Graduate Student Senate

General Assembly Meeting
June 10, 2020
https://lehigh.zoom.us/j/91392754216

ingss@lehigh.edu
Agenda

● Remote Living and Learning Survey for Graduate Students - Results and Actions

● Announcements

● Discussion Space

● Open Floor
Remote Living and Learning Survey for Graduate Students

- Almost 400 students replied; this is about a quarter of Lehigh’s graduate students
- COB was the lowest response; they are mostly Masters’ students, and part-time
- Some of the survey data might be a bit old now, because when the survey went out, all grad jobs were frozen
  - With Beth’s advocacy, the provost decided to not freeze any graduate jobs

Major Concerns:
- Grad student funding
- Fear of losing jobs outside of Lehigh
- Food insecurity or access to food (25% of grad students, which is about 100)
- Rent insecurity (39% of grad students, which is about 150)
- Grant funding (38% of grad students, which is about 150)
  - GLO is hearing that federal funding agencies have put forward extensions for grants
  - These extensions go through various points in the fall; this is a big concern for students who are funded by grants
- Ability to pay for health coverage (43%); international students are required to pay for Lehigh’s health insurance
- Issues related to immigration or DACA status; international students are extremely concerned about this
  - Many of our international students, especially new ones, will not be
- able to get visas to get here in the fall
- Finding a job upon graduation - a lot of students are extremely worried about this
  - This is, of course, all feeding into stress and anxiety
- Worry about making progress on dissertation and thesis
- Access to lab and materials
  - STEM field are beginning to be able to go back to labs, with plans
  - LTS is actively working on opening up the libraries, and we should hear something in a week or two
- Worry about meeting faculty expectations
- Practicum and internship hours
- Ability to concentrate on assignments
- Balancing academic responsibilities with multiple roles
- Motivation
- Ability to complete degree
- Stress and mental health
- Access to medical providers - health center is now open for students who are around
  - Access to psychotherapy is less of a concern than access to medical doctors
- Discrimination - primarily for east Asian students, specifically if they leave campus and go into South Bethlehem
- Feeling safe at home - need more context to interpret this result

**How can Lehigh support students?**
- Regular communication and transparency
- Information
- Checked on
- Consulted
- Recognized; acknowledge the grad experience is different
- Connection
- Access to resources
- Flexibility; adjust expectations

**Bright Spots:**
- A lot of students reported feeling very supported by their department and/or by Lehigh (more from department than from Lehigh)
- The bulk of students are planning on completing studies at Lehigh
- Expressions of appreciation
Budget Committee

- Meets once a year (in the summer) to determine the GSS operating budget as well as the budgets for all graduate clubs

- We’re still looking for a delegate from the college of engineering and applied sciences

Sine Zungu (treasurer):
- Before we can start allocating funds, we need to create a budget committee.
  - This funding is for travel grants, general grad activities, and clubs
- The committee will include Sine, and one representative from each college.
  - It is a short committee; it usually meets once a year to allocate the funds
  - If there are any other situations that require the budget committee to make a decision, the usually meet via email
- If you are interested in signing up, please send an email to ingss@lehigh.edu, or to Sine.

Please consider signing up!
Optional Practical Training Program Letter

- OPT allows international students to work in the US post-graduation for a set period of time. STEM graduates get 3 years and non-stem can work for 1 year.
- Administration seeking to suspend the program
- CMU and MIT graduate students wrote a letter and are seeking graduate student governments’ signatures from a variety of Universities
- Unit Reps will vote on if we sign this letter - look for an email

This will be a quick turnaround; simple majority for if we will add our signature.
Information Pages for Graduate Students

Graduate Life Office Homepage:
https://gradlife.web.lehigh.edu/

Graduate Student COVID-19 Information Page:
https://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/organization/graduate
Mental Health Resources

Counseling Center access is still available via Zoom or phone

After hours counselor always available.
Dial (610)758-3880, select “0” on the keypad

Referrals- we are working on a list to share with everyone!

Keep up to date:
https://studentaffairs.lehigh.edu/content/covid-19-counseling-psychological-services-updates
Mental Health - Self-Care

https://tinyurl.com/LehighSelfCare
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pdoAf-MkxeOB8pAM4qGge4TagErylDXJzijaoDCM7pY/edit?usp=sharing

- Natania and Sara have put together this self care guide
All of these resources are in the GLO newsletter
Access the Career Center Virtually

More Info:
https://careercenter.lehigh.edu/content/working-virtually-career-center

Aly Erk (Career Center):
● There are resources on Handshake, including COVID-19 remote opportunities
Will send out BALANCE letter when we send out the minutes for this meeting.
GRADS HAVE WALKED 532 MILES SO FAR!

