



GSS Meeting

Wednesday, November 13th, 2019, 6:00 pm
Student Union, Room 169

Meeting called to order by Elina Geut at 6:05pm; minutes recorded by Simon Rotzer

1. Opening Remarks
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Attendance
 - i. Taken via QR-code; alternatively: tiny.utk.edu/GSSNov2019
 - ii. Present: 62 out of 75 filled-senator positions – meeting has a quorum
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 15, 2019
 - b. Motion to approve (Andrew Putt), second (Derek Boyd); all in favor
3. Guest Speaker
 - a. Title IX Coordinator, Ashley Blamey, DSW.
 - i. David asked me to come here; I appreciate the opportunity; my goal for tonight is to hear your questions and concerns
 - ii. Title IX is about access to education and not to be excluded from education on the base of sex (sexual violence, stalking, harassment...); case that expanded sexual harassment into Title IX (not recorded); think about Patt Summit; TSSAA lawsuit to do basketball rules for women; up until then women only played on half of the field; women were thought to be physically unable to perform, not too long ago
 1. Also works with pregnant student to ensure access; works with STEM (traditionally male dominated areas); sexual violence (quick summary)
 2. In addition, our campus is unique because we have a huge focus on prevention
 - iii. One thing that disproportionately targets graduate students: behavior of professors; we are their employees, but faculty that oversees us or we get grant money from knows we work for them
 1. Issues in the hierarchy have been identified; national academies are working together, “UTK Action Collaborative” (David Willis sits on it); we have cross-campus collaboration, we have a working group that met plenty of times; picked recommendations out of the national academy’s work to pick on campus;
 - iv. National Action Collaborative: UTK is the only Southern university involved in it; issue: how to diffuse the hierarchy and power differently

1. There are a number of ways to think about this: thinking about humans, or money; we all have an investment in the issue
- v. Comments/questions?
1. Question (Chloe Sandoval): I am from Physics and Astronomy which has a single digit percentage of women. Is there anything that Title IX is doing to recruit or retain female students? We lost two or three female students in the past; this is a big issue here, for my department and others
 - a. Answer (Ashley Blamey): One of the issues that the collaborative is focusing on more aggressively; we have the infrastructure going to go deeper; we partner with groups that recruit women (STEM); if you have a departmental issue, just call us; do not worry, you will not start a massive chain of reaction; we start with 1) what is the concern, then you meet with the person and provide resources and structure; 2) if it is an overarching issue, we think about who we contact in the department; we are happy to help
 - b. Comment (Dean Thompson): I want to add that this is a great question and an issue with lots of parts,
 - i. In the Graduate School we provide grants to departments to increase recruitment for a diverse applicant pool (defined differently; e.g., nurses need males)
 - ii. Other thing to encourage: department or college has a graduate student advisory board; express issues to Dean, they take it seriously
 1. Talked to the Dean; in the process of overturning old faculty; feels like change is coming, but not sure
 - iii. Comment (Ashley Blamey): Other departments are doing it well; there are some collective opportunities in the stem fields
 2. Question (Ashlyn Schwartz): I am curious about the Action Collaborative in terms of harassment: are you looking at bullying? Different ways to report? There is nothing on campus right now.
 - a. Answer (Ashley Blamey): It is interesting to hear about bullying; Action Collaborative is primarily around sexual harassment;
 - i. UT just started Vols A.C.T. that might help.
 - b. If you have an environment without sexual harassment you will also have an environment without bullying; language is different on paper, but we do more; we are paying attention to this issue though;
 - c. University and Commission for Women is looking at bullying; subcommittee focused on that; UT is looking at

