



GSS Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 13, 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. Call to Order
 - B. Attendance
 1. Taken via QR-code
 2. Present: 64 out of 70 filled-senator positions – meeting has a quorum
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Thursday, January 10, 2019 Meeting
 - B. Motion to approve (Jonathan Kubesch); second (Michelle Parker); all in favor; approved
- III. President's Report (Cara Sulyok)
 - A. Issues typically addressed in the President's Report will be covered during "New Business"
 - B. T-shirts: If you have not received one yet, let Jack know at the end of the meeting
- IV. Committee Updates
 - A. Annual Fundraiser, Grace Pakeltis
 1. Quickly approaching: April 7, 2019 at 9 am (start time)
 2. Everyone here needs to be either running or supporting
 3. Committee has already reached out to businesses; if you have additional ideas, email the committee
 4. Advertising will kick off next week; need senators to spread information to departments; we will advertise online and through other means
 5. Event will start at 7 am; if you are interested in volunteering that is when we need you; roughly 18 people
 6. Volunteers also needed later (30 total)
 - a) Grace: there will be a sign-up form later this month

- b) Non-senators can sign up too - encourage individuals in your department to volunteer
- B. Equity & Diversity, Brandy Mmbaga
 - 1. Brandy could not make it; no updates
- C. Legislation & Steering, Amanda McClellan
 - 1. All of the updates will be covered under “New Business”
- D. Professional Development Travel Awards, Sue Choi
 - 1. 62 applications received so far; up from 45 in January
 - 2. \$35,500 awarded; \$14,500 left
 - 3. Question (unidentified): If that money is not spent, what happens next year?
 - a) Answer (Sue Choi): If it is not spent by May 31, 2019, it is gone; but if we can prove that we need it, we might get it again (make a good case)
 - b) Comment (Cara Sulyok): We are working on spending every dime; money will go back to graduate students either through GSS PDTAs or GSS TAs
 - c) We cannot award for travel after May 31 because of how the money was allocated
- E. Programming & Events, Amanda Lake Heath
 - 1. Committee is planning a social for the beginning of March; be on the lookout and start getting excited
 - 2. GPSAW (Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week) - first week of April
 - a) GSS sponsors 4 events during the week
 - (1) Monday, April 1 - Trivia Night, different venue than Soccer Taco, location tba; 7-10 pm, food will be served
 - (2) Wednesday, April 3 - BBQ in the Park, Circle Park, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, food will be served
 - (3) Friday, April 5 - GSS Awards Ceremony and Breakfast, location tba, 8-9:30 am, breakfast will be served
 - (4) Sunday, April 7 - Smokey’s Pantry 5K
- F. Travel Awards, Michelle Parker
 - 1. Slow time, between cycles
 - 2. Next cycle we will be going completely electronic; no more printing out the forms; we will follow the GSS PDTA-model, future plan is to go completely rolling
 - 3. Chair’s term is coming close to an end; if everyone is interested in being the chair next year, contact Michelle so that we can get be trained
 - a) The job entails (will change): get the applications, sort them, determine who submitted, delete double submissions, have

meeting for approval, run algorithm to decide how much money people will get, do a workshop once a semester

4. Question (Ryan Gesme): What is the summer deadline?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): It is on the website; it is a hard deadline

V. New Business

A. GSS Constitution Updates

1. Email has been sent out with list of key changes
2. Changes include:
 - a) Deletion of time specific signing/dating of Constitution
 - b) Clean up grammatical errors
 - c) Addition of Equity and Diversity Committee to permanent committees
 - d) Removal of selection of committee chairs from the floor in the first meeting; changed to selection by President and Vice President for serving on the executive committee
 - (1) Permanent committee chairs selected by President and Vice President
 - (2) Ad-hoc committee chairs selected by committee members at first meeting
 - e) Eliminated repetitive language in Finance Committee
 - f) Clarified program number requirements for senator representatives (the 50 question)
3. Bylaws need to be amended now
4. GSS will vote on the constitution now (timeline was met with over two weeks prior to this meeting), 2/3rd quorum needed to vote on it in here
5. Afterwards it will go to the graduate student body for vote during the 2019-20 elections
6. First of two votes on the constitution - all in favor, one abstention - constitution is approved

B. Best Practices in Senator Selection

In keeping with the University of Tennessee tradition of volunteerism and service, the Graduate Student Senate proposes the following guidelines for selection of senators within departments and programs. These are recommendations, as per our Bylaws, the selection process is decided by individual departments and programs.

