

- I. Call to Order at 8:04 a.m.
- II. Roll Call
 - A. Absent: Chemistry & Biosciences, Digital Sciences, History, Liquid Crystals, Math, Philosophy, Teaching Learning & Curriculum, Theatre and Dance
- III. Approval of minutes from Sept. 20, 2019
- IV. Dr. Cynthia Stillins - Interim Dean of Graduate Studies
 - A. Data on graduate student success is not as complete as the University wants it. A university climate survey indicated student dissatisfaction in terms of financial issues. As a result, the University has put together three initiatives focused on putting together expectations for all those who work with graduate students as well as the graduate students themselves. These initiatives were modeled after a program put together by Virginia Tech. Three subgroups have been formed for this, and they are headed by associate deans. The subgroups need graduate student representation from across the university, so if you are interested, please email Cindy (cstillin@kent.edu).
 1. Question: Has Virginia Tech seen improvements since the implementation of this program?
 - Cindy: Yes.
 2. Question: I'm happy that we're addressing the mental health aspect of graduate school, but it doesn't appear that we're addressing the financial issue. Could you provide more information on that?
 - Cindy: All decisions regarding stipends are made at the college level. The budgets are approved by the deans. Kyle Reynolds has been investigated stipends across the state and nation, and it appears Kent State is similar to a lot of other universities. Nonetheless, the University is looking into additional, unrestricted fundraising. A graduate student emergency fund has already been identified as a key target for fundraising.
 - B. Other initiatives being taken up by the Ad Hoc Educational Policies Committee: Family leave for graduate students and a separate grievance policy for graduate students. If you wish to have a voice in crafting those policies, contact cstillin@kent.edu.
- V. Jim Rabar - new blackboard system
 - A. The University wants to make sure it is using the right learning management system (LMS) for Kent State. A committee was formed last fall to look at different LMS. Initially, most of the time was spent gathering information, figuring out what people like and what they don't. The committee sent out a survey and received nearly 2,000 responses. There was a lot of concern over migrating content from Blackboard to potentially a new system.
 - B. As of now, there are three LMS in the running: Blackboard, Desire to Learn and Canvas. The next step is to create more opportunities for engagement with students, staff and faculty. Mid-November the committee is holding an event where the three systems can hold Q&A sessions for graduate students, faculty and staff. Jim said he would follow up with specific times and dates but hopes to see a lot of graduate students there to share their voices.
- VI. Executive Board Reports

A. **Executive Chair** – Anna Solberg – asolberg@kent.edu

1. Faculty Senate Meeting

- Faculty are starting to look at the Kent Core classes. This isn't going to affect graduate students as much as students, but it may affect graduate students as teaching assistants. Currently, there are 124 core classes. The Faculty Senate is looking into a standardized assessment of these classes and how they are affecting students. For the Kent Core, there are presently 11 learning outcomes. The Senate hopes to turn the 11 outcomes into four. They will be voting on this at their Nov. 4th meeting.

2. Recreational Center Fees for Thesis or Diss II Students

- Last year, the Executive Board was able to set a \$35 fee per semester for a recreational pass for Thesis or Diss II students. This is still in effect. This is down from \$70 per semester, so we cut it in half. Some departments have also offered to cover the cost, so be sure to check with your department first.

3. Current Student Solicitation

- Anna is talking with Lee Greenfelder in Advancement regarding solicitation calls that graduate students are getting. Lee told her that if you are to get a call asking for money, it will be from a student worker. If it is not from a student worker, it is likely a scam. The issue is that some of us graduated with our bachelor's and master's degrees here, so there is a mixing of lists. The best thing to do is to ask a lot of questions of the person asking for money. If you can, make a record of it and send it to Anna. She is trying to get a handle on how often graduate students are being called and whether these are real or scam calls.

