

October AoS Minutes

October 16th, 3 p.m.

239 Greene St, 2nd floor conference room

Facilitating: Anne

Notetaking: Seana

Timekeeping: Ella

Present: Anne, Ben, Seana, Rani, Darach, Ziad, Michelle, Maya Wind, Shafekah, Sean, Nathan, Daniel, Chris, Parth (Poly), David (Russian Students Union), Sarah, Abhinav (Poly), Jacob, Jess [by skype], Claudia [by skype], Ella

Introductions/Announcements (10 minutes) 3:16

Standing Committee Reports (20 minutes) 3:27

Bylaws election update (10 minutes) 3:32

Update of Organizational Chart (10 minutes) 3:40

Discussion of steward- vs. member meeting-governance (20 minutes) 3:53

Endorsement (10 minutes) 3:59 (we should contact Parth about Poly news)

Poly Plan (Nathan and Ella) (20 minutes (extended 10 minutes)) 4:30

Childcare fund distribution update (Michelle, Seana, Chris) (10 minutes) 4:40

(GSOC wide email when application is set up-- with parents' caucus announcement)

1. Standing committee reports

a. Political Solidarity

- i. Ziad: What's going on with the social justice training?
- ii. Sean: SJT is October 20th at 4pm, good for stewards and anyone else who might be interested. 2 hour event where people will speak generally about how different forms of oppression impact organizing and how to deal with that. It will be a good discussion, all are welcome to attend!
- iii. Sean: Summary of update -- we have started our BDS campaign, working with GSOC non-stewards. First we are starting an open letter with sign-ons aimed at getting NYU & UAW to divest from Israel, and along with that an organized series of events about labor and Palestine. A few events coming up in that series. We also had the We Are Workers day this week to raise awareness of academic work.
- iv. Jacob: What was the We Are Workers turnout?
- v. Sean: About 20 people, low but we wanted to show solidarity with other universities.
- vi. Claudia: Are there any plans for advertising upcoming Rise Up October events in NY?
- vii. David: I would love AoS to endorse that. I have also put together a list of names & phone numbers of people who are on call so when these events have come up, I let people know. Maybe I should check in with

Communications to make the mass-texting process easier... anyone from CommComm who can help me with that?

viii. Sarah: Let's find an app or something that will make that easier.

b. Organizing

- i. Ella: Card collection campaign is ongoing. The cards turned into GSAS were never distributed to departments. I've pieced together that GSAS sent an email to departments Tuesday this week asking them to send a copy of the card PDF to department workers. Good thing GSAS is our best organized school so I think let's not push through the bureaucracy and do some mailbox stuffing for departments that haven't been taken care of yet. If you want to help with that, get in touch with me. My district is well covered, are any other stewards finished and willing to help with Steinhardt professional schools?
- ii. Michelle: Has the enrollment fee kicked in?
- iii. Ella: No, not til the end of the semester. We are going to have weekly meetings at Wash Square like we have been having at Poly, coming up soon.

Bylaws Election Update

Chris: Results were 294 voters, 213 yes to 81 no. Seana and I were able to identify 105 voters who have not yet signed cards in our system. Because the voter system is anonymous, in the future we need to make sure we only set out votes to people who are eligible. So no matter the outcome of those ineligible votes, bylaws are PASSED! It's great that we had good turnout and still with confusing lists, still 10% turnout which is awesome.

Anne: So we don't need to follow Robert's Rules anymore, we get to govern ourselves without motions.

Chris: So one of the features of the bylaws is an increased organizational flexibility. So our bylaws help us govern ourselves but the organizational chart, referenced in the bylaws, is a more dynamic document. The bylaws allow us to fluidly update the organizational chart. One of the things that can happen with that chart means that switching around responsibilities for the stewards. We have been serving as a governing body. There is now potential within the bylaws to allow a member meeting governing structure, so not all votes have to come from stewards. Members who show up can vote. Essentially Assembly of Stewards meetings become membership meetings. We wrote it in as a possibility in the bylaws. So for now before the next meeting, please look at the organizational chart. Our next meeting we will discuss the chart. We will allow you guys to make comments on the chart until the next meeting, then we will discuss the comments you guys have.

Claudia: Some of the rationale for this came from the process of comments we received during the open review period for the bylaws, as well as feedback from other graduate workers' unions at other schools. We want to acknowledge that our organization is new and growing, some parts of NYU are still not well organized. One question is how we make decisions and voting structures. We feared that limiting voting to stewards could lead to demobilization. We want to keep people involved, we are also worried about steward loss. We lost people over the summer

who had been stewards who claimed they were overwhelmed by the workload. So the other thing to consider is how to split up responsibilities across groups. So for example being a steward could be about working within a squad structure, whereas committees could take on more specific roles. Membership could take on more general questions. There are a lot of options, so we wanted the bylaws to be flexible because we don't yet know what the best system is.

Darach: Are we discussing these changes now?

Chris: Yep, let's go for it.

Anne: Bylaws hasn't formed a consensus about what we prefer exactly. I know you were considered about the member-led meetings.

Darach: The idea of meetings where voting occurs at a meeting when we don't have an idea of who is showing up or what is going on. What about mass communications? How/when will people be informed about issues? I understand the sentiment, is there a way for people to access information online and vote online? So people don't have to show up at the meeting necessarily.

