



GSS Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

5:30 pm

HBB 103

Meeting called to order by Johnny Richwine at 5:35 pm; minutes recorded by Simon Rotzer

I. Opening Remarks

A. GSS T-Shirts

1. Can be picked up from Amanda Lake Heath (Programming & Events Chair)
2. Should be worn at least once per month to increase visibility of GSS

B. Name Tags

1. Voting number is located on the corner of your name tag and listed on the Senator Roster on the GSS website
2. Return them after each meeting

C. Attendance

1. Taken via QR-code
2. Present: 38 out of 46 filled-senator positions - meeting has a quorum
3. Additional Guest: Dr. Misty Anderson, President of the Faculty Senate

II. Guest Speakers

A. Dr. David Manderscheid, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

1. Main goals for his term:
 - a) Achieve representation internally and externally
 - b) Improve six-year graduation rate for undergraduates
 - (1) Graduate students are important for this endeavor; that is why graduate student rate needs to be increased
 - (2) Provide more opportunities for e-learning; recommends teaching e-learning classes (improves our chances on the job market)
 - c) Increase graduate student rate
 - d) Make sure that every department has the money it needs

2. Questions:

a) Brandy Mmbaga (60): How do you want to focus on diversity and inclusion?

(1) Dr. Manderscheid:

(a) Points to successful project from his time before coming to UTK

(b) UT-specific: replied to a report from Diversity Advocates that has been left unanswered for a while

(c) In short: less talk, more action!

(d) We have to hold him accountable!

b) Derek Boyd (11): In your plan/strategy how do you plan to address the issue of graduate student stipends?

(1) Dr. Manderscheid:

(a) Agrees with the issue of low stipends

(b) Redirects question to Dr. Thompson

(2) Dr. Thompson:

(a) Graduate School has \$1m available to put towards stipends right now

(i) Currently collecting data from Payroll until October

(ii) Targets departments that are paying the lowest wages

(b) Minimum stipends have not increased since 2002

(i) Some departments pay more, but the initial money (\$1m) will be given to departments with lowest graduate student wages

(c) Chancellor has indicated to put more money into this program so that, over time, wages for all graduate students will (gradually) increase

c) Ryan Gesme (19): Are there plans to increase office space (desks, offices, etc.) for graduate students?

(1) Dr. Manderscheid:

(a) There is no talk about increasing the load on the individual graduate students

(2) Dr. Thompson:

(a) Physical space-decision are handled at the college/department level

(b) However, new buildings will be able to house additional people

(c) No solution yet, but it is a part of the metrics the university is looking at

d) If you want to talk to Manderscheid, email him directly

B. Dr. Dixie Thompson, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

1. Thanks senators for being active in GSS, because others depend on us
2. Issues of space and stipends
 - a) Not easy to fix, will take a while and careful planning
 - b) But we need to remind the Graduate School about it
3. Graduate School is working hard to get most up to date data on stipends
 - a) First \$1m will be put towards the lowest paid graduate students
4. Other investments for graduate education
 - a) \$4.5m in fellowships each year (graduate school/colleges and departments); shows that graduate education is important
 - (1) Graduate School had no part in the decision to put money into fellowships, not stipends
 - (2) However, argues that it gives departments more flexibility
 - b) \$0.5m in tuition support for prestigious fellowships that do not necessarily provide enough for tuition
 - c) \$18m of in-state/\$50m of out-of-state tuition for people on fee-waiver
5. Graduate education is vital for UT
 - a) There still is not enough money for all stipends yet
 - b) They are looking for more and try to do the best for us
6. Efforts to foster diversity and inclusion
 - a) Increase diversity and inclusion in the applicant pool
 - b) Trying to get raise number of diverse applicants to UT (involves lots of travelling, departmental grants for recruitment efforts, hosting a lot of colleges that bring scholars to our campus)
7. Questions:
 - a) Jordan Kaiser (14): Health insurance for graduate students covers the basics, but dental and eyecare need improvement. Can we do something about that?
 - (1) Dr. Thompson:
 - (a) Group on health insurance benefits will meet next week
 - (b) We can send her an email with an outline of some gaps in the coverage that should be addressed

b) Michelle Parker (37): Does UT offer programs for graduate student success?