4. Senate Meeting Food

- At some other universities, senators are paid for their work on the senate. Those universities have more money than Kent does. Anna said paying the senators isn't an option, so that's why GSS has been providing food at the senate meetings. Meals that we have at senate meetings are typically \$600 to \$800. If you'd like to continue spending that money, that's fine. If you want to cut that down, we can think about providing more awards, programming, etc. It would almost automatically go into awards, but it depends on how we would craft the budget at a future date. Currently, that money for the meals comes out of the Operating account. The money that we get from RASP and the money we got from the president last year, we allocate for awards.
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- There are a number of different options in terms of food. Anna is sending out an online survey in which you can vote on your choices for the meals.
- Question - Do we think Grad Fest is worth the money?
 - For Grad Fest we spend between \$400 to \$500 a month. Anna said we will bring this issue to our next

senate meeting.

- Question - Do we do any fundraising?
 - We are looking into calling from alumni or creating an endowment fund. That would be just for awards. Then we could allocate the funds elsewhere.

5. Graduate Student Involvement

- For student involvement, Anna has been starting a conversation with the May 4th Event Staff. He will be coming to the Dec. 6 meeting to discuss how graduate students can get involved with the May 4th event. If you have any ideas, please reach out and let Anna know. She can forward you along to the necessary p
- STEM entrepreneurship forum is looking for volunteers. It is taking place Oct. 29th from 10:45 to 1:30 p.m.. You get free lunch and a \$25 Visa gift card.

B. Executive Vice Chair – Victoria Reynolds – vreynol1@kent.edu

1. University Committee Representation

a. Committee reports:

- i. University Teaching Council Meeting: Committee members talked about what they do. They provide teaching development grants, travel grants, development grants. For new business, they wanted to know whether they should ask for more money. They suggested perhaps conducting a survey to see what works and if they should create workshops for teaching faculty
- ii. College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum meeting - Geography is changing their master's program from an M.A. to an M.S. effective Spring 2020. Students can already elect to pursue the M.S. or the M.A.
- iii. ACAA: Committee is currently looking to appoint a new co chair. Online education is currently shopping alternative options to blackboard. Looking to correct the poor numbers the university received in a recent survey about feelings towards employment within the university. Creating a scorecard for assessment throughout the university for each college/department; helps profs think of the overall structures of their courses and if they are doing what they intend to. Issuing 5 \$500 Assessment Awards which are grants given to departments throughout the university who are actively making changes based off of their assessment reports, the deadline is October 31st.

2. Internal GSS Committee Representation

- a. If you would like a role in the subcommittee for the awards or bylaw committee, please let Victoria know. They would like more representation from various disciplines.

3. International Travel Award

- a. ITA submission deadline has passed. The review committee will be meeting to go over the ITA. The decisions will be made by the

next senate meeting. Trying to work on changing the travel dates because they aren't convenient.

C. Finance Chair – Xin Hong – xhong1@kent.edu

1. Budget

- We are introducing a new budget. Previously, the budget for GSS was formatted for the academic year, and now, it is formatted for the fiscal year (e.g., July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020). This is so GSS can align with the rest of the University. GSS appears to be carrying over a large sum of money, but this carryover balance includes funds that have not been allocated yet. Some of the awards have a full year to be allocated, so this is why we see this balance.
- Please see the attached budget for more information about how the money is allocated. We cannot fully approve the budget at this time because GSS is still waiting for funds.

2. Domestic Travel Award

- GSS will increase the award to \$450 each thanks to financial support from Research and Sponsored Programs. For the fall semester, we have 152 recipients. For those who have already submitted the reimbursement for the \$300 DTA refunds, the additional \$150 will be added to your reimbursement.
- GSS funded all 152 applicants. One student withdrew their application. GSS has funded more students with the DTA this fall semester when compared to previous fall semesters. Please let us know how we can continue to make the DTA accessible for your academic unit.
- Question: Can you apply for two DTAs in one semester?
 - Xin: No, you can only apply for one per semester.

3. International Travel Award and Research Award funding

- The budget for the 2019-2020 International Travel award is 23 full awards with up to \$1,500 per award.
- The budget for the 2019-2020 Research Award is 23 full awards with up to \$2,000 per award.

4. SCA

- We will not have the Special Contingency Award this year. There is still an allocation of \$5,000 in the budget for the SCA, but this will be for next year. The SCA is still on hold due to it being reviewed by the bylaws committee.

5. Motion to approve the budget for the ITA, RA, and DTA: Motion from Political Science; Second from Physics

- No objections.

