



## GSS Meeting Minutes

*Thursday, January 10, 2019*

*5:30 pm*

*Student Union 169*

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: 66 out of 69 filled-senator positions – meeting has a quorum
- II. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Wednesday, November 14, 2018 Meeting
  - B. Motion to approve (Jonathan Kubesch); second (Sue Choi); all in favor; approved
- III. President's Report (Cara Sulyok)
  - A. Housekeeping Updates
    1. If you have not received your t-shirts yet, ask Jack
    2. It is good to be here in the new student union; we will be here until the rest of the year
    3. GSS does not have a room in the building yet; SGA does
      - a) Cara Sulyok, Jack Ryan, Dean Thompson, Interim Chancellor Davis, and Provost Manderscheid are working on it; we need it so that we can be seen as a respected organization; right now we are tucked away in Dunford Hall, this morning it was said that we will get space in the new Student Union
    4. SGA president was the only student representation on the original search committee for the new chancellor
      - a) We were not, but we have different needs (e.g.: age, goals post-graduation); Cara Sulyok and Jack Ryan advocated to President Boyd to add a graduate student; they met with him almost immediately;

- b) Result: Cara Sulyok will represent graduate and professional students; she wants to hear all our voices; how we want the next chancellor to look like; our goals to achieve; we have a chance here
  - c) At the end of the meeting we will have a discussion
  - d) Please send out Cara Sulyok's email ([gss@utk.edu](mailto:gss@utk.edu)) to other graduate students so that we can get even more input
5. Major goal this year: fill all available senator positions; your contact information is online; if you are in a department with only one seat filled (and more available), please make sure to get that filled; it helps us represent the student body better
  6. Please check that your contact information on the website is correct; if not, contact Jack Ryan ([gss2@utk.edu](mailto:gss2@utk.edu)) to have it updated

#### IV. Committee Updates

##### A. Annual Fundraiser, Grace Pakeltis

1. Working on helping Smokey's Pantry with the 5k; raising money and getting it funded; also: participation; next month: advertising (us) to others (department); that will start soon
2. Date set up right now: April 7<sup>th</sup>; UTPD has agreed; Sunday after GPSAW week; the week will be used to promote the event

##### B. Equity & Diversity, Brandy Mmbaga

1. No updates

##### C. Legislation & Steering, Amanda McClellan

1. Amanda not here, Cara Sulyok will present instead
2. Bylaw updates: second of two votes will happen today
3. After that: the committee will go through constitution to see if anything needs to be changed; needs to be voted on by the graduate and professional student body; this usually happens together with elections for GSS President and Vice President in April

##### D. Professional Development Travel Awards, Sue Choi

1. Professional Development Travel Awards: up to \$1000; ask if you have questions; 45 applications so far; turnaround time right now: 2 weeks; turn in applications two weeks before the travel date starts, encourage department and peers; awarded \$29,000 so far; \$20,000 left; first come-first serve basis; make sure to promote the awards amongst your peers
2. Comment: Are the travel awards not available for summer?
  - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Yes, they are only available for travel until May 31, 2019. This is because of where the money is sourced.

3. Question (Jonathan Johnson): Since the deadline is two weeks before the event, what happens when you are notified on the day of departure?
  - a) Answer (Sue Choi): No problem; you will know by the date you start; afterwards, you have two weeks to get reimbursed. You are able and encouraged to apply immediately.
  - b) Comment (Jack Ryan): You can apply before the two weeks-deadline though.

E. Programming & Events, Amanda Lake Heath

1. Committee has not met since last time
2. November Social: Ugly Sweater Party at Literboard; 29 people attended, budget about \$300; we stayed under budget
3. Hefty things planned this semester; most importantly GPSAW (Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week); two or three events during that week - first week of April
4. Before the Ugly Sweater Party senators were asked to RSVP to encourage others to participate and get feedback; as a thank you for the 25 who RSVP'd there is a special surprise: a swag bag giveaway
  - a) Richard Bean won the raffle
5. RSVPs are awesome, because we can get a better budget; we were good this time, but we can accommodate more in the future
  - a) Please join us in the future and relay it to your fellow peers