(1) Dr. Thompson:

(a) There are several professional development initiative groups meeting now to assess the professional development situation and how to fill gaps

(b) Professional development is not all about success, but it ties into it

(i) Success also depends on support structures: career development, health services, etc.; all of this is available to us

(2) Comment by Derek Boyd (11):

(a) There was talk about graduate students being turned away from the writing center, because it is only for undergraduates

(b) Answer by Dr. Thompson and another senator:

(i) It was just announced that they will now help graduate students too

c) Ali Boggs (47): How can we address the situation of graduate students being left behind, because they are overloaded with teaching which keeps them from conducting research?

(1) Dr. Thompson:

(a) Turn to resources in the department (mentor/department head) and let them know about your frustrations; they should be receptive

(i) Alternatively: Dean of Students has an Ombudsperson who can help you look for solutions

d) Derek Boyd (11): Since you are collecting data on graduate student incomes: have you thought about sending out a survey to graduate students to get a clearer picture of the stipend situation?

(1) Dr. Thompson:

(a) Graduate School is exclusively looking at data from payroll

(2) Derek (11):

(a) There are differences in resources that students need: dental, eyecare, etc. This is hard to evaluate through payroll data alone.

(b) There is no way to account for overworked students

- (3) Dr. Thompson:
 - (a) There is no real measure for being overworked
 - (b) However: the notion of the faculty is that workload is not evenly distributed right now
 - (c) Her understanding: the issue will be worked on
- e) Michael Phillips (15): Are you accounting for student fees in your data analysis? Fees put additional stress on students with a low paying stipend.

- (1) Dr. Thompson:
 - (a) The suggestion can be brought forward to the administration
 - (b) Fees are not approved at the campus level, but by the board of trustees
 - (c) Could UTK provide relief for fees? – She is not sure if that issue exists

- (2) Brandy Mmbaga (60):
 - (a) Is it possible to give students the option to tell payroll where to put the increased stipends (towards fees, or more money monthly)?

- (3) Dr. Thompson:
 - (a) The idea can be put into a GSS proposal

C. Ms. Moira Binder, Parking and Transit Services

1. General information

- a) She is the customer and communications manager
 - (1) Not a “follow the rules and there will be no problem”-person
 - (2) Responds even to negative emails
 - (3) Contact information:
 - (a) Moira A. Binder, mbinder@utk.edu; 865-974-2846
 - (b) Pass her information around in case we have parking-related questions
 - (4) She brought new parking maps for us
- b) Parking-situation on campus
 - (1) UT has excess commuter parking this year
 - (2) New Terrace Avenue Garage
 - (a) Designated for commuters and staff; no specific zones for either
 - (b) 1000 parking spots, 300 vacant spaces daily since it has been opened
 - (c) Real-time information available online/through app; check G17 (Terrace Avenue)

- (i) Do not even bother checking G16 (Volunteer Boulevard), it is always full
- (3) Factors that make it hard to provide more convenient parking spaces:
 - (a) No way to expand parking north of campus
 - (b) Cannot have parking garage on Ag campus, because it casts shadow on greenhouses
- (4) Reminder:
 - (a) No commuter/staff parking on campus on game day
 - (i) Find alternative solutions, e.g.: park in the city, have someone drop you off, use KAT
- (5) There is no real time info on garages, except for G16 and G17
 - (a) If we come across a full garage in the early morning, we can tweet to Moira and she will make it known to everyone
- (6) Parking and Transit Services does not send out emails about (temporary) disruptions in parking (e.g. reserved spaces for certain events)
- (7) "Getting around UT"-newsletter is emailed once a month
 - (a) We can sign up for it

2. Questions

- a) Michelle Parker (37): Why can graduate students teaching their own classes not use staff parking spaces?