D. Advocacy Chair – A.J. Giorgi – ajgiorgi2@kent.edu

1. Office Hours

- The GSS Executive Board now has official office hours. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop in to the Student Center, 120M. It is in the Student Organization section of the student center.

- Please see the attached document for the office hours.

2. Research Award

- Between 25 and 30 applications were received. They are currently being blinded and are in the process of being sent out. About half of those can be funded if the full amount is to be funded. It is anticipated that the review will be finished in about a week and a half to two weeks.

3. Socktober

- A fundraising event for gathering socks for the homeless community. Please drop off the socks in our office or contact us via email. Socks are one of the most requested items but least donated at homeless shelters, so if you can donate a pair or two, that would be fantastic.

E. Research Symposium Chair – Srijana Bhandari – sbhandas3@kent.edu

1. The 35th Annual Graduate Research Symposium will be April 9 - 10, 2020. Please keep this in mind. The Save the Date cards are being created. They will be available to distribute to constituents at the next senate meeting.
2. Volunteers will be needed for the Research Symposium, so if you have time, please send an email to Srijana. Depending on your schedule, your volunteering will absolutely be different than your presentation times.
3. Find out more about upcoming and previous symposia at <https://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/research-symposium>

F. Info Services Chair – Grace Murray – gss.info@gmail.com

1. Instagram - #GSSFunded
 - An instagram is in the process of being created. Please start to send pictures our way. We'd love to share them.
2. If you have published/presented recently, let us know. We'd like to spotlight you on social media.
3. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter ([@KSUGSS](#))

V. Old Business

A. Charter & Bylaws

1. This committee is still working. GSS is slowing down the process because any changes that are made this year won't take effect until next year. In this regard, GSS would rather spend the time to make sure we get the charter and bylaws into the best shape we can before bringing it for a vote.
2. Report from ****AMENDMENT**** Biological Sciences: The charter revisions from the committee will likely be brought to the floor pretty soon. The committee is now turning its attention to the awards. One of the largest problems is that there isn't a lot of diversity on the committee. The people on the committee right now are primarily scientists. If you're a sculpter, I'm assuming you have different needs than I would. I would be really interested in getting artists to volunteer. The committee is desperately looking for volunteers for input on the charter and the bylaws. Biological Sciences said "I am officially begging, please for the love of God, I will buy you a coffee or beer to share your opinions with

me -- up to \$5.00. I really just need someone to talk to me from the other side of campus.”

VI. New Business

- A. No new business

VII. Announcements

- A. Gradfest tonight at Zephyr (6-8 pm). Doctoral student Cody Ruiz will be hosting trivia!

- B. Reminder from Anna: Per the bylaws, if you have submitted an incomplete request for an award or reimbursement, you cannot receive the funding. You don't want to lose an award because you didn't follow the guidelines.

1. Question: What happens if something is missing? Will you tell them? Is it a one-time thing?

- Jenn: Sometimes people don't include the funding form or don't fill it out. She's had people not include any identifying information. Sometimes the award letter isn't included or proof of attendance.

2. GSS is moving forward and trying to set up an Engage platform in which all of this will be online, so this will make it easier for constituents to be able to follow the guidelines.

3. If a senator or constituent would like someone to look over the application or reimbursement packet, please bring the application or packet to our office hours and the executive board will look at it.

4. Question: Can someone appeal if there are special circumstances in which they can't submit the packet?

- Jenn: You have a two-week timeframe. I don't think there's anything in the bylaws right now that would allow that, but I think it would absolutely be OK to send an email to whoever is in charge of the award. Having communication is key, and we can give you an extension if we know what's going on.

5. Question: Is there an appeal process outside of special circumstances?

- Jenn: You've been given the award under the condition that you will fill out paperwork correctly.
- Anna: I would recommend you have another set of eyes look over the packet before you submit it. It is in the bylaws.
- Victoria: If you don't think this is a fair process, you should join the bylaw committee!

6. If you have questions about the specifics of the reimbursement packets and the application, please let Anna know. The Executive Board is working to make this process as simple for the applicants as possible while also following the bylaws.

VIII. Adjournment @ 9:56 p.m.

- A. Motion from Geography. Second from Anthropology.