

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2015

Jess Welch, President
Jeremy Auerbach, Vice-President
Trevor Hedberg, Secretary

❖ **CALL TO ORDER**

❖ **ROLL**

- Senators Absent:
 - Danielle Sanok
 - Randi Black
 - Robert Truka
 - Jonathan Lindsay/Kate Abrahamsson
 - Candace Wilson – Excused
 - Richie Livingston – Excused
 - Dustin Mills
 - Kendra Slayton
 - Robert Pivar
 - Taylor Hixson – Proxy, Noah Lasley
 - Stefan Hodges-Kluck – Proxy
 - Brian Rider – Proxy, Jackson Martin
 - Jason Strickling
 - John Salasin – Excused
 - Kelly Rooker
 - Julie King
 - Jenny Onley
 - Andrew Giminaro
 - Jennie Byrd Haney
 - Nick Sirica
 - Herb Piercy – Proxy, Elizabeth Thomas
 - Timathoy Estabrooks
 - Shannon Rosedale – Proxy, Erika Panek
 - Erik Johnson
 - Melissa Martin – Excused

❖ **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Approve Minutes → two small edits made; minutes approved
- Updates
 - Signed petitions (related to the graduate student stipends) were submitted at the beginning of the meeting.
 - Regarding the graduate student stipends, even without the data being fully compiled, administrators are fairly confident that our stipends are not competitive with top 25 institutions.
 - The stipend research is primarily focusing on whether stipends constitute a living wage; thus, some other considerations (e.g., the varied cost of living in various areas of the country) are not a serious focus.

❖ **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Updates

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- Luncheon on February 13th → wants to meet with committee chairs to formulate rough bullet points to present at the luncheon

❖ **INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Chair of Equity & Diversity Committee
 - Committee is currently drafting a bill to get an ombudsman for all students at the university
 - During the March 4th meeting, the committee will present a draft of this bill and solicit feedback from other GSS members.
 - Steven Jones delivered a presentation this week to the Faculty Senate proposing changes to the current UTK residency requirements that was well received by most faculty members.
- Chair of Communications & Outreach Committee
 - A draft of the orientation packet for GSS senators was recently distributed; the committee requests feedback on this material.
 - Suggested additions:
 - Rough explanation of the organizational scheme of GSS could be helpful
 - Current senators should be instructed to secure senators for the following year (ideally in the spring semester); how senators are chosen is up to each department, though elections are a fairly common method.
 - Next GSS social is scheduled for February 26th at Cool Beans; flyers are now available.
 - The date of the Town Hall Meeting is (most likely) going to change to March 25th.
 - At the Town Hall Meeting, the format is likely to be altered so that we begin by highlighting some of GSS's recent accomplishments.
- Chair of the Travel Awards Committee
 - Last meeting, the committee requested feedback regarding the best use of GSS funds.
 - 20% of those who requested a change want funding for research-generating events.
 - 30% of those who requested a change want funding for events that are not focused on either the creation of original research or presentation of such research (e.g., veterinary externships).
 - There were some other proposals, but they were much less common.
 - A significant portion of respondents (more than 30%) also said that the current GSS allocation of travel awards was fine.
 - Potential revisions to the allocation of GSS funds will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Chair of the Fun Run Committee
 - The committee has locked down a lot of sponsors for the event.
 - Starting location will now be the amphitheater – not Circle Park.
 - At the moment, there are 9 scheduled stations and 3 other possible stations; more stations would still be appreciated.
 - Posters are available, though the typo regarding the year should be noted.
 - The Big Orange Adventure needs participants. Teams consist of 4-6 people, and it is open to the public – not restricted to graduate students.
 - Volunteers for the Big Orange Adventure (i.e., those that run the various stations) will get a free T-Shirt.

❖ **EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Updates
 - Commission for Women → meeting this week; Jimmy Cheek is visiting the committee
 - Graduate Student Appreciation Week occurs in April: free food, free events, etc.

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- Faculty Senate Graduate Council
 - Presently, graduate students cannot get minuses (e.g., B-) but can receive plusses (e.g., B+); some faculty feel that graduate students should be capable (like undergraduates) of receiving minuses in their courses.
- Advisory Committee on Student Organizations
 - Nothing noteworthy to report except that some student organizations do not follow the basic procedures for writing viable constitutions
- Commission for Blacks
 - Annual conference is coming up, though registration is now closed.
 - Trailblazing series is in progress.
- Dean of Libraries Student Advisory Committee
 - Janna is trying to get the amount of time that grad students can borrow certain periodicals increased from its current 24 hour limit.
- Faculty Senate Library and Information Technology Committee
 - Trying to bring Google Education to UTK
- Faculty Senate Research Council
 - The current amount of time to get an IRB to conduct research currently takes 2 months, which makes things difficult for graduate students on tight timetables.
- SPAC
 - Next meeting is February 9th
- Technology Advisory Board
 - Linda.com is now available to UTK students; about 1500 students are using it presently.
 - The board is working on improving our cell phone network.
 - More feedback is needed regarding wireless connectivity on the Ag Campus.

❖ **NEW BUSINESS**

- Call for Topics
 - Jeremy's proposal: make involvement in the Fun Run mandatory *if* the Fun Run is extremely successful this year.
 - Kelly Ward is coming to speak about work-life balance later in February; she could give a talk to graduate students on February 17th in the evening, but this would not align well with our upcoming GSS meetings.
 - For the luncheon, we should gather some information about how GSS has helped individual departments and highlight the contributions of the committees; suggestions should be emailed to Jeremy at gss2@utk.edu.
 - Would it possible to gather information about GSS success stories as a way to promote the organization? → Probably but it will require some research on UT alumni
 - Should we bring up the lack of lactation rooms again? → Response at the previous luncheon was, in the eyes of some senators, too superficial and dismissive; according to a recent report, there are actually only 2 lactation rooms on campus.
 - It might be helpful to broach the possibility of getting more money from the administration for GSS Travel Awards, given the increased interest, but such a suggestion would need to be made with appropriate sensitivity and gratitude, since the funds were recently increased by \$200,000 annually.

❖ **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Upcoming events

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❖ **ADJOURN**

❖ **COMMITTEE BREAKOUT**

Upcoming Graduate Student Senate Meetings

Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 5:30pm (Claxton 206 *tentative*)

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 5:30pm (Claxton 206 *tentative*)

Other Events

Chancellor's Spring Luncheon – Friday, February 13, 2015 at 11:45am (Crest Room)

“Ice Cream” Social – Thursday, February 26 at 7pm (Cool Beans)

Big Orange Adventure – Saturday, March 7 at 9am (HSS Ampitheatre)

Town Hall Meeting – Thursday, March 26 at 5:30pm (Shiloh Room *tentative*)