F. Travel Awards, Michelle Parker

1. Michelle Parker is sick, Cara Sulyok will present instead
2. Spring Travel: over 260 applications totalling more than \$345,000; 208 awarded with an average award amount of \$451 per awardee
3. Summer Travel deadline posted on website; application will go live a month prior
  - a) We are switching platforms; we try to go paperless; signature page will be scanned and uploaded
  - b) More to come in the future; Michelle Parker is working on it
4. Things to mention: on the signatures page all three signatures are required; even if there is no money from someone, you still need a signature
5. There is and always will be a hard deadline
6. If there are ever any questions, tell individuals to contact Michelle Parker ([gsstravel@utk.edu](mailto:gsstravel@utk.edu)); always contact her, especially if there are problems

V. New Business

A. *Action Item*: GSS Bylaws Updates

1. Led by Amanda McClellan;
2. List of changes:

- a) Cleaned up grammar, punctuation, and spelling issues
  - b) Delineated committees by permanent and ad-hoc, per Constitution
  - c) Clarified voting requirements in bylaws, per Constitution
  - d) Removed minimum bill requirement language to reduce unnecessary legislation
3. Question: Are there any questions about the changes?
  4. Comment (Johnathan Richwine): This here is the second vote for the Constitution.
  5. Motion on the table to change the documents
    - a) Motion (Frankie McGinnis), second (Michael Phillips), all in favor, motion passes
- B. UTK Chancellor Search Discussion
1. Question (Cara Sulyok): Is there anything you want to see in the next chancellor?
    - a) Comment (Sue Choi): Could you explain what a chancellor does?
      - (1) Answer (Cara Sulyok): S/he is the CEO of the Knoxville campus; involved in trying to raise stipends (started with Interim Chancellor Davis); can affect tuition raises; new buildings; collaboration with more organization; basically, everything that relates to the campus
      - (2) Comment (Dr. Thompson): S/he oversees every aspect of campus, research, development, academic, facilities; everything ultimately stops with the chancellor
    - b) Comment (Suzanne Sawusch): Openness to supporting diversity
    - c) Comment (Zach Sims): Multidisciplinary research experience
    - d) Comment (Frankie McGinnis): Needs to look at the benefit packages for researchers; right now they are not reflective of the life of a young researcher
    - e) Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): Quality of life factors; there is a concern on the ag-campus about access to low cost food; connect bike trails to campus; facilitate discussions
    - f) Comment (Britta Svoboda – proxy for Gresham Collom): Supports distance education; often forgotten; there are no scholarships or stipends, it is a different situation
    - g) Comment (Amelia Ahles): Concerning the ag-campus: understand how much agriculture means to UT and TN; in her department there is a lot of outside funding, but that makes them feel like they are forgotten; do not let them fall through cracks

- h) Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): Tuition price; parity for students
- i) Comment (Jonathan Johnson): Committed to campus safety; in case of active shooters HSS has locked doors that teachers cannot open; make campus safer
- j) Comment (Amanda McClellan): Values diversity, but is diverse; make sure that diverse applicants are encouraged to apply
  - (1) Comment (Jack Ryan): This is an important item; former Chancellor Davenport was the first woman to serve in this position
  - (2) Comment (Dr. Thompson): What will help: how search committee acts; faculty/campus: what messages are we sending out?; focus is on all of us; we need to state that we want a wide variety of people
  - (3) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): Chancellor can value diversity, but also wanting to encourage other roles (faculty/students) of diverse backgrounds (not just color, race, religion), but also deaf-community as well,
- k) More pressing point: some chancellors are never seen; just even a bit more visible will be nice; more student involvement would be nice
- l) Comment (Zach Sims): Background with UT undergrad might be problematic; a chancellor who is open to engaging with students is preferable
- m) Comment (Amanda Lake Heath): Works to incorporate out-of-state students; they have a harder time; get more out-of-state students; right now there are way more in-state students
  - (1) Comment (Simon Rotzer): Do not forget about international students and their issues
- n) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): "Integration" matters; make sure to bring together the community; not just diversity
- o) Comment (Jack Ryan): Search committee is narrowing down the vast majority of applicants; afterwards they will be brought to campus; there will be plenty of opportunities here and later on to meet with candidates
  - (1) Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Are the applicants coming to every college? Will they be interacting with students?
    - (a) Answer (Jack Ryan): Hard to say, but there might be a way to meet with GSS

(b) Comment (Dr. Thompson): Details will be decided by the search committee; Cara Sulyok will voice these concerns

