



## **GSS Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 30, 2022 5:30 pm**

**Student Union, Room 169**

Senators Present: Refer to Appendix

Ex-Officio Members Present: Millie Turner Cheatham, Dixie Thompson, Nick Jakel

### **Opening Remarks - George Fields**

1. Call to Order
  - a. Hello everyone and welcome to our seventh senate session of the 2021-2022 academic year.
  - b. Today we have some exciting proceedings today, the new Bylaws and Constitution are being voted on from the tabled version from last session. From there, they will go to the entire GSS body for voting during elections.
  - c. Thank you for being here today.
2. I want to briefly walk through our senate procedures for those who are joining us for the first time.
  - a. Please raise your hand if you wish to be acknowledged. For those on zoom, please raise your hand and one of the moderators will notify me so I can acknowledge you. Once you have the floor, you may speak. Always introduce yourself with your name and voting number so that we can make note in the meeting minutes.
  - b. Chat will be muted through the senate meeting so that we adhere to roberts rules/parliamentary procedures. If you have technical issues, please email [gss2@utk.edu](mailto:gss2@utk.edu) and we will work to get them resolved

immediately. We will keep the zoom open after the meeting adjourns if any of our virtual members want to stay and chat.

3. Attendance
  - a. We will take before/after each senate meeting.
  - b. Attendance taken, 40 members present, quorum reached.
4. Now I will introduce our President, Hunter Hammock, for the President's Report.

### **President's Report - Hunter Hammock**

1. Thank you for being here, we appreciate your support on behalf of the graduate students and all the work you've put in this semester.
2. My remarks will be brief today.
3. We're approaching the end of the year and I want to discuss what we've accomplished.
  - a. We've had a net gain of 6 senators.
  - b. There will now be some rotations in departments coming up for representation, let us know if your department does not have established procedures we can help.
4. Events upcoming:
  - a. GSS elections
    - i. Deadline for nominations has been extended to next week.
    - ii. It has been an honor to serve in this role. This has been such a great leadership experience for me personally and I am glad I have been able to make change for the campus. I encourage you to consider it running for office.
    - iii. Please let us know if you want to get further involved with GSS, either at the elected officer level or on the exec team or as a committee chair.
  - b. Financial
    - i. Stipends and financial situation has become an increasingly serious issue this year.
    - ii. We will continue to lobby for increasing stipends for our grad students and the potential for fee reductions/waivers.
    - iii. Put forth a number of suggestions, policies, and resolutions to improve this going forward.
    - iv. Encourage deans and presidents to do surveys within their departments to identify issues and then address this.
    - v. Over 40% of our grad students have a consistent issue with food insecurity.
5. Thank you for your work
  - a. Network with your department to begin the transfer of power.

- b. Have a good evening.

### **Vice President's Report - Mohamed Al Sager**

1. Hello everyone, thank you for joining us today.
  - a. I would like to welcome our new members of the senate.
  - b. We look forward to working with you and making changes that will improve the graduate student experience.
  - c. Please do not hesitate to voice your opinion and let your voice be heard.
  - d. I have a few brief announcements and updates I'd like to share with you.
2. Nominations have been extended.
  - a. Reach out to myself or Hunter if you have any questions.
  - b. Open to any eligible grad students, pass along to your department.
3. Take part in GPSAW, you have earned it!
  - a. We are hosting 2 events, the 5k and the awards ceremony.
  - b. Other events include Milkshake Monday on April 4th, here at the Student Union outside Steak n Shake at 12pm.
  - c. Smokey's Closet has extended hours that day 4:30-6, with suit fittings and the ability to get professional pictures taken.
  - d. We will forward relevant emails to you, please share with your departments.
4. Have a good semester!

### **New GSS Coordinator: Nick Jakel**

1. Background in leadership development, passionate about higher education - especially grad school.
2. Excited to work with you all.

### **Internal Committee Reports**

#### **Davis Carter, 70, Finance Committee Chair**

1. Current Account Balance: \$11780.32
  - a. Budget after known charges: \$7903
  - b. Checking acct remains the same (\$824)
  - c. Reception budget: \$3000
  - d. 5K budget: \$2000
    - i. Some of that money will be going back to the GSS checking account, which we get to keep!
    - ii. Money from registrations and donations will be going to Big Orange Pantry.

