



GSS Session 9 Meeting Minutes
5:30 pm, Thursday, April 20, 2023
Student Union, Room 169

[5:33] Call to Order

Attendance

Review of Agenda

Public Comment

- No public comment made.

[5:35] Approval of Minutes

- Approval of Minutes from 02.16.23
- Approval of Minutes from 03.29.23
 - Motion to approve minutes: Senator #99
Seconded: Senator #16
 - Voice vote: unanimous vote of **yes** to approve minutes from 2/16/2023 and 3/29/2023

[5:40] Scheduled Guest Speakers

- Mr. Charles White, PI/Director of Academic Enrichment Upward Bound Program
 - Upward Bound is a grant program sponsored by US Department of Education
 - We are here to ask for assistance. Every year we have a 6-week program for high school students to be hosted on campus and taking classes run by instructors.
 - We need instructors for Chemistry, Research Guidance, Psychology, ACT Preparation
 - If you would like to work for us this summer, please contact us. Even if your specialization is not for the categories listed above, still reach out and talk to us for instructing opportunities
 - **Q from Senator #16:** Is Chemistry and Research two separate things or the same class?
A: Those are two separate classes. One is Chemistry, the other is guiding Research projects the students are doing on their own in the library not necessarily in Chemistry.
 - **Q from Senator #99:** How many hours is it and is there a syllabus or other materials for these classes?
A: You get paid for 6-12 hours a week starting \$17 and up to \$25 per hour; and depending on the course depends on the materials already available.

[5:45 pm] Reports

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

- **Resolutions:**

- Tonight, we will be considering a resolution sponsored by Stacie Beach, Senator 16 from History.
 - This resolution represents a few things: an opportunity for us to come together to make our voices heard collectively as one.
 - It also represents our willingness as graduate students and stakeholders of the university, to recognize where we as a university can do better and to seek positive change to move on from the “way we’ve always done things.”
 - It furthers our call for a place at the table through shared governance, to be included, and to provide input so we can hopefully avoid problematic situations to our best ability in the future.
 - As this university grows, it is imperative that the university keeps its people in the forefront of the minds of those affecting change. If we put blinders on and focus on the future, we ignore those directly beside us.
 - As we take this resolution into consideration this evening, let's all reflect on our positions in this university and take stock of where we are in progressing our voices.

- **Stipends:**

- Based on information I received today, the stipend resolution to be introduced on May 9 is inevitable. I am personally grateful for the hard work and collaboration that interim senior Vice Chancellor Bolton and Dean Thompson have put into gathering up-to-date data on graduate stipends in academic units across campus.
 - The resolution will be focused on the increased cost-of-living since the minimums were increased in August 2021, as well as the cost-of-attendance cited by the university.
 - Our goal will be to suggest, based on relevant data, increases in stipend minimums for graduate students on assistantships.
 - Because May 9 is our chance to pass this, and because it affects many of the Senators in this room, I am going to call for those interested in working on this resolution to raise their hands now so we can be direct in our efforts to pass this important piece of legislation.

- **Chancellor’s Attendance at the Final Session on May 9**

- As many of you know, the Chancellor will be attending the final GSS Session on May 9.
- I encourage Senators to take additional steps to ensure they can attend so we maximize our chance to be heard.

- **University Trivia Night Fundraiser**

- The GSS is co-hosting with the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association the University Trivia Night, a fun, friendly competition between students, faculty, and staff to see who among us has the most trivia prowess.
- Tickets are \$5 for students and \$10 for faculty and staff.
- Additional information, including event details and the link to the Eventbrite page for tickets can be accessed on our website: gss.utk.edu.
- I encourage all of you to promote this event to your colleagues and department members, as this event serves to increase the funds in our organization’s checking account.

- **Senator Social at Main Event**

- We want to show our appreciation for the work we have all done this year for the GSS and its mission of representing, supporting, and advocating on behalf of graduate and professional students.
- We are providing a night of fun for our Senators at Main Event in West Knoxville.
- The GSS is providing Senators a wristband for food, non-alcoholic drinks, and access to many fun activities. To ensure Senators can participate, we are offering two dates for the event.
- We'll take a simple raise of hands to gauge interest. The two dates are Tuesday, May 2 and Wednesday, May 10.
 - Majority of present senators 'voted' for May 10th.
- As we move into our final GSS Session for this academic year, I am going to provide an overview of what we have been able to accomplish as an organization this year. We set out the year with lofty goals and high ambitions. As we round out the year in the next calendar month, I want us all to appreciate the work we've done to improve the graduate student experience here. We have made an impact and I am looking forward to characterizing that impact at our last session.
- **Comment from GSS VP Leighton:** Flyers are in the back of the auditorium for the annual fundraiser. Please distribute and spread the word for this event.

[5:54] Unfinished Business - None

[5:54] New Business

- **Action: A Resolution Advocating for Increased Transparency and Communication Regarding Current and Future New Construction on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Campus**
 - Presentation detailing the Resolution by Stacie Beach (Senator #16 for History).
 - Motion to vote on resolution: Senator #75
 - Seconded: Senator #43
- Resolution raise of nametag vote (simple majority needed):
 - majority in favor (no votes against and no abstentions)

[6:05] Discussion: GSS Election Results

GSS Program Coordinator, Nick Jakel will review the results of the GSS annual election.

- 191 total votes were cast by graduate students in 3 calendar days
- Katherine Trubee received 94.88% of votes and has been named GSS President Elect for 2023-2024
- Hannah Thompson received 96.59% of votes and has been named GSS Vice President Elect for 2023-2024
- For context, in last year's election there were 252 total votes in 8 calendar days
- Comment from Katherine Trubee: We are looking for senators interested in serving on the executive Committee next year, so please let us know if you are interested.

[6:07] Discussion: Cost of Living Study from the Bredesen Center

GSS Senator Kyle Llopart will review a study on cost of living conducted within the Bredesen Center.

- Here to share the results of the survey on Cost of Living in Science and Engineering.
- Even if not your department, I hope you find this to be relevant to the departments you represent as we work on stipend advocacy.
 - The average stipend in this department is \$30k.
 - 43% of stipends go to rent.
 - The majority of students do have roommates.

- There is anxiety about the cost of rent and increasing rent costs.
- Around \$500 for Groceries a month
- Around \$150 for transport and commuting costs
- In conclusion, we plan on using the survey to negotiate with our department for better stipends.
- Stipends should be adjusted yearly based on changing cost of living data.
- Please support the UCW-CWA in advocacy for better stipends for graduate students. There is a Grad rally for Higher Pay on Tuesday, April 25th from 3-4pm outside McClung Tower.
- **Comment from Senator #71:** Would it be valuable or helpful for the GSS to collect cost of living info more broadly?
- **A:** There is already a Basic Needs survey distributed across campus.

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.

