

Graduate Student Employment Committee (GSEC)

Minutes of January 29, 2021 meeting

Voting members present – Bowden, Handschy, Jung, Norling, Skuodas, Walker-Cecil.

Non-voters present – Campo, Danger, Getz, Kiser, Rent, Welter, White.

The meeting was called to order by Associate Dean Campo @ 10:02 AM.

- 1) Associate Dean Campo welcomed the committee back. She recognizes this has been a chaotic, difficult year for many. Students should reach out to the Graduate College in cases you think the college can be helpful. She looks forward to seeing the students returning to campus and in-person meetings.
- 2) Minutes of the November 30, 2020 meeting were approved.
- 3) Data Request: Todd Rent provided a follow-up summary on data requests from FSDS regarding time off taken as a result of a child entering the employee's home (birth and adoption). Information for graduate assistant leave is not centrally maintained by FSDS. The most common documented time off taken was related to health events. FSDS resources are heavily invested in maintaining federal tracking/leave guidelines. The University is able to track where GAs have received FMLA designations, but those are comparatively few because of FMLA qualification rules.

There is not a centralized process for reporting leave time. Therefore he reached out to UI Workforce operations in the hopes of greater insights using payroll data. Regrettably, they are not able to compile valid data. Paid leave tends to be handled in a unit and therefore documentation is kept within the department.

He continues to explore internal data that may be helpful with the family leave discussion. For example, is there a reason to request collecting aggregate numbers from other populations?

- 4) Summer health insurance premiums: Communicating about summer health insurance practice where three premiums are charged on the June 1st paycheck. The goal of Human Resources is to provide greater transparency, give better communication to help students plan.
 - a) Propose communicating in the Spring semester.
 - b) Perhaps the best time to help students in planning is to communicate near the beginning of the spring semester by sending a notice to all individuals with the potential to be impacted.
 - c) Provide information to students on how to ask Human Resources their questions.
- 5) Mandatory Fee transparency- Todd Rent thanks committee members for distributing a draft memorandum. It was distributed so close the meeting therefore it was briefly reviewed. Some issues being addressed:
 - a) Modified TA appointment letter to bring better clarity to fees that are not mandatory. St
 - b) Drafting a document that would accompany a graduate assistantship offer letter.
 - c) Link in offer letter takes to MAUI sites which includes tuition rates and mandatory fee rates: but does NOT include records & document fee, international orientation fee, matriculation fee. It takes a lot of wading through for a graduate assistant to understand the terms used and their meaning.

- d) Suggest capitalizing Mandatory Fees with an added foot note to set this apart from the common understanding of the phrase “mandatory fees”.
 - e) Rent asks that committee members review the document, suggest areas in which clarification might be needed, so it can be refined to assure there is little ambiguity.
 - f) A committee member reminds us that issues about transparency and jargon use become irrelevant if 100% fees are recommended to UI (and adopted by the institution) and proposed the GSEC committee send a recommendation for 100% fees covered up the chain of command.
 - g) The strongest approach is to intervene in two ways:
 - i) Taking into consideration the current conditions we have (by improving transparency),
 - ii) Changing future conditions (making recommendations to leadership).
 - h) Deadline for payroll reduction sign up should be more clear. Clearer about the option in spreading out payments.
 - i) Rent would like to have additional eyes on the documents. Given this memo was shared this morning, everyone should have time to read and discuss the memo and have a vote on the memo: usually addressed to Dean Keller and Cheryl Reardon as head of Human Resources.
 - j) A further suggestion was made to have fee charge discussions in advance of graduate orientation activities. From an instructional design standpoint, it would be nice to have an opportunity to guide new grads through some of these steps before simply sending them to a maze of website links. Especially since new grad students are missing scaffolding for these concepts. This would also require standardizing the language used—as Kezia noted earlier.
- 6) ESL testing review committee: First meeting of the committee has been scheduled for 2/8/21. Charge for the committee was distributed. Two students are on the committee including a student from the Graduate Student Senate and the International Student Advisory Board.
- 7) In person courses for Spring 2021 – Getz and Campo break down comparing in person instruction versus virtual. Spring session for the University shows 21.6% courses are in person for the spring semester. CLAS has fewer in person classes in Spring (7.99%) and less in person classes than Fall (14.08%). Of note, face to face synchronous courses are not included in this data.

Discussions are in the works regarding Fall 2021 in person instruction guidelines which will be based on many assumptions about vaccine availability and population distribution.

Governor Reynolds backs K-12 being taught in person, and this may extend to higher education.

- 8) Vaccine distribution: The request from the Board of Regents requesting Governor Reynolds to include college instructors in group 1B was denied. Any graduate assistants having clinical duties should have a vaccine available to them, those without clinical duties will not have vaccines available to them in the near future.
- 9) Bargaining overview: The Board of Regents are in collective bargaining with three incumbent unions from the university, including COGs. The Board of Regents BOR takes lead in that process (per Iowa Chapter 20). Negotiations must be completed by March 15th. Rent to provide additional updates to GSEC as they become available.
- 10) International research and work remain restricted until at least August 1. International research off the table through Summer 2021. Travel plans are change very quickly and unexpectedly. Many countries have strict expectations for those entering including long quarantine periods.

11) Bylaw changes: Pronoun changes were made to the GSEC agreement. Gender pronouns were found in documents and on the website, they were reworded to eliminate gender. Committee members should be alert that future documentation should be written with gender guidelines in mind.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 AM.