



## GSS Meeting Minutes

*February 17, 2021*

*5:30 pm EST*

<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/93262154759>

### Opening Remarks

- Attendance - Austin asked everyone to check in using barcode (57 present)
  - Roger Kane was not able to attend. Austin led the meeting.
- Voting on meeting minutes -
  - Minutes for January, 2021 were approved.
  - Minutes for Fall 2020 were approved.

### President's Report

- Upcoming GSS Elections
  - Elections will be held in April. People interested in running for offices need to let Austin know about the intention to run.
- Health Insurance Future Updates

### Committee Updates

- Equity & Diversity - Ashley Browning
  - Resolution on Graduate Student Fees (joint resolution with Faculty Senate and Dean Thompson)
    - Proposing that graduate student workers no longer pay fees associated with being a graduate student at the university. This was a concession to focus on graduate student workers. They wanted this to apply to all graduate students, but were only able to get this waived for graduate student workers.
    - Dean Thompson said that the proposal needs to correctly state the fees based on the hours worked (full-time or part-time).
    - #58, Dean Thompson - Fees may account for \$2000 or more. Some colleges charge fees above that.

- #21 - Have you checked with the registrar office for exact fee amounts? Yes. They were checked
  - #36 - Does not support resolution. Think fees are quite low.
  - Shahram Hesari - More than 70% of graduate students are international. The normal salary is \$1200 per month. Eliminating the fees would greatly help these students.
  - #21 - Understand what Nick is saying but rent in Knoxville has gone up for students. We are asking for an allocation for graduate research assistants.
  - #58 - Where will the money come from to reduce the fees? Dean Thompson said that it will have to come from some other place. There will have to be a decision made about reallocating resources. Ashley said that we will hold the vote on this resolution until next meeting.
  - #32 - She thinks it is important to know how it will be reallocated, but she is on board with the idea of the fee waiver.
  - #16 - Even if resolution is passed it is not our job to determine where money will come from.
- Graduate Student Well-Being
  - Chloe Sandoval - Counseling care was a concern. UT has hired a clinical case coordinator to help students transition out to community care. Another person is also doing wellness Wednesdays.
  - Wanting to create a graphic for well-being resources. Is there someone in the graduate school that could help? Dean Thompson said that Dr. Sean Hendrix is the person to contact.
  - #44(Proxy) - On SBA for law school and student chair for wellness committee. Promote collaboration with other wellness organizations within other departments/schools.
- Legislation & Steering
  - Kate Higgins - Focusing on changing constitution and by-laws on committees. Simplifying defining the permanent committees and how the ad hoc committees are formed. This will be voted on at the next meeting. It will be sent out prior to the meeting.
- Programming & Events
  - Rachel Crosslin - Spring Calendar:
    - February: Virtual Proximity-Based speed friending 2/24/21
      - 6:30-8:30pm
      - March: Virtual Yoga, Virtual Trivia
      - April: GPSAW week
        - Virtual Academic Event Ideas: Awards Breakfast, Professional Development Workshop

- Virtual Social Event Ideas: 5K Fundraiser, cooking/crafting kits
- In-person: Knoxville Zoo Even, scavenger hunt/selfie race
- May: UT Gardens Picnic Social
- Travel Awards
  - Spring 2021 application
  - Sheila Hawkins - She said they have received one application.
  - Funding cannot be for externships
    - Looking for information for funding on these types of opportunities
      - 18 - There are some scholarships available
        - McClure Scholarships (given through the Center for Global Engagement)

## New Business and Open Floor

- Why aren't we getting more applications for travel awards?
  - 36 - The conferences are not expensive so it would be more effort than it is worth. Students also do not like the online conferences. Publicizing has been good, need clarification on what is/isn't professional development
  - 67 - need to be more clear what students can apply for
  - 18 - Lots of students need to take into consideration the Pandemic. Productivity has been effected
  - 24 - Have the dates for the summer application been decided yet?
    - No
- 58 - Technology Fee Advisory Board
  - The university is negotiating with Protorio instead of Lockdown Browser
  - \$1 Mil for departments to request technology (Usually it is \$2 Mil)
  - Discussion of having a proctor room on campus
    - 57 - Have they thought about coordinating with SDS?
      - No
- 36 - UTK Police Advisory Council
  - Crime statistics down in 2020 (except for property crimes)
  - Ride along program with UTK - <https://utpolice.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2018/09/17914364.pdf>
- 36 - Question for Deen Thompson about Vaccines
  - What efforts are being made to include faculty and GTAs in the vaccine waves?
    - Lobbying has not yielded any positive outcomes
  - Doctor Thompson - Testing is available. Information on the covid website
  - 27 - Is anyone at UT included in any waves for the vaccine?
    - To the best of our knowledge, everyone is considered general population
  - 24 - How can we help lobbying?
    - Reach out to state senators
- 27 - Working with student in microbiology to start a chapter of the national policy center here at UT

- VP - GSS Website
  - Send headshots and bios for the website

## Adjournment

36 - Motion to end

67 - Second

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Next Meeting: March 11 at 5:30pm on zoom