- **Comment from Senator #72:**
 - Please help us review Travel Award applications, please reach out to Kassie Hollabaugh (Senator #72) at gsstravel@utk.edu . There will be pizza!
 - A reminder/invitation will be sent to GSS senators over Slack.
- **Comments from Senator #77:**
 - Graduation photoshoots are happening all over campus with champagne bottles and things being used as props, and there is little clean up happening outside Ayers Hall.
 - Parking issues where people without passes are taking parking spots needed by graduate students.
 - The Graduate school has allocated some funds to distribute to incoming students and raise stipends from 30k to 34k, but they are not distributed equally. We wish they could be distributed equally among student, not selectively.
 - New performance-based stipends are for incoming students only – current grad students are not being considered for those which feels unfair.
- **Comment from George:**
 - Going forward we can expect better parking management and we hope to have more information regarding parking at the next senate meeting in May.
 - As far as the clean-up from the photoshoots, not sure who to contact about those concerns, but maybe start with Facilities Services.
 - As far as stipends, and stipend inequality and inequity, one of the big issues we have run into is the fact that the faculty are also facing similar issues in equitable pay. Asking the university to limit the disparity between min and max stipends/pay is very hard to do. The university at best can set the minimums, so we can ask for them to raise the minimums. But maximums, and the disparity between min and max, are more complicated to address. We will address these issues hopefully with the Chancellor on May 9th.
- **Comment from Senator #75:**
 - I was wondering if there will be an increase of funds for Academic Support and Travel Awards.
 - Response from Senator #72: We are at our budget and are at the point where we will be maxed out. We did get an increase in funds this year and increased the average number of awards given out. I don't think an increase further than that will go much farther, especially considering how

we only fund a portion of travel, and if we award more then it ends up taking the funding responsibility away from the individual departments - who really need to be stepping up to fund their respective students.

- **Comment from George:** We had a rollover from last year for academic support that went towards awards this year, but that was a one-time thing. Totals in awards are \$153k for Academic Support; \$250k for Travel Awards already distributed; and \$100k left for the last of the Travel Awards this year which will be entirely used up.
- **Comment from Dean Thompson:** One thing is we need to figure out a process to get departments and colleges to commit to exactly what they want to contribute to support for their students so we can have better awards and spending of our award funds.
- **Comment from Senator #95:** Are there any updates to the initiative for support for international students?
Response from George: It is mostly a scheduling issue between all our partners. We have a pledge of support from all our groups, we just need to follow up on that. I know that there are a handful of senators ready to get started, and as we get ready for the next academic year, we need to be ready for our incoming international students and be proactive on how to support them especially in terms of things like housing.
- **Comment from Senator #29:** There are not many options on campus for food choices. I do not understand why we cannot have more choices and I would like to discuss this with the senate. It is extremely hard to eat well and be healthy here on campus.
- **Comment from Senator #33:** I want to second that, not just in pricing but also in quality of food, it is hard to eat well here when we are working for long hours on campus daily. It seems like maybe bringing in more food trucks would be an easy solution to have more variety and include smaller businesses from the community.
- **Comment from Dean Thompson:** I am recommending that GSS join partners with SGA on this issue to get this issue heard and addressed on campus.
- **Comment from Senator #77:** I recommend going to Stokely Hall. It is about \$10 a meal to use the buffet, even though it might take more time than stopping at a POD Market.
- **Comment from Senator #52:** Also, faculty get a 15% discount at the POD Markets.
- **Question from Senator #43:** Two questions. First, what is the \$500 number?
Answer from Senator #72: This is the average number of funding I get from other sources such as advisors, departments, etc...
- **Question from Senator #43:** Staff also get a discount, so at a minimum Graduate Students should be getting some kind of help as well - is there not something we can do to get a discount as well at any of the POD or food places on campus?
- **Comment from Senator #91:** Any updates on housing/master lease agreements?
Response from George: If there is going to be a master lease agreement, it sounds like that will go to undergrads despite the work we've done this semester. Hopefully going into the next academic year, hopefully we can get some kind of pledge or agreement of support for the future. I am optimistic about change, but not optimistic about the time it would take for that change to happen.

- **Announcement from Senator #18:** Once again, please join UCW for the rally on Tuesday, 3-4pm, in front of McClung Tower to advocate for better stipends.
- **Reminder from Zane (Senator #97):** If you are graduating, don't forget to get your GSS graduation cords.

[6:55] Final Attendance + Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn: Senator #77
Seconded: Senator #16
- Meeting Adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Next Session: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 5:30 pm in SU 169

Upcoming Event(s):

- VOLS ACTIVE Bystander Training for Graduate Students - Thursday, April 27 at 12:00pm to 1:00pm, Virtual (Zoom). Register via <https://forms.gle/5eE56syppyLhSAJP7>
- University Trivia Night - Monday, May 8 at 7:30pm - Student Union Pilot Company Ballroom. [Event information and registration can be found here.](#)

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>	Y
Anthropology	4	<u>Brianna Gardner</u>	N
Anthropology	5	Proxy	Y
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 (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>	N
Music	24	<u>Alexis Kilgore</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>	N
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>	N
Child and Family Studies	41	<u>Hannah Thompson</u>	N
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>	N
Educational Psychology and Counseling	45	Amanda Ainsley Green	N
Kinesiology, Recreation, & Sport Studies	46	<u>Emily Mayfield</u>	N
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>	Y
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 (PROXY)</u>	Y
Accounting and Information Management	54	Olivia Bruck	Y
Accounting and Information Management	55	<u>Kainat Bhayani (PROXY)</u>	Y
Business Analytics and Statistics	56	—	—
Business Analytics and Statistics	57	—	—
Economics	58	<u>Ivan Anich</u>	N
Finance	59	—	—
Management & Entrepreneurship	60	Miranda Epperson	N
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>	N
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>	
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>	N
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>	Y
Nursing	82	<u>Adaora Ede</u>	N
Social Work – Distance Education	83	<u>Marlon Wade</u>	Y
Social Work – Distance Education	84	<u>Suelynn Hartness</u>	Y
Social Work – Nashville	85	—	—
Social Work – Nashville	86	<u>Alissa White</u>	N
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>	N
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 (PROXY)</u>	Y
Electrical Engineering & Computer Science	93	<u>Mojtaba Dezvarei</u>	Y
Electrical Engineering & Computer Science	94	<u>Francisco Zelaya</u>	N
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>	N
Nuclear Engineering	101	<u>Emily Hutchins</u>	Y
Nuclear Engineering	102	<u>Evan Williams</u>	N
Space Institute	103	<u>Kyle Ackermann</u>	Y
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

