



October 1, 2019 | 7:00 p.m.
Nebraska Union | Ballroom

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice President Juritsch moved to postpone approval of the minutes from April, 2019 and September 2019 to the next meeting. The motion was approved by a majority of assembly votes, Representative Smith voted No.

OPEN FORUM

Representative Selzer introduced a student from the Sociology department. The student talked about the initiative to form a Graduate Student Union at UNL. They described what forming a Union involves and some of the benefits of having a Union. Students can find more information at unionizeunl.org. They mentioned that at least a third of major big ten schools have a unionized graduate student body. They also mentioned information on the website would be inclusive of international graduate students.

Representative Gutierrez Pinto informed the assembly of a sexual misconduct case that happened in the Biological Sciences Department. The sexual misconduct was reported to the UNL Title IX Office and the individual was found in violation, however, no effective sanction was applied and the individual was allowed back in campus. Students from the Biological Sciences department will file a complaint to the NU Board of Regents. Vice President of Academic Affairs Sotelo suggested them to contact the Title IX Collaborative.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

President Ratcliff.

President Ratcliff informed the assembly of the formation of a health care committee. They also informed the assembly that the search for Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs had closed and final applicants will be coming this month. They encouraged the assembly to attend the candidates' public talks and ask questions regarding the new budget model, academic freedom, instruction, teaching, research, and fundraising. President Ratcliff also asked the assembly for their input regarding whether private funders of University buildings should be publicly disclosed. After several contributions from Assembly members, the Assembly concluded they strongly prefer for the information to be disclosed to ensure that these agreements do not affect the University functions in any way, shape or form.

Executive Vice President Juritsch

Nothing to report. EVP Juritsch requested the Assembly to carbon copy him in their requests and questions to President Ratcliff to distribute the workload.

Vice President of Student Affairs Sotelo

VPSA Sotelo reminded the assembly to contact her if their committee needs support for organization, event planning, bill writing, amongst others. She also reminded the Assembly members to state their name and/or department when speaking for better records in the Assembly meeting minutes. She reported that she attended the Parking Committee meeting where she learned that from 2018 to 2019 there had been both an increase in citations and in number of parking permits sold; she requested specific numbers in terms of permits sold and number of parking spots available. She also reported attending to the first EVCAA Committee meeting, and that she will be participant of the interviews to EVCAA candidates.

Vice President of Representation Rodene

VPR Rodene reported that the representative mailing is up to date and requested representatives to contact him if they did not receive a committee assignment. He reminded Assembly members to ensure their alternate attends meetings if they cannot attend themselves.

Vice President of Finance Huben

VPF Huben informed that the Assembly is still under budget and searching for ways to allocate reserve money. Current ideas include renting out commencement gowns and creating a database of living places and transportation for international students moving into Lincoln.

Representative Leighty asked if it is possible for everyone to receive a summary of what happened over the summer regarding health care. President Ratcliff ensured representatives will be informed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Graduate Travel Award Program

Representative Baty informed the Assembly members that they will receive an email with a link to a survey for people to fill out if they are interested in reviewing. They reminded the Assembly members that if they are applying for awards in a period they cannot be reviewers for that period.

Quality of Life

Representative Lively informed the Assembly that they are presenting a bill to the Assembly for a self-care Sunday series.

Diversity and Inclusion

Representative Peter informed the Assembly that the new Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Barker, holds office hours every last Monday of the month from 4 – 6 pm. They will be meeting with Dr. Barker before the next Assembly meeting. They will also hold a Committee meeting soon. They are also presenting a Bill to the Assembly to purchase a table at the upcoming LGBTQ dinner.

Representative Godfrey mentioned that the GTAP survey asks whether the reviewer has presented or published work. Representative Baty informed the Assembly that everyone is qualified to review, regardless of previous scholarly experience.

NEW BUSINESS

Reserve Funds and Possibilities for Fund Usage

President Ratcliff informed the Assembly that there are currently \$22,000 in reserve funds, and ideas are needed to use these funds. Current ideas include:

- Purchase gowns, so people can rent them for a nominal fee ‘washing fee’
- Expanding GTAP more funds to graduate students going to conferences
- Creating a Database for graduate students regarding housing in the area and transportation
 - Representative Warrington mentioned that the last idea mentioned would be a good resource.
 - Representative Harp mentioned that travel support would be great
 - Representative Godfrey mentioned that funds in GTAP are only for graduate students that are presenting, and suggested to allocate funds for people attending conferences that are not presenting at said conferences.
 - Representative Fabrizio mentioned that the kind of funds Rep. Godfrey is suggesting could be used by graduate students that are about to hit the job market and need networking opportunities.
 - Representative Leighty mentioned that this idea would require separate process for those students.
 - Representative Tobin mentioned that programs or funds are created to help graduate students conduct research on sites or use the money as seed money.
 - Representative Smith asked how difficult is for the funds to be allocated. President Ratcliff answer that first the Assembly must reach an agreement on how the funds will be allocated, then the allocation of funds must be approved by the ASUN body.
 - Eva Bachman from the Office of Graduate Studies informed the Assembly members that graduate students may apply for day research funds for up to \$500 per trip.
 - Representative Carney suggested the funds could be allocated for international travel grants.
 - AA Chair Karimifard expressed being hesitant regarding the idea of opening travel funds for non-presenting students, given that the number of applicants would likely increase, and it would be difficult to establish selection criteria. Instead they suggested investing in expanding the graduate appreciation week to have it twice a year.
 - D&I Chair Peter suggested that non-presenters could be made eligible for travel awards if they were involved in a project being presented.

