

GSS Senator Meeting November 2, 2017
5:30-7:00 PM in HBB301

- I. Meeting Called to Order by Rachel ; Minutes Recorded by Erin Rowland
- II. Attendance
 - a. Use the new link <https://goo.gl/7UnJrE>
- III. Minutes from Previous Mtg
 - a. Available online
 - b. Motion to accept without reading. Seconded. Voted on and approved.
- IV. Special Speaker – Dr. Thompson, Dean of Graduate School
 - a. GSS working with center for Career Development to increase professional development
 - b. Will announce beginning next week more about graduate fellowships for next year
 - c. Travel Award process is moving to management under the Graduate School (will be handed in at 111 Student Services)
 - d. Faculty Research Awards were already due last year. Almost \$90,000 available each year for these.
 - e. Concerns
 - i. Disseminate information to departments about how departments (other entities?) can pay for travel ahead of time for graduate students attending conferences and then be reimbursed instead of students having to prepay as some do not have the financial means.
 - ii. Vet school students can no longer apply for GSS Awards for their externships. Can this be opened back up?
 - iii. Can notification be made sooner on whether or not GSS Awards will be received. Students are sometimes finding out right before or right after their conferences and have had to cancel.
 - iv. Problems have arisen about students' comprehensive exam results being delayed or rules being very different even within departments. Are there any ways to make this more uniform?
 1. Dr. Thompson said that department exams are very different, so it would be difficult to make the timing of exam results uniform. We could perhaps look into making things more uniform within subunits, though.
 2. If students have problems with timing on exam results, they should first approach their department head, then the dean of their college before approaching the Graduate School.
 - v. Sergio also offered that the GSS is only receiving about \$35,000 towards travel awards out of the \$5 million in fees that are paid each year by graduate students.
 1. Sergio suggests we need a committee to investigate it where the graduate student fees are going.
- V. President's Report given by Sergio Bedford
 - a. Caffeine breaks have been very popular, so we will probably try to do these again.
 - i. A point was made that we might want to think about increasing our GSS presence with on-campus events that help graduate students network with one another, especially 1st years. Dean Thompson relayed that in the new Student Union, there is going to be a gathering place specifically designated for graduate students. This should help them better get to know one another.

- b. GPSAW is the first week of April.
- c. All campuses except for the Health Science Center have opted out of outsourcing.

VI. New Business

- a. Constitution Task Force – Brad Phillis
 - i. **Link on Google Doc: https://tiny.utk.edu/hG*SR**
 - ii. We can approve the Constitution by a 2/3rds vote in the GSS. It will then have to be approved by ¾ of voting graduate students.
 - iii. We intend to set up our bylaws to make things more changeable without having to have frequent school wide votes by graduate students.
 - iv. Please look over the Constitution for any mistakes.
 - v. Any departments with over 50 students could have more than one representative.
 - vi. Feedback – please look at...
 - 1. Preamble – what do you want in it?
 - 2. Nondiscrimination and diversity statement
 - vii. Comments
 - 1. 2/3rds vote should be 3/4ths of VOTING graduate students, not all graduate students
 - 2. We need a date on, if the president appointed a judiciary head/committee, when he would have to complete this.
 - 3. No problem with departments having more than 1 rep if they have over 50 graduate students.
 - 4. It is wishful thinking to have all GSS senators elected by the first day of the academic year.
 - a. Constitution was adjust to read “within two weeks of the first day of the academic year.” Dean Thompson suggested that anytime after that is awfully late for representatives, and Sergio added that the previous year’s rep may not stay on for the first GSS meetings at the beginning of the academic year.
 - 5. Thoughts on non-discrimination article?
 - a. It might be good to state that in the event of discrimination, who should the student address. Dean Thompson recommended cross checking with Hilltopics on this.
 - 6. Permanent committees will be included in the Constitution, but the rest will be placed in the Bylaws under the concept of temporary committees that the president forms at the beginning of the year.
 - 7. ONCE WE FORMALLY SEPARATE, it will be important to continue making sure the entire campus knows GSS has separated from SGA and that graduate student concerns should be advised by GSS not SGA.
 - viii. It was motioned and seconded that the senators would allow an online vote on UTK Go to approve the Constitution before the January meeting.
- b. Legislative and Steering Committee
 - i. Top concerns voted on by GSS senators to address this year
 - 1. TA Stipends, diversity, and campus safety
 - 2. Committee already has enough individuals research TA stipend concerns, but needs volunteers to research on diversity and campus safety.

3. Volunteers should email Sarah at sleppa@vols.utk.edu
 - c. Brown Bag Series coming up – “Transitioning to the Next Phase” on Nov. 9 from 11:30AM to 1PM in Hodges Room 253
 - d. GSS Travel Award deadlines coming up
 - i. A&S and EHHS – Nov. 20
 - ii. All other colleges – Nov. 27
- VII. Motion to Adjourn and seconded