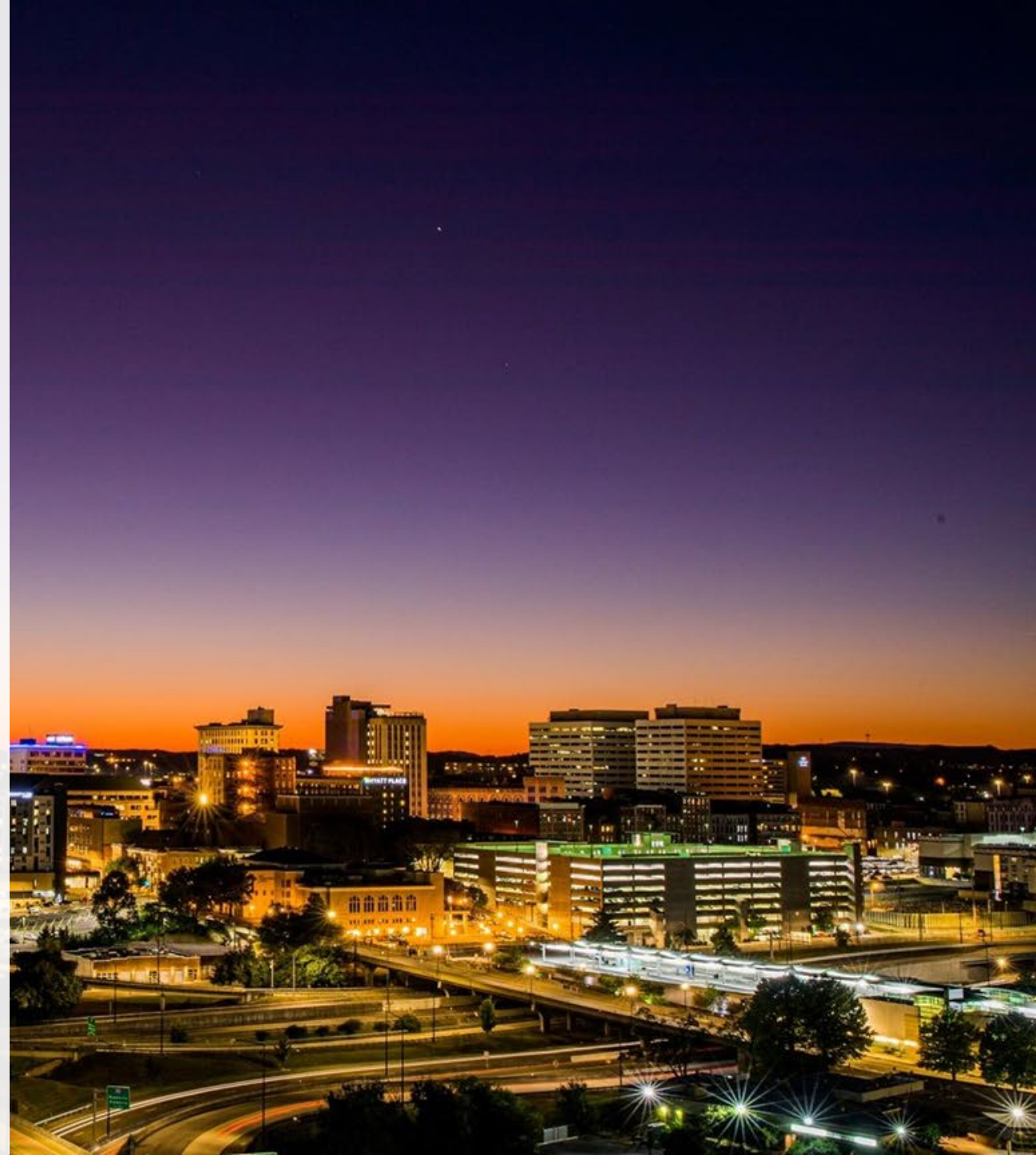
Session 9
April 20, 2023



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 (2/16 & 3/29)

6. Guest Speakers

- A. Mr. Charles White, Upward Bound Program

7. President's Report

8. Unfinished Business

9. New Business

- A. Action: A Resolution for Increased Transparency and Communication
- B. Discussion: GSS Election Results
- C. Discussion: Cost of Living Study from the Bredesen Center
- D. Discussion/Open Floor

10. Announcements/Member's Privilege

11. Adjournment

Scheduled Guest Speakers

Mr. Charles White

Director of Academic Enrichment Upward Bound Program
CAPS Outreach Center

cwhite90@utk.edu

President's Report

George T. Fields
GSS President

Action:

A Resolution Advocating for Increased Transparency and Communication Regarding Current and Future New Construction on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Campus

Discussion: GSS Election Results

- 191 total votes were cast by graduate students in 3 calendar days
- Katherine Trubee received 94.88% of votes and has been named GSS President Elect for 2023-2024
- Hannah Thompson received 96.59% of votes and has been named GSS Vice President Elect for 2023-2024
- For context, in last year's election there were 252 total votes in 8 calendar days

Discussion: Cost of Living Study from the Bredeesen Center

Kevin Llopart
GSS Senator

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

- VOLS ACTive Bystander Training for Graduate Students
 - Thursday, April 27, 12-1pm; via Zoom, Registration required
- University Trivia Night
 - Monday, May 8, 7:30 pm; Student Union Pilot Company Ballroom



Adjournment

Final Attendance

Refreshments are at the back of the room!