(i) Comment (Cara Sulyok): If I advocate for graduate students to have a seat in front of the Chancellor Candidates, the GSS needs to show up; we need to make sure our voices are being heard; not just here, but over the UT system; we make up around 21% of the campus, but mostly we are the first point of contacts for undergraduate students

2. Question (Cara Sulyok): What would you wish that the university administration knew?

a) Comment: Ag-campus has its own chancellor; he is very approachable; you can go to him and tell him what you want, because he will hear you

(1) Comment (Jonathan Richwine): They have their own chancellor, but graduate under the UT chancellor; we need more clarification please

(2) Comment: She approaches both; both responsive; her understanding; they are on equal footing

b) Comment (Ryan Gesme): Office space; it is hard to figure it out; not enough; creates problems for office hours

c) Comment (Amanda McClellan): Administration could show up when things are happening and not just make up new events; "just show up for your people"

(1) Question (Cara Sulyok): Where/when do you want to see them? Your office?

(2) Answer (Amanda McClellan): Yes, that would fit the course I am teaching

(3) Comment (Jack Ryan): President Randy Boyd will attend a GSS Meeting later this semester

d) Comment (Zach Stumbo): Diversity in the medical providers

e) Comment (Matt Jones): Acknowledge the mental health crisis: graduate students are six times more likely to experience anxiety and depression

(1) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): Graduate students deal with different pressures, some have kids they need to take care of; being mindful of the stress, but maybe do a survey to figure out the major stressors, so that they can be addressed; figure out what the points of stress are,

what are the main points, then develop focal points for action this semester

- (2) Comment (Jonathan Johnson): Mental health on a logistics level: mental health center is completely overwhelmed; it can take two months until you see someone; they try to push people off campus; this is a problem for people without insurance or parents' insurance
- (3) Comment (Jonathan Johnson): They already have workshops; meet in groups; some resources for grad students
- (4) Question (Cara Sulyok): Are those meetings mixed undergraduate and graduate students? Can you walk into one with your students present?
- (a) Answer (Jonathan Johnson): They check for that
- (5) Question (Zach Stumbo): Regarding mental health: with our insurance we do not need a referral; why is that not the same for general practice? Why do we have to go to the student health thing first?
- (a) Answer (Dr. Thompson): that is part of the policy; talk to Yolanda McCaffrey, 865-974-2337, [ychildest@utk.edu](mailto:ychildest@utk.edu) in the health center
- (6) Question (Brandy Mmbaga): What about vision insurance?
- (a) Answer (Dr. Thompson): we will get it next year, but we have to pay for it
- (7) Question (Brandy Mmbaga): What about dental insurance?
- (a) Answer (Dr. Thompson): it already exists
- (8) Comment (Brandy Mmbaga): Fees; it is really hard to pay; maybe free up some money to free us up from the fees
- (a) Comment (Derek Boyd): There is a lot of stuff we should not have to pay for; maybe make it a choose-your-own fee thing
- (9) Comment (Frankie McGinnis): Figure out alternate ways to take time off without paying tuition and then coming back (anthropology suffers from that); they cannot do research during the school year, because of scholarships or teaching on campus; talk about being more in contact about research: how to better engage in research; make it more accessible

(10) Comment (Cara Sulyok): Concerning the GSS Professional Development Travel Awards: we need to show the University that we can use them and need them

(a) Comment (Jack Ryan): Goal is to provide it throughout the whole year in the future

(11) Comment (Cara Sulyok): if you know anybody who wants to share something with her; give out her email ([gss@utk.edu](mailto:gss@utk.edu))

C. Senator Bingo

1. To get to know each other!
2. Frankie McGuinness won!
3. Comment (Cara Sulyok): next meeting: sit next to a new friend

D. Additional Items, Dr. Thompson

1. Concerning a space in the building and a seat at the table in the search committee for the new chancellor: we all have good advocates in our GSS leadership
2. One more thing: people who are GTAs and GRAs: do the code of conduct training, UT will look at completion rates
  - a) Over 90% completed title IX training
3. One more space-thing: later this year, the graduate student commons will open in the library; space to go gather with small groups, hang out; controlled space (ID to swipe in); really great; more information to come

E. Concluding Thought, Cara Sulyok

1. Question: How can we address the issues we just talked about?
  - a) If you know something we can tackle/change let us know
2. Equity and Diversity working on title IX; already made good progress
  - a) Let Cara Sulyok know and they will work on it

VI. Adjournment

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

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Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 13 at 5:30 pm in SU 169