- e. Additional Purchases
  - i. GSS t-shirts: \$1250
  - ii. GSS cords: \$375
  - iii. Additional Backdrop: \$750
  - iv. Table Banner: \$100
  - v. Stickers: \$100
  - vi. Megaphone: \$52
  - vii. Please email me or Hunter ideas for other purchases you feel would be beneficial for GSS.
- 2. GSS 5K
  - a. Register now if you haven't already! 57 participants currently signed up (Donations also welcome).
  - b. Would like to get around 75 participants or more!
  - c. Beautiful route selected.
  - d. Shirts are ordered, anticipating some more people will register.
  - e. After April 2nd, price goes from \$25 to \$30.
  - f. April 9th is the race!
  - g. Need 4 more volunteers - email me if you're interested

**Igor Bernardi, 26, Legislation Steering Committee Chair**

- 1. Parking: Email with written confirmation that graduate students can park on campus during game day should be circulated with the Senators soon.
  - a. Please pass along to your departments.
- 2. Advisor 360 Feedback Proposal: Senators should expect an email within the next week or so: idea is to put to a vote during the next GSS meeting.
  - a. Please read it and send me any comments or proposals you have to improve it before it comes up for a vote.
- 3. Stipends: In addition to efforts already mentioned by Hunter, a draft will be presented to the Senators before the next meeting, where it will also be put to a vote.
  - a. Lots of communications with the higher powers of the university.
  - b. Hope you filled out the recent survey.
  - c. This will be sent to you before the next GSS meeting, feel free to send ideas on how to make it better.
  - d. The idea of putting it to a vote is not indicative of us having power, but rather the backing of the organization which makes it more likely to be addressed.
  - e. Pushing for better stipends, not to be seen as us requesting something, but an opportunity for the university to save money, as being paid a

liveable amount improves grad students ability to teach, work, and do research.

- f. Grad students are often the workhorse of a university.
  - g. We want the university to understand that this is an opportunity for them to invest in us.
4. Professors' evaluations: When the semester comes to an end
- a. They do actually make an impact and are taken into consideration
  - b. Make sure you evaluate your professors, both the ones that do a good job and the ones that do a bad job.

#### **Lufuno Phophi, 95, Equity and Diversity Committee Chair**

- 1. Women at Work Career Readiness, April 5th from 4pm-5pm, virtual event, posts with links are out, we will distribute to senators to get out to their department.
- 2. Basic Need Coalition April 13th 4pm-6pm, really relevant considering what Igor has mentioned about stipends and the proposal from Brigid in Graduate Student Wellbeing.
- 3. Looking to put out one more programming event before the end of the semester.
- 4. Always eager to work with student organizations, reach out.

#### **Kassie Hollabaugh, 68, Travel Awards Committee Chair**

- 1. Between August 1-April 1, we awarded 241 students and over \$90,000, each person got on average \$400.
- 2. One more deadline which is tomorrow at 5, tell your departments to get any last minute funding applications in.
- 3. The GSS Travel Awards provide support to students who are presenting at conferences.

#### **Leighton Chappell, 45, Programming and Events Committee Chair**

- 1. Women at work event from WiStar3, April 5th from 4-6 features podcast host from Harvard Business School.
- 2. Lots of upcoming events, check your emails so you can enjoy all the events coming up for GPSAW.
- 3. 5k April 9th
  - a. Not this Saturday, the next
  - b. Cherokee Park
  - c. Please register, still open
- 4. Axe Throwing and Archery Night from Student Engagement
  - a. April 7th 5-7 at Ancient Lore village
- 5. Awards Reception

- a. Next Wednesday, Tennessee Terrace at Neyland Stadium.
- b. Goodie bags, awards, refreshments and hors d'ouvres.
- c. We will have Dean Thompson, Chancellor Plowman, and Chancellor Cuevas there.
- d. Looking for 5 more volunteers.
- e. Recommended dress code: business casual.

### **BJ Armstead, 44, Graduate Student Senate Advisory Committee Chair**

1. Working with grad student organizations.
2. Vet department has students who want to join GSS.

### **New Business**

1. Bylaws and Constitution - George Fields
  - a. At the last meeting, we voted to table the vote for a final vote at this meeting.
  - b. Have received no negative feedback.
  - c. Please don't submit your vote until we've completed both motions, QR code titled Vote 10.
  - d. Kat Capstick (37) moves to vote on bylaws amendments, seconded by Igor Bernardi (26).
    - i. Required  $\frac{2}{3}$  to approve, there are 52 senators here so 35 are needed to confirm.
  - e. Kassie Hollabaugh (68) moves, Christian Young (92) seconds to vote on the constitutional amendments.
    - i.  $\frac{3}{4}$  threshold required, would be 39/52.
  - f. Senator on zoom had issue with voting link on their device, link recirculated.
  - g. Bylaws Amendments: 40/52 affirm, passed.
  - h. Constitution Amendments: 42/52, passed the next threshold and will be listed on the ballot to receive votes from grad student body as a whole,  $\frac{3}{4}$  threshold.
  - i. Senator had issue with google doc vote, discussed over zoom with exec.
  - j. Both votes are completed.
  - k. As for New Business, since we approach the end of the year really want to address any issues concerning this year or next.
2. Dean Thompson
  - a. Thank you all for your hard work and all that's gone into making GSS a a success.
  - b. Really excited to welcome Nick and excited for him to support now and in the future.

