



GSS Session 8 Meeting Minutes

5:30 pm, Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Student Union, Room 169

[5:35 pm] Call to Order

Attendance -quorum established

Review of Agenda

Public Comment

Members of the public may address GSS members on any item appearing on this posted agenda or matters impacting students.

- No public comment

Approval of Minutes - None

[5:40pm] Scheduled Guest Speakers

Ms. Kinsey Simmerman, Young Professionals Group for Special Olympics East Tennessee
(see powerpoint presentation slides)

- Public Health educator for the Knox County Health Dept; on the board for the Special Olympics through the young professionals group.
- For those interested in volunteering, there are monthly meetings about business, fundraising, and events.
- Unique opportunity for those who want to stay in Knoxville and network in the public health sector
- Membership event in May at Schultzbrau Brewery
- If interested, email Kinsey Simmerman for more info and/or fill out an application and send it to her
- 2-year commitment, (so if graduating before then it might not be the right fit for you)
- Also there is a ticketed Smokey's Baseball social event soon

Mr. Allen Bolton, Interim Sr. Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

- Here to talk about the scope and scale of Finance and Administration

- New budget model
- Units Reporting to SVCFA represent around 20% of all UTK Staff
- F&A has fiduciary responsibility for:
 - UTK's \$1.3 billion annual budget
 - Maintenance and safety oversight for UTK's 910 acre campus, plus other areas
 - Critical infrastructure support for our 8K employees and 33.8k students
- Previously, UTK was following an "Incremental" budget model. Have since moved to an Incentive-based (or RCM) budget model.
- Current budget model (BAM) is in Q3 of it's first year.
 - The good: the working model is technically sound, has good user training, and moving towards transparency.
 - What can be better: needs better alignment of incentives to goals; needs acknowledgement of qualitative achievement and "citizenship"; needs better alignment of decision making to resources; needs more context for transparency and more focus on clarity; needs continued improvement of data and processes.
- Biggest Challenges/Opportunities for F&A
 - BAM next steps and revision
 - Alignment to vision/mission for effort and resources
 - Organizational best practices and change management
 - Prioritization
 - A culture of clarity (including transparency)
 - DASH – the ERP system going live on 7/1/2024
- Stipend Data – commitment and context
 - The GSS request for stipend data across UTK is in process and should be available by the end of the semester.
 - The context is that F&A are working on finding national data for context including variability by discipline and region
- Parking
 - Do not currently have any answers for us yet, but they will be working on coming up with solutions for the issue of competing with the students we teach for parking
- Facilities
 - Priority is accessibility and safety issues (18-36 months)
 - Long term is fulfilling the masterplan combined with the investment plan (3-4 years). Chemistry is the first building they want to fast track.
- Housing
 - Working with Dr. Cuevas on housing especially in regards to a partial solution for graduate housing, which they may have concrete answers for us as soon as January of 2024.
 - Over the next two years will see about 5,000 beds owned privately on Cumberland. The University hopes to add another 2,500 as well.
 - The public-private housing partnership has never happened before in Tennessee, so this is a unique opportunity that will hopefully bring a lot of housing faster than if the university was doing it without partnering with the private sector.
- Q&A
 - **Question from Senator #31:** Will this new housing be affordable for undergrads and graduate students when rent is already incredibly high with

what is currently available?

Answer: Our primary driver in our P3 partnership work is that these new housing options will be affordable. We will be selling housing at a lesser cost which will hopefully influence the rest of the option and help bring rent costs down across the market.

- **Question from Senator #96:** In long term, how will it be included in the masterplan where we will allocate space for the new housing?
Answer: Finish the quad near Magnolia, so one will go there. Another will go on Caledonia north of Presidential Blvd. One will be placed near the baseball stadium around Fraternity Row, but without impacting what is already there at Fraternity Row.
- **Question from Senator #58:** How can the University forecast incoming class sizes to make sure that the new housing is keeping up with those numbers of incoming/growing class sizes?
Also, in terms of stipends, what kind of mechanism is there to adjust graduate stipends? Because graduate students are in a non-competitive environment where it feels like we have no ability to influence our stipend rate.
Answer: To the question on forecasting incoming students, we have a study that has forecasted enrollment to that we can try to keep up with housing needs and academic space for the growing enrollment. We have a team working on marrying those aspects and linking them together. In regard to stipends, we do not have incentives in the model related to graduate stipends. It is one of the things we are looking at in the revision of the model, so we are discussing ways to customize our model and are open to suggestions and feedback. The flux of the base set stipend is a college-level decision and should probably be based on models done regionally.
- **Senator #58 follow-up question:** I agree with you that stipends should be set by depart, but there is no policy for raising stipend for current students to match the higher rates going to the new/incoming students. For instance, as a 4-year graduate student, our rate is 18K, but the new students will be receiving 22K.
Answer: I was not aware of this situation, and I ask that the minutes from this meeting be sent to me so we can work on and follow-up on it.
- **Question from #16:** Related to event parking versus classroom parking: I have students who don't come to class because they get ticketed for parking in lots that become event parking, specifically for Friday night discussion sections. Is that being considered?
Answer: Yes, those things are on our radar due to GSS, and we are working on it.
- **Question from Senator #84:** will the new buildings impact available parking?
Answer: Yes, we are aware of the parking and considering it with the buildings, and we are working on expanding our parking in new and creative ways.