- defining “bullying”; challenge is what it actually is; you need to know if it is it or not;
- i. I can get some information back to you if you are interested
- d. Comment (Dean Thompson): You might want to mention the online training.
- i. We have training for graduate students, last year 80 took it, 640 this year; if you are teaching undergrads I would very much encourage you to take the training; in addition it talks about sexual harassment and prevention which goes back to bullying; how to address low level things in your classroom; a bit low budget (do it for free); saving the university 60,000; personalized it to the university;
 - 1. Please give us feedback about what you would actually want to see; what would make it useful to you; let us know; if we create something that is not impactful let us know;
3. Question: (Amanda Capannola): Language around Title IX is around sex; in the Supreme Court that is contentious; in the course of UT does that mean gender expressions beyond binary:
- a. Answer (Ashley Blamey): Yes
4. Question (proxy for Alexander Carter 39a): When it comes to sexual harassment and a “he says, she says”-situation: announcing something but do nothing; do you think that this is worth it?
- a. Couple of good things: retaliation is what I will talk about; this is why people do not report; is it worth the situation I will create? that is true across the board for everyone who experiences sexual based discrimination
 - b. Back to the example: investigations in the area; UT 51%, it is not the individual respondent that has to prove that you do not; it is the university’s; it is not a person vs person-experience; we look at other items, what happened before; historical reports; other things we can look at?
 - i. If we get a report about a faculty member and people do not want to go forward, we pull five years of student evaluation data; maybe not a chance to look at this case, but at others; there are ways of looking at cases other than person vs. person; what we can often do is education; we are not often talking about the most egregious parts, we have to educate; my

expectation is that people can still grow; if we are in a situation in which we cannot do anything but inform, we did something useful; retaliation is the most easy thing to prove; it is not tolerated; initial act is very hard to prove; retaliation is way easier to prove;

5. Question (Jasmine Kreig): Are there are plans on working with Oak Ridge National Lab? Many people in my lab work with them but UT standards do not apply; any plans on working on that?
 - a. Answer (Ashley Blamey): Great questions, but we have not thought about this yet; we have students placed in many places where we cannot control the people that grade their work;
 - i. Things that will change some areas: NIH, NASA, (fundes for big grantees) are now asking institutions to report when there are allegations of harassment that needs to change that person's responsibilities;
 - ii. We have a responsibility today to change that persons' duties; we have an obligation to report to them; if we find someone responsible, we have to communicate as well
 - iii. It is their money, so they have issues they want to address; if someone harasses you, they are wasting money
 - b. Comment (unidentified): My department is run through Oak Ridge; something needs to happen, because graduate students are not protected at the lab by the university even though we are employees; our bosses are not appointed by UT
 - i. Answer (Ashley Blamey): Maybe call me so we can find out if we need to address this
 - ii. Comment (Dean Thompson): If there is anything with graduate students, we want to know as well
 - c. Comment (Krista De Cooke): Ecology and Evolutionary Biology has classes with Oak Ridge as well
 - d. Comment (Chloe Sandoval): We have too
 - e. Comment (Ashley Blamey): Let us know if there is any problem: we may be training people, but experience should reflect that training; the university will advocate for that because that is your job
6. Comment (David Willis): I will be here after the meeting and will write down your concerns to send to Ashley
 - a. Comment (Ashley Blamey): I would like to hear from the people directly if possible; if there is a concern or an experience I want to be the person to hear about it;

email me at titleIX@utk.edu; if you call us, maybe leave an office where we can get to you; email is preferred

