GSC General Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
6pm virtual meeting

I. Welcome

II. Land Grant Recognition

III. Officer Updates

A. Co-Presidents, Matt Saxton and Lindsay Winkenbach
   i. Matt: University COVID updates / Faculty council com joint update
      - Faculty council working with Dean Stromberger regarding mentoring initiatives for graduate students
      - Contact Matt if you are interested in participating
   ii. Lindsay: Student health updates
      - Developing comprehensive Q&A document regarding student health insurance plan, this will be distributed soon
   iii. Spring break update
      - Thank you for providing your feedback!
      - The university has sent out their spring break announcement
   iv. Graduate student climate survey
      - Thank you for providing your feedback!
      - We will share the data with you once it is available

B. VP of Graduate Advocacy, Zaria Vick
   i. Diversity and Inclusion Committee updates
      - Watch for upcoming update

C. VP of Graduate Engagement, Juli Scamardo
   - Send newsletter updates and events to gscsusu@gmail.com
   - Congratulations to the 16 award winners of the Professional Development and Supply Award. Winners will get an email from Juli
   - Thank you to everyone who graded award applications

D. VP of Finance (Treasurer), Kaylee Clark
   i. Approved fund requests overview
      - Reach out to Kaylee if you are interested in funding requests and joining the budgetary committee

E. VP of Information (Secretary), Theresa Berger
   - Access meeting minutes and recording on the GSC website
   - Bookmark the GSC webpage and share it with fellow graduate students – great source for updates, resources, and announcements for graduate students
   - Join our email list to get frequent updates from GSC, the sign-up link is on the GSC website
IV. Confirmation of Department Representatives

V. Guest Speaker: President Joyce McConnell

- Thank you to graduate students and teaching assistants
- Update regarding COVID testing:
  - COVID testing moving from PCR test to saliva test, anyone can be tested.
  - Positive result must be confirmed with a second PCR test.
  - Reach out to the Pandemic team with additional questions.

Graduate student stipends
- Included in 5-year strategic planning.
- The Graduate School has initiated a comparative report of stipends to provide future recommendations. This report will be ready in December.

Mentor-mentee relationships and future programs
- Consider giving additional consideration for Principal Investigators (PIs) including opportunities to go through leadership training.
- Additional policy will be added to the bulletin and manual.

Remote instruction
- The goal is to mitigate transmission and have a certain percent of students attending on-campus classes via hybrid classes.
- No positive cases traced back to classroom exposure. No transmission in the classroom thus far.
- Currently providing 50-60% of classes via hybrid courses, with a focus on first-year experiences. It is easier to have upper-level courses online.
- Concerns should be forwarded to the Teaching and Learning Continuity group.
- Regarding concerns of retaliation, currently working with the Graduate School to put a stronger policy in place, and the Office of General Counsel may be consulted as well.

Pulse of the graduate student body
- There are 3 principle ways to receive input from graduate students:
  - Dean Stromberger and the Provost
  - Faculty Council
  - Talking with graduate students individually

- Now talking with graduate students collectively through GSC and President McConnell would like to do more of this in the future.
- Earlier in the year, graduate student input was sought out regarding health and safety related to COVID.
- Research continuity for graduate students is a current concern as the square footage determines occupancy in a laboratory. It is helpful to talk with the county regarding more flexibility and provide student input.
5-year strategic planning and MS/PhD programs

- Would like feedback from graduate students regarding the MS/PhD programs balance and what factors are important to consider.
- It is important to provide a smooth transition between MS and PhD programs. Will continue to further this with Dean Stromberger and consider stipends to support graduate students.

Open Q&A Discussion

- Will graduate student tuition and fees be adjusted due to COVID-19? It is difficult to project enrollment and budget at this time. The earliest budget will be determined by April 2021. Would like feedback about what areas to focus on. It is important to consider the entire compensation package, including the fees, and consider other options to help offset the fees.

- Will there be increased stipends or funding if graduation is delayed due to COVID-19? Currently trying to assess the number of delayed graduations and determine where researchers, PIs and graduate students are in their research process. The Graduate School will provide a survey to estimate how many students are delayed for graduation and by how much, and consider ways to mitigate. The national trend is to freeze admission of new graduate students and support current students.

- What are the long-term effects if we can’t allow new students to join right now? This is a complex situation that depends on several factors including the length of grants, the number of students and graduation rates (students that would have been graduated and will be graduating), etc. It is important to admit new students and also avoid pressuring current graduate students. Currently working on projections for next semester, and graduate students should be a part of these conversations.

- How to handle de-centralization on campus? There are several benefits to de-centralization, including less barriers to allow more creativity. It is important to consider where centralization can help to reduce barriers across the university and avoid redundancy through strategic centralization. Centralization also helps to reduce financial burdens and improve budgetary spending.

- How can graduate students provide input regarding the budget? Graduate students are invited to townhall meetings regarding budget. It would be helpful to communicate to graduate students via faculty council. Planning for strategic budget reform in the next semester and it is important to invite graduate students for this transition over the 5-year planning period.

- Please contact Dean Stromberger to invite other leadership from across the university
VI. Upcoming Events

- Grad Showcase week of **November 16-20th**!
  Learn more about this year’s Grad Showcase [here](#).
- If your grad organization is hosting an event, we’d love to promote and showcase it on our website and in our general meetings!
- **Next meeting** on December 1st at 6pm MT