[6:20pm] Reports

President's Report: George T. Fields, GSS President

GPSAW and Awards Banquet

As many of you know, this is Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW). This week is dedicated to recognizing and appreciating the great graduate students we have here at the university. The GSS hosted the GSS Awards Banquet on Monday, March 27, 2023, and overall the event was a huge success. To provide an overview, this year GSS received 119 nominations for the 9 various award categories. We convened a selection panel of graduate students and faculty and staff who work with graduate students to determine award recipients and those who should receive additional recognition at the banquet. We were thankful to award 27 people and organizations with awards this year.

The Banquet was only the first major event of this week. GPSAW is packed with events, both social events and professional development opportunities geared toward graduate students. I highly encourage you all, and I hope you all will spread the word to your constituents and colleagues, to take advantage of this week and its focus on graduate students. Explore the available events that are listed on the agenda. We hope to see you all there!

Basic Needs Survey

You know now of a survey being conducted by the Basic Needs Office to better understand what obstacles and insecurities students face. The results of this survey will influence how the limited resources we have will be allocated to address aggregate needs across campus and the community of students. Please take time to complete the survey based on your own experiences, and take promotional materials for the survey from the back of the room to disseminate in your units. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, March 31.

Meeting with International Student and Scholar Services (I-SSS) and I-House

We have been working this year to improve the level of support for international graduate students. As I've said many times, graduate students all face the same large-scale challenges. International graduate students face so many more challenges that are unique to their status of being international. As the GSS, we are in a position to provide peer support and to serve as a source of information and comfort for our colleagues. Leighton and I met with William Vittetoe from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (I-SSS) and the Director of the I-House, Lauren Wood, to discuss a potential partnership with them, as well as the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) and others. To begin this partnership, and at the request of several Senators, I am asking today that we establish an ad hoc committee to specifically address the need for peer support of our international graduate student constituents and colleagues. If approved by the Senate, this ad hoc will serve as a HUB for international students to seek support and information related to their integration into and comfort in the UT community. This committee will include members from the aforementioned offices, as well as other international student-focused offices and organizations. If successful, this committee will bridge the gap between students who are wanting to and needing to be a part of this community and making that happen. Our goal will be to help international graduate students feel more like volunteers both in spirit and in mind. I look forward to our discussion about this great opportunity.

Update on Resolutions

With Spring Break and other obstacles, we are still working on the resolution addressing new constructions on campus.

I am glad Mr. Bolton was able to be here with us today. He has been working very diligently to locate and gather the data on graduate stipends that will serve as the basis of the imminent resolution on graduate compensation.

The resolution on campus space is forthcoming as well.

Looking Forward

We're in the home stretch of the academic year. I think that at this point, we have accomplished a lot. For the end of the year, I have set three broad goals for the organization. These goals have been assigned to members of the Executive Committee and I am fully confident that we will accomplish them.

- Three resolutions: graduate compensation, university space, and new constructions. These resolutions will set the tone of the next academic year and budget cycle as they relate to graduate students. It is our duty as the Senate to try our best to stay ahead of the curve and to make our voices heard on these crucial issues.
- Bylaws revisions: Though we updated our bylaws last year, those were out of necessity to update language from several decades ago. Now, we are poised to make changes to improve the function of the organization. The bylaws changes will largely pertain to improving the structure of the organization, taking out unnecessary provisions, and providing procedural standards for the processes of the organization. All of these changes will be open to Senator input, as these changes will be spearheaded by the Judiciary and Legislative Steering Committees. Keep an eye out if you're interested.
- Annual Fundraiser: The Bylaws require an annual fundraiser. Planning for this year's fundraiser has taken us through several ideas, and we are finalizing what the fundraiser will be, which will take place toward the end of April. In the meantime, we are organizing benefit nights at local establishments to promote fundraising at a smaller scale.

