions**
	3. A&S Grad Council:
		1. Reps: Allison Checkeye (amc343@pitt.edu), Turki Alturaifi (tma53@pitt.edu), Deborah Danuser (deborah.danuser@pitt.edu), Garrett Fiegenbaum (glf17@pitt.edu), Travis Court (tac136@pitt.edu)
	4. University Council on Graduate Studies
		1. Rep: Robert Marshall (rrm72@pitt.edu)
2. Old or Unfinished Business:
3. **New Business:**
	1. Reimbursement policies:
		1. Reimbursements are only valid with receipts within 30 days of purchase, last four of credit card on receipt and/or bank statement
		2. Food for events needs a sign-in sheet
		3. Alcohol is tricky; requires advisor approval, campus bar tender if on campus, or proof of liability insurance from the business
			1. Contact Advisor Rosemary Capo if you want to have alcohol at your event — alcohol approval form needed from her
		4. **Contracts for bartenders or rented venues needed 21-days prior to events — Go to SORC for contracts**
		5. **To avoid the reimbursement process, get in contact with either Lacey or Christina to go directly to the SORC office during purchasing hours to use the SORC credit card directly**
		6. Gift cards are a no go
		7. Implementing Purchase Approval Form
			1. Form is coming soon
			2. Goal: make sure students are not making purchases that cannot/will not be reimbursed
			3. Purchase form will be on the website early next week; for now, contact Christina (asgso@pitt.edu) — aim to submit this form 2 weeks in advance — form will be up on ASGSO website SOON
		8. **To avoid the reimbursement process, get in contact with either Lacey or Christina to go directly to the SORC office during purchasing hours to use the SORC credit card directly — avoid reimbursements this way!**
	2. Webmaster? Webmaster? Pls?
		1. Email Lacey if you want to be Webmaster
		2. Easy click and point, not html
	3. Travel Grants
		1. You can submit information up to 30 days after *returning* from travel
	4. GSO Department Funding
		1. Based on enrollment
		2. Supplemental funding form for departments that are smaller
		3. **Christina will send out final budget form so all departments can see about how much money they have now**
	5. Emergency fund establishment
		1. How to adjudicate awards
		2. What can be reimbursed
			1. Cannot reimburse medical bills
			2. Can reimburse professional development, academic, teaching costs, etc.
		3. $2000 in the budget from last year, $4000 for this upcoming year
		4. Trying to give it out as an award so that we can work around SORC’s policies — e-board will work on wording/policy
	6. Open forum for discussion.
4. Announcements:

 <https://discord.gg/T6kWFFQ8tJ>

 If you’re still not a member of the Discord server, now is a good time to join!