



**GSS Session 6 Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 16, 2023, 5:30 pm**  
**Student Union, Room 169**

## **Opening Remarks**

### **5:31 [Zane Smith, Chair] GSS Session 6 Meeting Called to Order**

- **[Katherine Trubee, Technology Officer & Karen Norwood, Secretary] Attendance**
- **[Zane Smith, Chair] Review of Agenda**
- **[Zane Smith, Chair] Opening of Senate Floor for Public Comment**  
*Members of the public may address GSS members on any item appearing on this posted agenda or matters impacting students.*
  - **Rep of the UCW-CWA:** demanding family and medical leave for graduate workers. UT is proud to call itself home to world class scholars in fields where research shows the importance of family  
Grad workers are not instruments or machines. We are humans. Need for better

### **Approval of Minutes: 11/15/2022 and 1/25/23**

- **Voice vote to approve the minutes for the 11/15/2022 session**
  - **Motion to approve: #16**
  - **Seconds: #75**
  - **Minutes approved unanimous yes**
- **Voice vote to approve the minutes for the 1/25/2023 session**
  - **Motion to approve: #71**
  - **Seconds: #20**

### **Guest Speakers: Ian Crone [Director of the Student Union] & Alison Ward [Associate Director of the Student Union]**

- [Ian] changes coming to the physical space of the SU to make sure kit stays relevant and is adapting to student feedback
- Phase II – 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the SU:
  - Changes to how this space promotes unity – feedback is that it feels too much like a mall or airport, too transactional.
  - How to elevate the space and respond to student requests that there is space and furniture to utilize.
  - Smaller programming space

- Students want an expanded rec space – billiards, gaming, etc...; want smaller programming space for guest speakers or entertainment; want a pub (they showed an example of a microbrewery on campus at another school); want better rec space outdoors such as a union plaza sit-down space like a beer garden.
- [Ian provides a QR code for student feedback/response]
  - What is your favorite thing about the student union?
  - What is the top reason for visiting the student union?
  - Should a coffeehouse/juice bar be a priority for the student union?
  - Should an on-campus pub be a priority for the student union?
  - Should a seated restaurant at which you are served be a priority for the student union?
  - Should a performance space (seating 100-150) smaller sized venue be a priority for the student union?
  - Should an expanded rec space (billiards, video games, etc?) be a priority for the SU?
  - Should an expanded outdoor programming/hang-out space on the Plaza be a priority for the SU?
  - What would you improve about/add to the SU to better serve the students and promote community?
  - Complete this sentence: Being in the SU makes me feel...

## **President's Report: George Fields**

### **• Stipends**

- During our last Senate Session, I brought up the subject of stipends and the fact that the university can only set minimum stipends and cannot effectively control stipend inequalities and incongruities within and between academic units on campus.
- To clarify, minimum stipends for graduate students on assistantships have not been updated since 2021, and these new minimums went into effect August 1 of that year.
  - These stipends were set prior to that effective date, meaning they likely did not fully account for the 30% increase in the cost of living in Knoxville during 2021, as stated by Don Bruce from the Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research.
  - We need updated minimums to reflect the daily struggles graduate students are facing everyday.
  - We need the university to acknowledge that graduate students cannot be their best and contribute to the university in their fullest capacity when we struggle to find housing, face higher margins of food insecurity, etc.
- Since the last Session, Leighton and I have spoken with Mr. Allen Bolton, interim Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, and we are working now to gather stipend data from payroll. From there, we will introduce a resolution to formally request that the university reconsider stipend minimums going into the 2023-2024 academic year.
- If you are interested in working on this, which should be everyone here on an assistantship, reach out to Hannah Thompson, Chair of Legislative Steering. I will work with her to get this process moving. Time is of the essence, as we all know.

### **• Parking**

- We have been talking and working on the issue of parking since the beginning of this academic year. Through much of that, we have heard that changes to the existing structure of parking can't change or evolve, as it has always worked this way, or can't work that way.
- We have invited Mr. Mark Hairr, Director of Parking and Transit, who has not replied to our invitation to speak.
- We did, however, get a chance to speak with Mr. Bolton on the issue of parking, and he seems open to ideas for creatively addressing the strained parking situation.
- Our continued meetings with him will hopefully prove fortuitous.

