

**Student Government Association  
Graduate Student Senate  
Meeting Minutes**

September 22, 2011

5:30 P.M. – LAW SCHOOL 135

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

**III. GSS Orientation: The Graduate Student Senate**

The GSS is an advisory body representing the concerns of graduate students at UT. Representatives are encouraged to solicit concerns from their departments to represent to the GSS. Because we are student advocates, representatives are requested to send a proxy if they are unable to attend a meeting. GSS works closely with the Graduate School and Office of the Dean of Students.

**IV. President's Report: Old Business**

A. GSS has the opportunity to work on a wide range of issues. In the past, for instance, the GSS has represented graduate student concerns regarding the school's health insurance. Representatives are encouraged to bring issues that come before their attention to the GSS or the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC). The director of the Student Health Center, Jim Boyle, may attend a future GSS meeting to hear any concerns or questions about graduate student health insurance.

B. The GSS has also represented graduate student interest in augmenting current graduation tradition, primarily by creating official UT doctoral regalia, a Chancellor's Award for Research and a student address at the graduate hooding ceremony.

C. For the 2011-2012 year, Todd and Will would like to make the GSS more transparent and visible on campus. To accomplish these goals, the GSS, for one thing, will consider changing voting procedures for both the GSS president/vice-president and for departmental representatives. Voting for GSS president and vice-president occurs along with voting for undergraduate SGA representatives. Although the university sends an email with a link to the ballot, many graduate students are unaware that GSS candidates are included in the ballot, believing the email only concerns undergraduate students. GSS representatives are also selected by their departments through a variety of methods at various points in the year (some, for instance, at the end of the spring semester and some in the fall right before the GSS begins meeting). The GSS would like to streamline the process for selecting GSS representatives. Additionally, Todd and Will want to attend graduate student organization meetings.

## **V. President's Report: New Business**

A. A primary responsibility of the GSS is selecting the recipients for Travel Awards. For the 2011-2012 school year, additional one-time money is available for the fall, spring and summer semesters.

B. The GSS also sponsors the Love Your Libraries 5K run to raise money for the library. Scheduled for Saturday, March 3, 2012, the run will begin in Circle Park and loop around campus.

C. As part of the current GSS's goal of making the senate more visible on campus, we will be holding a Town Hall meeting later in the fall (date TBA). The meeting will hopefully allow graduate students to discuss ongoing concerns and have an impact on university policies relating to graduate students.

D. Todd and Will have also created a Facebook page (Facebook Group Skelton-Gibbons: Graduate Student Senate) to allow for better and faster communication between graduate students. The GSS is also making public a list of all graduate representatives and committee members available on the SGA website.

## **VI. Administrative Business**

A. Shelby Johnson volunteered to be GSS secretary and was confirmed by vote.

B. Graduate student representatives for university committees were confirmed by vote.

## **VII. Future Issues:**

For the October meeting, the GSS will elect committee chairs to spearhead the various activities the GSS will be involved in this year, including:

- \*Committee on Graduate Student Equity & Diversity
- \*Committee on Communications and Outreach
- \*Committee on Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards
- \*Committee on Graduate Student Senate Fun Run

We will continue discussing the ways the GSS can represent graduate student concerns for:

1. Academics
2. Communication
3. Diversity
4. Fiscal responsibility
5. Student life

## **VIII. Adjourn**

<p><b>Future Meetings:</b> October 26, 2011 November 17, 2011</p>
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