

Graduate Student Senate  
February 2012 Minutes

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll
- III. Approval of the Minutes
- IV. President's Report
  - A. Trace embargo: The Graduate Council passed the Trace proposal. Students can now apply for a one-year embargo to delay publication of a thesis or dissertation on Trace. After the first year, students can apply for extensions to that embargo.
  - B. Student Health: Todd Skelton and other GSS representatives had a meeting at the Student Health Center to address graduate student health insurance concerns (especially regarding the requirements and policies for international students), questions regarding women's health services provided in the new building, and other topics. They will report on that meeting as well as the upcoming Student Health Advisory Meeting at the March GSS meeting.
  - C. 2012 SGA elections: The undergraduate presidential candidates will be attending the March meeting to deliver a short speaking engagement and answer questions.
  - D. Graduate Student Housing: The University is designating graduate student housing in the Andy Holt apartments.
  - E. LGBT Bill passed in Student Senate (undergraduate): A bill to allow applicants to self-identify as LGBT on the university admission application passed the SGA. It still has to pass through other committees and the administration before being implemented.
  - F. GTA Raise Proposal: The University wishes to again increase the GTA stipend. Note that tuition is almost certainly going to be increased but fees should remain constant for next year, except perhaps for the parking and transportation fee. The University also hopes to create new positions for GTA teachers as part of an effort to address bottleneck undergraduate courses.
  - G. New University Center: Demolition on the current garage will begin around Spring Break.
  - H. Academic Policy Committee: The Academic Policy Committee is working on a set of proposals that should streamline readmission to the graduate school, change of program of study within the graduate school, and the completion of concurrent master's degrees.
- V. Vice-President's Report
  - A. Love Your Libraries 5K: Will Gibbons handed out copies of the registration forms for representatives to distribute in their respective departments. He also circulated a volunteer sign-up sheet.
- VI. Committee Reports:
  - A. Communication and Outreach: "Swords and Scales," a graduate organization within the Law School, invited GSS representatives to invite other graduate students in their departments to a Shrimp Boil at the Roaming Gnome on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The committee reminded representatives of the upcoming PEER Symposium, and also updated the GSS on projects to increase the GSS social media presence.

- B. Love Your Libraries 5K: Come to the 5K on March 3!
  - C. Travel Awards: The spring awards cycle has been completed. The committee is continuing to work on revising the application.
- VII. Old Business
- A. Graduate Student Leave Policy: Representatives reported preliminary findings on research completed on the leave policies of peer institutions and top 25 schools. Additional details and recommendations will follow.
  - B. Constitution and Bylaws: The SGA is working on revising the constitution and bylaws, but there is no update on that progress.
- VIII. New Business
- A. PEER Symposium: The Program for Excellence and Equity in Research is organizing a symposium on networking and career preparation. Although the symposium is geared towards students working in the sciences and math, many of the sessions speak to graduate student concerns across different fields. The keynote speaker will be **Dr. Clifford Houston**, who holds the Herman Barnett Distinguished Professorship in Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Texas Medical School, and is the Associate Vice President for Educational Outreach. On Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, PEER is sponsoring a viewing of PhD Comics. The viewing will be at the Alumni Memorial Building at 7:00PM. For more information and registration please visit:  
<http://web.utk.edu/~peer/symposium.htm>
  - B. Travel Blog: GSS is considering creating a “travel blog” to be used and updated by graduate students. It will serve as a forum to share news about conference and research travel, and allow grad students in different departments to see what might be happening across campus. The blog could also serve as a good recruitment tool as a way to show prospective students that research vitality and activity taking place across campus. The GSS discussed the feasibility of the idea and whether graduate students would pursue updating the blog. Depending on the format, representatives seemed to agree that the idea was worth pursuing.
- IX. Adjourn