- **Resolutions**

- The GSS is actively pursuing a couple of resolutions aimed at improving the graduate student experience.
  - We have a resolution addressing the controversy surrounding the construction of the new business building, with an emphasis on encouraging the university to be more proactive in their communications with units of buildings they plan to demolish with new building projects.
  - We also expect to have resolutions soon on increasing stipends, the use and assignment of space on campus, and we welcome others.
- The Legislative Steering Committee has also stated that they are close to publishing a resolution guide for Senators, which provides guidelines for how Senate resolutions should be constructed and presented.
  - Hannah Thompson, the Chair of Legislative Steering, has expressed that the committee is poised to assist Senators with topics of interest and exploring whether interests are fitted for a resolution.
  - Use the committee as a resource if you wish to pursue a resolution.

- **Listening Session with the Provost over New Construction Projects**

- Following the last Senate Session during which I addressed the email from the Chancellor regarding the new business building and the moving of units in Dunford, Greve, and Henson Halls, and the expressed concerns about how this move and those to follow will affect access to units and will impact their space needs, I communicated with the Provost these concerns, and he has agreed to host a listening session.
- The listening session will be held on Thursday, March 2, from 2:00 to 3:00pm in Student Union (SU) 192.
  - This event will be for Senators only, but I highly encourage you all to attend and express your questions and concerns, as our input in these processes is only as important as we make it through making our voices heard.

- **Elections**

- Though it is still some time away, as an organization we need to continue the conversation about the election of the next President and Vice President of the Senate.
  - If you or someone you know is interested in running for one of these elections, please feel welcome to reach out to Leighton, Nick, or myself for more information and insights into those positions.
  - More information about the election will be shared in the coming weeks.
- On the topic of elections, it is time for us to take stock as an organization and begin thinking about how Senators in your academic unit are selected.
  - We will be sharing a survey to all of you in the coming weeks to gather information on how your academic units handle the selection of Senators.
  - It is important to remember as we move forward that Senators are representatives of graduate students, and thus graduate students should play a role in selecting their representation on the Senate.
  - Keep an eye out for that survey and communicate with us if you have any questions.

- **GPSAW**

- As many of you may know, the University participates in the national recognition of graduate and professional students during the Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW) which will be held from March 27-31.

- The GSS is enthusiastic to be involved in recognizing our colleagues, and I want to take a second to introduce the GSS Awards Banquet, which will be held at 6:00 PM on Monday, March 27 in the Student Union Pilot Company Ballroom.
  - At the banquet we will be recognizing excellent graduate and professional students, and faculty and organizations focused on graduate students through the GSS Awards
  - the nominations for which are open now and will close on Thursday, February 23rd at 5:00pm.
  - Nominations for these awards can be submitted by anyone at the university, so please share this with your units and colleagues.
- Within the Senate, we have an award to recognize outstanding contributions to the GSS and its mission of supporting graduate students.
  - It is reserved for graduate students in the GSS.
  - Please take some time over the next week to appreciate what the GSS has accomplished this year, what it will accomplish before the end of the semester, and appreciate the efforts of those around you.
  - If you are so inclined, submit a nomination for individuals who you think have made an outstanding contribution to the Senate.
  - As a final reminder, nominations for all GSS Awards, including the Senate Award, will close at 5:00 pm on Thursday, February 23.

- **Question from Senator #16:** Can you repeat when is the listening session with the Provost?

**Answer from George:** The listening session will be held on Thursday, March 2, from 2:00 to 3:00pm in Student Union (SU) 192.

- **Question from Senator #84:** Will there be a zoom link for the listening sessions?

**Answer from George:** We will try to set up a zoom if the room is capable of supporting it. If it is not, we will try to find a room that will support it.

- **Question from Senator #88:** Is the demolition of the building inevitable?