4. President's Report

- a. Dean Thompson: Women Leadership Position
 - i. Not a long term commitment; I coordinate a women's leadership lunch every month; a group of women leaders, some academics, some not; each month we have different topics that we cover; one of the things we wanted to do is hearing from some of our student leaders; what is on your mind. Are two people interested to join us next Wednesday at noon? SGA is coming too
 1. Volunteers: Chloe Sandoval; Grace Pakeltis; Suzanne Sawusch; Katherine Ryan; Amelia Ahles
 - ii. Room number is Student Union 362c from noon to 1PM
 1. Bring our own lunch
- b. Newsletter & Research Participation
 - i. We have battled this in the past; we will start a newsletter;
 - ii. If you have any research interest, then send to us before Nov 21st and we will include it in the newsletter that we will send out to all senators and all grads on the liststerv
 - iii. Solves the conundrum we have; so send us requests for participation
- c. Chancellor's Roundtable
 - i. You will receive an email with an RSVP to sit down with the Chancellor
 - ii. In the past this has been an almost structured event where we bring question and they do too
 - iii. Chancellor Plowman does not want to talk much, but wants to have questions from you; I talked to Abigail Bromfield; we will send out an email with the invitation; November 25th, 3:30 PM to 4:45PM
 - iv. Question (Dean Thompson): How many? – Typically, around half a dozen students; maybe verify that information
 1. Comment (David Willis): I will clarify that
 - v. Question (Claire Mayo): What time was it?
 1. Answer (Dean Thompson): 3:30 to 4:45PM
- d. Sexual Prevention Action Collaborative
 - i. UT is a founding member and the only public university in the South that is a founding member
 - ii. Goal is to change culture; we will have more next meeting

5. Confirmations

- a. Chair, Professional Development Travel Awards
 - i. Kamille Piacquadio; all in favor
 - ii. Comment (David Willis): personally want to say thank you; really appreciate it; beyond the call of duty
- b. External Committees
 - i. Residency Classification Committee (1 in-state, 1 out-of-state)
 1. Reviews appeals for students in the residency of students
 2. Comment (Dean Thompson): I thought it was about in-state and out of state

- a. Answer (David Willis): They review the rules for those cases and determine whether you are in or out
 - 3. Comment (David Willis): in-state out-state it is; all electronic, no personal meetings, you will get your appeal sent to you, you will receive a bit of training and then make a vote electronically; we need one in state person and one out of state
 - 4. Comment (unidentified senator from Communication and Information): I actually had to deal with this: if you move to TN other than to attend UT and you have an address you can show with 365 days of residency; you are out or in-state? Think about hat
 - a. Comment (Dean Thompson): there are other issues connected to that
 - b. Amanda Lake Heath volunteers; Alexander Carter will proxy, but we will get it all solved (Shiela Hawkins);
 - c. Motion to nominate (Derek Boyd); second (Stacie Beach); all in favor
- 6. Committee Reports (Goals and Objectives)
 - a. Treasurer, Amanda Lake Heath
 - i. Two new expenses added to the budget: computer services for Graduate Commons in the library
 - 1. September was \$17.78 and October was \$29.00
 - ii. We have \$5,848.98 left in the budget this year
 - b. Equity and Diversity, Derek Boyd
 - i. We now have an email gssedc@utk.edu
 - 1. Place for you to allow us to monitor what is going on on campus
 - a. If you have an actual event go to UT's Bias Education and Response Team
 - b. Comment (Dean Thompson): bias.utk.edu is their website
 - ii. Group on campus: "Students for the Rock"; live streams the Rock to remind people about the awesome thing that go on there
 - iii. Comment (Katharine Ryan): Email me if you have any concerns
 - iv. Savannah Collins-Key is on the Council on Interculturalism; has a lot of money for diversity stuff; if you have any ideas, let us know
 - v. Started building a committee for mental health for graduate students
 - vi. Question (Avery Blockmon): If we have diversity questions can we email you?
 - 1. Answer (Derek Boyd): Yes, send it to our new email
- c. Travel Awards, Nicholas Sarafolean
 - i. Not much to talk about
 - ii. Deadline until next Monday; things are going better; people seem to read instructions now
 - iii. Question (Savannah Collins-Key): Last time you said that you all you wanted to fix the signature issues; what happens when you get your application back because of missing signature, where do you start to

address things? (Form got returned, but the department head did not sign it.)