Next: 5/9/23, SU 169 @ 5:30PM

Bredesen Center SAC Cost of Living Survey Results

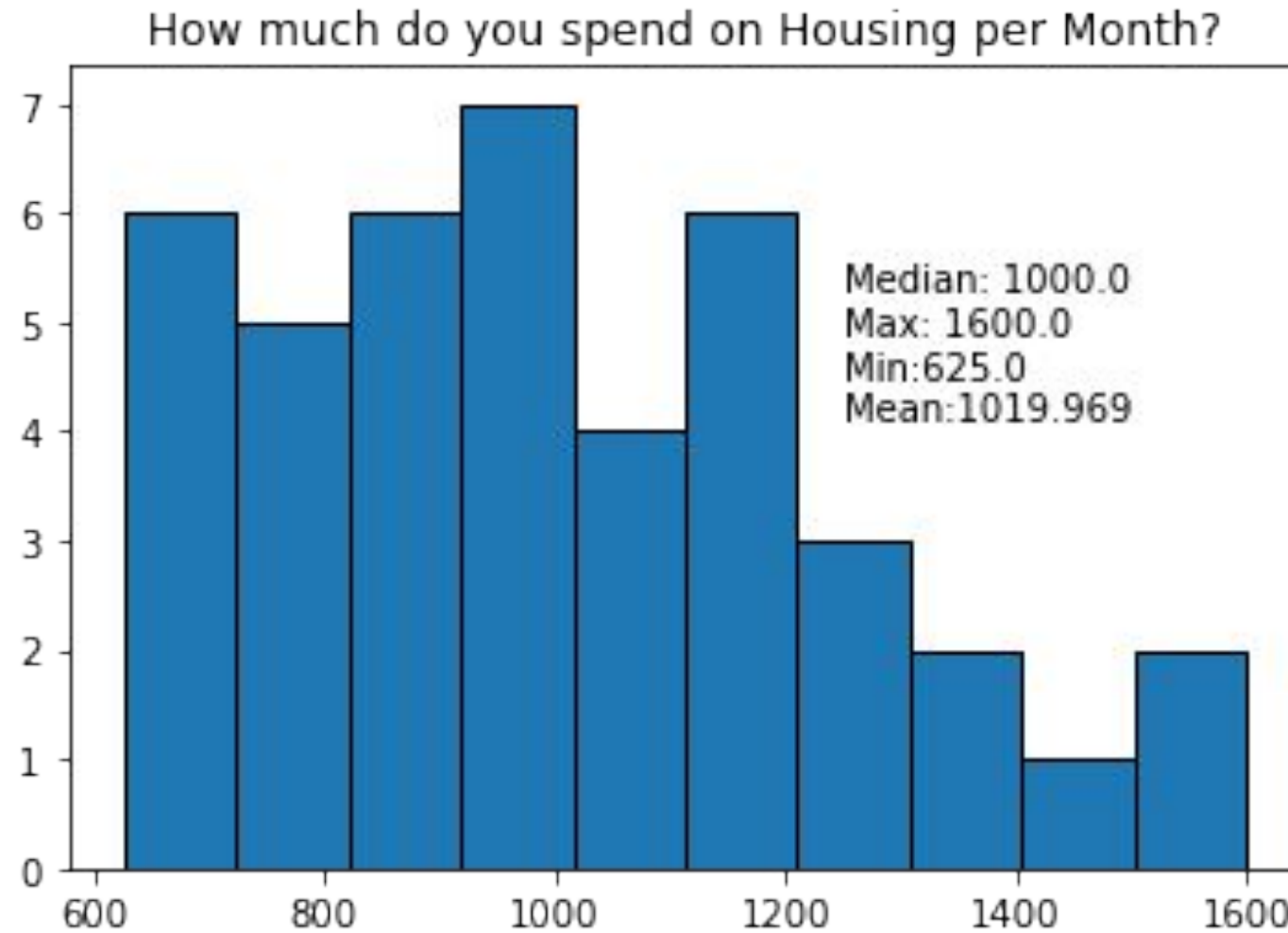


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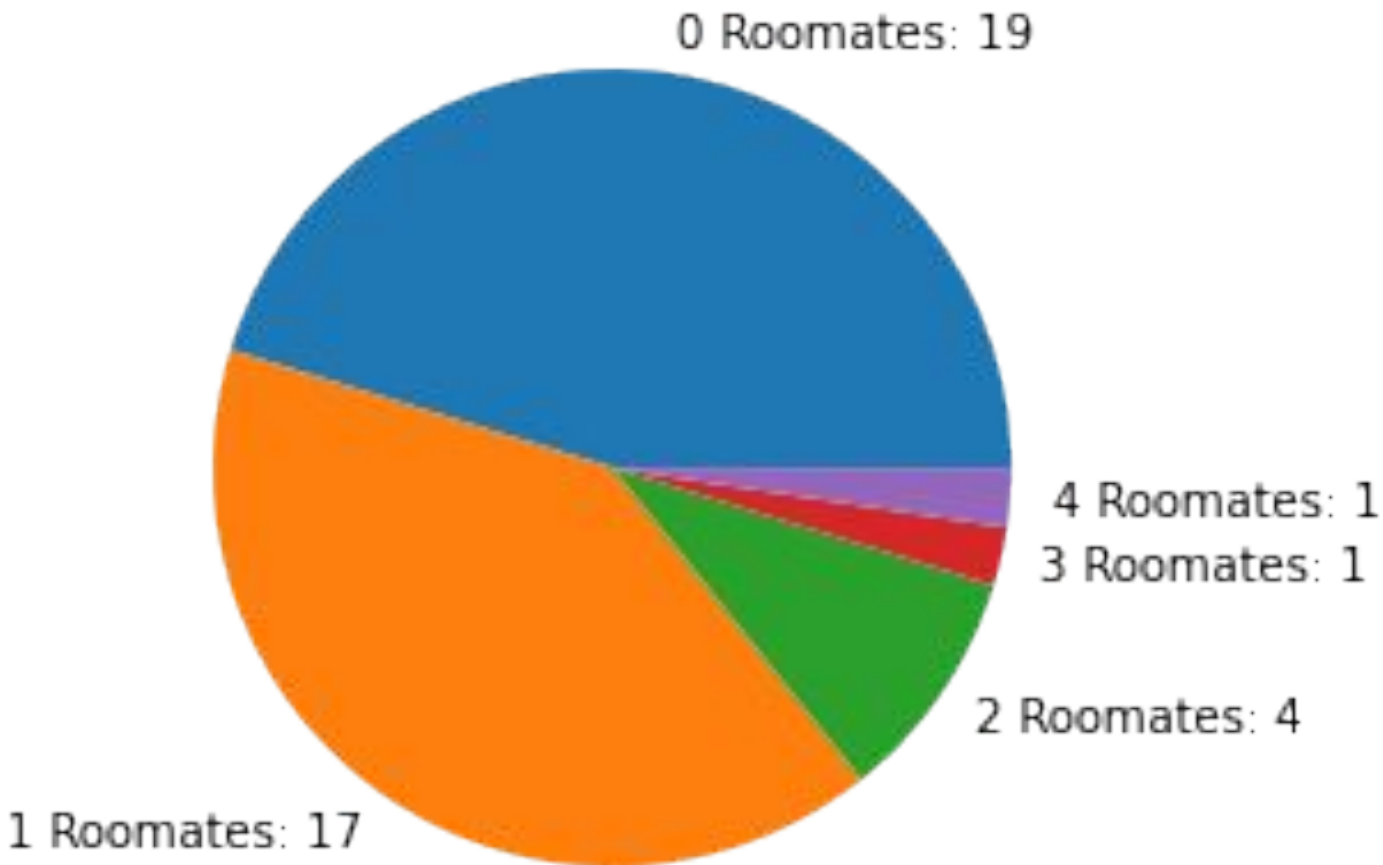
SAC Cost of Living Survey

- We want to determine how inflation has affected the cost of living for students, specifically over the past year
- We have received 41 responses as of yesterday (April 3) at 7:00 PM, (51 as of right now)
- We will discuss results received so far, but if anyone wishes to speak to SAC individually, please reach out to us
- Reminder: This survey will be continuously monitored, so if you have not filled it out, please feel free to do so

How much do you spend on Housing per Month?

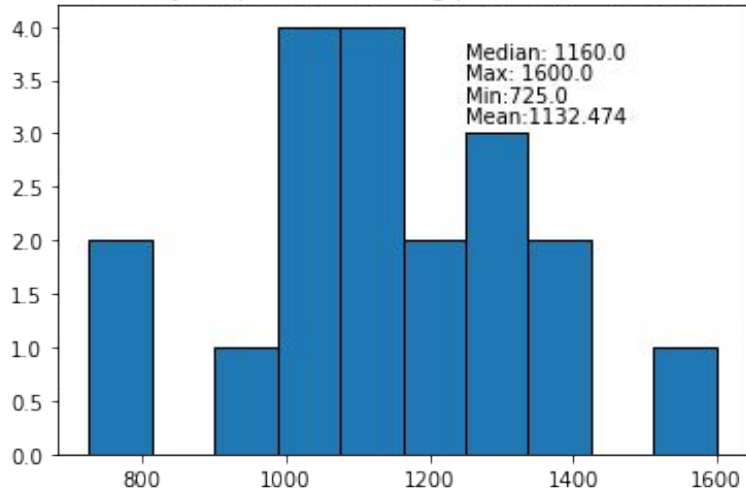


Do you have Roommates? If so how many?