**Answer from George:** Yes, as of now, it seems like the university has decided this and that the demolition is inevitable.

**Follow-up Comment from #88:** Many students in these buildings are upset about this and really do not want to relocate. They feel like they are losing their identity.

**Answer from George:** Approvals for new buildings are approved by the state, it's hard for the university to back once it is approved. I understand where people are coming from but I don't think there's any way to stop that at this point unfortunately.

- **Questions from Senator #71:** This Will the Housing Task Force Report be shared with the rest of the senate?

**Answer from George:** Yes.

**Follow up from #71:** What is the next step with that? The recommendations from are sent and then what – is there anything else the senators can do?

**Answer from George:** The recommendations from that task force were forwarded to the Vice Chancellor and Dean Thompson, as well as university housing. The next step for me is to sit down with those stakeholders and determine what are the next steps. I know for a fact from my meetings with Dr. Cuevos, which are pretty regular, that on behalf of student life, and representing that part of it, is actively trying to find units off campus to establish master lease agreements. The problem is because the market is so saturated with demand. Many units are not willing to sign agreements that would give rental rights that are appropriate for us as opposed to the market at large, and so it's really difficult, and I'm not speaking for Dr. Cuevos here. Just so, if that be in the minutes, it's really difficult to find apartment complexes that are willing to offer rates low enough to be equitable for us. He's not given any details at

this point, but I think that there may be some of those coming up. I mean, I'll be forthcoming with those as soon as I get that information.

## New Business:

- **Action: External Committee Nominee Confirmations**

*The Senate will consider the following Senators for leadership positions representing GSS for the rest of the GSS year.*

Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Council	Katherine Trubee
Faculty Senate Research Council	Anirban Roy
University Technology Fee Advisory Board (TAB)	Katherine Trubee

- - Motion: #16
  - Seconds: #45
  - Comments/Questions? None
  - Roll call vote: passes

## Discussion: Open Floor

*Senators may bring up any topic of their choice to share information, start a conversation, or ask questions.*

- **Question from Senator #75:** I have heard from my constituents that there is a need for a unified vacation leave policy for graduate students, so they are able to take time off without fear of backlash or consequences from their advisors?  
**Answer from George:** I have sent out a few emails since that came in, hoping to hear back on if there's anything it's been done at the university. And if not, is there something that can be done, right? Because we can push for all these things – so alongside adequate housing, addressing food insecurity, family and vacation leave is right up there.
- **Question from Senator #71:** A student was struggling in a class and went to the tutoring center for help and found out that there are no tutoring services available for graduate students. Is there any services to help graduate students academically that are available?  
**Answer from Dean Thompson:** As far as I am aware, the tutoring services available are undergraduate focused.  
**Comment from Kathrine:** I know the tutoring center is geared towards specific classes, so with statistics I would gear them towards the math tutoring center.  
**Comment from Senator #105:** In the medical school, there are tutors, and they are paid an appropriate amount.
- **Question from #52:** Where is the tutoring center and is it the math center that is in the library?  
**Reply from #71:** It was in Dunford  
**Comment from #96:** Math tutoring is only up to 200-level and not available for graduate students.
- **Question from #16:** Are there resources if someone needs help navigating the application process for graduate fellowships and grants?  
**Answer from George:** There are offices on campus that handle national scholarships/fellowships

like the Fulbright, but not clear what we have available for smaller scholarships and fellowship award applications.

- **Comment from Senator 52:** Student Parents @ UT student org founded, more info can be found on volink and you can sign up. Email: studentparents@utk.edu. Hoping to host a movie night in the spring

