



GSS Meeting

Wednesday, March 4th, 2020, 6:00 pm
Student Union, Room 169

Meeting called to order by Elina Geut at 6:01pm; minutes recorded by Simon Rotzer

1. Opening Remarks
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Attendance
 - i. Taken via QR-code; alternatively: tiny.utk.edu/GSSMar2020
 - ii. Present: 53 out of 74 filled-senator positions – meeting has a quorum
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 5th, 2020
 - b. Correction: changed meeting year from “2019” to “2020” for January and February minutes
 - c. Motion to approve (Katharine Ryan), second (Jonathan Kubesch); all in favor
 - d. Word of Order (Elina Geut): according to Robert’s Rules there is no abstention, just yes or no; if you want to abstain, just do not vote
3. President’s Report
 - a. David Willis, GSS President
 - i. GPSAW: Wellness
 1. Theme: wellness; there is plenty of opportunities to make sure you are taking care of yourself; I like the theme and the opportunity to make more than just appreciate students
 - ii. Interim President Boyd Visit on March 9th
 1. Tasked me to have questions; if you have question tagline “Questions for President Boyd” (1st meeting); David wants to relay questions
 2. Second meeting is another time we can ask questions
 3. Third meeting is a student reception; March 9th, 4:30PM to 5:30PM; informal with snacks
 4. Thank you all for showing up and for your service; this is hard work this is volunteer stuff; this goes to the volunteer spirit; this motivates me and makes me happy; I am very honored to be in this position
 - b. GSS Elections Timeline (Sue Choi)
 - i. Elections are coming up; 18th of March, end of Spring Break; also, if you want a different executive position (secretary, etc.), tell us so we can tell the next people; there is no formal part, except for confirming you in Fall

- ii. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): About transition: we have identified two potential positions; do we have any restrictions on newbies chairing a committee or becoming a senator?
 - 1. Answer (Sue Choi): any department I did not have a name for I emailed the last year's senator and the DGS, but also gave them options to become a committee chair; what we want to do this year: if you are a committee chair you will have had to fill out a survey and if there are any recommendations we will go for those first; if you have any suggestions for future senators in your department, just send them to us
 - 2. Comment (David Willis): concerning the executive committee: if it is a junior senator my advice would be to take into account what your recommendation would be; do they show potential?
 - 3. Follow-Up Question (Jonathan Kubesch): So, there is no formal paperwork?
 - a. Answer (Sue Choi): yes, there is no official structure; you just forward the names to us

4. Committee Reports

a. Legislative Steering, Austin Boyd

- i. First, we will do the second vote on passing these amendments (consistency and number in the bylaws); then I will talk about the amendment of the quorum issue
- ii. First vote: changing the amendments from four to five
 - 1. All in favor! Changes will be made
- iii. Second vote: changing President's power to appoint people to the Graduate Council; currently it says that he can appoint but he should also be it; we are adjusting that
 - 1. All in favor! Changes made
 - 2. We did not take a motion for the vote because it is mandatory; we already motioned on that last time
- iv. Last time we decided to not move forward with the wording on the quorum; we sent out a poll; overwhelmingly the majority said to go with what we talked about last time: take attendance before the vote
 - 1. When we started working on that we noticed that might lead into a lot of issues, because we would have to take attendance every time (minutes; ending; etc.)
 - 2. A lot of work, so we decided to table it for next year; it will be in the list of potential things to address for next year's legislative steering committee; next year has more time and will not rush to it
- v. Question (Shiela Hawkins): Can we not just confirm with our voting number?
 - 1. Answer (Austin Boyd): that is something somebody wrote in; without getting into a larger discussion: right now we do not have designated seating; this would be a different issue to address; we did not want to come up with a new section in the bylaws just for this issue; there are other things we talked

about but did not want to do this year; we will leave it for next year's committee; if you take a look at other bylaws for other organizations you will notice they have so much more; a lot of the suggestions we put forward here came from other organizations; we saw an attendance taking method from an undergraduate organization; but we like free seating because it allows to mingle with others; we will put it into the considerations for next year

vi. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): What if we could specify this for certain types of actions and make a quorum necessary for certain other actions?

1. Answer (Austin Boyd): we clarify this in section 3; so we would have to define all motions and which would necessitate a roll each time or we could put in a time stamp when to take a new vote; we want to make it a process that is efficient especially when we have a lot to vote on; this is only technical administrative stuff and we want to do change here, so roll call should not be too complicated; we went through a few ideas; before you vote in the committee chairs you would not need a quorum, that would be a problem

vii. Question (Michael Vineyard): Is this an issue that has actively been an issue for the meetings? Did we have people leave? Or are we working through a hypothetical example?

