



**GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL (GSC) MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**TIME:** 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

**PLACE:** Student Services Building (SSB), Conference Room B&C  
([1200 W Harrison St., Chicago, IL 60607](https://www.uic.edu/locations/1200-w-harrison-st-chicago-il-60607))

**1. Welcome & Dinner**

**2. Speaker for tonight**

i. Kevin L. Booker, Chief of Police, UIC Police Department

- Encourage fist/elbow bumps over handshakes due to the COVID -19 virus. They are trying their best to increase awareness about the virus and its preventive measures. Although, it has low-risk people should be made aware.
- He has been at UIC for 5 years and 25% of the staff in the police department are graduates of UIC. They're proud of the diversity at UIC Police. Being part of Chicago, he feels it is unfortunate that we are facing an increase in crime rates in the city.
- He discussed a few horrific events that happened across the country and UIC campus in the past year or so. The main reason for discussing the events is to emphasize that even though the Police are doing their best, they are unable to be omnipresent. Thus, the Chief requested everyone to report if they see/hear anything suspicious. He also points out that don't be afraid to call them if your immediate safety feels threatened. They have several videos on YouTube for the safety process. It can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YfIMlW-oqE>
- He recommends that all students download the UIC Safe app. They have developed and updated this app based on the needs of people at UIC. They are increasing the number of security guards at UIC. After recent unfortunate events on the campus last year, they have installed cameras for achieving 24-hour coverage around most of the campus.
- They have fixed the schedule for security guards based on the timing of classes of different students at UIC. They have increased the working hours to all 7 days with the help of different private organizations other than UIC police.
- The UIC Safe app has an option using which you can ask for assistance at any point in time. They are increasing the number of cameras around the campus to investigate leads regarding crimes. They have about 1500 cameras; he exclaims that it is quite impossible to manage all of them simultaneously.
- He points out that the service Safe Exchange Zone is very under-utilized. He implied that if any student wants to purchase or exchange goods with a stranger they met on any social platform, they can come over to the zone at any time and exchange the goods under the supervision of cameras.
- They have a UICPD women training program for self-defense, which is solely for women at UIC. It is a great opportunity for a group of 20 or more, to learn and expand your self-defense tactics.

- They also have nighttime shuttle service, which is being used extensively by students at UIC. But they have faced certain problems with the efficiency of the program. They are constantly trying to improve the service.
- Blue-line is out of their jurisdiction, but they have tie-ups with officers from CPD to set-up services for UIC students at the blue line. They have UIC and CPD officers riding from Damen to Halsted from 7 am to 5 pm. They started it last week and are still trying to improve the process by hearing feedback and concerns from CPD and CTA.
- SWAT officers are seen at UIC by several students. He suggested that they have been put all over the city by the mayor, to improve safety in the city of Chicago.
- Is it ever advised to move across the compartments while traveling in the CTA? He recommends calling the UIC Police immediately and to follow the standard protocol for safety. He said that they can trespass into CTAs compound under emergency, but they have certain limitations.
- One of the representatives from the nursing department asked what application they should use while walking late at night from work to remain safe. He said that they should use the UIC SAFE application which has a virtual walk option.
- There were concerns regarding the camera operation. A representative asked general questions about the process and retention of recording done by cameras installed around the campus. Chief mentioned that cameras are always recording, and if any investigation is being undertaken, they will flag that data and it will be forwarded to the concerned department. If there are no investigations, they will delete the camera footage after 30 days.

ii. Sagen Cocklin (Co-President) and Jared O'Connor (Secretary), Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), UIC

- They are here to talk about the purpose of GEO. GEO is a graduate student labor union that represents 1400 TAs and GAs at UIC. They are recognized by different teaching and graduate unions across the country.
- They are getting ready to negotiate new contract terms for GAs and TAs for the next fiscal year. They negotiate about different concerns of GAs and TAs like personal finances, wages, health, workplace grievances and other personal issues faced by them.
- They currently represent all the TAs and GAs at UIC and are proud to be of any assistance to them. They are in the process of adding RAs into the union. They can help TAs and GAs who are facing harassment crisis. He spoke about the strike last year and was proud to admit that it was a success. They helped in relieving the international student fee by half and helped in increasing the pay for GAs and TAs by about 14% per three years. About 150\$ relief was achieved for different fees for the employee. He said that they were able to get financial relief for personal campus care and dependent based medical costs.
- Every department has 10 or more TAs and GAs, which is a good thing because they can have better negotiations for the students who are part of the union. They take great pride in dealing with different issues that are faced by graduate students. They bridge the gap between students and the different executive members of the graduate college, which means that they can provide students a platform where they can voice opinions.

