



**Graduate Student Council
General Assembly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 03/06/24, 5:30–6:30 PM
Adelbert Hall, Toepfer Room**

Opening Discussion:

- The GSC executive board regrets to inform you that Kameron Ko has resigned as the Vice President of Internal Communications. There were discrepancies in the budget that could not be accounted for and an investigation of this matter is ongoing. We will keep representatives informed about the process. With the end of the year quickly approaching, this position will not be filled. Please direct communications (for example, about a proxy appearing on your behalf at the next GA) to gscinfo@case.edu.
- The agenda was presented (as per the GA slides)

RTA presentation:

- U-pass is a program since Fall 2001, providing all students with access to public transportation
- Opt-in only program, to provide universal access privileges; thus based on a revenue-neutral program for the RTA, so that it can benefit students and the RTA
- Heavily discounted rates, unrestricted access
 - Current RTA pass rates are \$95 per month, for graduate students, \$65 per semester (5 months), an 86% reduction in price
- Process in negotiating a 5-year agreement for grad and undergrad, in all schools
- Just adjusting for inflation costs
- Timeline to determine the rate: this should be done in the next couple of weeks (no huge jumps, just an inflation adjustments)
- Why is the RTA unable to offer an opt-in program?: program is based on the model of underutilization for universal access - thus allowing the RTA to give universal access at a cost-neutral for them, while benefiting students
 - Only people who are 100% users would opt-in if that was an option, so they would run on deficit (this is the assumption of RTA)
 - 100% being about student - they calculate this rate based on the assumption that 10% of the population would use every day, 50% would use it often, while 40% might not use it or use only a few times (this is the example they gave, but not the precise percentages)
- For 10 months of coverage in this program, instead of spending \$950, the cost for each student is \$65 per semester
- Summer access: the plan might be revised to include Summer. RTA rep mentioned this being an issue they can discuss with CWRU
- Opt-out program -> student discount for the 40% who are planned to not use the RTA pass as much. This is not possible for the RTA

- Why the RTA cost is different for undergraduate and graduate students: the used percentage rate -> undergraduates are expected to use the pass less often
 - The undergraduate program has been on for 25 years; while graduate student program has highly varied -> they are looking for a continued relationship with all graduate and professional students
 - Nature of the experience with the bodies, and activities done by grads versus undergrads, as well as the nature of activities for each school (e.g. medical and nursing) are used to assess the percentage
 - Utilization data: they are investing in technology to measure that, but there is no data to compare grad and undergrad. The data for CWRU usage is also not the most reliable.
- Opt-in per school instead of all graduate students: it could go back to being by school, or it could be a group determined by the administration (e.g. only business school students and not law students)
 - The school as a whole buy-in for the 5 years, if you are not in a covered school, then you will not be able to access the pass for these 5 years
 - Unified seemed to work better, more leverage and broader benefits to the student body; rather than by school only
- 5-year price: inflation adjustment will be added in the contract and finalized within the next two weeks
 - The cost increase will be inflationary only
 - Align undergraduates and graduates to put things on the same page and future negotiations - which is why it will be synchronized
 - But yes, there is a way to negotiate it for graduate students
- Rep comment: Even if only using a few times a semester, the greater good is for the whole student body, and a great way to explore Cleveland -> encouragement for keeping the access
- A request was made about how many people pick up passes -> They will get the information and send it over as a proxy of how much people care enough about it to pick it up. The CWRU representative said he would get us that data.

Next step in the meeting: Harley took attendance of reps

Afterward, Thomas started off the discussion:

- Rep from engineering, wanted to say that they didn't want to vote yet because they haven't had time to talk to students in their school about the five-year change, as well as additional inflation costs; but that it is a good thing and that even people who are not using every day would be willing to participate
- There is no opt-in, its all or nothing for all graduate students
 - Can we bring the opt-in to the table, to discuss with Richard
- Summer access: should be considered as most grad students are not Spring and Fall only
-

- More comments about wanting all numbers to talk to school students, so no vote; but GSC should pressure the RTA
 - RTA is predicting 10% of students using all the time; if it was revenue neutral, it would be around \$50, the math isn't adding up (numbers will be emailed to Thomas)
 - CSE student body as being much higher, a non-commuter school, only pays \$37 (numbers will be emailed to Thomas)
 - Why can't CWRU support grad students the same as employees under needs (transportation, parking discounts...), GSC can negotiate with CWRU to get access to that, having CWRU care about graduate students
-> if the benefits can be provided to staff, why can't it to graduate students
- If not locked in the rate for 5 years, why are we not having the same value, is it worth it?
 - The idea is that it will keep inflation only rising every year, the price should be locked in
 - If a student who really does need the RTA, if we don't vote for the RTA, could we potentially negotiate to have a smaller discount for students who really need it? Idea for the board
- Having numbers before voting, not committing to something beyond what we would agree
- If we were to agree to a 5-year contract, really stick to only inflation which should not be higher
 - Most people in the medical school do not like the RTA since it's not safe, they don't feel comfortable since homeless people sleep on the RTA in the cold and they might be harassed, especially at night -> need to increase security otherwise we shouldn't get into the contract
 - Redline doesn't check passes, so we should just use it for free as everyone else
 - Counterpoint: students in person replied that other lines (green and blue) do check passes, as well as buses
- The point was brought up for RTA being based on the only model, only 10% of people use, "only vibes" and need more information and tracking
 - Who picks up passes might not be a good way to count numbers based on how many they have left -> it's not ideal but it would give us some data
 - Data might be impacted by things such as lots of passes being lost
 - Having lacking data might benefit us since the price would likely increase when we have data (possibly more than 10% of students use it)
 - The problem is that is revenue neutral, but it doesn't make sense -> they care about the costs of operation. So as of right now, we really need to advocate for a true revenue-neutral cost instead of how to get more money out of the school
 - Inequity in stipends not covering RTA passes in some schools versus others
 - Francesca said that as per the survey results, there is no support for this vote: so feelings about, if the RTA pass doesn't get voted on opt-in (if the vote fail), what would be the feelings around

increasing the GSC fee from 1.5% to 2% (math hasn't been done yet), so that the difference covers the RTA costs for students who really, really need it. Would be similar to PD funds, people can apply and receive funding; and open some kind of fund to help those in need.

- Emergency fund usually is not used to cover that, but can we ask the president/who runs it, if this can be worked to GSC
- Results of the RTA survey in the agenda
 - Comments about results not being representative (only 700 students), and also, not based on the percentage of students in each school
- Offsetting the costs of other students' transportation might not be of interest to most students since they paid a premium to live close to campus and be able to walk
- Underrepresented results in the survey, but it's especially worse since most respondents are from the engineering school and medical school
 - We should not be clouded by the results
- For reps, "we represent our classmates and we should make decisions based on that, survey our own classmates, not based on what we want individually"
 - Moving the vote to April -> Get information from RTA about costs and utilization data, so that reps can talk to the student body, and get information from them before getting a vote
 - Getting information the week of the vote, Thomas is doing everything to get the information early enough to send it before the week of the vote; if that is not possible, it's an option to have the vote online; especially since it's a five-year contract, so it's a big decision.

Thank you for joining us and see you in April!