



GSS Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

5:30 pm

HBB 103

Meeting called to order by Jonathan Richwine at 5:30 pm; minutes recorded by Simon Rotzer

- I. Opening Remarks
 - A. Attendance
 1. Taken via QR-code
 2. Present: 53 out of 62 filled-senator positions – meeting has a quorum
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Thursday, October 11, 2018
 - B. Motion to approve (Ryan Gesme); second (Jordan Amspacher); 52 in favor, one abstention; approved
- III. President's Report (Cara Sulyok)
 - A. New Senators
 1. Thanked senators for bringing in second senators, it requires a lot of work
 2. Number of senators are now based on department/program enrollment
 - B. Housekeeping Updates
 1. GSS meeting dates are on the websites; meetings alternate between Wednesday and Thursday
 2. Every senator serves on two committees
 - a) Internal (assigned by Cara Sulyok)
 - b) External (we have enough senators assigned right now; more senators will be assigned as external committees are added)
 3. If you have two departmental senators and one of them cannot attend a meeting, you have to send the senator who can make it plus a proxy; if you have no proxy and miss two meetings, you will be removed of your duties as senator; anyone from the department can serve as proxy
 4. If you have not received a GSS t-shirt yet, let Jack Ryan know
 - C. What Happened

1. Stipend increases: GSS has three “Thank You” cards for Chancellor Davis, Provost Manderscheid, Dean Thompson; they worked super hard behind the scenes and need to be thanked.
2. GSS Professional Development Travel Awards
 - a) Sue Choi (Committee Chair) will provide updates
 - b) Very thankful for all the money, but we need to use it
 - c) Encourage your peers to sign up, application process is super short
 - d) Do not ask Cara Sulyok if your workshop is eligible for funding; just submit an application and see what happens
 - e) Jack Ryan: If you apply and your idea is not eligible you can always resend applications

D. Departmental Communication

1. Cara Sulyok was not aware that not every senator had a listserv for their departments. Cara Sulyok and Jack Ryan are working on a listserv for all graduate students
2. Right now the GSS President and Vice President are relying on senators to distribute GSS news
3. Some departments have a listserv and easy access. If not, ask someone in the department to get access or to obtain a listserv
4. Some senators have to send it to department heads or other important people, this might lead to students not taking it seriously
5. Question (Simon Rotzer): Can we just send out the emails we receive from GSS?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Yes; just forward it, but maybe delete the “unsubscribe”-link at the bottom of the email

E. Question (Ryan Gesme): Are there any updates on the specifics of the stipend updates?

1. Answer (Cara Sulyok): Being handled at the departmental level, but contact Sean Hendricks from the Graduate School for specific info; alternatively email Cara Sulyok
2. The \$300 pyear will be split, half to be paid out by the end of 2018; the remainder to be distributed evenly throughout the rest of the academic year’s pay

IV. Committee Updates

A. Annual Fundraiser, Grace Pakeltis

1. Thanked the participants in the first fundraiser (Jason’s Deli)
2. Decided on an organization to support: Smokey’s Pantry
3. Committee worked on the details, in the spring the whole senate will be involved with advertising

B. Equity & Diversity, Brandy Mmbaga

1. Brandy Mmbaga is not here, Cara Sulyok will present instead

2. Focus on Title IX - meeting individuals across campus to see how we can better communicate the rules to graduate students
 3. Hate language on the rock
 - a) Committee is working on a statement on what happened
 - b) Working on a call for action
- C. Legislation & Steering, Amanda McClellan
1. Worked on the bylaws; we will be voting today
 2. Constitution
 - a) Says: every department with “less than 50” people – one senator, “more than 50” – two senators; what about “exactly 50”? – problem right now with some departments at 50 and 49
 - b) Open call to look at the constitution and communicate issues
 3. Equity and diversity is not a permanent committee; we can make it permanent and send a message
 4. If there is anything that you have seen that needs to be changed, let Amanda McClellan know
- D. Professional Development Travel Awards, Sue Choi
1. Twelve days since the day the opened and 8 applications right now, two-week turnaround time, just now waiting on Graduate School approval
- E. Programming & Events, Amanda Lake Heath
1. Booked our November event for Tuesday, November 27th at 7 pm at Literboard (Cumberland Ave), “Ugly Sweater Party”; it is not a Christmas or holiday thing; if you do not own an ugly sweater just wear whatever sweater you want; we are celebrating whatever you want
 - a) Attendance: two RSVP links, one for senators; everyone needs to RSVP no matter whether you attend or not; provide a reason why not (scheduling, lack of interest, etc.); this will help make more informed events in the future; another link for all graduate students, because it is a paid event; this is the last event this semester
 2. Spring lineup for events is pretty packed
 - a) GPSAW (Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week) is going to be a big thing in April
 3. Question (Simon Rotzer): Do we have to pay for the November event?
 - a) Answer (Amanda Lake Heath): No; GSS will pay; sodas and snacks provided; rest we need to pay
- F. Travel Awards, Michelle Parker
1. Michelle Parker is not here, Cara Sulyok will present instead
 2. Over 300 applications have been received for the spring round; application date is November 26th at 5 pm; it is a hard deadline; certain colleges have earlier deadlines, check with them