- c. Strongly encourage you to participate in the GPSAW events.
  - i. Calendar in email of all events.
  - ii. Monday night in UT Gardens, fun activities and enjoy the scenery.
  - iii. 3MT 3:30-4:45 watch party of all the presentations, q and a, winners announced at the end.
  - iv. Come out for the 5k!
  - v. Gearing up for the end of the year, grad school is staying busy with offering fellowships, welcoming new students, preparing for graduate hooding.
  - vi. Thank you for all that you do to contribute to the success of our great university!
- 3. Open Floor
  - a. Lufuno Phophi (95)
    - i. Echoing issues around stipends, especially for other international students.
    - ii. Trying to travel from their home, find a home and more are more difficult without financial support. Housing and food needs not being met affects our work.
    - iii. Consider the financial burden on international students, including for travel - being unable to visit family because of inadequate pay is very hard and depressing.
  - b. Devon Carrol (71)
    - i. Comment on student fees.
    - ii. Thanks to Hunter and Mohamed for discussing how we can better serve students with our fee structures and fighting to get them lowered/reduced.
    - iii. Want it on record to recommend that the university reconsider their fee structure for out of state students, they pay nearly double in tuition and fees. Despite moving and establishing residency, the school does not recognize me as an in-state student. This is very frustrating, and disproportionately affects faculty and students who come from areas that are not as well known or funded, limits ability to recruit and hire for positions.
    - iv. NC State requires change of residency within 6 months, in order to address these issues.
  - c. Dean Thompson
    - i. This is a state rule, not a UT residency issue.
    - ii. If someone comes to TN to go to school, they're listed as out of state and remain that way - it is a state legislative policy.

- iii. I'd change it if I could tomorrow, and we will keep pushing for that change.
- d. Christian Young (92)
  - i. Question about fee structure to Dean Thompson.
  - ii. Does this change need to go through the state leg or can higher ed board change it?
- e. Dean Thompson
  - i. I will check into that and have an answer for you by next time.
- f. Nate Gibson (12)
  - i. Question for Dean Thompson.
  - ii. Any discussion from school about subtracting fees prior to taxation, rather than having to pay fees out of pocket after paying taxes on stipends.
- g. Dean Thompson
  - i. I don't know anyone who can override IRS rules, let me take that to people who know more about this than I do and get an answer back to you. Fees are assessed independently from the income you make as an employee.
- h. Melanie Buziak (89)
  - i. Ph.D Dissertation for Engineering, after classes, we have to take thesis courses to stay a student. Means paying for classes we're not really taking when we're being paid to do research.
- i. Dean Thompson
  - i. So for those engineering fees, those are levied by the college, I recommend talking to your dean. The tuition fees are a university charge, which is intended to demonstrate you can complete research. Part of the degree requirement.
- j. Elliot Loughran (76)
  - i. Regarding different fees.
  - ii. Nursing dept, some courses have been switched to distance education in order to reduce fees, but it means we are not eligible for insurance through the university.
- k. Dean Thompson
  - i. Trying to get DE students access to our insurance, pushed for years for this and we will keep pushing.
- l. Austin Conte (81)
  - i. Regarding earlier question about traveling for intl students.
  - ii. Sounds like a good opportunity for some sort of fund to be designated, by an intl students group or partner.



- iii. Also, found resources on residency reclassification on Tennessee College of Law website.
- m. Dean Thompson
  - i. I agree about the financial burden on intl students, results from the three question survey have shown financial is the biggest challenge by far. All graduate have financial burden.
  - ii. Housing market in Knoxville is creating a lot of stress for grad and undergrad students, still something people are trying to fix.
- n. Ben Thornberry (27)
  - i. A lot of interest in fees.
  - ii. Graduate Workers Organizing Committee is still working to get rid of fees, grad student section of United Campus Workers.
  - iii. Get involved!
- o. Rose Diaz (32)
  - i. Reiterate Intl Student Issues.
  - ii. We're all in a tight spot, but intl students also have no opportunity or ability to work outside the university, so all we can make is our stipend. Makes it additionally difficult financially.

### **Adjournment**

1. Take attendance one more time to ensure quorum was maintained, same link as at the beginning of the session.
  - a. Quorum maintained.
2. Motion to adjourn.
  - a. Christian Young (92) moves, Kassie Hollabaugh (68) seconds.
3. Please take and distribute some 5k flyers. Thank you!

