



GSS Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 14, 2019

5:30 pm

Student Union 169

Meeting called to order by Cara Sulyok 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: 57 out of 70 filled-senator positions – meeting has a quorum
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Wednesday, February 13, 2019 Meeting
 - B. Motion to approve (Jonathan Kubesch); second (Brandy Mmbaga); all in favor; approved
- III. Guest Speakers
 - A. Mr. Tyvi Small, Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement
 1. Has been at the university for almost 12 years (Haslam College of Business); started new position 2.5 months ago
 2. History of the office
 - a) Brand new role; did not exist until 2.5 months ago
 - b) Come up with list of things
 - c) Chaired diversity group
 - d) In addition to building infrastructure for office
 - (1) Office needs to support great work on diversity and inclusion
 3. Make sure that “diversity” is broader than just race and ethnicity
 - a) Accountability – how to hold people accountable for diversity and inclusion, about creating culture; “bring authentic self to campus”; develop metrics; business school: what gets measured gets done; how we measure it hold people accountable matters

- b) Diversity plans – each college has to submit those, but did not do for a while; gives colleges opportunity to think about diversity and inclusion
 - c) Talking about how to do education about diversity and inclusion; Chancellor: cultural diversity training; how to do that on campus so that everyone knows what diversity and inclusion is; how do we give graduate students tools or kits to deal with those issues; that way you can feel comfortable to provide opportunities for all students who walk into your classroom; give everybody an opportunity to be successful in the classroom
 - d) Help understand departments that students come from diverse backgrounds
 - (1) How to add more inclusion to classrooms/syllabi; example English class: include diversity and inclusion in the curriculum; new gen-ed curriculum that just got approved
 - e) Recruitment piece and retention piece: how can we work together to recruit diverse graduate students and keep them
 - f) Corporate partners: we need diversity in our workforce, but also students who can work in international (multicultural) work environments
 - g) Retention in our faculty, advisory boards, engage
 - (1) Get people “on the ground” to find the most salient issues
 - (2) Forum last Monday: eye opening tough, much needed, helped the cabinet understand diversity; committed to creating an environment that is diverse and inclusive (cabinet level)
 - (3) What to do at the graduate level?
4. Question (Chloe Sandoval): Physics and Astronomy is not diverse department with single digit in women; in the past we tried to talk to faculty on how to fix it; answer: we tried it, it did not work. Will you help faculty and DGSs with that? We also have a retention problem.
- a) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): Absolutely! It is not a one-shot deal.
 - b) We have to think about what the national reputation is of UT; have to be creative and intentional when recruiting diverse students; be intentional about everything we do; starts with recruitment process: what language do we use, how does our website look like, what signals are we sending to people that have not been here before
 - c) When we work with our industry we create opportunity; did not work at first; went for years; built reputation for wanting diverse students; took a while; you can do a lot of recruitment; but if you

do not look at retention you will have problems; we will talk to departments, faculty, etc.

- d) Once we have accountability you will be surprised (metric) how people will react; first: we cannot find people, then suddenly people will pop up from everywhere; if you think about it: the conversation we are having need to be had on a campus level
 - e) Comment (Dean Thompson): In the Graduate School we created a “recruiters network”: best practices in recruiting, go to departments and talk about holistic admission processes; opens the door to consider more applicants; what Dr. Brothers says routinely: we focus too much on “who do we let in”, but not on “who do we invite to the dance”; we have not focused on these issues too much
 - f) Comment (Vice Chancellor Small): Recruitment is one thing, retention and graduation is another thing; we have to create atmosphere that is inclusive to all students who come here; talked about on the undergraduate level
5. Question (Andrew Putt): As future potential faculty members we have particular courses that train us how to teach and reach out to student. More and more applications require diversity statements, how can we better prepare ourselves to teach in a diverse setting or incorporate diversity and inclusion, do you have any tools?
- a) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): Teaching certificates might be useful; Teaching and Learning Innovation is important: do some research (TLI): think about inclusive grading and teaching practices so that you are more prepared in the future; again: use TLI as a resource or come up with something yourself
 - b) The other thing: as people talk about developing inclusive statements notice that this is ok, but also look at the department and make sure it is a place that values what you value
 - c) When we do recruitment on our end I serve on every recruitment committee; I am the one who looks at things from a diversity perspective; example: pretty high level professorship: nobody liked the female candidate, “no team player”, “did not listen”, etc.; basically all things we would value in a male candidate were thought of issues with the female candidate; I went to the Dean who shut it down
6. Question (Brandy Mmbaga): UT as a predominately white institution; we know that underrepresentation is an issue; representation of faculty and leadership is an issue too; double tax on faculty of color (invisible tax); will your office be responsible and talk about representation in terms of faculty and higher ups as well (e.g., diversity tax, invisible labor)?