1,000 MILES
IN OUR GRAD STUDENTS SHOES

We invite our graduate students to walk/run a collective 1,000 miles.

How does it work?
Upload the miles you run/walk each day to record our progress!

Prizes awarded for:
- Most miles walked
- Most creative route
- Best post-walk photo
GLO is making a historical record for grads during COVID-19

Share with us what you are thinking and feeling

Look for posts on Facebook

facebook.com/groups/lehighglo/

from Kadia

Feelings Poems Pictures

email

gradshare@lehigh.edu
WRITING

BOOT CAMP

Friday(s)
June 12 and 26
8:45am-12:15pm

A 1/2 Day Virtual Writing Retreat

8:45: Zoom opens, intentions, inspirational message
9:00: Session begins, writing starts
10:30: check-in by chat. encourage stretch/walk break
12:00: Session ends, writing ends. Quick check-out

Sign up and registration required for link!

NO DISTRACTIONS.
NO INTERRUPTIONS.
NO EXCUSES.
Capitalism: Limits and Merits

Join us for informal, interdisciplinary discussion

Thursday, June 11 @ 8 PM

https://lehigh.zoom.us/j/98514892042
FEELING ISOLATED?

Lehigh Lookout

Learning To Connect

This 60-minute social interaction space will focus on building deeper and more meaningful connections—with yourself and with others. If you’re open to exploring your relationships to self and others, this will be an opportunity to experiment with vulnerability in a compassionate environment. When you make space for curiosity, you may be surprised by the outcome.

Call now: (410) 793-1300  lehigh.edu  lehigh_2020

COFFEE BREAK

This 60-minute space is for anyone interested in taking a break, getting together, saying hello, updating each other on your current circumstances, talking about how you are negotiating life at this time and what you are doing to make it all work. Grab your mug and come fill your cup!

Thursdays at 3:30pm EDT. Click here to sign up.

Call now: (410) 793-1300  lehigh.edu  lehigh_2020

Live Better with Stress

This 60-minute workshop focuses on distress management with opportunities to talk about challenges, share coping efforts, and gain support in adjusting to COVID-19 and related stressors.

Tuesdays at 1:00pm EDT. Click here to sign up.

Call now: (410) 793-1300  lehigh.edu  lehigh_2020
Start by thanking everyone who filled out the fall concerns survey - we shared them all with the Academic Planning Taskforce, they really seemed to listen. The biggest takeaway from the meeting is that they understand how variable grad situations can be, and are aiming to include flexibility and autonomy in their plan.

Further thank DI&E committee who are already taking steps to act on the action steps discussed in last week’s town hall and President Simon’s response to the open letter.

Has there been any outreach to incoming graduate students?
- This is the next big push, in the next week or two
- GLO is about two weeks behind
- Specific questions can get in touch with Kathleen
- We are playing orientation by ear, since we want to base this off of what the situation in PA looks like
  - Will likely be mostly online

Update from DI&E:
- Working diligently on action steps put out in the letter
- How can we, as graduate students, help to facilitate action and change and hold Lehigh accountable?
- As a group of students, where are we coming from?

Thoughts about moving forward with anti-racism at Lehigh:
- Possible townhall for graduate students?
- Groupmes: Organizing for LU Black Lives and Lehigh Students for BLM - most
• of organizing effort
• Anonymous survey to students to gather thoughts about BLM

Problematic legislation happening:
• Escalation of tensions between the White House and China → reducing the number of student visas for Chinese students in STEM fields
• OPT - trying to organize graduate schools so that when things come up, we can respond collectively

For GSS Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Committee, if anyone has something specific to say regarding BLM and Lehigh as an anti-racist institution, please email me at kam716@lehigh.edu.
Suggestion/Concern Form
Send the E-Board feedback
What issues are you facing as a grad?
Submissions can be anonymous

https://bitly.com/GSSsuggest
https://forms.gle/H45JrxGbjXb45qdh7
Hi all, I'm involved in organizing a Peace March in Emmaus this Sunday at 2pm from Furnace Dam Park in Emmaus to the Emmaus Triangle. We will have a few community speakers at the end of the walk at the Triangle. We'll also have voter registration tables. If you can come, please wear masks and social distance as possible. Here is our Facebook page.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/180742033343695/?fref=nf
Next Meeting:  
July 15th, 12:10-1pm  
https://lehigh.zoom.us/j/91392754216