1. Current senators should communicate with their department or program for recommendations in conjunction with whatever selection process is used by their department or program.
2. The GSS recommends that current senator(s) bring next year's senator(s) with them to the final GSS meeting of the year.

These steps will ensure a smooth transition from one year to the next.

1. This is a suggestion; one thing that departments found is that transition is much smoother when the outgoing senator is helping the incoming senator
2. Encourage departments to implement them and vote early
3. Ideally, 2019-20 senators should appear during the last meeting of the year on April 10th
4. Question (unidentified): If we are not able to bring in a new senator, what should we do?
 - a) Comment (Cara Sulyok): We cannot enforce anything, but we can suggest to put the best practices into the bylaws; nobody checks emails during the summer, so it would be good to have that done; currently: 70 out of 98 filled positions, but if we could get 98 out of 98 that would be better; we should set the next president up for success
5. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Is there some sort of “crash kit” we can implement (e.g. next steps)? Something they can refer to?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Depends on the department, just ask around
6. Question (unidentified): Is there a sheet that describes what a senator actually does? Person from last year said one thing, but it is actually more.
 - a) Answer (Jack Ryan): We are working on it; we sent out emails, but we are compiling a “what does it mean to be a senator”-document right now
7. Comment (Amber Rountree – proxy): Whoever is roped in does not know the meeting times; most meetings on Thursday night; signed up without knowing about it; maybe include a FAQ
 - a) Comment (Amanda McClellan): Scheduling is a hard thing
 - b) Comment (Cara Sulyok): Meetings were set in July. We [Jack and I] will have a transitioning meeting with the new President to create a “living document” to make transition better; meetings are scheduled the way they have been over the last two years; it is the President’s job to schedule meetings
8. Suggestion (Jonathan Kubesch): If you can get a one-sheet document out we can include it in our department’s graduate student handbook
9. Suggestion (Michelle Parker): My department will hold elections in March, so if we could have the document before that it would be awesome; no pressure; my concern with holding elections in the spring is that we are cutting out a good portion of incoming graduate students; how are we getting the first year graduate student representation when we require senators to be present in April?
 - a) Comment (Cara Sulyok): Senators are not permanent
 - b) Comment (Amanda McClellan): Senators can be proxies all the time; if they need to be removed/step down that is possible

10. We are not saying that bringing a new senator is a new rule, it is a suggestion; we found that when we were looking for the second senators we sought out someone from the first year
11. The purpose is: all of the feelings (not knowing what to do, responsibilities, schedules) can be mitigated when we bring in people earlier
12. Comment (Cara Sulyok): Another addendum to add: just because your department has two senators this year does not mean that you will have two next year; some departments are well over 50, but there are borderline cases
13. Question (Johnelle Simpson): Are there any consideration on dividing senators up by college, so that we are not straining smaller departments? This seems to be an issue here
 - a) Answer (Amanda McClellan): That has not been done in the past; now we are trying to increase representation
 - b) If we include more people, we get more views, e.g. math is different than history
 - c) Comment (Amanda McClellan): We also have people from intercollegiate programs (i.e. not represented by just one college)
 - d) Comment (Erin Wohletz): We only have a few graduates students, so if we go by college we have nothing to say
 - e) Comment (Johnelle Simpson): I am just asking because of experiences from other colleges
 - f) Comment (Cara Sulyok): Not a bad idea, but we have to consider that we are also graduate students and that might require too much from them
 - g) Comment (unidentified): It would be bad if we condensed all of our needs into one senator
14. Question (Johnelle Simpson): How about different allocation, e.g. 1000 student per senator?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): We can change that at all time; we are currently working under the ideas of past administrations
 - b) We have been fighting a battle for fair representation in general; we are the face of GSS in our department
 - c) Comment (Michelle Parker): Take my college (Communication and Information), we have a total of four senators and four programs; as an information science PhD-student my needs are different from others housed in my college; I know nothing about communication
 - d) Comment (Amanda McClellan): This is a perfect discussion for the legislative committee!