- They have installed an International Student Caucus, in which they have all the different graduate students come together to have their opinions heard. They have many other workshops, some of which deals with sexual harassment and transgender administration program. Those programs help all the students to feel safe and more welcomed at UIC. In the future, they want to extend their services to the RAs because they feel they are also an equal part of the union.
- They had a “March on the Boss” last week, to talk about the fulfillment of the terms of the negotiations that happened in last year's strike. They have participation from different unions like nursing, graduate programs, etc. The unions helped them to make the march successful.
- The main concern that they highlighted is that the hourly pay for TAs and GAs should be recognized for the international students and they have raised concerns with the right department to make sure that the terms are being honored.
- They have a membership pass for the TA or GA, and he highly recommends for students to come and become a part of the union. They have a conference next year which will help TA's and GA's to raise their concerns, which will then be forwarded to the people at the top of the food chain.
- He and all the people at the union appreciate the fact that they are legally partaking in making important decisions made by the senate. They are understanding how the university works. He suggests that students can benefit from the union and take the experience on the job.
- If you have split appointments like 25% RA- 25% TA, you can still be part of the union. The membership dues to the union will be according to the contract that you've signed with the university. If you're 25% TA or GA, you can participate with them. If you were a TA, and then you're offered an RA, you can still be part of the union, but you won't be recognized.
- They take membership dues directly off the pay. The cost of membership is about 2% of the total pay, which amounts to 47\$.
- If any student is having personal issues with the advisor and if they are facing issues that violate the contract, the concerned student can reach out to the union and the union will immediately help them resolve the issue. They recognize all the disabilities related to any mental or personal issues faced by TAs and GAs and want to be of service to them.
- GEO deals only with graduates and they are still considering something for undergrads.
- For general membership and other inquiries: [www.uic-geo.net](http://www.uic-geo.net)
- GEO Email: [geo@uic-geo.net](mailto:geo@uic-geo.net)

iii. Grace Cua, Research Specialist, Institute for Juvenile Research, UIC

- She is a representative of community engagement and collaboration core, CEC. She is here to talk about the different services that they have made freely available for graduate students.
- The services that they had been providing in the past was not a very good model. They have developed a newer model that is more student inclusive. There are 64 centers across the USA, and they have one at UIC. They collaborate with the United State Health Program.

- There are several cores within the Institute for Juvenile Research. The main program is community engagement. It helps to make research of graduate students more involved in the community. They help in networking for the students. The community engagement advisory board consists of social service agencies, retired researchers and UIC faculty and staff. They have expertise in the field of community engagement.
- They promote community research; they also link group members to facilitate research. The community board can be a resource for graduate students, you can be a guest in the meeting. They can bring the community to the classrooms so that the research can be made more inclusive. It is a free service for all the students. They have other resources that can be used by the students to improve their data clusters, management, and analysis.
- The link is provided in the flyer. They have an upcoming seminar where they will be talking about the benefits for students to have a good research background which can be community inclusive.

iv. Attorney Santiago Del Real, Student Legal Services, Office of Dean of Students, UIC

- He graduated from UIC in 2009, he did his JEE at DePaul but he is glad to be back at UIC. He has about ten takeaways that he has to offer to us:
  1. Go see them at student legal services, this service is free to all the students.
  2. Read all the documents that you attest
  3. Read all the documents and fliers provided to you
  4. Know your and other parties' law
  5. What court do you hold?
  6. What law do you hold?
  7. Know how long you're obligated to the contract
  8. Know all the little details about the contract
  9. Try to negotiate and read the document before you send it
  10. Go see them at student legal services because the service is free of cost to all students at UIC
- Their office hours are Monday-Thursday from 8:30 to 2:30. Some of the major issues faced by UIC students are housing, immigration, and employment-based issues. You can reach out to them with any concerns regarding any of those or other matters.
- They can help you understand the terms and negotiations of your contract. They help with common processes like an accident or expunging any criminal record. They are in SSB on the third floor.
- He wants students who are applying for jobs to know that you read all the documents properly and understand the terms of the contract thoroughly before you sign it. For students who are signing a new housing contract, he advises them to be sure of their and their landlords' obligation in the rental agreement.
- Know what state law you're in, and which state controls your contract. He stresses again about all the take-aways. He suggested being extremely cautious about the contract that you are signing and don't be afraid to reach out to them when in doubt.
- He suggests that talk to them when in trouble because they can guide you about your problems before you are referred to an attorney. They will suggest appropriate non-profit organizations to tackle the situation. At any rate, when attorneys are being involved,

make sure to reach out to them before seeking help from external resources because they will help you understand the legalities associated with the same.

