

- I. Call to Order at 11:03am
- II. Roll Call
 - A. Absent: CAE, Architecture, Business Administration, Communication & Information, Computer Sciences, Digital Sciences, History, Music, Nursing, and Philosophy.
- III. Approval of minutes from February 5, 2021
 - A. Motion to approve the minutes: First from Political Sciences, second by Geology. Minutes were approved.
- IV. Dr. Carrie Berta, Assistant Director of Clinical Services (cberta@kent.edu)
 - A. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is now its own department and consists of licensed counselors and psychologists and is the primary mental health resource on campus. The Counseling Center and the Psych Clinic is still providing Mental Health services. They are Master's and Doctoral students in training.
 - B. Expanded and enhanced services:
 1. CAPS has partnered with Impact Student Assistance. It is an organization that has licensed clinicians all over the United States and CAPS' partnership with them allows them to connect students with clinicians wherever they are (both in and out of state). This decreases wait times and allows students to be connected to clinicians more quickly. At this time, the wait time for an appointment is roughly one week. The majority of counseling is currently taking place remotely.
 2. Actively enrolled students are now also eligible for 6 therapy sessions covered by student fees. If you have the Kent student health insurance therapy services at CAPS are covered. Students can also take advantage of this over summer. If cost is a barrier, there is a Financial Care Assistance program that can determine if fees can be reduced for particular students.
 3. CAPS now has after-hours crisis support through their partnership with Impact Student Assistance. During evenings, weekends, or holidays students can call CAPS and be connected with a licensed clinician for in-the-moment support. CAPS will follow up during the next business day. For emergencies and immediate danger, please call 911.
 4. You can find the CAPS website [here](#). Their phone number is 330-672-2487. You can find information about their different services and student support groups [here](#).
 5. Other helpful links ([Meditation across campus](#), [Flashes Rise Above](#), [Mental Health Awareness Trainings](#), [U Good](#))
- V. Dr. Manfred van Dulmen, Interim Dean of Graduate Studies (mvandul@kent.edu)
 - A. The Governor shared on March 4th that once the cases in Ohio go below 50 per 100,000 all the state health orders will be dropped and health experts think that we could be at that point in 6-8 weeks. The university might choose to keep some policies in place for student safety.
 - B. Vaccine rollout has been rather slow, but it is increasing in our county and our state. Kent State has a vaccine committee and it is likely that in the coming weeks we will have a point of distribution on campus as well. The plan is that every adult who wants a vaccine will be able to get one before coming back to

campus this Fall semester. This plan is subject to change, depending on how the pandemic continues to unfold.

- C. Graduate Studies is undergoing future planning efforts at this time. The department is meeting with over 80 folks from all different areas to identify issues and recommendations for four key areas: Administrative structure and core functions of Graduate Studies, support for graduate students, support for faculty and staff, and advocacy and philanthropy. Dr. van Dulmen wants to make sure that graduate students' voices are included as much as possible in this process.

1. If you have recommendations or suggestions, you can email our Advocacy Chair, Anna, and she can bring them up in the Graduate Student Expectations committee meeting.
2. Reminder: The Graduate Student Trustee application has been extended to Friday, March 19. Find out more [here](#).

D. *Questions:*

1. *Jordyn:* I would love to see parental leave and sympathy leave for graduate students. Is there any information on this?
Dr. van Dulmen: A policy group looked at this last year, but there was not a group that specifically focused on graduate policies. The current committee will start to meet this coming month and will be able consider what the leave of absence policy includes and how short-term leaves will be addressed.
2. *English:* Are there any conversations about summer funding for graduate students? Are conversations happening regarding graduate funding being more competitive and meeting living wages across all departments?
Dr. van Dulmen: We have a separate committee that will look at Graduate Assistantships in general, including pay levels and scope of work. We have realized that what you do varies by department and this committee will examine that as well. One thing to note about summer funding is that the graduate budgets are in essence owned by each academic college. Each college has flexibility in terms of how they want to allocate that, but conversations about funding will be ongoing. Additionally, we will look at how to leverage philanthropy to ensure that we can provide more fellowships.
3. *Biological Sciences:* Do you have an estimated month where a vaccination clinic may open up on campus for the general population? Do you think that students, researchers, teachers that are in person may be ahead of the general public in any way?
Dr. van Dulmen: Great questions, which we have also tackled at the state level. We have tried to advocate for having in-person instructors be a priority group, but that effort was unfortunately not successful, but this can change in the future. Our understanding from the state is that they will roll out vaccinations in 5-year increments and that there will be no more priority groups. When we do open up as a vaccine distribution site, we will be open to the public. We cannot provide you with a date right now, as it is constantly changing at this moment. However, once the university is able to vaccinate faculty, staff, and students, we have an internal priority schedule for who will get access first.

4. *Biomedical Sciences*: When Kent State opens the vaccination clinic, would that be based on a first come, first serve basis or is it based on where you live?

