GSA Exec Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2018

Normal meeting followed by semi-annual meeting with Dean Linda Schaffner

- Our next meeting is set to Monday October 22, 3pm.

- Budget finalization
  - Travel and research grant date changes are done and accounted for
  - Mar updated the budget with all the things we have fixed so far
  - Pig may cost slightly more for Fall Party. Rob Latour offered to pay for the difference in order to make a whole pig happen. We are open to this as long as it is not ridiculously expensive.
  - Comfortable with the budget, finalized!

- New reimbursement rules
  - For private off-campus account only.
  - The new policy is to do as much as possible through Carol Birch and the academic studies office before any events, rather than getting reimbursed afterward.
  - Mar has alerted committee heads of this new policy.
  - In the future, Carol “may” be able to open up a separate PO for private fund for adult beverages at GSA events (this would be excellent).
  - If anyone is buying a large amount of food – catering, pizza, etc – please use the “business meal” paperwork to make everyone’s life easier.

- Committee positions
  - Almost all are full after the all-hands meeting.
  - Thanks to Michelle for making an excellent google doc for this.
  - One problem is that the Awards committee has to represent three separate departments, meaning we need someone from fisheries or physical sciences.
  - Jessie will follow up with people who signed up along with current reps for each position to make sure everyone knows who their new person is.

- First year elections
  - All nominations were in as of Monday September 24.
  - Candidates: Alex Smith, Cristin Wright, Jackson Martinez, Kristen Sharpe, and Shantelle Richards.

- Request to bring Kelly Crace back to campus – followed up on this with Linda (see below).
• GSA-digest
  o List is on the google drive “agenda” document.
  o Michelle started a new one for October
  o Jessie will talk to Carol about getting an easier way to find out which student papers have been published each month – Web of Science alerts.
  o Michelle will ask last year’s Halloween party people where it is happening this year and we can put that on the digest if/when we know.

• Wachapreague work days
  o We will email Dick Snyder and ask Linda what she thinks of our plan.
  o 8-9 people raised hands at F’all hands meeting.
  o First years did not get the opportunity to go to Wachapreague this year thanks to Florence – however this can also be geared toward upperclassmen who need to write.

• Community Garden Bank Account
  o Pamela Braff is handing over treasurer duties to Alex Smith. The bank account is linked to the off-campus GSA account. We are aware of this and we approve!

Most important notes from the meeting with Linda Schaffner:

• Shared the VIMS Education Program Dashboard, which has nice graphics of the stats of the grad student body and the numbers, such as job sectors upon graduation and later on. We can share this on the GSA website.

• There is high competition among faculty for the one-time funds, which are used for things such as equipment, the round-up, HPC clusters, and more. Keep this in mind when thinking of your research and/or lab group goals.

• One big upcoming change is the potential Professional Track Degree Program (non-thesis, although we are trying to move away from that term as it is not super positive). This would be geared toward students who want to go into the industry, policy and management sectors or who do not want to continue in academia. Instead of a masters thesis they would do a very extensive capstone project.

• In theory, there is also interest in hiring a professional development person for VIMS graduate students, someone like Sarah Glosson on main campus.

• Counseling situation is unfortunate, and there is no firm projected date when we will have someone available on VIMS campus. Encourage people to use the W&M main
campus counseling center. Linda will look into whether the main campus counseling department would be willing to do appointments over the phone or via skype/facetime to make the service more accessible.

- Kelly Crace will be back for the January writing boot camp. Hesitant to invite him for anything separately as attendance has historically been low. GSA will advertise the January talk more than in the past.

- First years did not get to go to Wachapreague – a 1-day field trip led by Chris Hein is in the works, as a supplement or alternative to our GSA Wachapreague Work Days.

- A lot of hiring is happening in the coming year in terms of faculty. If anyone is concerned about the wording of job postings (oceanography vs. coastal systems), know that VIMS is known as a top coastal and estuarine science institution and leaders intend to keep this reputation. Candidates for incoming faculty positions will be competitive if they can describe how their work and expertise could be applied in Virginia, either as a supplement or a separate project to what they plan to work on in other regions.

- Clayton house will be mostly space for the GSA! Blueprint drawing showed most of the downstairs space as open with tables, chairs, and couches. Though it will be labeled as community space, this is intended to be used as grad student space. The annex will be open as well and probably contain the pool table and gym equipment.