I recognize that our semester both collectively as individuals and as an organization is coming to a close. However, I fully believe that if we can accomplish these goals we will have made a lasting impact on the campus community we inhabit and will have paved a way forward for our incoming leadership to hit the ground running.

Unfinished Business - None

[6:35pm] New Business

- **Action: Ad Hoc Committee on International Student Support**
The Senate will consider the establishment of an ad hoc committee to address the growing need for peer support for international graduate students for the rest of the GSS year.

- **Motion for Discussion: #99**
Second: #75
- **Question from #71:** Since this is an Ad-hoc committee, when will it be dissolved?
Answer from George: Great question – it will be dissolved at the end of the academic year before start of summer, and it will need to be reestablished at the start of the next academic year. By setting it up now, we are laying groundwork to make it easier to enact in the future.
- **Question from #15:** What resources do we have for international students coming in during the summer if this will be dissolved before the summer?
Answer from George:
Dean Thompson: And I don't think there will be stopping GSS senators from working over the summer.
George: The summer isn't required for senators to work, but it is optional.
- **Question from Zoom:** Will the committee only be open to senators?
Answer from George: It will be completely open to whoever wants to serve on it.
- **Question by #95:** What is the size of this committee?
Answer from George: The size will not be set, and I know of at least 5 senators who are interested in serving on this committee.
- **Raise of hands vote**
Yes: majority
No: none
Abstain: none
- **The motion to establish the Ad Hoc Committee on International Student Support has been approved.**

George nominates Aman Misra for Committee Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on International Student Support

- Motion to discuss nomination of Aman Misra: #72
Seconded #43
- Raise of hands vote (2/3 needed) for Aman to be committee chair:
Unanimous vote for yes.
Aman is confirmed as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on International Student Support.

[6:48pm] Discussion: GSS Elections

GSS Program Coordinator, Nick Jakel, will review the GSS Election candidates and answer questions.

- **Nick Jakel, GSS Program Coordinator** reviewed the GSS website, candidate information, and voting process.
- **Question from Senator #75:** Since there is only one person running for each role, can it just be a unanimous decision for the election instead of going through the whole process?

Answer from Nick: Great question – because there is still a write-in option, we will go through the election process to preserve the democracy of the election.

[6:53pm] Discussion: Open Floor

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

- **Comment from #72:** We have extended our travel awards deadlines. I sent out an email to all senators to share with their departments. I just got an email from a student today asking if we can extend out deadline which tells me my emails are not being shared with your departments. This is pertinent information that students need to know. Our new deadline is April 5th by 5pm. Students must submit by that deadline. If they don't meet the deadline, we will not review their application.
- **Question from Senator #91:** Some departments have students quitting their programs due to stipend issues. Are there any kind of stipend statistics or information that Dean Thompson can share with us?

Answer from Dean Thompson: We are currently looking at that data and working on it.

Announcements/Member's Privilege

Senators may share out any information to the group. This could include announcing any of the following: upcoming events in their department, GSO, or anywhere on campus, sharing a deadline for a grant or scholarship, raising awareness about a new or underused resource on campus, etc.

- **Katherine Trubee:** I wanted to introduce myself as I am running for GSS President along with Hannah Thompson as GSS Vice President. Whether you vote for me or not, please vote and encourage your constituents to vote. We are really excited to stay on next year in these roles or not to continue to grow the organization and the representation it provides for graduate students.
- **Comment from #75:** Department of Plant Sciences hosting an event at UT Gardens tomorrow evening. Please join us!
- **Comment from #95:** Please join us on April 12, online, from 3-4:30pm for an online event by the Center of Current Development and Academic Exploration for international alumni. It is the first of its kind and majorly focused on international students.
- **Comment from #71:** I have a petition to raise the lowest stipends with a flyer and a QR Code to sign the petition. Please sign and help raise stipends and talk to me if you have any questions.
- **Comment #44:** April is sexual assault awareness month – we will have a Vols Walk for SAAM on April 12th 10am-1pm in the SU Plaza.

[7:02] Final Attendance + Adjournment

- **Motion to Adjourn #72**
Seconded: #10

GSS Session 8 Adjourned at 7:02pm.