### **Announcements/Member Privilege:**

- GPSAW coming up
- **VP:** Make sure to pick up your ice bears tickets/hat/voucher
  - **George:** It is past the point to request tickets, now it is just picking up
  - **#89:** Parking is \$10, but Market St. and State St. garages are free, KAT bus and trolley are also free if you are looking at ways to get to the game on Saturday.
- **#75:** On Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Ag-Campus is having a Walk & Bridle Round Up
  - \$5 a bowl for chili
  - Day full of events, chili cookoff, fundraisers with faculty and staff
  - More info on the website – 10am-5pm
- **#33:** If every senator can go to our social media accounts to follow @UTKGSS (fb, instagram, twitter), we post all info about our events on social and it is an easy way to like and share the info with your constituents. Additionally, there will be a senator highlight every month so I will be soliciting senators to volunteer and submit some info about themselves and ways to promote resources across campus. Please follow us!
- **Question from #31:** international students can't work outside the university and a minimum number of hours/jobs inside the university. And some ofn their stipends are not supporting them during this increase of cost of living here in Knoxville.  
**Response from #33:** There is nothing. It is an immigration thing, not a university thing. A way to get around it is for departments to support students like paying for travel, but it is very restrictive.  
**Response from #30:** not all students are able to bargain with their department so how do students make that happen?  
**Response from #33:** For me it was a mistake that they hired me for compensated work that I wasn't allowed to be compensated for.  
**Response from #92:** One thing you can do is go to your prospective advising professor and ask for support.  
**#91:** Some countries are allowed to get work permits for hardships.  
**#40:** To add to the point on working during the summer – I have applied to an internship in DC on a F1 visa, and I was allowed to do so. So it is possible to.  
**#33:** Were you allowed to work that internship in addition to your assistantship?  
**#40:** Yes  
**#10:** There is also a situation with the taxes, depending on which country you're from you are taxed differently.  
**#20:** you can intern at any place in the US that you want through CPT Curriculum Practical Training and get paid for 40 hours.  
**#77:** If you are applying for a summer internship off campus you need a CPT, but on campus you don't need that.

**George:** all these things we're talking about are fantastic because this is what Aman and I have been working on currently to try to establish connections with resources with places like the I-House to get students connected to information and resources they need. We are also trying to get tax information workshop set up as well.

**#30:** I wanted to know if it is possible to have a presenter come in for international students so they can see what the problems are and hear from students.

George: I think that is what the ISC committee is working on

**#77:** CGE is a really good resource for international students

**#:** You can only work 20-hours a week, you have to go through the ISS to finish the process.

**#82, Adaora Ede:** I am chair of the ISSC – if there is a way for us to solicit questions and responses for international students ...

**George:** I can do that as long as you all vote for it. Let's see if we can get an ad-hoc committee organized for it.

- **#52:** I forgot to mention earlier that I want to thank GSS and Dean Thompson on behalf of the Student Parenting group for their support.
- **#89:** Backtracking to the GSS awards: if you haven't already, you should have gotten an email already for the award nominations – please forward that to your constituents so we can get that info to as many students as possible
- **Nick:** one final note on Ice Bears tickets, there are some unclaimed tickets so if you are interested in going to the game please stop by and talk to us after the meeting.