Dr. van Dulmen: It will be based on the state's priority schedule. We have to follow the state's distribution schedule and it would likely occur through the Center country system. However, if you live in a different county, you can still sign up. The vaccine committee will share more information about all of this as soon as we are able to open as a distribution center.

5. *Economics*: If health orders are lifted in the near future, what will this mean for graduation?

Dr. van Dulmen: We are currently working on different ideas to create a safe in-person graduation experience for you.

6. *Jordyn*: You mentioned using the Climate Study data for your strategic planning. Can you speak a little bit more about how important it is for graduate students to take this survey and how this data will be used in making decisions?

Dr. van Dulmen: The data from the study will be shared with leadership and is used to make decisions about where we need to go and how to leverage our resources. From previous climate studies, we have learned that graduate students have concerns about who they can go to with grievances or problems in their department. As a result of this data, the committee will work on a grievance policy for graduate students. The Climate Study data is actively included into the decision making process at Kent State.

Note: The study this year is focused on race and will inform how to ensure that all students can truly feel safe and included on our campus.

Please remember to take this survey before the end of the month!

VI. Executive Board Reports

A. **Executive Chair** – Claire Jackman – cjackma2@kent.edu

1. February Faculty Senate Meeting

- a) Wastewater monitoring and random COVID testing is going well. Mask wearing will most likely continue in the summer and fall, but the increase in vaccines is promising as we think about what fall classes will look like.
- b) University sponsored travel might be back in the summer or fall, but this is yet to be determined.
- c) The university is developing the Anti Racism and Equity Institute, which is a research-oriented, interdisciplinary initiative to actively identify, investigate, and remove racism. Anti-black racism is the focus, but it will also include immigration, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination. This will be a space to collaborate between researchers and educators and over 100 staff and faculty members have already expressed interest in joining this institute. The plan is to establish it this fall.
- d) A new graduate program is coming. There will be an M.S. and a PhD in Mechatronics. Additionally, some undergraduate degrees were added.
- e) This fall, there will be an Environmental Design research

institute.

- f) After a holistic evaluation of SAT and ACT requirements, a discussion about their necessity took place. The GPAs of admitted students this year look the same as in past years when standardized tests were required. As a result, Kent will most likely pursue test-optional admissions moving forward. The Deans of the Colleges are also being asked to assess future use of standardized exams for graduate students, which could remove a lot of cost barriers for students.
- 2. Vaccine Task Force
 - a) Kent State has not yet become a point of distribution (POD) yet. The university is prepared to become a POD and the Rec Center will likely be used for this, to avoid overwhelming DeWeese. From the vaccine survey, the university found that about 80% of student respondents indicated that they would want the vaccine once they are eligible. There are also promising numbers coming from faculty and staff. Regardless, physical and social distancing as well as mask wearing will likely still be a part of the fall semester.
 - 3. Graduate Studies Advisory Committee (Graduate Studies Future Planning events)
 - a) This past meeting was centered on the Graduate Studies Future Planning events, which Dr. van Dulmen covered earlier.
 - b) There are about 12-18 graduate students that are participating and Dr. van Dulmen is making sure that at least one graduate student is in each small group to ensure strong graduate student representation.
 - 4. Student Leadership Advisory Committee
 - a) This meeting's focus was on mental health resources available through CAPS.
 - 5. Dr. Lamar Hylton, VP for Student Affairs (lhylton@kent.edu), is looking for students to serve on a committee to discuss budgeting priorities as the University budget is developed for the next fiscal year. Please email him and cc me if you would like to serve on this important financial advisory committee.
 - 6. GSS Executive Board Election Information
 - a) The board and Kyle talked about the best way to do elections and there are certainly pros and cons to each approach. We agreed to have candidates submit their application materials via email to Claire. You will be able to watch all of the candidates' videos and vote on their submissions. The deadline to apply for the 2021-2022 Executive Board is Sunday, March 21 by 11:59pm.
 - 7. Gradfest Friday 3/5 at 7pm
- B. **Executive Vice Chair** – Jordyn Stoll – jstoll7@kent.edu
- 1. Committee Reports
 - a) **Educational Policies** (Mitch Powers; mpower16@kent.edu)
 - (1) Grad Student representatives are requested for subcommittees: Undergraduate Policy Council, Graduate Policy Council, Academic Calendar Advisory Committee, Transfer Credit Committee,

Fiscal Impact Statement Review Committee,
Internationalization Advisory Committee.

- (2) The subcommittees meet monthly and any graduate student is eligible. A representative and an alternate can be present.

b) **Strategic Enrollment Management** (Mitch Powers;
mpower16@kent.edu)

- (1) Various Subcommittees are in the process of drawing up plans for their corners of the strategic enrollment plan. Strategic plans are expected to develop in some detail in March. Major focuses are on: non-traditional students, international students, and students who apply to Kent but do not enroll. There is a general desire for data driven decisions, but the state of data sharing between departments/colleges leaves something to be desired. A subcommittee will be addressing this.

c) **Intercollegiate Athletics Committee** (Mitch Powers;
mpower16@kent.edu)

- (1) Spring sports are underway. Committee discussed conference schedules and COVID policies. The testing regimen for student athletes is aggressive (compared to NCAA standards) with athletes being tested 3x/week. This, combined with social distancing policies, has been effective at avoiding outbreaks within the various athletics programs.