1. Answer (Austin Boyd): primarily hypothetical, but if you look at attendance today it is already low; we just wanted to deal with it now before it becomes an issue; if it becomes an issue later

viii. Question (Amanda-Lake Heath): Have we considered an electronic voting system?

1. Answer (Austin Boyd): Yes; that is something we are toying with; Dean Thompson is in favor of it; somebody sent us links of software we could use; we are thinking about test-running those in the future; it is not as simple as just pulling out your phone and testing

ix. Question (Surendra Singh): What would it take for the next GSS to change it? Would it too difficult for others to modify it?

1. Answer (Austin Boyd): Under the current bylaws: yes; if the amendment to our constitutions passes it will be easier; it is easier to create something new than to change something; if you want to remove something you need to vote twice to remove it; we did not want to put something forward in something that should not be changed all of the time; we are changing it right now because we are young; over time we hope fewer changes needed

2. Follow-up (Surendra Singh): So, it would be tougher? Is there a way to put it on the table so they can decide if they want to change it or not?

- a. Answer (Austin Boyd): That is why we are putting it on the list for the next year with a pros and cons list; now it just came down to a time crunch, but we did not have enough time; without having the time for a full discussion we could not do it now; there is a regulation that you need to be informed two weeks before we vote on it so we figures to table it until next year
 - 3. Comment (David Willis): We want to do it right and have continuity; this is something we want for next year that it is a process not just start restart; I want to present and answer any questions to help in the process
 - a. We pulled a lot of ideas from talking with the Faculty Senate; Dr Stolz who is the current President and the President Elect; we want be seen more than the “adulging” senate; we have more power than the Undergraduate Senate; GSS is the reason female graduate students are not not-paid when pregnant; as a senate we decided to address that
- b. Treasurer, Amanda-Lake Heath
 - i. We are preparing for GPSAW; did a lot of budgeting; now we are looking at \$5.384 left after the Senator Social; if we stay within our budget we should have around \$600-ish left to play around with or leave for the next senate; last year we had \$300 left and bought the table cloths; bought new senator t-shirts; if you have any interest in the treasurer’s position I am happy to answer any questions;
 - ii. Question (Shahram Hatefi Hesari): Can we spend the leftover money on the Awards Breakfast?
 - 1. Answer (Amanda-Lake Heath): Any money that is left after we elect new executives can be used for anything in GSS as long as we spend it within the fiscal year; the new President and Vice President will be elected and they can make a decision on how to use it; they would have to spend it before May 31st
 - 2. Comment (David Willis): one of the ideas we talked about was a banner; just think along those terms
- c. Equity and Diversity, Derek Boyd
 - i. Update: on February 21th we published a statement on the Corona virus; facts might be a bit outdated (in terms of case numbers), but rest is okay
 - ii. Next week on the 11th is the “Unity at the Rock”-event; show of student unity; slapping the rock; 3:30 to 4:45PM
 - iii. If anyone is interested in the position just let me know
 - iv. Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): wanted to appreciate the Corona info sheet
- d. Travel Awards, Nicholas Sarafolean
 - i. Announcement (Sue Choi): Nick Sarafolean is not here; there are no updates

- ii. Question (Derek Boyd): For those who have awards but conferences that might get canceled and we already paid for the plane tickets; what happens?
 - 1. Answer (Sue Choi): we will talk to people
- iii. Question (Unidentified): Do we know how much money was left?
 - 1. Answer (David Willis): we will probably run out
- iv. Question (Laurie Eriddia): How much actually went out of the money? Biggest complaints in my department are the early deadlines; so, if we have an excessive amount of money left over at the end maybe we can readdress the issues of the deadline and offer an opportunity to apply for people who missed the deadline or extend the deadline
 - 1. Answer (Sue Choi): might be in the minutes
 - 2. Comment (David Willis): I presented it to the Dean and at the end there was not much left; we had an excessive amount of people to turn down; it is one of the things we have to fight for more money; next leadership committee will discuss it; we spent it all;
 - 3. Comment (Sue Choi): we will not have an accurate amount until people accept or decline it; it is not spent, but divided up; we only know at the end
 - 4. Comment (David Willis): with the fear of the Corona virus we might get into a scenario like that; something that might happen;
- v. Question (Surendra Singh): When I went to a conference last Fall I got two travel awards: one departmental and one from GSS; deadline was 30 days after travel; is there a way to extend the 30 days thing to at least 60?
 - 1. Answer (David Willis): we would have to talk
 - 2. Comment (Chloe Sandoval): that might be fiscal policy; that might be what it is
 - a. Question (Sue Choi): Could you email us?
- vi. Comment (David Willis): the more questions we have and bring to the hierarchy, the better
- vii. Comment (Elina Geut): further questions can always be emailed
- e. Professional Development Travel Awards, Kamille Piacquadio
 - i. Name changed a little bit; we took out travel; we can do everything domestic now
 - ii. Closes May 17th; we updated FAQ with tips and tricks; at this time a total of 43 with 32 acceptances; a little under \$50,000 available
 - iii. Question (Katharine Ryan): I am wondering in terms of documentation: do you need any proof of registration for a workshop? There are some workshops you do not register, but just attend. What are the nuances for that? What kind of documentation do you need?
 - 1. Answer (Kamille Piacquadio): depends; when you also go to a conference, we want you to sign up for regular travel awards;

