

Graduate Student Employment Committee (GSEC)

Minutes of October 30, 2019 meeting

Voting members present – Fuhrman, Goldberg, Handschy, Lingo, Norling, Scialacqua, Skuodas, Walker-Cecil, White.

Voting members absent – Thaggert, Tranel.

Non-voting members present – Campo, Danger, Keller, Welter.

The meeting was called to order by Dean John Keller @ 4:02 PM.

- 1) Minutes from the April 25, 2019, meeting were approved.
- 2) Dean Keller briefly reviewed the committee composition as determined by the by-laws. He distinguished between voting and non-voting members. The scope of the committee is limited to the graduate assistant employment agreement, which would not include general student wellness or student life matters. COGS remains the salary bargaining unit for graduate assistant employees. Thus far the committee has successfully advocated for no changes in the employment agreement. Dean Keller is abdicating his responsibilities as the committee's chair, appointing Associate Dean Shelly Campo to perform these duties.
- 3) Although Joni Troester, Senior Assistant Vice President and Deputy CHRO Human Resources, was unable to attend this fall. She shared in an email to Dean Keller that there is no current discussion in making changes to health insurance plan frameworks. In spring health insurance premium rate setting activities begin. Should the committee desire further discussion on this topic, she welcomes an invitation to a spring GSEC meeting.
- 4) Grievance procedure drafts – Following up on a suggestion by the GSEC committee to make the graduate student grievance procedure be clearer, Donna Welter consulted with CLAS Associate Dean Christine Getz, Graduate College Associate Dean Shelly Campo, Human Resources Employment Relations specialists Shelley Stickford and Jan Waterhouse. Draft documents were discussed. Edits/comments were noted such as language be added to flow chart, language regarding the “two (2) non-conflicted co-workers” needs to be reviewed and revised on the Grievance Form and COGS contact information added under Other Resources. Revisions will be made and a DRAFT version of all documentations will be sent out to the committee to review prior to the next meeting. The [Office of the Ombudsperson](#) cannot be a graduate assistant advocate through the grievance procedure. Their code of ethics is centered on: confidentiality, neutrality, informality, and independence.

The committee felt the workflow form should be housed on the Graduate College website around other employment information. Other university offices could then link to the Graduate College webpage. Print flyers in the department may be more accessible to graduate assistants, but has the potential to provide outdated information.

In instances where policy changes are proposed to the employment agreement, who has authority? Dean Keller stated GSEC could make recommendations for policy change to University

Administration who would likely require review of the policy change proposal by General Counsel and Human Resources.

Additional comments about the draft documents may be forwarded to Donna Welter, Shelly Campo, or Wendy Danger by November 15th.

- 5) Committee Activity Plan for AY19-20 – It was suggested that setting a reoccurring meeting schedule would help GSS and COGs recruit members.

Discussion about amendments to bylaws may include: removing the need for GPSG ratification of GSS and COGs elected members, add sections to by-laws regarding the authority and scope of the committee, clarify roles and responsibilities of members.

The members would like to discuss mandatory and non-mandatory fees assessed to graduate assistants. For instance there is concern that the international graduate assistant population is the only population that pays fees that are required (not optional) yet “not mandatory.” It was noted the international student fees are lower at Iowa than at other universities.

Concern was expressed about a university employment practice review being concluding without consultation from/with a large population of employees (i.e. graduate assistants). It was mentioned that the review was for 50% effort non-temporary employees, many graduate assistants have a 50% appointment. The employment practice review began with a thorough review of employment practices in the Athletics Department and was to expand to other areas. When the outside reviewer’s contract was renegotiated, a shift to implementation of recommendations and a scaled down version of the area reviews. The committee would like a better understanding of the efforts to date and planned in the future.

If graduate employment practices are a duty of the committee, it would be helpful to have a better understanding of climate issues surrounding graduate assistant experiences to guide the discussion. The GradSERU survey includes questions related to teaching and research experiences. This survey was first performed in Spring 2018 with the next survey being planned for Spring 2020. Employment climate data questions could be assembled and shared with the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 4:49 PM.