GSS Senator Meeting February 6, 2018

5:30-7:00 PM in Arts & Architecture 113

1. Meeting Called to Order by Rachel ; Minutes Recorded by Erin Rowland
2. Opening Remarks
   1. Dr. Thompson, Dean of Graduate Schools, with updates from the Graduate School
      1. Looking at new admissions
      2. Grad School is busy considering
3. Attendance
   1. Use the new link https://goo.gl/7UnJrE
4. Minutes from Previous Mtg
   1. Available online
   2. Motion was made to accept without reading. Seconded. Voted on and approved.
5. President’s Report by Sergio Bedford
   1. Election time is nearing. We need an election chair.
   2. Need a new Travel Awards Chair for next year. Please let Sergio know if you are interested.
   3. Summer Travel Awards - March 1, due April 1 or 2 depending on college.
   4. GPSAW, April 2-6
      1. We will be doing a Talent Show, Roller Disco, Trivia Night, and a 3MT
      2. BBQ for GSS officer candidates to meet graduate students
      3. Need help on planning the Awards Breakfast, PLEASE
      4. Ideas?
         1. Maybe a grad student meet up at Central Filling Station – the new food truck place in Happy Holler
      5. GPSAW week calendar should be set soon. We will be sending it out.
6. Guest Speaker – Beauvais Lyons, Faculty Senate President
   1. There have been concern over Neo-Nazis and Traditionalist Workers Party on campus. Discussion in the Faculty Senate has expressed concern over these groups.
      1. The decision was made to name the groups, but to follow Chancellor Davenport’s lead to not mention the leaders by name.
      2. We are committed to complying with the College Free Speech Act, but these groups do not respect the rights of others’ freedom of speech.
      3. An official statement was issued condemning their actions and applauding university administration’s support of diversity and equality.
   2. There will be a “United at the Rock Against Racism” meeting at The Rock from 3:30-5:30PM on Friday, February 9th for all people, regardless of religion or non-religion, to hold a candlelight vigil to take a stand against racism and hate.
   3. The Faculty Senate is also concerned about graduate stipends and is working to bring attention to this issue.
      1. These stipends can vary by department, so that makes for some difficulty.
      2. The idea would be to first perhaps focus on a minimum universal stipend floor.
   4. Concerns from GSS?
      1. Fees for international students. This has been crippling for some international graduate students, particularly those from more impoverish countries as fees are currently over $1000 and may be high compared to sister universities.
         1. Response: This is being looked at. It may be a good area of inclusion for the new head of International Education at the university.
      2. Some students have expressed concern that advisors are not helpful or may have unlimited power concerning grants, etc. Students are struggling to speak out because of that power.
         1. Response: Consult the handbooks for the department. Due process is available. Graduate students should also have multiple mentors in the grad school process as they can benefit from diff ideas and inputs.
         2. GSS addition: The appeals process is very student focused. Check out the resources available.
         3. Dr. Thompson: We have a new Dean of Student Services, Sarah Bradbury. Also, feel free to reach out to her if you feel like this is a deep seated institutional issue. Also, if there are issues on comprehensive exams, these should be handled at the department level, and students should refer to the departmental handbooks for due process.
7. Constitution
   1. 29 Senators were present out of 59 active senators, so we have a quorum.
   2. The Constitution was seconded and approved.
8. United at the Rock Against Racism – Addendum
   1. The question arose of whether we want to endorse the faculty statement or craft our own from GSS.
      1. Two other campus organizations have also drafted statements, so we could draft a statement, as well.
      2. It was determined that the GSS diversity statement from the GSS Constitution would be used to craft a statement from our GSS Executive Committee to answer the racism issues on campus. This way a vote would not be needed by the GSS in general.
9. Adjournment
   1. Motioned and seconded. Vote passed to adjourn.