2. Comment (Sue Choi): for the documentation for reimbursement follows reimbursement policies; if you paid for it you need a receipt; if you apply for it you do need a receipt at first;
 - a. Kamille and Adrian have been diligent at reviewing the applications and there is no way you can get reimbursement without proof
- iv. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): If the event is internal (e.g., UT field day) will that count? Field day is open for everybody; you go and get points because you learned about something. Is going across the state with a UT event still reimbursable?
 1. Answer (Kamille Piacquadio): for that type make a good case for it; as long as you can make a good case it is not incredibly hard
 2. Question (Unidentified): Would that be the same for AI school at -unintelligible-?
 - a. Answer (Kamille Piacquadio): if you can make a case that it will help you in the future then you are good; look also at the FAQs
- v. Comment (Amanda-Lake Heath): the FAQ page states that you should send proof of attendance and should be changed if it is not required
 1. Comment (Sue Choi): we will look into it
- vi. Comment (Sue Choi): we had a question today about the awards: does it cover summer funding? Exceptions can be made; fiscal year ends in June you might be okay; if your travel happens after June then only prepaid airfare can be approved; this is new information; if you travel after May 31st is discouraged to apply but you can still get through
 1. Question (Claire Mayo): Who do we ask?
 - a. Answer (Sue Choi): gsspdtravel@utk.edu
- f. Programming and Events, Joshua Williams
 - i. Thank you for everyone who made it out; we had 25-ish people
 - ii. Caffeine bar on 25th of March right after lunch in the Graduate Commons
 - iii. Another one in April around 8th; the week before finals kick in
 - iv. GPSAW calendar is coming out soon
 - v. Question (Stacie Beach): Is there a specific date for the coffee-bar or is it weeklong?
 1. Answer (Joshua Williams): it will be a week before GPSAW
 - vi. Comment: (Amanda-Lake Heath): we are spending quite a bit of money on GPSAW (1/3rd of budget); please encourage peers and colleagues to attend and show up; we are ordering at least 1.5 times the amount of BBQ than last time; please tell people and bring people
 - vii. Question (Suzanne Sawusch): When you get your fliers you can email them to me I will put them on social media?
 1. Answer (Joshua Williams): Yes; calendar should be done by next week
- g. Technology; Sharahm Hatefi Hesari

- i. Believe I responded to all emails about your webpages? Is there anyone who did not send an email yet? - I will be around next year so do not worry if you want to add something; this year I only did your front page can do more next year
- h. Annual Fundraiser, Jonathan Kubesch
 - i. Shout-out to David Willis: he just had a baby
 - ii. Working with David about our t-shirt; Amanda-Lake Heath was also helpful; we are making it happen; \$15 shirt for us; \$20 for the general public; \$5 off if you use cash; money will be used to pay off t-shirts and rest goes to Smokey's pantry; would like to thank the committee to making this happen; if you need me I got good business cards
 - iii. Question (Amanda-Lake Heath): Will the t-shirts be available during or before GPSAW?
 - 1. Answer (Jonathan Kubesch): Yes
 - 2. Follow-up (Amanda-Lake Heath): No cash?
 - a. Answer (Jonathan Kubesch): We will do cash
 - iv. Question (Andrew Putt): Do you have a price point on the shirts? Will \$15 only pay for the shirt or also add to the fundraiser?
 - 1. Answer (David Willis): \$15 will cover the shirts and let us make money
 - 2. Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): We are looking at a \$4-6 revenue thing
- i. Mental Health Ad Hoc Committee, Chloe Sandoval
 - i. Big and exciting news: shout-out to Ashlyn even though she is not here
 - 1. We got \$500 grant for the committee; most of it will go toward GPSAW; committee will do a "Paint the Rock"-event; then do a campus walk to things that support graduate students on campus; I am teaching a knitting for mindfulness class
 - ii. Other exciting news: working hard on getting a short survey send out to get data to inform the bigger survey we want to do later on; David Willis and I are working on it; we are working with IRB
 - iii. Last week I met with Student Advisory Committee for the Counselling Center; hoping to be fully staffed by the Fall; right now they are four counselors short; at full capacity they will have 16 members; they are looking to establish an urgent care track; much like in healthcare you can get in quickly; going to hire someone specifically to be in charge of the urgent care track; trying to take care of issues in quick short sessions with that; looking to add an online counselling services; if you have student health insurance you already have access to online counselling; so if you are struggling to find someone here that is always an option; so let people know
 - iv. Question (Derek Boyd): For the wellness walk: do you have any ideas on how to include students with accessibility issues?
 - 1. Answer (Chloe Sandoval): Have not thought about that yet but we will make sure to include it
 - v. Question (Suzanne Sawusch): Can you send us an email with the things you just talked about? It was a lot of good information

