

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015

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

❖ **CALL TO ORDER**

❖ **ROLL**

- Senators Absent:
 - Danielle Sanok
 - Randi Black
 - Robert Truka
 - Kelsey Stephenson
 - Kay Leigh Farley
 - Jonathan Lindsay/Kate Abrahamsson
 - Matt Ascitutto
 - Candace Wilson
 - Steven Jones
 - Kristen Anders
 - Dustin Mills
 - Corinne Tandy/Matt Riley
 - Robert Pivar
 - Janna Caspersen
 - Taylor Hixson
 - Jackson Martin
 - Jason Strickling
 - John Salasin
 - Andrew Giminaro
 - Jennie Byrd Haney
 - Nick Sirica
 - Sam Lookatch
 - Donghwan Yoon
 - Timothy Estabrooks
 - Kyle Letteney
 - Erik Johnson
 - Drew Drake

❖ **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Approve Minutes → Minutes for 2/3 approved
- Updates
 - Recap of the luncheon
 - Fairly well-attended by both students and faculty
 - The chancellor delivered a presentation on the competitiveness of UT's graduate student stipends; broadly speaking, stipends are not competitive with schools in the top-25 aspiration group.
 - The presentation on the graduate student stipends is available on the UT Board of Trustees website.
 - \$1 million has been put into a fund to improve graduate student stipends.

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- Allie Rhinehart pressed the administration on the current IRB policies; faculty and administrators recognize that this is a serious problem (for students, faculty, and administration).
 - Bylaw Changes
 - Updates to the bylaws are almost finished.
 - The penultimate draft will be circulated to members of GSS.
- ❖ **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
- Updates
 - Milestone review committee report
 - There is some debate about whether a goal to become a “top 25” institution is laudable, since a failure to make that mark will look bad in the public eye.
 - The goal is to get into the top 25 peer institutions, which is a different ranking system than, for example, the US & World News Rankings.
- ❖ **INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**
- Chair of Equity & Diversity Committee
 - Dean of Students Office currently fills the role of Ombudsmen, though not in quite the same way as what a legitimate ombudsmen would provide.
 - Next week, this committee will discuss equity in the process of how travel awards are allocated.
 - Chair of Communications & Outreach Committee
 - GSS Social was cancelled because of a blizzard, but there will be another one scheduled.
 - Think about who might replace you if you won't be able to serve on GSS next year.
 - Chair of the Travel Awards Committee
 - Retroactive applications are now called “short-notice” applications.
 - Travel awards are now both needs-based and merit-based.
 - The online system for applying for travel awards is still in progress; applications – whether online or in the “classic” paper format – will be available within the next two weeks.
 - Chair of the Fun Run Committee
 - Fun Run is this Saturday.
 - This year's Fun Run features twice as many events as last year's Fun Run.
- ❖ **EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**
- Updates
 - Commission for Women
 - Most sexual assault incidents revolve around drinking, but despite the messages to avoid drinking, it occurs on campus in excess nearly every Saturday of the fall semester.
 - The Lady Vols brand has been under discussion because only the basketball team has been allowed to keep the Lady Vols brand.
 - Student Programming Allocation Committee
 - Regarding Sex Week, SEAT applied for 40% of the total funds that were available and received 15% of the total funds available.
 - Many student organizations received no funding at all, and SEAT got the second-most funding of any student organization.
 - SEAT's allegations regarding discrimination with respect to what groups were funded have not withstood critical scrutiny.

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- This is the first year that this allocation process has been in place, so the process may undergo some minor changes before next year.
 - Technology Advisory Board
 - Linda.com continues to gather more users.
 - Atlas TI is being dropped because it is not worth what it currently costs; it is being replaced by NVivo.
 - Sexual Assault Taskforce
 - New policy on sexual assault was approved by the task force.
 - SAIS process is going to be reviewed at the end of the year, but the committee has not discussed this yet.
- ❖ **NEW BUSINESS**
- Ombudsmen Presentation
 - Ombudsmen = someone who plays a mediatory role in helping students resolve issues or complaints with the university
 - Does not change policies on his/her own
 - Does not replace appeal processes
 - Students do not have access to this service presently, but staff and faculty members have two ombudsmen that they can consult.
 - Other schools in the top-25 peer aspiration group provide this service to their graduate students.
 - Call for Topics
- ❖ **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- Upcoming events
- ❖ **ADJOURN**
- ❖ **COMMITTEE BREAKOUT**

Upcoming Graduate Student Senate Meetings

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

Other Events

Big Orange Adventure – Saturday, March 7 at 9am (Circle Park)
Town Hall Meeting – **Monday, April 6** at 5:30pm (Baker Center)
“Ice Cream” Social – **Wednesday, April 8** at 7pm (Cool Beans)
Travel Awards Workshop – **Tuesday, April 7** at 5:30pm (UC 221)