President Ratcliff finished the conversation and requested Assembly members to continue thinking of ideas to make use of the funds.

Health Care/Insurance: Reporting Back

Assembly representatives expressed that a co-pay of upwards of \$7,000 would be terrible for graduate students. They also expressed issues with not enough information on insurance cards, insurance representatives not being helpful, delayed insurance payments, and added burden to international graduate students.

AA Chair Karimifard shared that when we were insured by Blue Cross Blue Shield emergency room visits were fully covered, which is not the case with United Healthcare.

Representative Richards suggested that students with prescription medications use the GoodRX application to find better pricing. They also shared that students in their department have been turned down by the UNL health center because staff in the health center communicated that thesis/dissertation hours are not considered in their definition of a full time student.

Representative Krogstan shared that the UNL health center required students in their department to be enrolled in 6 lecture credit hours to receive care. Students in their department also communicated that they would prefer a tiered system where students could choose whether to have a high premium or a high copay. They also shared that students often have issues finding healthcare providers.

Representative Gutierrez Pinto shared that most students in their department would prefer an increase in premium, although this preference was not backed by an overwhelming majority. Students in their department would also like for our insurance to cover birth control and continuing mental health services. They also asked if there is a reason why we cannot be included in the same plan as professors and staff.

Eva Bachman asked those that were denied care at the UNL health center if they were told they could not use the health center services or if they were told that they could not get health insurance. Representatives answered that they were told they could not use the health center.

Representative Tankersley shared that there is an issue with communication of changes to graduate students' health insurance plan. They shared that learning our student health insurance options so close to the semester and with such short notice makes it almost impossible to find alternative health coverage.

VPAA Sotelo shared that students in her department brought up issues with spouses and dependents health insurance coverage, and that UNL does not provide any reduced or affordable option for spouses and dependents. Students in her department also shared that the health insurance and student fees burden is particularly high for international graduate students. They also shared that they would prefer an increase in premium over one in copay. Students in her department also complained regarding the low dental coverage and the large out of pocket expenses related to dental healthcare.

President Ratcliff ended the conversation and informed the Assembly they would follow up regarding this issue.

GSA Bill #4 A bill supporting LGBTQA+ History Month and expenses related to the History Month Dinner

D&I Chair Peter presented a bill allocating funds for the Assembly to support the LGBTQA+ History Month Dinner. VPAA Sotelo introduced a friendly amendment to the bill. The bill passed unanimously.

GSA Bill #5 A bill allocating funds towards a monthly event series called Self Care Sunday Series from the Quality of Life Committee

Quality of Life Chair Lively presented a bill allocating funds for a self-care monthly series of events. VPAA Sotelo asked whether the bill was funding a single event or the whole series of events for the year. QL Chair Lively responded that bill was funding the whole series of events. VPAA Sotelo introduced a series of friendly amendments and an amendment for clarity. The amendment and the bill passed unanimously.

GSA Bill #6 A supporting UNL Policy on Consensual Sexual or Romantic Relationships draft
GSA Bill #7 A supporting UNL policy on Workplace Bullying draft

President Ratcliff asked the Assembly members if they had any feedback regarding the policy drafts that were shared with the Assembly members. VPAA Sotelo mentioned that she had concerns regarding the policies language and implementation. President Ratcliff requested the Assembly members to share whether they shared the same concerns and about 70% of the members raised their hands showing that they shared those same concerns. Representative Leighty mentioned that if or when the policies are

approved, training and clear communication of the policies to all stakeholders and University constituents would be necessary. Bills #6 and #7 were withdrawn from the Agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AA Chair Karimifard shared that he will send an email to the Assembly regarding forming departmental GSAs.

Representative Leighty shared that Sustain UNL is helping organize climate strikes happening at 3 pm every Friday.

Representative Harp shared that researchers in psychology were holding a fundraiser this upcoming Monday at Chipotle from 5 – 9 pm.

Representative Palacions shared that they are starting a podcast in collaboration with local radio station KZUM to showcase research around the university. They mention Dr. Swearer is a point of contact for the project.

Representative Warrington shared that their department is offering glass and ceramic sessions on Fridays at 5pm.

Representative Selzer reminded the assembly to fill out Union interest forms and return to them.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.