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*Minutes Recorded by Secretary Kat Capstick*

**Next Meeting:** April 21st, 2022 in SU 169 at 5:30

## Appendix: Senator Attendance

### GSS Session 7

03.30.22

Department by College	Voting #	Name	Present
Architecture	1	Sarah Kenney	YES
Landscape Architecture	2	Mary Robbins	NO
Anthropology	3	Brigid Ogden	YES
Anthropology	4	Jason Schaefer	YES
Art	5	--	N/A
Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology	6	Bethany Campbell	YES
Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology	7	Logan Dunn	NO
Chemistry	8	Trevor Wilson	YES
Chemistry	9	Elizabeth O'Connell	YES
Earth and Planetary Sciences	10	Kaitlyn Gauvey	YES
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	11	Hope Ferguson	YES
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	12	Nate Gibson	YES
English	13	James Shepard	YES
English	14	Karen Norwood	YES
Geography	15	Victoria Haynes	YES
History	16	Jason Jonson	NO
Life Sciences	17	--	N/A
Mathematics	18	Evan Habbershaw	YES
Mathematics	19	Johannas Krotz	NO

Microbiology	20	Diana Ramierz	NO
Microbiology	21	--	N/A
Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures	22	Sara Rico-Godoy	YES
Music	23	Tracy Clark	YES
Music	24	--	N/A
Philosophy	25	Anne Merrill	YES
Physics and Astronomy	26	Igor Bernardi	YES
Physics and Astronomy	27	Ben Thornberry	YES
Political Science	28	George Fields	YES
Political Science	29	Caitlin Goff	NO
Psychology	30	Jane Kim	YES
Psychology	31	Rebecca Skadberg	YES
Sociology	32	Rossana Diaz	YES
Theatre	33	Rachel Darden	YES
Advertising & Public Relations	34	Dusty Bryan	YES
Communication and Information	35	--	N/A
Information Sciences	36	Jessica Barfield	YES
Information Sciences	37	Kat Capstick	YES
Journalism & Electronic Media	38	--	N/A
Child and Family Studies	39	Cassie Sorrells	YES
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	40	Jeana Partin	YES
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	41	Zac Hyder	YES
Educational Psychology and Counseling	42	--	N/A
Educational Psychology and Counseling	43	--	N/A

Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	44	BJ Armstead	YES
Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	45	Leighton Chappell	YES
Nutrition	46	Anna Jackson	YES
Public Health	47	Catherine Warner	YES
Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management	48	Youngdeok Lee	YES
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education	49	Arianna Banack	YES
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education	50	Jared Huisingh	YES
Accounting and Information Management	51	Jack Badger	YES
Accounting and Information Management	52	Alex Zukowski	NO
Business Administration	53	Joseph Moulden	YES
Business Administration	54	Abigail Ritch	YES
Business Analytics and Statistics	55	--	N/A
Economics	56	Richard Beem	NO
Finance	57	--	N/A
Management & Entrepreneurship	58	--	N/A
Marketing	59	Melissa Baucum	YES
Marketing	60	--	N/A
Supply Chain Management	61	Thu Trang Hoang	YES
Supply Chain Management	62	--	N/A
Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications	63	Kendall Martin	YES
Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications	64	--	N/A
Agricultural & Resource Economics	65	Mary Marks	NO
Animal Science	66	Alison Pfau	YES

Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science	67	Alexis Gillmore	YES
Entomology & Plant Pathology	68	Kassie Hollabaugh	YES
Food Science	69	Melissa Dein	YES
Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries	70	Davis Carter	YES
Plant Sciences	71	Devon Carrol	YES
Cent/Interdisc Rsrch Grad Edu (Bredesen Center)	72	Vanshika Singh	YES
Cent/Interdisc Rsrch Grad Edu (Bredesen Center)	73	Isis Fukai	YES
Law	74	Jake Gray	YES
Law	75	Ronald Young	YES
Nursing	76	Elliot Loughran	YES
Nursing	77	Courtland Kuntz	YES
Social Work	78	Kiki Kline	YES
Social Work	79	Anna O'Dell	YES
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	80	--	N/A
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	81	Austin Conte	YES
Civil & Environmental Engineering	82	Mohammad Safaritaherkhani	NO
Civil & Environmental Engineering	83	Nastaran Moradloo	NO
Electrical Engineering & Computer Science	84	Manu Rathore	YES
Electrical Engineering & Computer Science	85	Samaneh Morovati	YES
Industrial & Systems Engineering	86	Ebrahim Sharifnia	NO
Industrial & Systems Engineering	87	--	N/A
Materials Science & Engineering	88	--	N/A
Materials Science & Engineering	89	--	N/A

Mechanical, Aerospace & Biomedical Engineering	90	--	N/A
Mechanical, Aerospace & Biomedical Engineering	91	--	N/A
Nuclear Engineering	92	Christian Young	YES
Nuclear Engineering	93	Evan Williams	YES
Comparative and Experimental Medicine	94	Ana Towe	YES
Comparative and Experimental Medicine	95	Lufuno Phophi	YES