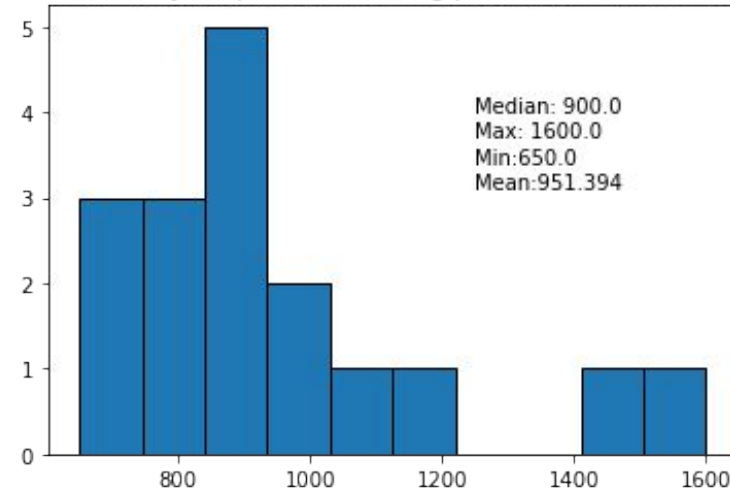


How much do you spend on Housing per Month?

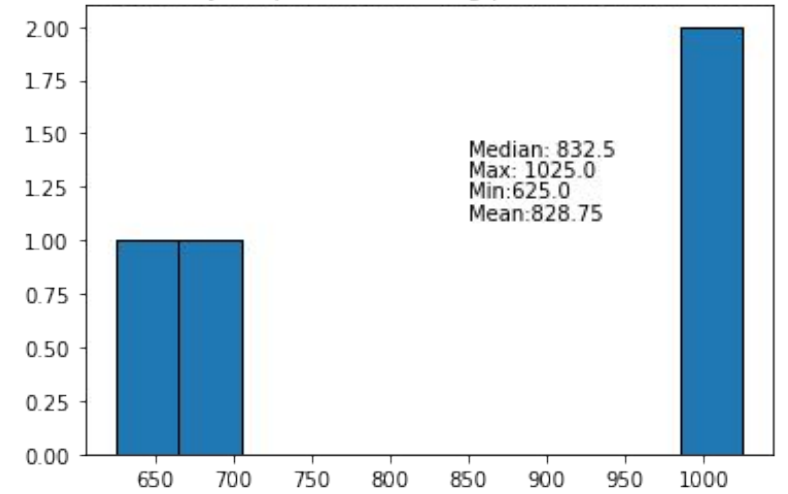
How much do you spend on Housing per Month? (No Roommates)



How much do you spend on Housing per Month? (1 Roommates)

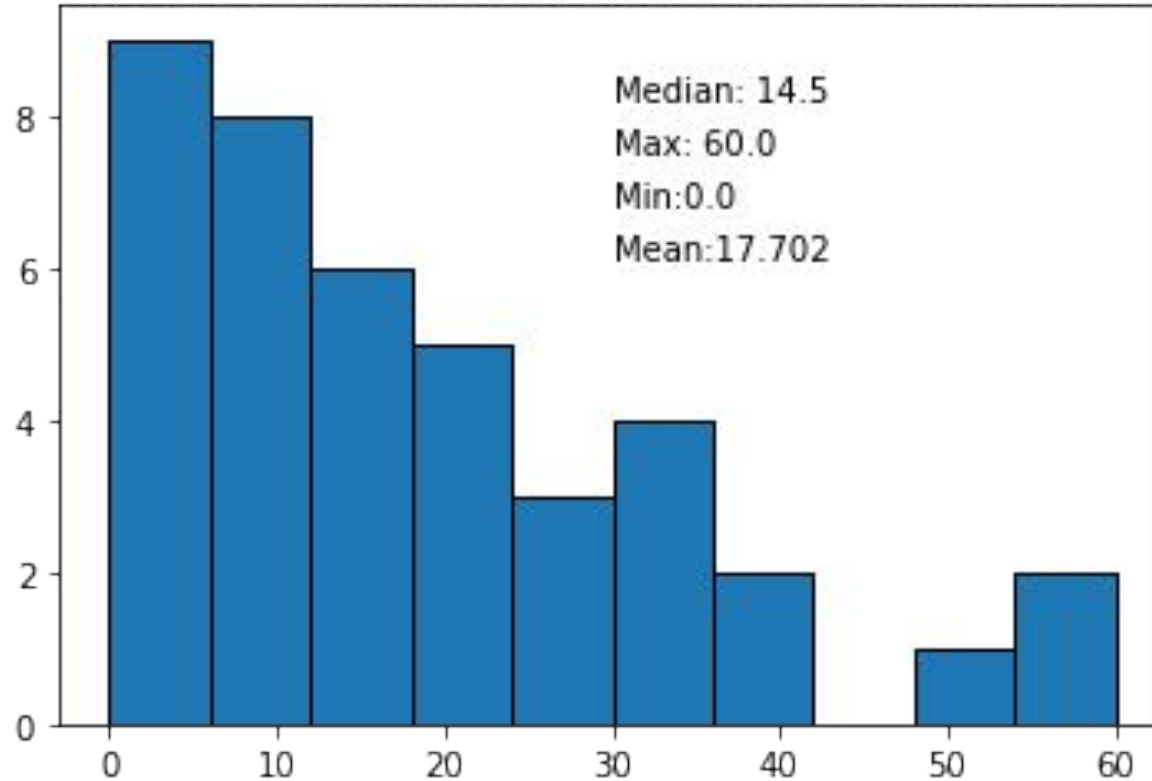


How much do you spend on Housing per Month? (2 Roommates)