15. We will put together a one page “do that” and will get requirements out soon
 16. Motion to table the discussion (Michelle Parker); second (Jonathan Kubesch); all in favor; discussion is tabled
- C. GSS Awards Ceremony and Breakfast Nomination, Cara Sulyok
1. Part of GPSAW week; Friday, April 5, 8-9:30 am
 2. Large part of the breakfast is having people to give awards to; 3 different categories we seek nominations for (from faculty/staff, from graduate/professional students, from senators)
 3. Deadline to nominate: Friday March 1, 5 pm (link is on GSS website); link will be given to us; forward it to head of department for faculty, spread it to graduate students
 - a) 1st category must be from faculty and staff, big group of awards, not just one; send it to faculty and staff members
 - b) 2nd group: nominations from graduate and professional students as a whole; many more categories; people who support us
 - c) 3rd category: just for GSS senators
 4. Question (Ryan Gesme): What is the award?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): No monetary attachment; we are currently working something out with the Graduate School to stay within regulations
 5. Show up and you get free breakfast!
 6. Comment (Jack Ryan): Just making a nomination does not mean anything; a committee will read the nominations and determine awardees
 7. Question (Jaye Rochell): Are there any attire requirements?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Dr. Davis and Dr. Manderscheid will be in attendance, so if you win an award, dress accordingly
- D. 2019-20 Election Timeline, Cara Sulyok
1. Schedule for the election proceedings is posted online
 2. This is our plan:
 - a) Only elected positions are President and Vice President
 - b) March 11 - GSS will send out an announcement to all graduate and professional student to express interest
 - c) All will go through Simon Rotzer (Secretary) at gss3@utk.edu
 - (1) Include name and short statement
 - d) March 22 is the hard deadline to express interest in running
 - e) Over the weekend Simon will create a list of the interested
 - f) March 25 - voting will open, link goes out to graduate and professional students
 - g) Will not conclude until April 5, 5 pm
 - h) Candidates are invited to attend all GPSAW events

- i) Monday, April 8 we will let candidates know; after that the whole graduate student body will know
- j) April 10 - last meeting will serve as the transition ceremony
 - (1) If you know somebody who want to run, please tell them to block out time for April 10
- 3. We try to announce this early; Jack Ryan and Cara Sulyok are willing to talk to interested parties
- 4. Question (Amanda Lake Heath): Is this voting process now different than from the past when we were still under SGA?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): It is the same as always. But we handle our own ballot.
- 5. Question (Amanda Lake Heath): Can you run as a pair?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Yes! Just let Simon know, but know that you could be voted in but not your other pair partner; there will be a new form with everything on it
- 6. Question (Zachary Sims): Do we have any data on the votes from last year? High or low turnout?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Less than 50% of graduate students vote
- 7. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Are there any restrictions on campaigning?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Not now; we will add a restriction to only campaign while the voting is open
- 8. Question (Amelia Ahles): Will the constitution changes go on the ballot?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Yes, if we vote on it the second time next month; show up! It will be Pi-Day
- 9. Question (John Adgent): Is there any chance that we can switch next meeting to a different day? It will be on Thursday right before the beginning of spring break.
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Not possible, because we tried to be fair with the dates

VI. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn (Amanda Lake Heath); second (Jonathan Kubesch); all in favor; meeting adjourned
- B. Meeting ended at 6:45 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 14 at 5:30 pm in SU 169