- a) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): It is not an invisible tax, it is visible; problem here at the university: support faculty of color
 - b) Comment (unidentified): We have lost a lot of faculty of color, so it is a problem
 - c) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): You got to get comfortable with being uncomfortable; going through it with the cabinet right now: is it nerve wracking at points; yes, is it uncomfortable, but you have to have those conversations at points; create some intentional experiences so that folks having those discussions are comfortable
 - d) Other thing with diversity: how do we incentivize it and do the work around campus? We are creating a process to do that right now
 - e) Other side: recruitment and retainment; provide faculty with tools
 - f) Since we do not have too many: how do we address recruitment? Not just name the Smokey Mountains and hiking, but mention “more diverse things” (e.g. Greek fest, etc.); Are you intentional about those actions? – We are encouraging faculty; it is about creating critical mass (getting people in); faculty and staff matter both
7. Question (Alexander Carter): One thing in the past with events occurring on campus was the lack of transparency; this time they had transparency; moving forward we know that the action plan is on the website and we can see how it is implemented; What actions that are transparent will occur in the future?
- a) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): We have to be open, honest, and transparent; former problem: statements took too long to publish and were too vague; now we need to name it: say what happened and tell people what our values are
 - b) Belong.utk.edu is a progress-tracker; shows initiative; where we are and where we are going and its status; tracks what is going on at around diversity
 - c) Absolutely ongoing; diversity training and workshops are not a one-time deal; contact information is available, use it to check up on them
 - d) Transparent.utk.edu; everything we do is on the website
8. Question (unidentified): What about diversity with people with disabilities? What is done for those people at the graduate level?
- a) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): We are working for everybody; when we say “diversity” is broad then we mean it; they also do “veterans”, “first generation”, “low income”, we talk about everybody and address the issues and needs that these populations/groups might have

- b) Thinking about how you support students who are parents; for example: schools closed down for a while, so they had parents bring their kids to campus;
 - 9. Comment (Cara Sulyok): I propose another session with the Vice Chancellor.
 - 10. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): What do you want to do to maintain intellectual diversity (esp. as a land-grant institution)? Sometimes we lose that when we focus on skin (or other factors)
 - a) Answer (Vice Chancellor Small): Look at recruitment; recognize that you need people from all over the place; everyone brings a different perspective even if they all look alike; doctoral level: think about how we can recruit a variety of people (not just ethnicity); see what they can bring to the table; there are different diversities that all matter to us (background)
- B. Dr. Ferlin McGaskey, Director of Faculty Development
1. TLI (Teaching and Learning Innovation) is our instructional development office on campus; provides support on instruction
 - a) Also does CIRTLL; it focuses on development of future faculty
 - b) There are some additional resources from TLI to support us
 2. Today: here to talk about a “Innovative Teaching and Learning Conference”; April 8; 8 am to 5 pm; Student Union; open to everyone (colleagues, staff, faculty)
 - a) Get us thinking about teaching and learning in different ways
 - b) Good for people who want to get new ideas
 - c) 26 different presentations/poster presentations/panels at this conference
 - d) Hear what others are doing here and in Tennessee in general; participants from NC, LA, KY, VA will be here too; different perspectives
 - e) Two keynote speakers:
 - (1) Darin Detwiler, Northeastern University
 - (2) Lisa Nunn, University of San Diego; lunch keynote: “sense of belonging on campus”
 - f) Workshop example: “what are the most effective strategies of reaching first generation students?”
 - (1) You do not have to be present all the time; we want you all
 - g) Online resources: teaching.utk.edu; main webpage has announcement for the conference
 - h) Another thing: we are looking for volunteers to help with conference (e.g. moderating conferences, announce speakers, monitor time, facilitate questions); if you are interested contact Dr.

McGaskey, or go to TLI website, and tell them that you want to volunteer as a moderator; gives you more exposure

- i) Comment (Dean Thompson): It demonstrates that you get involved in things like that; shows that you have a “service-mentality”
- j) Question (Ryan Gesme): Does the conference cost money?
(1) Answer (Dr. McGaskey): No, but you get food and swag
- k) Question (Brandy Mmbaga): Is it only open for graduate students?
(1) Answer (Dr. McGaskey): It is open for everyone
- l) Question (unidentified): Do you have to be a TA?
(1) Answer (Dr. McGaskey): No; all our services are open to any graduate students (except for events during faculty-appreciation week); including consultation; if you want to talk about stuff that is happening in your class just reach out and they will talk to you

IV. President’s Report (Cara Sulyok)

- A. Self-nomination for presidential elections is open now
 - 1. If you know about anyone who is interested tell them
 - 2. Friday next week (03/21) is the deadline
 - 3. Jack Ryan and Cara Sulyok will be happy to talk to potential candidates
- B. GPSAW is coming up: April 1-6
 - 1. Three major events: Trivia Night, Monday, 7-8 pm at Pelanchos; BBQ in the Park, Wednesday, 11:30 am - 1 pm; Third Annual GSS Awards Ceremony and Breakfast, Friday, 8-9:30 am
 - 2. There will be a huge flyer coming out
 - 3. Other departments have events as well
- C. Chancellor’s Search Committee has graduate students on the radar
 - 1. Plans to hold meetings with GSS and graduate students
 - 2. Keep an eye out for that email
 - 3. Most likely to happen before our next meeting
 - 4. The more of GSS shows up the better