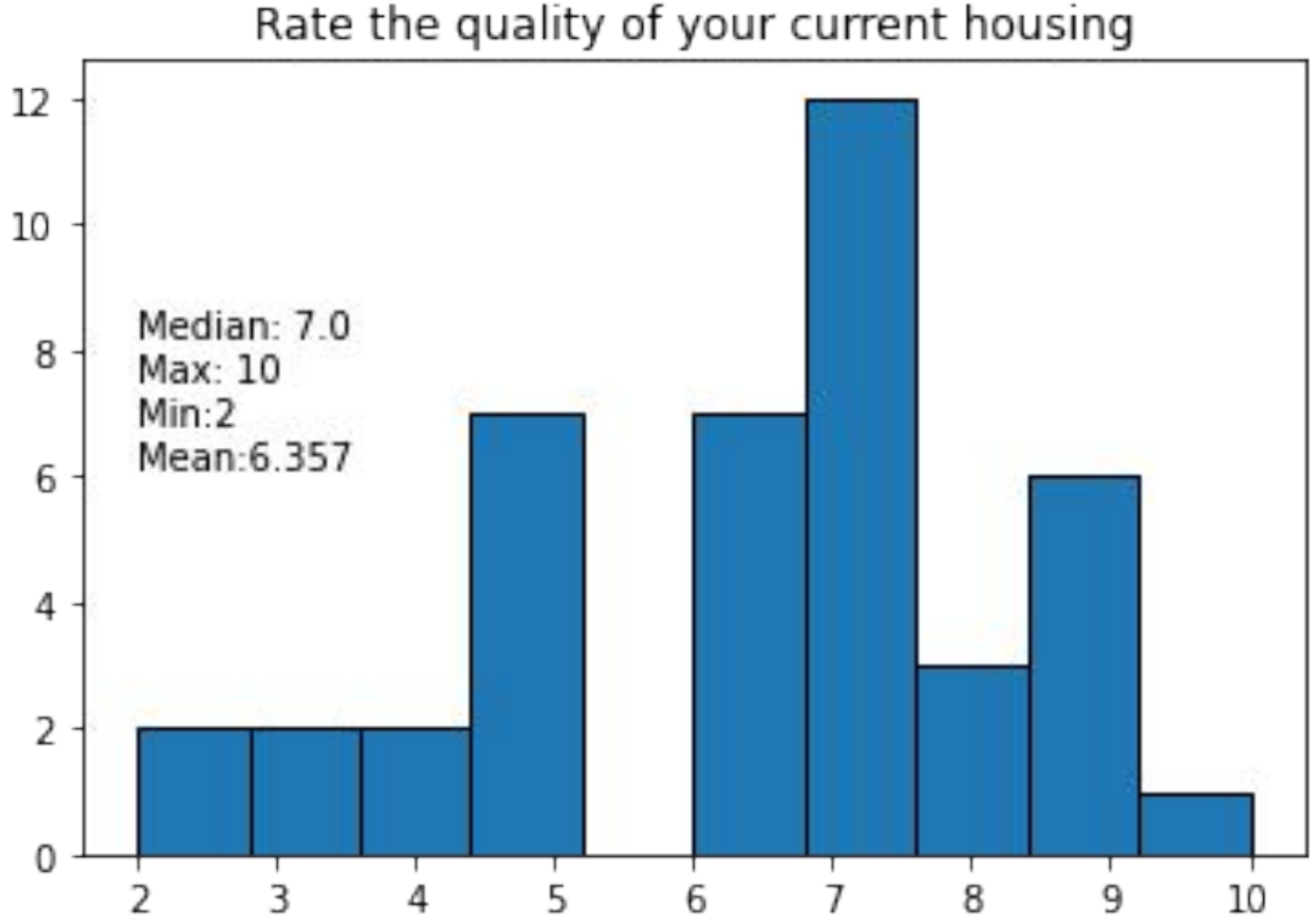


Has your Rent increased in the last 12 months? If so by what percentage??

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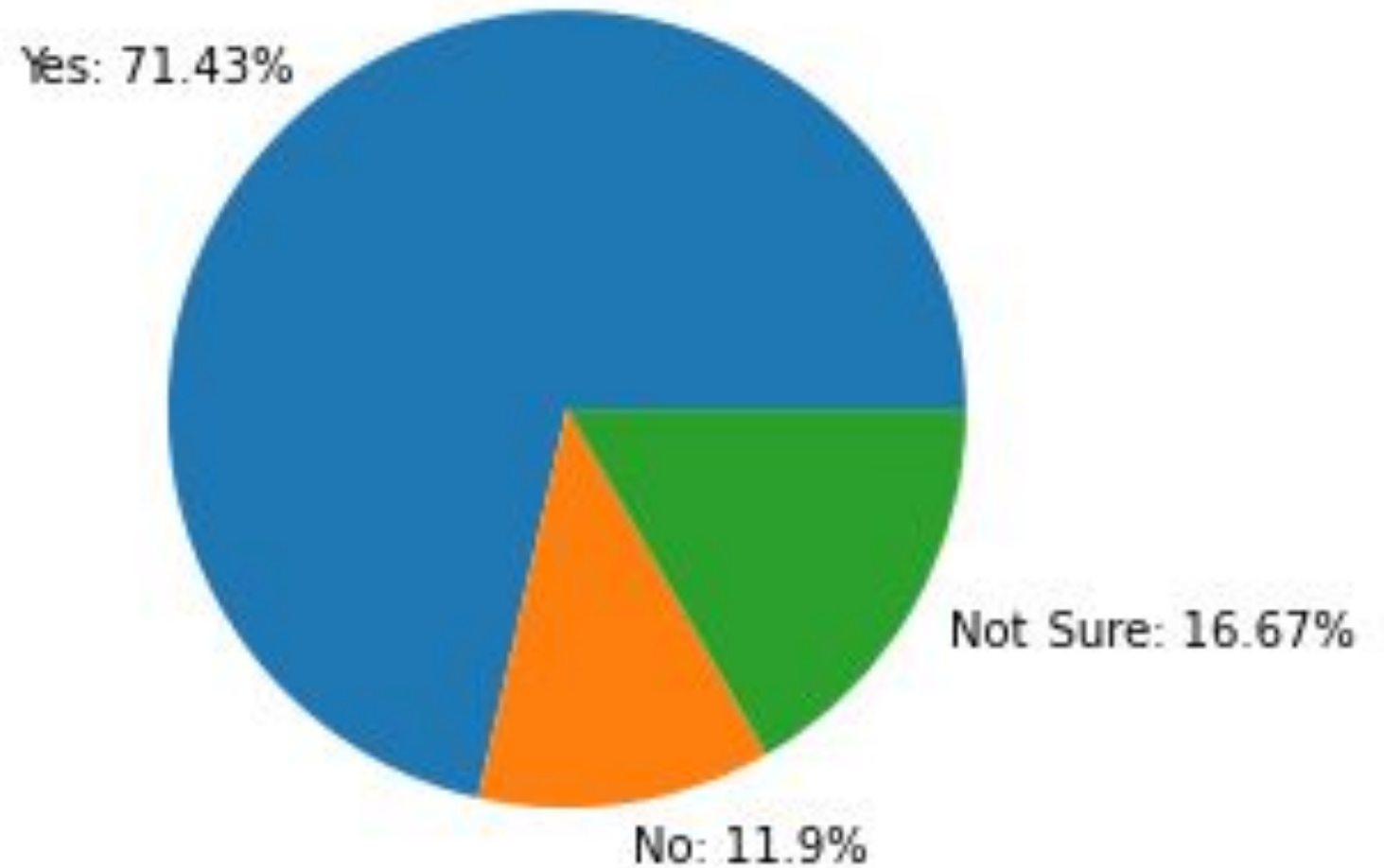