- They assist students who are facing issues from outside parties, but due to ‘conflict of interest’, they will not be involved in the cases between two UIC students, or two University-related parties.

### 3. Project Award

Christen Park, “Psychology Cross-Program Conference”, Liberal Arts and Sciences, UIC

- They are representing the Psychology department. They are inviting keynote speakers who address issues related to psychology and life sciences. It is an opportunity for students to discuss their research and network.
- They wanted to host this conference because they want people to come together and talk about problems. The keynote speaker will be beneficial for graduate students working in health institutes to tailor their research towards minorities.
- They have a poster program and students can participate and gain insight and discuss their research with different experts in the field. They are asking for 500\$ as an honorarium for the keynote speakers.
- The budget was discussed in front of the representatives, the budget reflected that they have a balance of about 138\$ which will be allocated towards the awards given to the students for the posters. The topic of keynote speakers will be related to diversity issues. The current speaker works with different subjects related to the field of psychology. The honorarium was about 700\$ last year.
- They are hoping to award four more students for the poster, which is not listed in their budget, which is the reason for them to ask for funds.
- The award was approved by the committee.

### 4. Updates

- i. GSC event “Women of UIC”, Sai Siva Kare, President, GSC UIC
  - GSC has put a lot of effort behind this event and it will be one of the best events yet. GSC has collaborated with other student organizations to host the event.
  - The event will be held on March 9<sup>th</sup>. The keynote speaker Dr. Natalie, is the Director of Women Leadership and Resource Center (WLRC). The event will consist of “W Monologue” by 5 UIC women, followed by an award ceremony at the end.
  - He humbly requests all the representatives to join the event and support GSC.
- ii. GSC Officers Elections on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Responsibilities, Requirements, and Nomination Procedure, Sai Siva Kare, President, GSC, UIC
  - There will be nominations for four positions including President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Nominees should be a full-time graduate student with an exception.
  - Must be a GSC representative and an executive committee member and/or have previous leadership experience to opt for the president’s post. Time commitment is around 5-12 hours per week on average, this may vary based on events and meetings.
  - Secretary:

- o Compile the minutes from all the GSC meetings and make it available for distribution by departmental Representatives
- o Maintain Departmental records
- o Take care of communication at GSC
- o Schedule monthly meetings, executive committee meetings and weekly officers meetings.
- o Maintain GSC website
- Treasurer:
  - o Takes care of the funding GSC related events and meetings
  - o Responsible for disbursing travel and project awards
  - o Recommends revision in GSC Travel and Project award related policies
- Vice-President:
  - o Meeting and event related logistics like reserving spaces, and ordering food and instruments required to host the event.
  - o Order food and book places at UIC
  - o Take part in the different senate and executive committees at UIC
  - o Act on behalf of the president when necessary
- President:
  - o Assist GSC officers, departmental representatives and executive committee members
  - o Invites all the speaker
  - o Initiates and encourages discussions related to meetings, events and other GSC related business
  - o Ensure timely and efficient execution of monthly meetings and events
  - o Makes the meeting agenda
  - o Represent graduate students of UIC at different university related events
  - o Oversee the health of GSC in terms of budget, outreach and its impact on the graduate students life
- There will be nominations for the position. The voting will be anonymously done by the ballots.
- Candidates will be elected by the representatives and executive committee members present at UIC. If there is a tie, both parties will be prompted with additional questions. The top two candidates will be voted up again.
- This is available in the constitution on the GSC website and can be found at: <https://gradstudentcouncil.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/106/2019/09/Graduate-Student-Council-Constitution-V1.pdf>
- The deadline for submitting the nominations is April 1<sup>st</sup> by 11:59 PM. You can submit nominations through email to both the president (Sai Siva Kare, [skare3@uic.edu](mailto:skare3@uic.edu)) and the vice-president (Biswajit Maharathi, [bmahar2@uic.edu](mailto:bmahar2@uic.edu) ).

## 5. Representatives Sign-In & Adjournment

## 6. GSC Executive Committee Meeting