V. Committee Updates

- A. Annual Fundraiser, Grace Pakeltis
 - 1. Cara Sulyok will present the update
 - a) 5k was going to happen on Sunday, April 7
 - b) Unfortunately, it will not be able to happen on that time
 - c) Not a fault of the committee
 - d) Happy to share that it will happen, but next academic year; we are currently in for a Fall race day; the project hit some hurdles that cannot be changed
 - 2. Jimmy John’s Fundraiser is happening on March 28th
 - a) 10% of all purchases will go straight to Smokey’s Pantry for the run

- B. Equity & Diversity, Brandy Mmbaga
 - 1. Major thing: trying to write statements for the events that took place on campus; trying to address that
 - 2. Still working on a “The Rock”-event; it should happen in April; update will come
- C. Legislation & Steering, Amanda McClellan
 - 1. Cedes time for new business
- D. Professional Development Travel Awards, Sue Choi
 - 1. Down to the last \$5,000; 54 awards with average \$861; still close to \$1000/person; still a month left; please apply two weeks before events happen; make clear differences between Travel Awards and Professional Development Travel Awards; Cara Sulyok and Jack Ryan are working with Dean Thompson on extending the awards
 - 2. Professional travel awards specifically ask about active participation; make sure to go to workshop, etc. to pick up a skill; communicate what you are attending and why you are attending
 - a) Comment (Cara Sulyok): You can get a maximum of one travel award and one professional travel award per year
 - 3. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): If we get funding renewed will we be informed?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Yes, absolutely!
- E. Programming & Events, Amanda Lake Heath
 - 1. Caffeine Bar happened on Tuesday
 - a) Encourage people to come!
 - b) Send out those emails!
 - c) Quite a shame to spend \$100+ on stuff for only 15 people
 - 2. Repeats the events for GPSAW; food will be provided at all of those events
 - a) Question (Sue Choi): Who is the breakfast open to?
 - (1) Answer (Cara Sulyok): It is open to faculty, staff, and graduate students
 - 3. Dean Thompson: “Three Minute Thesis”-finals will happen during GPSAW week on April 3 in the Student Union at 1:30 pm
 - 4. Comment (Amanda Lake Heath): You can find that information online at calendar.utk.edu/gpsaw_events; take advantage of all those opportunities
- F. Travel Awards, Michelle Parker
 - 1. Michelle could not be here; Cara Sulyok will give report
 - 2. One thing and major thing: we switched platforms for the applications, because it is easier for the committee and we can stop killing trees; GSS made the application completely paperless
 - 3. Links are online; they are not broken; if someone says they are, have them log out of their Google accounts and log in with their UTK credentials

4. Tell everyone to fill out and upload the signatures page; if it is missing you will not get money
5. Some colleges still want print; in that case use the provided word-document
6. Deadlines are listed online; April 8 at 5 pm; even if you can submit afterwards stuff later will not be accepted
7. Questions (Ryan Gesme): Can we push back the deadline from April 8?
 - a) Answer (Cara Sulyok): Applications were opened at least a month before; we cannot change that

VI. New Business

A. *Action Item*: GPSA Constitution Updates, Amanda McClellan

1. Lists the changes
2. Question (Amanda McClellan): Are there any questions about changes?
 - a) Comment (Cara Sulyok): The way the constitution works we need two votes in GSS and one from all graduate students; today is the second vote (after February meeting)
3. Graduate and professional students will vote in April if we pass it today
4. All in favor, one abstention; passed; the changes will be included in the election materials for all graduate students

B. *Action Item*: GSS Bylaws Updates

1. We edited the bylaws to reflect changes of the constitution; idea: prepared for the next leadership
2. Comment (Cara Sulyok): For these changes only need two votes from the senate; we can do the first of two votes tonight and the next one in April
3. All in favor; no abstentions; first vote was successful

C. Senator Requirements

1. Nice flyer exists now; print it out and hang it somewhere
2. Next meeting on April 10th; new President and Vice President will be there; maybe bring the new senators along so that we can facilitate the changing process

D. Anything from the floor?

1. Request/invitation (Brandy Mmbaga): I will send a 10-minute survey for my dissertation.
2. Invitation (Brandy Mmbaga): Multicultural Graduate Student Organization will do a "How to Stress Less"-event during GPSAW
 - a) Question (Andrew Putt): Where will the event be?
 - b) Answer (Brandy Mmbaga): It will be at Hodges Library
3. Comment (Dean Thompson): A few updates; we talked with Vice Chancellor Carilli today; they in the process of getting the new architectural design for GSS in the new Student Union
4. Grand opening of the Graduate Student Commons in Hodges Library will happen in the Fall semester

VII. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn (Amanda McClellan); second (Jonathan Kubesch); all in favor; meeting adjourned
- B. Meeting ended at 6:59 pm

Next Meeting & Transition Ceremony: Wednesday, April 10 at 5:30 pm in SU 169