Rate the quality of your current housing



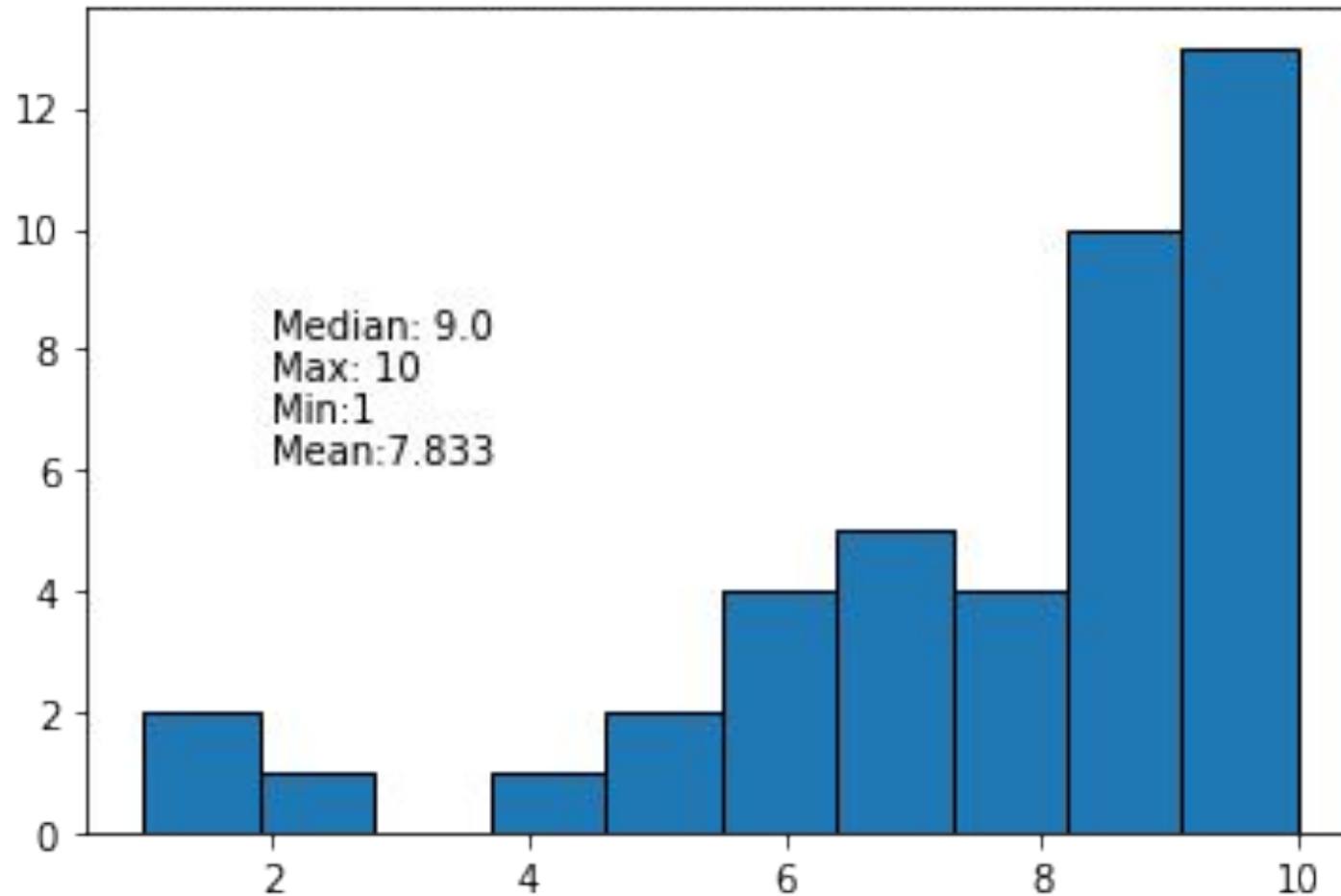
Do you expect your Rent to increase in the next 12 months?

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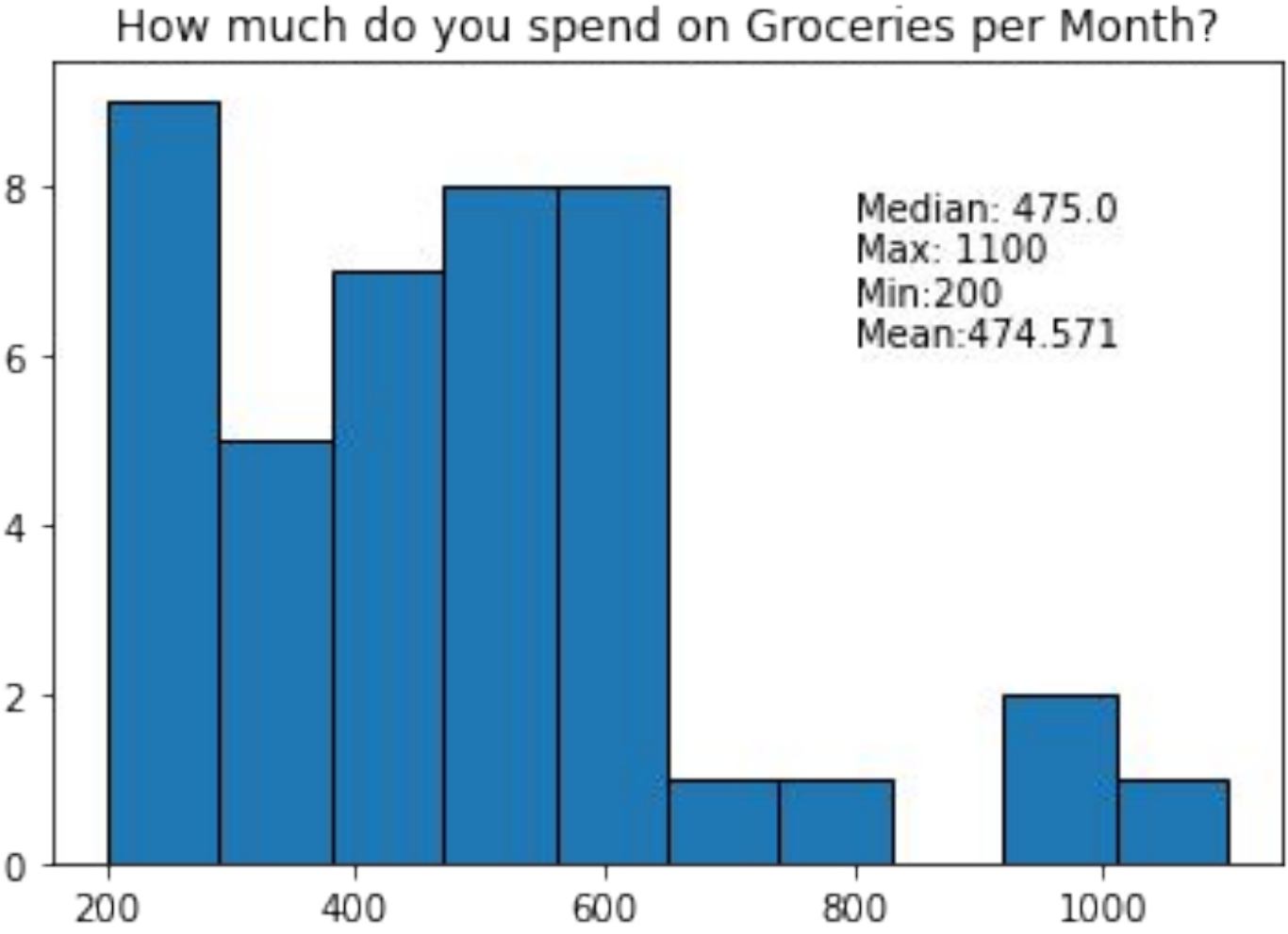


Does the Cost of Living versus Stipend cause any Stress/Concern?

