

GSS Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2020

5:30 pm EST

<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/93970715688>

Opening Remarks

- Attendance -59
- Austin called meeting to order
- September and October meeting minutes will be on the website for all members to view

President's Report

- Changes to the spring semester - No longer have spring break.
- New GSS website - was just approved last and will be up soon
 - Shahram asked everyone to view the new template. He asked everyone to send photos and resume to have their own webpage. More freedom of choice. Please take a look and give feedback.
 - #32 asked about the website - Is it live yet and can we take a look at it. Asked for the url to be placed. Asked if we could add Graduate Student Accomplishments.
- New Office Space - Currently Two offices in Grieve hall. We will be moving the two offices to the Student Union later this semester.

Committee Updates

- Annual Fundraiser-Austin said there is nothing to update this evening according to the committee chair. They are just starting their meetings.
- Equity & Diversity - Ashley Browning -Have met a couple of times this semester.
 - Goals for the year- being more proactive this year. Committee wants to host resources and personal events for students who might be experiencing adverse situations at this time.
 - Proaction vs. reaction
 - Social media presence
 - Will be doing some cross posting from other organizations on campus.

- Biggest project - Would like to set up a graduate student food pantry that will provide deliveries to students and other needs like diapers and baby food, gas money, etc.
- #14 - she would like to be on the committee and wants to know if there are more openings possible. Austin said that yes there are still openings. Each person needs to speak with the committee chair.
- Ashley said that they have discussed a collaboration with Smokey's Pantry.
- Graduate Student Well-Being- Chloe Sandoval
 - Survey - will have survey sent out and findings to administration
 - Discussion with Counseling Center - understand that they do not have the capacity to treat all graduate students for the long term. See the need to find referrals for community services. There is a list at the counseling center. Chloe thinks we need to have a detailed list of what type of counseling each counselor provides.
 - #36 - Agrees there needs to be more than a list. What makes UTK unable to see students long-term? Chloe said part of the issue is that there is such a high demand for counselors. Resources usually go to the undergraduates. Chloe suggested people email her with questions.
 - #32 - Would the counseling list be something we want to include on our website? It would need to be updated yearly. Chloe is not sure what that would entail to provide the list.
 - #60 - Is the purpose of providing a more detailed list that is separate from the counseling center to refer people to our list first? Chloe said that students should go to the counseling center first and look at our GSS list. Chloe wants to work with the counseling center to work with the process on locating counselors.
 - #14 - Have not heard good results or responses from students. Agrees that this is something we need to encourage the counseling center to improve. Chloe said that there are now online counseling services for immediate care through UTK account.
 - #16 - Need to clarify that if a student seeks outside counseling without a referral from the UTK counseling center then UnitedHealth will deny the claim.
 - #18 - If referred out by the Counseling or Health Center it must be referred each year.
 - Shahram - be aware that there is co-pay for health costs.
 - Compiling Resources - want to compile a list of resources for mental and physical health care. The resources can be inside or outside of UTK. This will be accessible on the website and provided in email.

- #67 - Would be beneficial to create a url that captures students' needs. Then needs could be distributed to organizations or persons with the resources.
- Legislation & Steering - Kate Higgins
 - Goals for the year
 - Committees mentioned in the Bylaws and Constitution - modifications to some committees like finance, programming and ad hoc committees.
 - Improvements to the transition process for incoming GSS Senators - want to understand each department's process.
 - Minor Changes to the Bylaws - Need a Social Media Officer. Need to change some language for clarification on internal and external committees.
- Programming & Events - Rachel Crosslin
 - Halloween activities - play more games, stream a movie, costume contest and mask contest.
 - Discord event- <https://discord.com/invite/TTMaDkr>
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- Travel Awards - Sheila Hawkins
 - Deadline for submissions October 30th
 - \$200000 for the year for travel funds
 - Make sure submitting expense through the appropriate department
 - #48 - Please repeat deadlines - Prior approval deadline of October 30th.
 - Reimbursement deadlines: pre-approval for Fall: Oct 30; Fall reimbursement Jan 1, 2021; pre-approval for Spring 2021: Feb 26; spring reimbursement May 21

New Business and Open Floor

- #58 - Technology advisory board - if anyone has any comments or suggestions they would like to know. He said students can reach out to him. ibernard@vols.utk.edu
- Igor Bernardi - tech fee adv board
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- Dixie Lee Thompson - she would consider office hours for students if we could offer new ideas since she offered in the past and no one showed up.
- Asked about students whose research has been delayed due to COVID and they are looking for additional financial support. Graduate departments are looking at financial needs or current and returning students at this time to project for student needs. Looking for ways to support students and she feels confident that we will find a path forward.

- Nicholas Grondin - Ask about how graduate student survey results are going to be used to make decisions.
- Dean Thompson said that the results are closely being reviewed and shared some of the results with us. She is developing themes based on responses from students. The first report of data will be made to the Council of Deans first of November. Said the results will also be shared with GSS.
- Shahram asked that everyone pass on social media accounts to graduate student friends.
- *Facebook - UTK Graduate Student Senate @UTKGSS
- *Instagram - utk.gss
- *Twitter - @UTK_GSS

Adjournment

#7 Motion to adjourn, #36 2nd Motion

Next Meeting: November 12 at 5:30pm on zoom