Final Attendance: Maintained quorum

Motion to end meeting: #16

Second: #6

**Adjourned at 6:48 PM.**

## Appendix 1 – Senate Meeting Attendance

Department by College	Voting Number	Name	Present
Architecture	1	<u>Kay Kriegel</u>	N
Architecture	2	<u>Rachel Paganelli</u>	Y
Landscape Architecture	3	<u>Carl Carlton</u>	Y
Anthropology	4	<u>Brianna Gardner</u>	N
Anthropology	5	—	—
Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology	6	<u>Lauren Walden</u>	Y
Biochemistry and Cellular and Molecular Biology	7	<u>Morgan House</u>	Y
Chemistry	8	<u>Trevor Wilson</u>	N
Chemistry	9	<u>Elizabeth Crumley</u>	Y
Earth and Planetary Sciences	10	<u>Chance Sturup (PROXY)</u>	Y
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	11	<u>Hope Ferguson</u>	Y
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	12	<u>Morgan Fleming</u>	N
English	13	<u>Kate Wright</u>	Y
English	14	<u>Karen Norwood</u>	Y
Geography	15	<u>Kayla Rouhlac (PROXY)</u>	Y
History	16	<u>Stacie Beach</u>	Y
Life Sciences	17	<u>Megan Elliott</u>	N
Mathematics	18	<u>Eli Brooks</u>	Y
Mathematics	19	<u>Shannon Hall</u>	Y
Microbiology	20	<u>Sayali Mulay</u>	Y
Microbiology	21	<u>Diana Ramirez</u>	N
Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures	22	<u>Morgan Schneider</u>	Y
Music	23	<u>Sarah Buzalewski</u>	Y
Music	24	<u>Alexis Kilgore (PROXY)</u>	Y
Philosophy	25	<u>Francis Nyamekeh</u>	Y
Physics and Astronomy	26	<u>Tanner Mengel</u>	Y
Physics and Astronomy	27	<u>Debshikha Banerjee</u>	N
Political Science	28	<u>Katherine Trubee</u>	Y
Political Science	29	Konstantinos Sygkounas	Y
Psychology	30	<u>Golnaz Forouzandehfar</u>	Y
Psychology	31	<u>Ian Warren</u>	Y
School of Art	32	—	—
Sociology	33	<u>Zaina Shams</u>	Y
Theatre	34	—	—
Advertising & Public Relations	35	<u>Josh Shockley</u>	N
Communication and Information	36	<u>Winston Roberts</u>	Y
Communication and Information	37	<u>Jessica Barfield</u>	Y



Information Sciences	38	<u>Francesca Watkins</u>	Y
Information Sciences	39	—	—
Journalism & Electronic Media	40	<u>Aman Misra</u>	Y
Child and Family Studies	41	<u>Hannah Thompson</u>	Y
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	42	<u>Emily Ballesteros</u>	Y
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	43	<u>Nathan Vann</u>	N
Educational Psychology and Counseling	44	<u>Taylor Baird</u>	Y
Educational Psychology and Counseling	45	Amanda Ainsley Green	Y
Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	46	<u>Emily Mayfield</u>	Y
Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	47	<u>Austin Jackson</u>	N
Nutrition	48	<u>Nick Gill</u>	Y
Public Health	49	<u>Catherine Warner</u>	Y
Public Health	50	<u>Sandra Wairimu</u>	N
Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management	51	Leah Coffey	Y
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education	52	<u>Tabatha Rainwater</u>	Y
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education	53	<u>Amanda Carter</u>	N
Accounting and Information Management	54	Olivia Bruck	Y
Accounting and Information Management	55	<u>Kainat Bhayani</u>	Y
Business Analytics and Statistics	56	—	—
Business Analytics and Statistics	57	—	—
Economics	58	<u>Ivan Anich</u>	Y
Finance	59	—	—
Management & Entrepreneurship	60	Miranda Epperson	Y
Management & Entrepreneurship	61	<u>Tan Kim</u>	Y
Marketing	62	—	—
Supply Chain Management	63	—	—
Supply Chain Management	64	—	—
MBA – Working Professionals	65	—	—
MBA – Working Professionals	66	—	—
Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications	67	<u>Samuel T. Monarch</u>	Y
Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications	68	<u>Emoni White</u>	Y
Agricultural & Resource Economics	69	<u>Bishal Bista</u>	Y