Anne: The agenda setting would have to be much more important if it depends on people walking through the door.

Darach: I feel like online voting gets more voices, like with our bylaws vote we just had.

Claudia: Another model is, if something is brought up at a meeting, that would be voted on at the next meeting. There will be a summary of points circulated, and an announcement about the upcoming vote at the next meeting. For our elected body of stewards and possibly Joint Council meetings. At least those elected individuals are designed to appropriately represent the different schools and districts. And the type of vote depends. For example, fair representation may be more important for some types of votes than others.

Sarah: I would be very hesitant to have voting occur on an issue within a single meeting. If people think the month between meetings is too long, can we set a deadline to raise issues and call votes? Also I think we should clean up our email lists before we try to open online voting. There needs to be a better list of who our members actually are.

Ziad: If we move forward with this, what will entice people to become stewards rather than just members?

Claudia: Good question, it may make being a steward easier to take on. That might keep some people from abandoning the steward position. So there are official roles for stewards we have to consider as well. Elected stewards should consider votes on particular issues.

Anne: I am hesitant to make it such that voting is a special goodie that you get for doing more work.

Michelle: I think this particular format of a meeting is difficult to work out these types of questions. I feel like it would help to have proposals (majority, minority) that are clear that we can discuss. Is this a real proposal?

Chris: No but we can make it one.

Michelle: I think there are definitely situations where it is appropriate for a quorum of stewards to be able to vote on an issue that comes up in a meeting. Also I'm not opposed to members voting, I want members to be really involved, but I also think there is a benefit to representative democracy. I think a lot of people who care about GSOC but can't show up to meetings benefit

from having representatives in our assembly. Without a distinction between those roles you can have a situation where the results of an issue depend on who happens to show up.

Darach: I was wondering what the timeline is on this.

Chris: We can commit to having something by next meeting.

Claudia: Maybe we should have a working group for this issue, not limit it to bylaws.

Chris: Working group hosted by members of the bylaws committee?

Ella: I support a lot of what Michelle is saying, I worry about voting fatigue among our members. I think a lot of what people want to get involved in isn't necessarily voting, we should let people participate in ways they want to like organizing or other more interesting things.

Anne: Ok, working group has thoughts now. We will send out an email to people about this.

Endorsement

Anne: Statement to all workers at NYU apologizing for them not getting paid on time. He apologized, then turned around and blamed people for not getting their paperwork on time. It was insulting and terrible.

Seana: We've heard this from Barbara.

Anne: I took the liberty of drafting a response letter. Let me read it to you and we can vote to endorse it. [Anne reads her response letter:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IQIAWOOx5BZECCkCJhBM9gTfLh_DmIDGfw0fVquMhwQ/edit?usp=sharing]

Anne: Vote?

Unanimous approval!

Chris: So we will send this to him, and...?

Anne: Should be public.

Chris: Press release? With this and...?

Seana: We should get SLAM in on this.

Chris: Anyone with press experience? Can we send out a press release on a Saturday?

Ben: Best time is probably Sunday so people get it when they are looking for something to post on Monday.

Parth: Also the Political Reporter. I can pass that information along too.

Poly Plan

[redacted]

Childcare Fund Distribution

Cash for kids!

Chris: We had a meeting with Local 2110, our president Maida and also Patrick to discuss the fund. For those who don't know, we get money in January 2016 for grad workers with students under the age of 6. We want to maximize people getting this money. It's going to be a flat amount disbursed to applicants based on the number of children. We had to alter the plan because the contract's language did not make any sense. We've also worked out an arrangement where 2 documents are required -- you need to show the child was under 6 before 2016.

Nathan: Will it be feasible for international students to fill this out?

Parth: If they brought the children in from another country, they should have a passport.

Chris: The other piece of documentation is an affidavit for people to sign agreeing they are responsible for the child. I'm a little worried about Barbara's lack of comment about the pitch, because NYU has to agree with the arrangement. We are finalizing the language this weekend. It needs to be approved, we want it up by November 1 or 15, close applications January 31. Seems promising. If you know of people who have worked at all in 2015 and have children, please send an email and ask them to get in touch with us. We want this money to be paid out.

Ella: Can we include that in our next GSOC-wide e-mail?

Michelle: That should be when the application goes up. This will be great for GSOC to get in touch with graduate worker parents. I'm excited about the vague affidavit for non-traditional families.

Chris: I'm a little worried about Barbara's reaction to that, that's the last hurdle.

Claudia: Thinking long term, we could have a caucus for parents to discuss issues related to their situation. If anybody is interested in bottom-lining that, let us know.

Michelle: I'd be up for co-coordinating that with someone else.

Shafekah: I was wondering how 6 got involved at the cutoff age.

Michelle: That's typical because that's usually when kids start school.

Claudia: Can the people who make the broadsheet circulate a request for content before it goes out?

Anne: I think the deadline for the upcoming month might be soon but going forward, totally.

Announcements:

hoodies (Michelle has them!)

AWDU book club (contact Michelle)

Ella -> Refugee working group, AWDU call

Sean -> 2nd event Nov 5th Labor in Palestine: "Is it Apartheid? Organizing Labor Under Occupation"