1. Answer (Nicholas Sarafolean): Arts and Sciences does things differently; in this case we went in on Monday, took all the current signature information and send it to all college Deans so that they could see what signatures are missing
 2. In Arts and Sciences, the Dean did not sign things until all signatures were there; should have already happened (signature today)
- iv. Question (Derek Boyd): If the department head was not available on the last day signatures, can the associate sign it as well?
1. Comment (unidentified): People have different ideas on how it works; did not like the email of the Forensics Center; is there a way to get an email response that tells you that everything is okay?
 2. Answer (Davis Carter): if it is just a google doc you can just go back to check if everything is okay
 - a. Answer (Nicholas Sarafolean): we can set up
- v. Question (Ava Hedayatipour): We have conferences in the last week of April, but the deadlines are not up until December; last year we applied for summer, but got rejected because we should have applied before spring; conference did not match the semester we applied for; conference application deadline is not until January
1. Answer (Nicholas Sarafolean): This should be covered in the FAQ; if that is the case then email me with the intent to apply; once you actually apply
- vi. Question (unidentified senator from Veterinary Medicine); we do not really have advisors, so what can we do to get people to give the advisor signature?
1. Answer (Nicholas Sarafolean): Is there a faculty member you regularly work with?
 - a. Comment (unidentified senator from Veterinary Medicine): So it does not have to be an advisor?
 - b. Answer (Nicholas Sarafolean): Research supervisor you work most closely with would be it
 - i. Comment (Dean Thompson): Whatever faculty member is most closely aligned with your work
- vii. Comment (unidentified): People are having issues getting their signatures
1. Answer (Nicholas Sarafolean): If you are confused send me an email
- d. Professional Development Travel Awards, Kamille Piacquadio
- i. It is not just me, but also another person; we have a couple of submissions with little problems
 - ii. We cover things that are professionally oriented; not things that are professionally unique; need to be professionally integrated

- 2. Comment (Amanda Lake Heath): I can help you get in there
- iv. We will make sure to push out an email once we get the timeline set up
- f. Mental Health Ad Hoc Committee, Chloe Sandoval
 - i. After talking with couple of people we have outlined goals for the academic year
 - 1. Create anonymous survey/reporting tool so that students can report to us; gather stories and information to bring to the university that graduate students face
 - a. Anyone who is good at developing surveys please let me know
 - 2. Talk to student health center to look at their anonymized data to see what graduate students have done
 - 3. Training for faculty/staff; begin to recognize signs of mental illness so that hopefully faculty members or graduate students can recognize this
 - 4. Referrals: since the counselling center is overburdened graduate students are referenced; we hope that the centers will help us set up a referral system
 - 5. Graduate student groups: still only two on Monday and Wednesday afternoons; last semester they had some that were not full so that is probably why they are only running two; if these dates are an issue, just let me know and I will pass this info along
 - 6. Dedicated staff for graduate students: difficult task; UT is hiring a few more staff members in January though
 - 7. Graduate student services at the Success Center: if you are doing well you are less likely to develop mental health issues
 - ii. Questions/comments?
 - 1. Question (Dené Vann): There is a professor in the Social Work Department who would be a good advocate for graduate students at large: Elizabeth Strand
 - 2. Comment (Chloe Sandoval): gssmentalhealth@utk.edu is now our new email
 - 3. Question (Stacie Beach): Training for mental illness and crisis: do you see it only for faculty or staff to recognize issues with graduate students, or also for TAs to see it with students they are teaching
 - a. Answer (Chloe Sandoval): I would love to see it with both
 - b. Comment (Dean Thompson): even now if the departments would want it, they could request it
 - i. We would like to do an online version
 - 4. Comment (David Willis): I challenged Chloe and the committee with lofty goals; now we have the 30,000 feet and we will funnel it down to 5,000 and further
 - 5. Comment (Chloe Sandoval): I will need a few people to be on the committee with me; so please stick around afterwards