(1) Ms. Binder:

- (a) Because we are graduate students, not staff

- b) Sue Choi (9): Where do parking fees go?

(1) Ms. Binder:

- (a) Mostly used pay back debt

- (i) T-buses also help pay off debt for new garages

- (ii) Does not fund nice offices

- (iii) Citations are 9% of the budget

- (a) 35,000 citations per school year

- (b) At the beginning of the year it is more extreme: confusion about where to park, or whether a parking pass is actually worth it

- (b) Two thoughts on overnight parking:

- (i) Parking meters on Vol Boulevard West

(a) \$3 for 10 hours (or \$0.30/hour)
during the day

(b) Apparently not monitored after
6PM and before 8AM; could be an
overnight parking option

(ii) We can work with advisors/supervisors
to get special permit for overnight
parking; needs to be related to UT work
and UT research

III. Confirmation of Appointments

- A. Johnny Richwine, Senate Chair
- B. Simon Rotzer, Secretary
- C. Holly Kelly, Technology Officer
- D. Michelle Parker, Travel Awards Chair
 - 1. Michelle provides update on travel awards for Fall 2018
 - a) 200 applications, 146 accepted, on average \$422/application
- E. Amanda Lake Heath, Programming & Events Chair
- F. Brandy Mmbaga, Equity & Diversity Chair
- G. Amanda McClellan, Legislation & Steering Chair

IV. Nomination of Executive Positions

- A. Annual Fundraiser Committee Chair
 - 1. The committee was neither present nor active last year
 - 2. It usually organizes “Smokey’s Pantry 5K”
 - a) Proceeds are donated to Smokey’s Pantry
 - b) Committee decides on where the money goes to
 - 3. It is already put in place, but without a chair
 - 4. Nominations
 - a) Comment by Dr. Thompson:
 - (1) If no chair can be found, we can reach out to sport management; they might be able to help, because they are planning similar events
 - b) Grace Pakeltis (50) volunteers for the position
 - (1) All senators are in favor, she is voted in

V. New Business

- A. Calendar: Senate Meetings & Senator Social
 - 1. Information and dates for meetings and events is available at gss.utk.edu
 - 2. Next Senate Meeting is on Thursday, October 11th, 5:30 pm, HBB 103
 - 3. Senator Social is on Thursday, September 20th, 5:00 pm, at Sunspot
 - a) Please RSVP online
 - b) Appetizers are provided by GSS
- B. Constitution Bylaws: Article VI Section 5 F

1. Jack Ryan suggest a change to the wording
 - a) Idea of the bylaw: lays out the way we vote
 - (1) Right now:
 - (a) Voting only possible in person/proxy or through the use of UTK Go website
 - (2) Proposed change:
 - (a) Change bylaws to allow for use of Google Forms or other forms of voting
 - (i) Explores other ways of voting
 - (ii) Increases transparency
 - (iii) All intended for use in Senate Meetings
 - b) Questions
 - (1) Michelle Parker (37): How will security be handled? Will names and voting behavior be linked?
 - (a) Cara Sulyok: issue will be taken care of; change in bylaws is meant to improve efficiency
 - (2) Dr. Thompson: What will the new voting system be used for?
 - (a) Cara Sulyok: can be used for all voting; bylaws still allow for secret ballot voting
 - (b) Clarification from Amanda McClellan (55): the bylaw only refers to votes on motions
 - c) Motion to table discussion until the next meeting by John Adgent (53), seconded by Jenn Summers (16), and accepted

VI. Internal Committee Meetings

- A. Annual Fundraiser
- B. Equity & Diversity
- C. Legislation & Steering
- D. Programming & Events
- E. Travel Awards

VII. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn; seconded, and accepted

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 11 at 5:30 pm in HBB 103