



GSS

Meeting

Agenda

Minutes

November 12, 2020

5:30 pm EST

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5797569571?pwd=UGphKzJuREZuSGhpUjBESDBIUEM5UT09>

Password: b8k3H6

Opening Remarks

- Attendance - 63 in attendance
- Minutes were introduced but not officially approved

President's Report

- Update from Dr. Thompson on Graduate Student stress survey and other updates
 - There will be some combined undergraduate and graduate ceremonies
 - Will accommodate graduates from May, August and December
 - There are a lot of professional development opportunities for graduate students
 - Remember all deadlines
 - Graduate Student Stress Survey
 - 760 completed the survey (12%)
 - How are students handling stress - 82% doing ok or fine, 18% struggling
 - What issues are causing most difficulty: Top 3
 - inability to interact with professors and peers, feelings of isolation, personal family issues
 - Open ended questions - Thanking faculty and administrators, some expressed frustrations,
 - COVID-19 has heightened frustrations

- Dr Thompson has shared all of the survey results and comments and has asked that faculty members try to reach out and stay connected with graduate students. She has encouraged GSS to stay engaged with students as much as possible.
- A main issue of concern is that some students are facing delayed graduation. Examples include theatre and anthropology students.
- Tomorrow is the deadline for departments to report information about delayed graduation for students and issues affecting student progress.
- GSS member asked if there will be another stress survey in the spring? She wasn't sure if this exact type of survey will be sent out.
- She suggested that we reach out to students in our department to see how they are doing.
- GSS member asked what graduate students can expect in spring 2021? She said that spring will be like fall 2020. Many online classes. Chancellor has updates every Friday at 11:30am livestream. These are recorded and available on the website.
- She has heard that graduate students are very disappointed that fall and spring break have been cancelled.
- GSS member asked if graduate school resources will be available during the holidays for graduate students who are concerned about going home due to COVID concerns? She has heard that resources will be available.

Committee Updates

- Equity & Diversity - Ashley Browning
 - Big Orange Pantry
 - Worked in partnership with Abigail Brumfield to provide focus for students. Pantry will be open approximately 13 hours per week. They have posted hours but take appointments as needed. In the spring they hope to provide deliveries to students within the 7 mile radius. It is a shopping experience vs. a charity give.
 - Mutual aid network for graduate students
 - Hope to add this to what is provided to the student emergency fund.
 - Provided a link how students can apply for aid
 - Resources for international students
 - Several international students will not go home during the break. We are hoping to provide resources to those students. Even providing access to legal services if needed.

- GSS student had a question about a student relief fund? Ashley said that it is a continuous application, no cutoff. Encourage students to continually apply.
- Graduate Student Well-Being
- Legislation & Steering - Kate Higgins
 - Discussing potential changes to constitution and bylaws.
 - Since the last meeting discussed sending out a survey on how your department chose you. When were you chosen: spring or fall
 - In article 4 it lists the committees: suggest modifying the section to describe how committees are formed instead of listing the actual committee names
 - #14 - commented about her position on the committee was confusing and .ees a great need for this change.
- Programming & Events- Rachel Crosslin
 - Halloween MASKquerade debrief - 10 people showed up to the event. One critique was to switch to ZOOM instead of Discord. Rachel thanked everyone for coming to the event.
 - December Event - would like some input on when to host the event and ideas
 - Secret Santa - Survey
- Travel Awards- Sheila Hawkins
 - Travel awards updates and policies
 - Please tell everyone about these awards. Sheila said to please ask them to read the instructions carefully. Students need to make sure that they qualify to receive the award. Things are different this year.
 - Important deadlines
 - Deadlines are on the website
 - November 15th - funding Nov. 23 and Feb. 22
 - January 8th - reimbursement (all go through Financial Aid office)
 - #36 asked about deadlines for spring semester
 - February 12th - Feb 22 and April 12
 - March 29th - April 13 and May 8
 - #26 - Will travel awards be for in person and virtual, attending or presenting? Sheila said Yes. As long as it is within the guidelines students can request funding. Because it is virtual, it is run through Financial Aid. There is a \$400 maximum per student for the year. Preference is given to students who have not applied.
 - Dr. Thompson stated that graduate school is looking for many ways to support students. She said that receiving money through Financial Aid will actually be easier. A clarification: if someone has reached \$400 limit then it can go against loan so still apply. She encourages students to apply because more money will most likely be available.

- Sheila encouraged students to attend a virtual conference to network with others. Remind students that the expenses must be out of pocket expenses and receipts must be submitted to validate the expense.
- Need to get rid of old link on website

New Business and Open Floor

Motion to begin discussing new business #32, 2nd motion #27

No new business

Shahram asked for everyone to send resume or CV and headshot.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting #36, 2nd #67

Next Meeting: January 21 at 5:30pm on zoom