1. Answer (Chloe Sandoval): will do
 - vi. I will be here if anyone is interested in discussing keeping this committee around
 - vii. Comment (David Willis): my number one recommendation is making this ad-hoc a permanent committee and I will push to make it so
 1. Comment (Chloe Sandoval): as the chair I am fully behind that as well; calling it a Graduate Student Wellbeing Committee; with the survey we are doing we are trying to look into all the aspects of well-being (financial, mental, etc.)
5. New Business
- a. UTK Grad Fee Waiver Teach-In; Darcy Ayers
 - i. Earlier this year a senator talked about the burden of our fees for graduate students and she responded with we are working on it; I am here as a representative of the people who are working on it
 - ii. This fee-waiver campaign that we have been building over the course of the past semester began out of some graduate students that were part of United Campus Workers but we are trying to open it up to every student on campus; we are hoping to build a policy to include a fee waiver with the tuition waiver it is not super common but we found precedent; there has been national writing about how the SEC has the highest student fees in the country and UT is the highest there
 - iii. We feel strongly about that, but also the Deans; every single one of the administrators has responded strongly in favor; it took little effort to make them aware of the issue
 - iv. Where we are at right now: Dean Thompson is working on it in the Graduate School; on our end we are working more on building a grassroots campaign to show how a fee waiver would support the graduate student community; please sign up and take a few blank ones to hand out in your departments; everyone can sign this petition; we are really focusing on getting graduate workers to sign on
 - v. Teach-in: we had an event to explain the campaign so far and share stories on how we had to deal with those things; not just a panel but people in the room as well; it is great that the awareness is growing in the graduate student body; the only thing we can get through is if we get together
 - vi. Question (James Shepard): If the university does not go through with it is there any way we can still fight for it?
 1. Answer (Darcy Ayers): anything is on the table on this point; we are fighting on the tuition waiver; the way the tuition waiver works is that it is the same place that pays for your tuition; we do not want to get rid of the fees; but we want to shift the burden;
 - vii. Question (Savannah Collins-Key): Two questions: Is that the petition? We had someone go around with it earlier.
 1. Answer (Darcy Ayers): Yes

2. Follow-Up (Savannah Collins-Key): Pushback from student that a fee waiver would increase the student ticket prices for athletic events.
 - a. Answer (Darcy Ayers): That goes back to what we are saying before; we do not want to take money out of that pot; that should not affect anything; the same amount of money should still go in, but not coming out of our pockets; that is something we can take into account; at this point what we are proposing should not affect that
- viii. Comment (Amelia Ahles): Texas AM just got away with the fees in case you need other precedents
- ix. Comment (Sheila Hawkins): our departments pay the fee waivers; so if departments pay for all fees would that not bankrupt some departments? It would take money away from departments to pay for other students
 1. Answer (Darcy Ayers): we do not want them to put it on the departments; if we would make it a zero sum game with the departments that would take away money from them and future students; Chancellor Plowman talked about how she wants to recruit more people so that should fall into this category; should not fall onto the departments;
- x. Question (Andrew Putt): When you say "fees" it is a broad category. what fees are you looking at? Special fees for engineering? That would be a purely department-thing, because the department decides to make the course cost money.
 1. Answer (Darcy Ayers) The model we have would do away with all fees; not just with top level university fees that everybody pays, but also the fees that some colleges pay
 2. Follow-Up Question (Andrew Putt): Would that not take away money from the departments?
 - a. Comment (Joshua Williams): that is an issue we deal with in the department of business
 - i. Answer (Darcy Ayers): the funding will not go away, but come from somewhere else; right now graduate students pay around \$5Mio a year in fees; if you put that into a line item it would be paid by someone else (graduate assistants pay that); that money would still exist
 3. Question (Unidentified): If we do not get tuition waivers, we would also not get fee waivers?
 - a. Answer (Darcy Ayers): Yes, but we can work on that too
 4. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Can we motion to add that to the list of things for the next administration?
 - a. Surendra Singh seconds – no action
- b. Awards Breakfast Nomination, Sue Choi