Next Session: Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 5:30 pm in SU 169

Upcoming Event(s):

- UT Basic Needs Survey: tiny.utk.edu/needssurvey - available now through 3/31
- Game Night in Hodges Library - March 29
- [Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week](#), March 27-31
- Gather in the Gardens - March 30, 3:30 to 5:00PM
- Get to Know GSS - New Office Open House and Candidate Meet & Greet, March 31, CSE Suite 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- Tie Dye Event at the Pride Center - March 31 - 3pm - 6pm
- GSS Elections - April 3-5
- Vols Walk for SAAM - Wednesday, April 12 at 11:00am to 1:00pm, Student Union, 21st Mortgage Plaza
- VOLS ACTIVE Bystander Training for Graduate Students - Thursday, April 27 at 12:00pm to 1:00pm, Virtual (Zoom). Register via <https://forms.gle/5eE56syppyLhSAJP7>

Appendix 1 – Senate Meeting Attendance

Department by College	Voting Number	Name	Present
Architecture	1	<u>Kay Kriegel</u>	Y
Architecture	2	<u>Rachel Paganelli</u>	Y
Landscape Architecture	3	<u>Carl Carlton</u>	N
Anthropology	4	<u>Brianna Gardner</u>	Y
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</u>	Y
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	11	<u>Hope Ferguson</u>	Y
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	12	<u>Morgan Fleming</u>	Y
English	13	<u>Kate Wright</u>	Y
English	14	<u>Karen Norwood</u>	Y
Geography	15	<u>Kayla Rouhlac</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>	N
Music	24	<u>Alexis Kilgore</u>	Y
Philosophy	25	<u>Francis Nyamekeh</u>	Y
Physics and Astronomy	26	<u>Tanner Mengel</u>	N
Physics and Astronomy	27	<u>Debshikha Banerjee</u>	Y
Political Science	28	<u>Katherine Trubee</u>	Y
Political Science	29	Konstantinos Sygkounas	Y
Psychology	30	<u>Golnaz Forouzandehfar</u>	N
Psychology	31	<u>Ian Warren</u>	Y
School of Art	32	—	—
Sociology	33	<u>Zaina Shams (PROXY)</u>	Y
Theatre	34	—	—
Advertising & Public Relations	35	<u>Josh Shockley</u>	Y
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>	Y
Educational Psychology and Counseling	44	<u>Taylor Baird</u>	Y
Educational Psychology and Counseling	45	Amanda Ainsley Green (PROXY)	Y
Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	46	<u>Emily Mayfield</u>	Y
Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	47	<u>Austin Jackson</u>	Y
Nutrition	48	<u>Nick Gill</u>	Y
Public Health	49	<u>Catherine Warner</u>	N
Public Health	50	<u>Sandra Wairimu</u>	Y
Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management	51	Leah Coffey	Y
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education	52	<u>Tabatha Rainwater</u>	N
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education	53	<u>Amanda Carter</u>	Y
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>	N
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>	Y
Nursing	81	<u>Jeanne Bernier</u>	Y
Nursing	82	<u>Adaora Ede</u>	N
Social Work – Distance Education	83	<u>Marlon Wade</u>	N
Social Work – Distance Education	84	<u>Suelynn Hartness</u>	Y
Social Work – Nashville	85	—	—
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>	N
Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	89	<u>Austin Conte (PROXY)</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>	N
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>	N
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>	N
Space Institute	104	—	—
Veterinary Medicine	105	Ashley Callahan	Y
Veterinary Medicine	106	Nicole Quaglia	N

Appendix 2 – Visual Aid from Meeting (next page)