3. Question: What can we do about weird numbers when trying to put in mileage for reimbursement?

a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): The committee will take care of it.

V. New Business

A. GPSA Constitution Proposed Language Change

1. Regarding how to determine the number of senators for departments with exactly 50 graduate students
2. Difficult to change things in the constitutions; there will be other things the committee will propose
3. Will do a pseudo vote today, we require less than or greater than equal to senators (part of the language change that comes in the spring); usually done when we vote for President and Vice President, easiest way of having everyone vote
4. Pseudo-vote to agree on the reading of the constitution, change from “more than” to “greater than or equal”
5. Vote: 52 in favor; one abstention; change is approved
6. Any department with exactly 50 graduate students will be allotted two senators

B. *Action Item*: GSS Bylaws Updates

1. Led by Amanda McClellan
2. Major changes to the bylaws were talked about last time
3. Major changes:
 - a) Clearer language
 - b) Comment (Sue Choi): Proposed change: include a “(GSS)” after you mention GSS the first time
4. List of changes:
 - a) Updated the bylaws to reflect language of the constitution
 - b) Removed minimum bill requirements
5. We gave notice two weeks ago, we need to vote twice
 - a) We need to vote today and in January
6. Vote: 52 in favor, one abstention; first approval

C. GPSA Constitution Discussion

1. Comment (Amanda McClellan): If you have thoughts about the constitution, email Amanda McClellan (aarwe@vols.utk.edu) throughout winter break

D. Equity & Diversity Committee, Brandy Mmbaga

1. Incidents at the Rock
 - a) Committee encourages everyone to make a phone call to the Dean and/or Chancellor to tell them we are not okay with what is going on; happened twice this past week; talk to people and raise your voice about it, make sure it is hate speech and not free speech, communicate that

- b) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): This is a very serious situation; the picture here is very threatening and targeting. Other groups are also interested in taking action (Faculty Senate, Past President of the HOLIL - Jewish community: showing support means everything right now), again: call people and tell them that this is not okay
- c) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): Not the first time this happened, other minorities too (ethnic, religious, etc.); even if you do not identify with minorities you are still close; our voice is always stronger when we speak up together; we try to craft a statement together to speak up and do action stuff; we want to push things forward, earlier proposals (spotlight on the rock), a bit desperate for change; let us know if there are things that are more feasible
- d) Comment (Amanda McClellan): It is not considered vandalism, The Rock is protected as a “public forum” by the board of trustees, anyone can write stuff
- e) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): Not doing anything is a sign of compliance; nobody should walk around thinking that the university is okay with actions like that
- f) Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Are we assuming that it was the same people twice?
 - (1) Answer (Brandy Mmbaga): The assumption is that it was an external group that was on/near campus for a few days, it is pointing to external people
- g) Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Would it be possible to provide spray cans to various groups (student organizations) to literally erase hate? - That would allow us to circumvent the free speech thing.
 - (1) Comment (unidentified): Great idea, does not fix the problem though
 - (2) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): Does not fix the problem; solution needs to come from the leadership to trickle down; when I come to campus, I want to feel like my administration is protecting me like all my peers; the fact that the administration is not doing anything is sending a message
- h) Comment (Amanda McClellan): Impression that the last time was the perfect storm for action; somebody made a statement: we want to do something, not just make statements
- i) Comment (Alexandra Teodor, proxy): Not an isolated issue, happened many times over the last years

- j) Comment (Kasey Spilman): Interim President Randy Boyd will hold an open forum to have people talk with him; we could use that for our advantage; November 23rd at 4:45 pm,
- k) Comment (Cara Sulyok): If there is anything else you want to tell him, email Cara Sulyok or Jack Ryan; they will meet with him personally and bring concerns to the table personally; Cara Sulyok will keep a document
- l) Comment (Jack Ryan): We will talk about the new incoming Chancellor: we need a graduate student on the search committee; usually it is just a student, if there is anything else just let us know

VI. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn (Amanda McClellan), all in favor
- B. Meeting ended at 6:45 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 10 at 5:30 pm in SU 169