

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2014

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

❖ **CALL TO ORDER**

❖ **INTRODUCTION OF SENATORS**

- Absences:
 - Danielle Sanok
 - Grady Ferguson – Excused
 - Randi Black
 - Cory Vineyard
 - Molly Albin – Excused
 - Robert Truka – Excused
 - Jonathan Lindsey – Sent Proxy
 - Janna Caspersen – Excused
 - Chris Wilson
 - Herb Piercy – Sent proxy
 - Erik Johnson
 - Jason Strickling – Sent proxy
 - Adam Powell – Sent proxy
 - Yusheng Mei
 - Hopelyn Clift
 - Melissa Martin – Excused
 - Andrew Giminaro
 - Will Batemean – Excused
 - David Surmick
 - Bo Wang
 - Matt Riley
 - Steven Jones – Excused

❖ **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Welcome to GSS
- Role as Senators
 - In a nutshell, we represent graduate student interests and serve as liaisons between the GSS and our departments.
 - Meetings once per month
 - About one social per year
- Updates
 - Travel Awards Committee has already met and allocated awards for the fall semester: 157 awards were sent out.

❖ **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Welcome to GSS

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2014

❖ **COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

- Secretary → **Trevor Hedberg appointed**
- Chair of Equity and Diversity Committee → **Robert Truka elected**
 - In-State vs. Out-of-State Residency is a pressing issue.
 - UTK does not provide equality benefits for those who are not married in the traditional (i.e., heterosexual) sense.
 - There is now a new leave-of-absence policy in the graduate student handbook that enables students to resume their current progress in their graduate program after taking up to a 2-year leave-of-absence, provided that the student remains continuously enrolled in at least 3 hours each semester.
- Chair of Communications and Outreach Committee → **Anne Turner elected**
 - Graduate students may be disinterested in the GSS because we do not appear to do anything consistently (i.e., from year to year) or utilize the resources that we have available, such as our website; correcting these issues will be one objective for this committee during the current academic year.
 - Additional objective for the upcoming academic year: develop orientation materials for new senators.
- Chair of Travel Awards Committee → **Grady Ferguson elected**
 - Chair will host a workshop on how to fill out the forms correctly
 - Moving to electronic submissions starting in Spring 2015 in an effort to streamline the submission process
- Chair of Fun Run Committee → **Kendra Slayton elected**
 - The de-stress events during Finals Week (e.g., massage therapists, therapy dogs, free food) are funded in part by the proceeds generated by the Fun Run.
 - Last year, the Fun Run was a scavenger hunt that ended in Hodges Library.
 - The main objective for the chair of this committee is to increase involvement in the event.
- Administrative Committees: Some spots still need to be filled.
 - Campus Personal Safety Committee
 - Graduate Curriculum Committee
 - Task Force in Support of Student Veterans

❖ **NEW BUSINESS**

- By-Law Revisions
 - By-laws have been revised for the first time in several years.
 - Changes will be sent out shortly; GSS members are encouraged to look over the changes and suggest further revisions as needed.
- Nursing Facilities
 - Jaime Call addressed the GSS to explain that campus does not have adequate facilities to pump for newborns.
 - GSS representatives voted decisively to pursue the implementation of suitable nursing facilities for graduate students, although no formal resolution was put forward.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2014

- Call for Discussion Topics
 - Some members of the Educational Psychology and Counseling Department were not informed of whether they would be funded for the 2014-2015 academic year until July 2014; many felt that such short notice regarding one's funding status was unacceptable.
 - Members of the Art Department voted in approval of gender-neutral bathrooms, but for whatever reason, these restrooms have never been installed.
 - Several GSS members voiced displeasure about the current parking situations for graduate students.
 - Some wanted information about the possibility of graduate students having their own parking lots or reserved spots. The possibility of selling staff permits to graduate students was also discussed.
 - ◆ In some cases, it is already possible for graduate students to get staff permits, provided that they are obtained via one's department with a signed letter of authorization.
 - ◆ But not all departments allow graduate students to get staff permits.
 - A plan to put together a formal resolution about graduate student parking was put forward; a subcommittee (beneath the Equity & Diversity Committee) was formed to pursue this matter, and it is being headed by Robert Rennie (rrennie@utk.edu).
 - The student fees for engineering courses are extremely high – up to \$1500 per semester. Some think these costs are disproportionately expensive and should be reduced, if doing so is possible.

❖ **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Upcoming events (listed at the end of the minutes)

❖ **ADJOURN**

❖ **COMMITTEE BREAKOUT**

Upcoming Graduate Student Senate Meetings

Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at 5:30pm (location TBD)

Thursday, November 6, 2014 at 5:30pm (location TBD)

Monday, December 1, 2014 at 5:30pm (location TBD)

Other Events

Chancellor's Fall Luncheon – Thursday, September 25, 2014 at 11:45pm in the Crest Room

“Ice Cream” Social – Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at 5:30pm (location TBD)

Travel Awards Workshop – Wednesday, November 5, 2014 at 5:30pm (location TBD)