Animal Science	70	<u>Jake Watts</u>	Y
Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science	71	<u>Alexis Gillmore</u>	Y
Entomology & Plant Pathology	72	<u>Kassie Hollabaugh</u>	Y
Food Science	73	<u>Fernando Rivera</u>	Y
Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries	74	<u>Joe DeMarchi</u>	Y
Plant Sciences	75	<u>Kollin Johnson</u>	Y
Cent/Interdisc Rsrch Grad Edu (Bredesen Center)	76	<u>Adedasola Ademola</u>	Y
Cent/Interdisc Rsrch Grad Edu (Bredesen Center)	77	<u>Sara Sultan</u>	Y
Comparative and Experimental Medicine	78	—	—
Law	79	<u>Jake Gray</u>	N
Law	80	<u>Ronald Young</u>	N
Nursing	81	<u>Jeanne Bernier</u>	N
Nursing	82	<u>Adaora Ede</u>	Y
Social Work – Distance Education	83	<u>Marlon Wade</u>	Y
Social Work – Distance Education	84	<u>Suelynn Hartness</u>	Y
Social Work – Nashville	85	<u>Marguerite Braun</u>	Y
Social Work – Nashville	86	<u>Alissa White</u>	Y
Social Work – Knoxville	87	<u>Kristin (Nicole) Wiggs</u>	Y
Social Work – Knoxville	88	<u>Aritra Moulick</u>	Y
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	89	<u>Austin Conte</u>	Y
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	90	<u>Rohit Ghanta</u>	Y
Civil & Environmental Engineering	91	<u>Mohammed Elbushra</u> <u>Elsheikh Elnur</u>	Y
Civil & Environmental Engineering	92	<u>Vivek Chawla</u>	Y
Electrical Engineering & Computer Science	93	<u>Mojtaba Dezvarei</u>	Y
Electrical Engineering & Computer Science	94	<u>Francisco Zelaya</u>	Y
Industrial & Systems Engineering	95	<u>Samuel Affar</u>	Y
Industrial & Systems Engineering	96	Chulin Chen	Y
Materials Science & Engineering	97	<u>Zane Smith</u>	Y
Materials Science & Engineering	98	<u>Max Neveau</u>	Y
Mechanical, Aerospace & Biomedical Engineering	99	<u>Anirban Roy</u>	Y
Mechanical, Aerospace & Biomedical Engineering	100	<u>Breanna Schaeffer</u>	Y
Nuclear Engineering	101	<u>Emily Hutchins</u>	Y

Nuclear Engineering	102	<u>Evan Williams</u>	Y
Space Institute	103	<u>Kyle Ackermann</u>	Y
Space Institute	104	—	—
Veterinary Medicine	105	Ashley Callahan	Y
Veterinary Medicine	106	Nicole Quaglia	Y