- (2) Notably, due to an extra year of eligibility due to COVID, a small number of student athletes will return as graduate student athletes. A search for a new athletics director is underway.

d) **University Libraries Faculty Senate Advisory Committee**
(Andrew Blinn ablinn2@kent.edu)

- (1) Discussed the results of the 2020 University Libraries Self-Study. Library funding and resources follow the trend of doing more with less, but in some areas (collection budget), that is not possible. We also discussed representation of library resources to undergraduate students and how to best advertise to that group. As a graduate teaching assistant that introduces undergraduates to the library search tools in a class setting, I proposed that there be additional resources introduced at times in class that the library could be of use. For instance, we have a STEM librarian that can help students perform research as well as statistical consultants that could help after students do their initial research assignments. While it is up to faculty to determine what information is provided in the lab sessions, it may be beneficial for graduate teaching assistants to add these additional resources (a subject librarian and statistics help) to the list of resources we share with undergraduates in

labs. There is a resource in the works by the library that would include embedded links that point students to these and other resources that should be completed in the coming year or two. This would serve as an easy collection of resources TAs could point to during labs at various points in the research process.

2. **Consider serving on a committee!** You learn a lot, can contribute to great projects, and it is also great for your resume. Committee representation information can be found [here](#).
3. **Please take the Climate Study Survey!** You can only take the survey by clicking on the link in your email. There is a lot of metadata being collected when you submit it through your email that helps in analyzing the survey. However, all answers are anonymous and your personal information is protected.

C. **Finance Chair** – Maneesh Shukla – mshukla@kent.edu

1. DTA update, Spring 2021
 - a) Total award: 56
 - b) Total award amount: \$7,389.50
2. SCA update, Spring 2021
 - a) Total award: 1
 - b) Total award amount: \$1,500
 - c) Special thanks to the SCA review committee members (*Delilah Ellzey, Gabrielle Frame, Hend Baza, Monica Ghosh, Nicolle Simonovic, Pratyusha Ghanta, and Timothy Niepokny*) for their time and hard work in reviewing the applications.

D. **Advocacy Chair** – Anna Solberg – asolberg@kent.edu

1. Research Award Applications were March 8th!
2. Updates on Research Award
 - a) As always, review our most updated award guidelines on our [website](#).
 - b) If you submit multiple applications, your most recent one will be considered.
 - c) Thank you to the review committee for your hard work!
 - d) If you applied for the award, you will typically hear back in about 3-4 weeks.
3. Update on Anti-Racism Task Force
 - a) The task force is starting to wrap up and putting together their final report, which includes their recommendations. The subcommittee reports will also be presented in the **final Townhall meeting of the year on April 8 at 5pm**.
 - b) If you have anything that you want the task force to address, please email Anna as soon as possible.
4. Update on GA Review Committee
 - a) This committee will begin to meet soon and look at stipends, expectations, leave policies etc.
 - b) Please let Anna know if you have any suggestions or recommendations!

E. **Research Symposium Chair** – Payel Datta – pdatta1@kent.edu

1. Total number of poster and oral sessions
 - a) Please share the documents that show what sessions they are in

with your constituents so that Payel can correct any mistakes ahead of time.

2. Request for volunteers and judges
 - a) Please reach out to folks in your department to find volunteers and judges. Graduate Students are not eligible to be judges.
3. General notes: All symposium sessions will be live and all poster sessions and all oral sessions will take place at the same time (2:30-4:30pm on April 7 for poster presentations and 2:30-4:30pm on April 8 for oral presentations). Specific times will be sent out!

F. **Info Services Chair** – Maike Amann – gss.info@gmail.com

1. If you have published/presented recently, let us know. We'd like to spotlight you on social media.
2. If you are reaching out to us, please make sure to use the gss.info@gmail.com email address.
3. Make sure to let me know about any senator changes in your department!
4. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter ([@KSUGSS](#))

V. Old Business

- A. N/A.

VI. New Business

- A. N/A.

VII. Announcements

- A. There is a new elevator pitch competition for graduate students happening soon. It is called FlashPitch and you can find more information [here](#). The deadline to register for that competition is on March 26th.
- B. Graduate Student Appreciation Week is happening the first week of April. You can find the schedule [here](#).
- C. Consider getting involved in the Culture of Respect Collective.
- D. There is an AdHoc Academic Honesty committee run by Todd Kamenash. We have a graduate student serving on this committee.

VIII. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn: First from Geology, Second from Public Health. Meeting adjourned at 12:34pm.