Graduate Student Senate

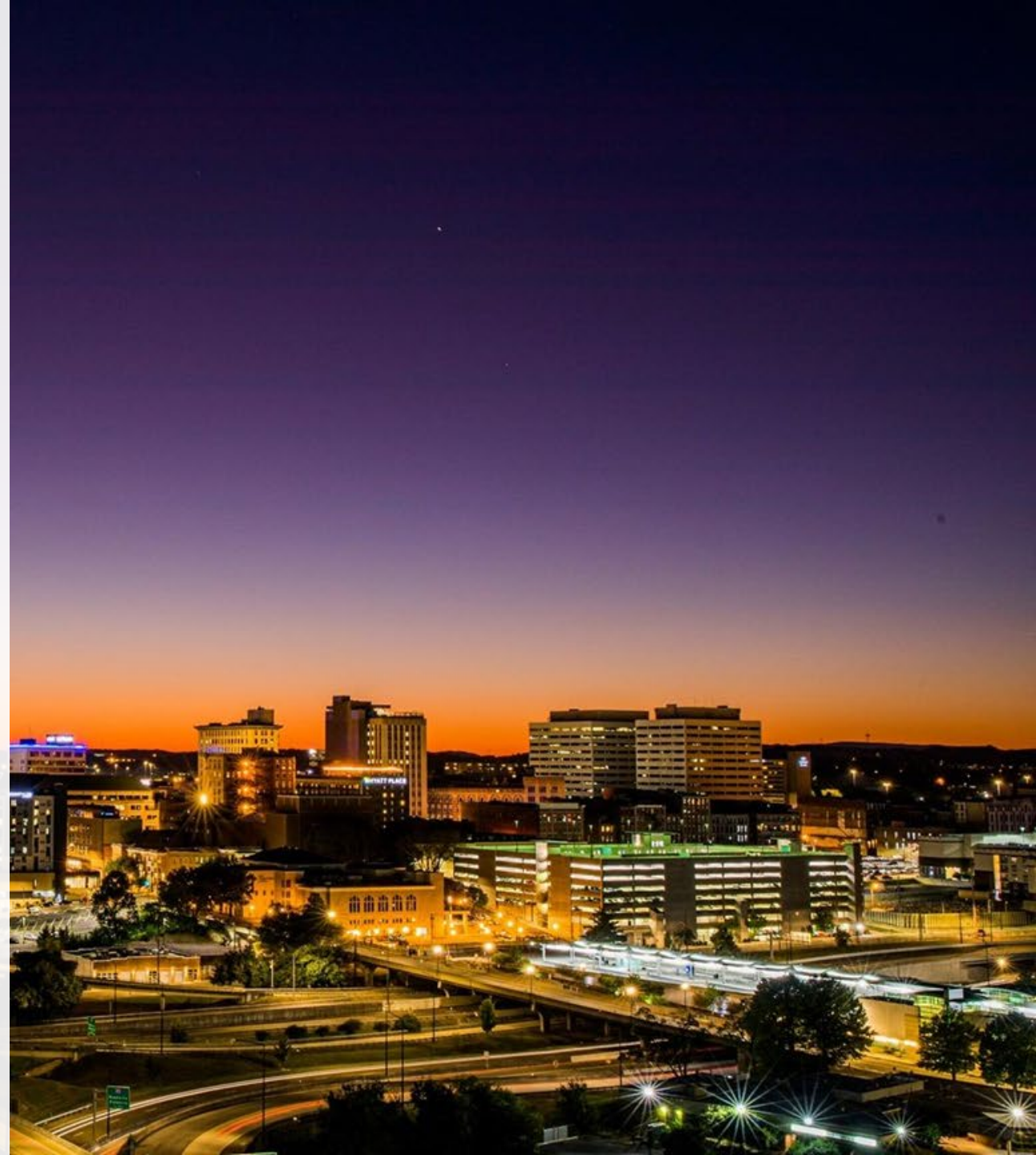
Session 8
March 29, 2023



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

6. Guest Speakers

- A. Ms. Kinsey Simmerman, Young Professionals Group for Special Olympics East Tennessee
- B. Mr. Allen Bolton, Interim Sr. Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

7. President's Report

8. Unfinished Business

9. New Business

- A. Action: Ad Hoc committee on International Student Support
- B. Discussion: GSS Elections
- C. Discussion/Open Floor

10. Announcements/Member's Privilege

11. Adjournment

Scheduled Guest Speakers

Ms. Kinsey Simmerman

Young Professionals Group for Special Olympics East Tennessee

Scheduled Guest Speakers

Mr. Allen Bolton

Interim Sr. Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration

President's Report

George T. Fields
GSS President

Action: Ad Hoc Committee on International Student Support

George T. Fields
GSS President

Discussion: GSS Elections

Nick Jakel
GSS Program Coordinator

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

- UT Basic Needs Survey (through 3/31: tiny.utk.edu/needssurvey)
- Vols Walk for SAAM (Wednesday, April 12th, 10am-1pm, SU Plaza)
- VOLS ACTive Bystander Training for Graduate Students (Thursday, April 27th, 12-1 pm, Zoom, registration required)

Upcoming Events

- Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (March 27-31)
 - Game Night in Hodges Library (March 29th, right now)
 - Gather in the Gardens (Thursday, March 30th, 5-7 pm)
 - Get to Know GSS (Friday, March 31st, 1-3 pm)
 - Tie Dye Event at the Pride Center (Friday, March 31st, 3-6 pm)
- GSS Elections (Monday, April 3rd 6am - Wednesday, April 5th 5pm)



Adjournment

Final Attendance

Refreshments are at the back of the room!

Next: 4/20/23, SU 169 @ 5:30PM