**Appendix 2 – Visual Aid from Meeting (next page)**

# Graduate Student Senate

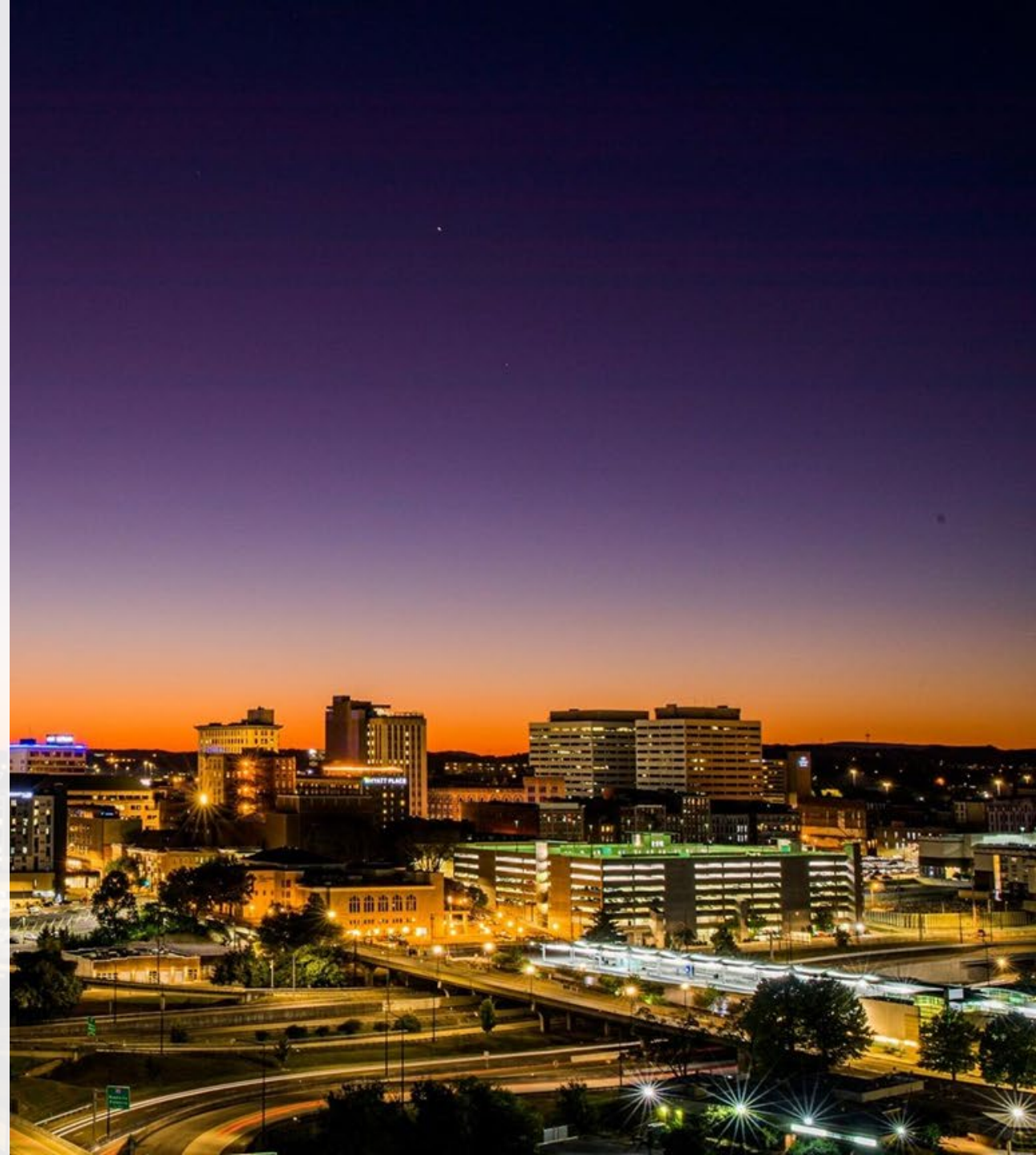
Session 6  
February 16, 2023



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE



GRADUATE  
STUDENT  
SENATE



# Agenda

## Session Opening

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Review of Agenda
4. Public Comment
5. Approval of Minutes
  - 11.15.22
  - 01.25.23

## 6. Guest Speakers

- A. Ian Crone, Director of Student Union and Alison Ward, Associate Director of Student Union

## 7. President's Report

## 8. Unfinished Business

## 9. New Business

- A. Action: External Committee Nominee Confirmations
- B. Discussion: Vacant Committee Positions
- C. Discussion/Open Floor

## 10. Announcements/Member's Privilege

## 11. Adjournment

# Scheduled Guest Speakers

**Ian Crane**

Director, Student Union

and

**Alison Ward**

Associate Director, Student Union

# President's Report

George T. Fields  
GSS President

# **Action: External Committee Nominee Confirmations**

**Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Council**  
Katherine Trubee

**Faculty Senate Research Council**  
Anirban Roy

**University Technology Fee Advisory Board (TAB)**  
Katherine Trubee



# Discussion: Vacant Committee Positions

## Judiciary Committee:

- Primary Justice (2 seats)

## External Committees:

- Faculty Senate Libraries and Information Technology Committee (1 seat)
- Faculty Senate Research Council (1 seats)
- Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Council (1 seats)
- Title IX Prevention Team (1 seat)
- University Tech Fee Advisory Board (1 seat)

# Discussion: Open Floor

- What needs are not being met on campus?
- What can the GSS be doing better to recognize and meet needs?
- What campus entities should we invite to answer questions?

# Announcements/Member's Privilege

# Upcoming Events

- ICE BEARS Hockey Game:
  - Saturday, February 18, 2023, 7:30 PM; Knoxville Civic Auditorium and Coliseum
- Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW)
  - March 27-March 31
    - GSS Awards Banquet: Monday, March 27, 2023, 6 PM; Student Union Pilot Company Ballroom (2nd Floor)



# Adjournment

Final Attendance

Refreshments are at the back of the room!

Next: 3/7/23, SU 169 @ 5:30PM