- a. Comment (David Willis): It is okay if you want to change committees
 - i. Senators wanting to serve on the Mental Health Ad Hoc Committee: Andrew Putt; Ashlyn Schwartz; Stacie Beach; Darcy Ayers; Savannah Collins-Key
 - ii. Question (Savannah Collins-Key): Can we do double committees?
 - 1. Answer (David Willis): yes, but I would encourage you not to get burnout
- g. Annual Fundraiser, Jonathan Kubesch (Interim Chair)
 - i. Presented by David Willis
 - 1. The whole department is at a conference; either bring in an undergrad or have David Willis do it
 - 2. Instead of talking about what they have done, he will talk about what we challenged them with
 - 3. In the past it has burned people out with things that are unachievable; I want them to reconceptualize things; if we just do one thing that is fine even if it is just t-shirt sales; that is what I challenged them to do; that way we remove barriers
 - ii. Question (Andrew Putt): Do you have a timeline on when we should see fundraising ideas?
 - 1. Answer (David Willis): next meeting we should see things; I really want to see dialogue, let us do this the right way
- h. Legislative Steering, Austin Boyd
 - i. Proposal to Amend Constitution
 - ii. As we talked about last time there will be amendments with the bylaws that are coming next meeting; including addressing the proxy issue and online meetings; changing the bylaws (Graduate Council, matching the quorum role; adding the roles of the ad hoc committee for future reference; anything else that people want to address)
 - iii. gsslaw@utk.edu is the new email
 - iv. Big thing for this meeting is the amendment to the constitution that lets us more easily amend the bylaws
 - 1. Two meetings to approve the amendment to one meeting
 - 2. We did not change anything else
 - 3. There has been some discussion and debate to whether this is supposed to be done; we do this to effectively make changes to our bylaws; closer to faculty senate; we currently follow the other student organizations but they meet more often; it is much easier for other committees to change things, but not for us since our meetings are a bit more limit
 - 4. Any questions or concerns before we vote on that
 - 5. Motion (Joshua Williams); second (Katharine Ryan; all in favor
 - 6. Now this has passed our level; it will only take effect when we pass it in spring through the SGA elections;

- a. Question (Dean Thompson): So changing bylaws does not require a SGA vote?
- b. Answer (unidentified): it still requires a two-weeks notification though
- c. Comment (Austin Boyd): We still require a two-weeks-notice and a two-thirds vote

7. New Business

a. Proxies & Absentees

- i. We need to update this; issue: when a whole department goes away at the same time they cannot have a proxy; new language: tell us why you cannot find a proxy in your own department; there are good reasons like emergency situations when you cannot find a proxy right away; our idea: if you have someone that is not of your department you can designate them if you can explain why
- ii. We also want a bigger discussion on proxies; if you have any ideas, for example, if we should have junior senators send it to the GSS-email

b. Website Update

- i. Technology Officer, Shahram Hatefi Hesari
- ii. We will refresh the website to make it more convenient; more user-friendly; we have designed a webpage for all senators; that will help you introduce yourself; what is your goal, what is your recognition, what you want to do; a page where you can introduce yourself to everyone; I will send an email to all of you in a week or two, please send me your resume and picture in a uniform format
- iii. If you had your picture taken today, send me a picture so I can match them with the new one
- iv. The headline of your CV would be your biography, your vision as a senator, any sort of information that would help others to identify you
- v. It will probably take a few months, because we are so many senators, but after that it will be much easier; the good news is that you will be forever in the GSS history; it will take a while, be patient

- 1. Comment (David Willis): the amount of effort this will take is humbling; I want to stand up to show you my appreciation

c. Announcement; Dean Thompson

- i. Monday 11/18: 9:30 to 11:00 at the Graduate Student Commons: I will be there with cookies to have you talk to me; beginning in the spring I will have monthly planned events in the commons; talk about issues; chat;

8. Adjournment, at 7:28PM

- a. Motion to adjourn (Kathrine Ryan); second (Stacie Beach); all in favor; meeting adjourned

Next Meeting: January 9, 2020 at 6:00 pm in SU169