- i. During GPSAW; please send in nominations; right now, we only have nominations from one department; scheduled for 8:30AM this year; chance to get together
 - ii. We could extend the due-date, but let us aim for March 9th now; the event is open for everybody you just have to RSVP
 - iii. Question (Chloe Sandoval): Just checking: I did nominate people, did it go through?
 - 1. Answer (Sue Choi): yes, it was probably more than just one department
 - iv. Question (Chloe Sandoval): Was there not an email that was supposed to go out?
 - 1. Answer (Sue Choi): yes, got stuck but not on our side; inform your departments
 - 2. Comment (Amanda-Lake Heath): maybe send it out to other people as well, because you can also nominate staff and professors
- c. GPSAW Events & Volunteer Opportunities, Sue Choi
 - i. We need volunteers; we have a whole month, you do not have to be a senator; starting from paint to rock to other events; we need people to help set up; other events need people too; BBQ in the Park we probably need bouncers to make sure that everything is well done; people who know how much food to hand out; Awards Breakfast: check people in
 - 1. I will send out sign up e-mails multiple times
 - ii. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): I would like to circulate the signup in the department; can you send me the link?
 - 1. Answer (Sue Choi): will do
 - iii. Comment (David Willis): come to the Awards Breakfast, there will be something special, so be there
- d. GPSAW Fundraisers:
 - i. External events; info will be posted online: Duck Donuts and Chipotle approached us; go there and they will support us with parts of their proceeds to Smokey's Pantry
 - 1. Duck donuts might be the one out west; we will clarify this
- e. Student Wellbeing Committee
 - i. We are getting short on time; do we want to do a small discussion real quick; we are serious on making it a permanent committee; it will be a next administration task; but what are some specific language and descriptions that would make it applicable; if you have though email Chloe Sandoval or GSS and we will put it together; Chole Sandoval and David Willis are committed
 - ii. Question (Unidentified): What are the goals; objectives?
 - 1. Answer (Chloe Sandoval): include financial issues; health insurance; fee waiver issues; mental health; this is a very wide an encompassing thing; if there are things that affect your wellbeing let us know
 - iii. Comment (Shahram Hatefi Hesari): this is something that is serious; think about it and try to support it

- iv. Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): suggest the idea that the survey to collect stuff on mental health to include that
 - 1. Answer (Chloe Sandoval): that is part of our research plan; basing it on what Berkley did; hope to do a repeat study each year
 - 2. Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): action on those recommendations should be a joint task especially since graduate students overrepresents people who deal with mental health issues
 - v. Question (Dene Vann): Can we include financial literacy issues? Payment plan stuff or something else?
 - 1. Answer (Chloe Sandoval): that would be a good thing to add under the resources-tab on our website
 - vi. Comment (Surendra Singh and Jonathan Kubesch): Could we add the bridge questions to the new business next year and why PhD graduate heads are pointy?
 - 1. Comment (Claire Mayo): PhD have the same attire as undergraduates
 - 2. Comment (Unidentified): just buy a new hat
 - f. Next year's GSS suggestion:
 - i. We are running out of time: we will send out an open blank survey where you can share your thoughts on that; also include matters on graduation hats; we will make it anonymous
 - 1. Comment (Jonathan Kubesch): I dig it
 - ii. Comment (Suzanne Sawusch): I need everyone's help; send me some content; I challenge everyone to join us on our social media; if you are hungry the Social Work students have a fundraiser at Brenz Pizza right now
 - 1. Question (Jonathan Kubesch): Can you email us?
 - 2. Question (Michael Vineyard): What kind of content would be helpful? Should we send stuff from our departments?
 - a. Answer (Sue Choi): share success within your department; awards or something in your department; promotional stuff like "hey here is a graduate student doing graduate student thing"; we are less selective right now
 - iii. Comment (Elina Geut): if you want to volunteer for GPSAW; see David Willis and Sue Choi after the meeting; if you have any comments questions send us an email
 - iv. Comment (Sue Choi): bring junior senators
6. Adjournment, at 7:27PM
- a. Motion to adjourn (Jonathan Kubesch); second (Stacie Beach); abstentions: zero; opposed: one; in favor: majority; meeting adjourned

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 14th, 2020 at 6:00 pm in SU169