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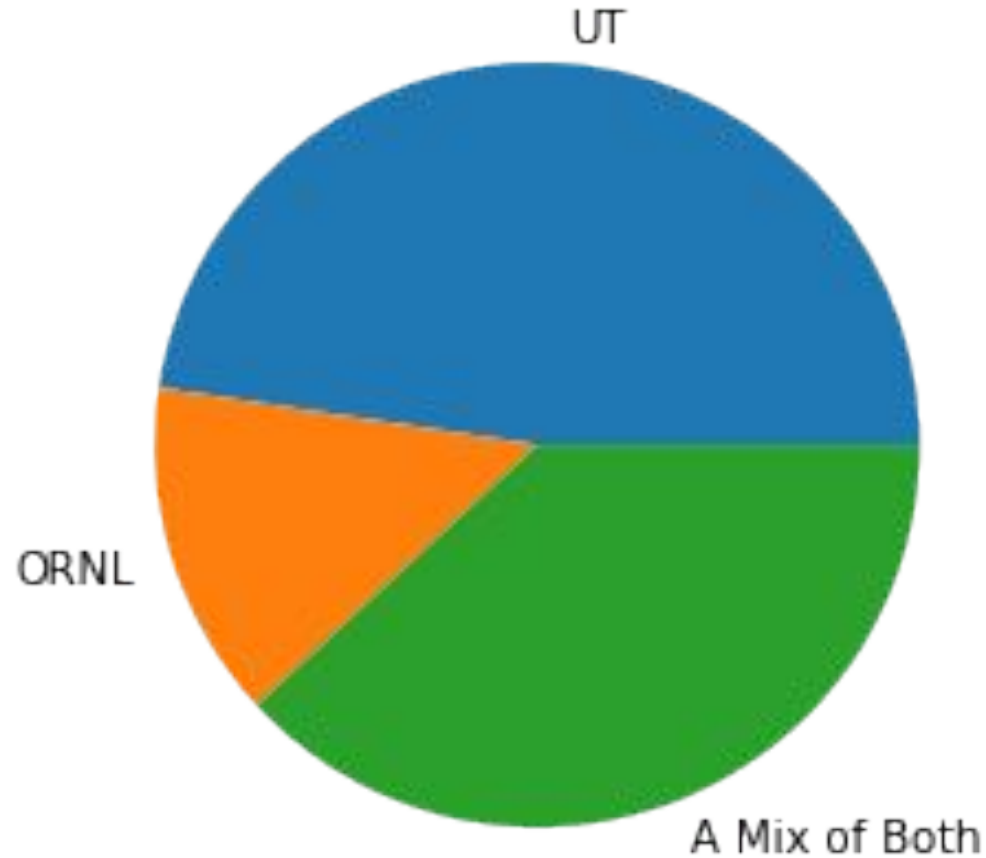


How much do you spend on Groceries per Month?



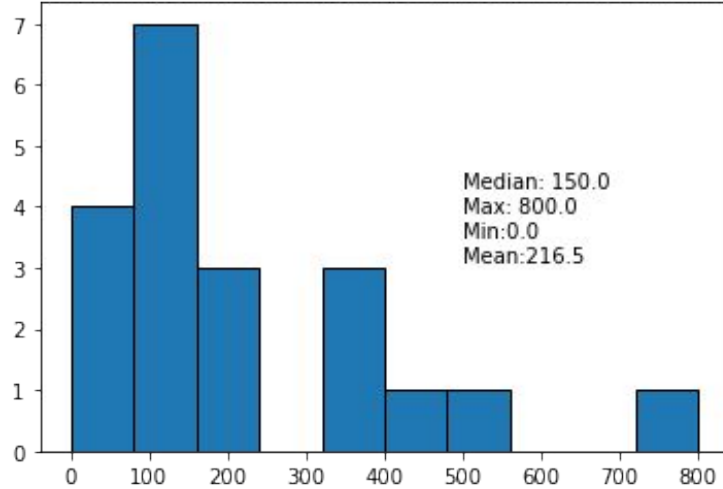
Are you primarily based at UT or ORNL?

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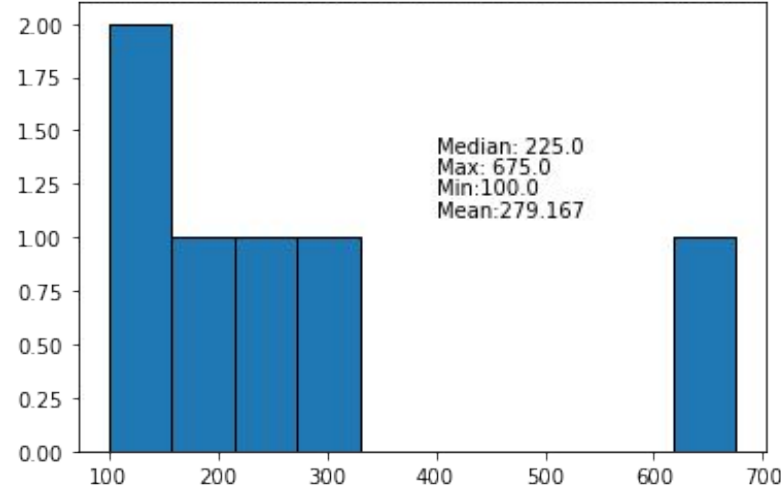


How much do you spend on Travel per month?

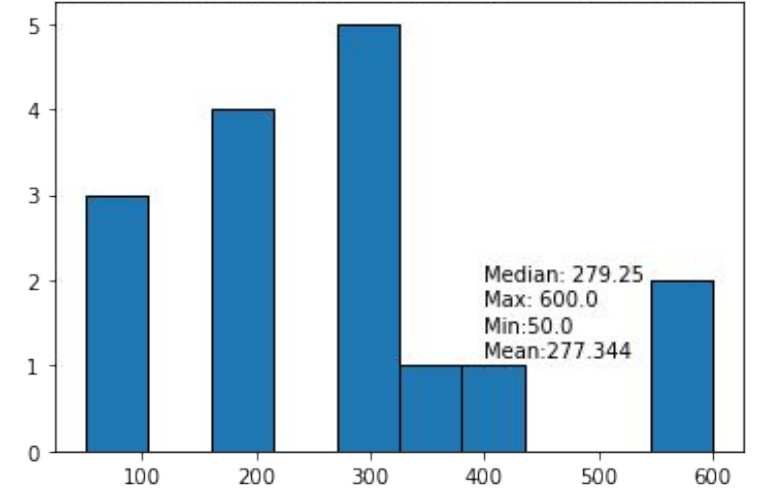
How much do you spend on Travel per month? (At UT)



How much do you spend on Travel per month? (At ORNL)



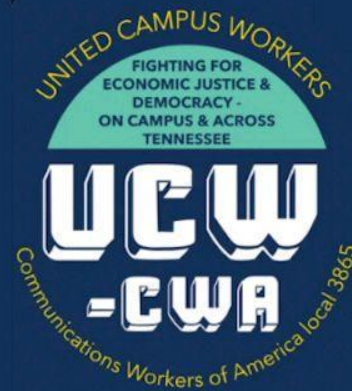
How much do you spend on Travel per month? (A Mix of Both)



GRAD RALLY FOR HIGHER PAY!

This semester graduate students are fighting for higher stipends at the UT-Knoxville!

They're demanding \$24,000 base stipends, and cost of living adjustments every year!



↑
**Sign the Grad
Petition!**



↑
**Join the labor
union!**



↑
**RSVP for the
Grad Rally!**

**APRIL 25TH,
TUESDAY**

Grad Rally for Higher Pay outside
McClung Tower

3PM-4PM

Have questions about joining your labor union?
Email the Graduate Committee at gradworkersutk@gmail.com