

- I. Call to Order at 11:03am
- II. Roll Call
 - A. Absent: Anthropology, College of Aeronautics and Engineering, Communication & Information, Computer Sciences, Digital Science, History, Music, and Nursing.
- III. Approval of minutes from March 5, 2021
 - A. First from Geology, second from Psychological Services. No discussion. Minutes were approved.
- IV. Amy Quillin, Student Ombuds (aquillin@kent.edu or ombuds@kent.edu)
 - A. Dr. Quillin explained that Ombuds means agent or representative. A Student Ombuds is a neutral, confidential party for the university and interacts primarily with students. A Student Ombuds can help students navigate the many, oftentimes confusing, policies of a university, generally related to concerns (such as grade concerns, financial aid or tuition issues, residence hall problems, etc.) It is important to note that Dr. Quillin cannot provide specifics about a student's financial aid or tuition information and does not have any authority over faculty and their grade decisions for example. She can provide information about processes or who to connect with about specific issues. You can find more information about the Ombuds office [here](#).
 - B. There is no difference between an undergraduate and a graduate complaint process. Currently, there is discussion about crafting a specific academic complaint process for graduate students. At this time, this process is run by each department and the university is working on creating a more neutral process for academic complaints.
 - C. Note: If you need to take a leave of absence or want to learn more about the process, you can connect with Tiffany Lewis (tlewis95@kent.edu) in Graduate Studies.
 - D. Questions:
 1. *Claire*: Are there any complaints that you cannot help with?
 - a. *Dr. Quillin*: Great question. Students are always welcome to consult with me and if I am not the best resource for them, I can make a referral. Some examples: If a student has a concern about discrimination based on a protected class, that is not an academic claim, but rather an EOA complaint and I can refer students to that office. Similarly, I can refer students for Title IX complaints and for issues with Graduate Assistantships, which are often better handled by Academic Personnel, as that is commonly more of an employment issue.
 2. *Political Science*: Is there a paper trail after a student meets with you? Can faculty and department heads access that?
 - a. *Dr. Quillin*: No. Unless a student gives me permission that I can speak to others, it is completely confidential. I keep my own records to keep track of students and general concerns, but I do not share them with others unless a student asks me to.
 3. *Anna*: How do we get in touch with you? What does the typical process look like?
 - a. *Dr. Quillin*: Anyone can contact me via my personal and Ombuds

email address (see above) and students can submit a concern via Flashline as well, which will generate an email to me also. Students can also call the office directly. In a normal year, I am also in the office and students can walk in and meet with me directly. Once the student makes contact, I reach out to them and offer to meet with them (currently via conference call or Teams). Depending on what the student's concern is, I will try to include information about the relevant process for their unique situation in those meetings.

V. Executive Board Reports

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

1. Executive Board Election Results
 - a. Thank you to everyone who ran for a position and thank you to all Academic Units for voting.
 - b. Claire, Jordyn, Maneesh and Anna will continue in their positions. They will be joined by Muhammad Farooq as Programming Chair and Blair Braun as Information Services Chair after the May 7th GSS meeting. Congratulations to our newly elected Executive Board!
 - c. The election results will also be sent out to the Graduate Student listserv as well as relevant administrators.
2. Faculty Senate Meeting
 - a. There is great optimism for this year's fall semester. The university is encouraging instructors to teach in person and is working to provide them with any support they may need. Courses are being planned with space consideration, so courses may be offered at atypical times. Additionally, courses may be held in different meeting rooms that are not used as classroom spaces in a typical year. The university is hoping that the Spring 2022 semester will be close to normal again.
 - b. Canvas Rollout: During our May General Senate meeting we will receive a presentation that discusses the Canvas Rollout.
3. Student Leadership Committee
 - a. Executive Boards of different organizations are having elections so there may be new leadership representing them for the next academic year.
 - b. Keep an eye out for May 4th events! The May 4th webpage will be updated soon.
4. Vaccine Task Force
 - a. The Kent Mass Vaccination site is running on Tuesdays and is able to vaccinate almost 3,000 people each time. They are almost completely booked throughout April, but the Wolstein Center in downtown Cleveland usually has appointments available. You can find information about the vaccine and how to get an appointment [here](#). We are seeing a lot of Kent State undergraduates getting the vaccine, which is promising!
5. Graduate Studies Future Planning Event recap
 - a. A lot of good discussions occurred across the different groups. People who attended the event were encouraged to speak openly about what their needs are and what is lacking in graduate studies currently. We expect to see more events like this. The Graduate

Assistant Review committee is also working to address GA specific needs.

6. Meeting with Dr. Hylton and GSS/USG reps
 - a. The biggest topic of this meeting was that the budget that is expected from student activities fees should be similar to our previous budget, which will help give us some guidance as we prepare for the 2021-2022 academic year budget.
 - b. Claire is still working with Dr. Hylton to get the Administrative support position filled for GSS.
7. Gradfest Friday 4/2 at 7pm
8. Questions:
 - a. *Political Science*: Will there be more graduate studies planning meetings in the future?
 - i. *Kyle*: There will be more meetings, but we have not established a timeline yet. We do have a meeting with the steering committee next week where we should be able to create more of a timeline and work through specifics.
 - b. *English*: Does the university have a system to track which students are getting vaccinated?
 - i. *Claire*: The vaccine task force has discussed this. Since the vaccine currently is only approved for emergency use, we cannot mandate it. If it gets full FDA approval, we can add it to the list of vaccines we already require from students. We are currently working with the university's legal team to learn more about what we can and cannot do.

B. Executive Vice Chair – Jordyn Stoll – jstoll7@kent.edu

1. Committee reports
 - a. Arts and Sciences College Curriculum Committee (Sarah Sternbach; ssternba@kent.edu)
 - i. The Center for Comparative and Integrative Programs is changing names to the New School for Multidisciplinary Studies. This involves some structural changes but no actual effect for graduate students. They did create a new Master's program - Master's of Liberal Arts will now be offered under this umbrella program, effective 2022. Biology is creating a new permanent course for graduate students in the catalog, "Neural Control of Reproductive Function".
2. Any lingering ITA refunds (awarded right before COVID) need to be used before May 21st. They can still be used for virtual conference registration fees for example. Please connect with Jordyn if you still have any lingering ITA refunds.

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

1. DTA updates
 - a. Spring semester: 52 DTAs were awarded to students (around \$7,000 total). You can find the list of all recipients on our [website](#).
 - b. Summer DTA applications will open on May 1, 2021 and the deadline for the award will be May 31, 2021 at 11:59 pm. This award will cover conferences between May 20, 2021 and August 25, 2021.

- c. Attending multiple conferences is allowed as long as the total requested amount is under \$300.
 - d. You need to only submit one combined application and one post award survey, even if you plan on attending multiple conferences. Please include all of the information from each conference in the application and the survey.
 - e. DTA budget update
 - i. We do not expect to run into funding issues, as we have a good amount of budget left for the summer.
2. SCA updates
- a. 2 SCAs have been awarded so far (for about \$7,000 total).
3. Questions:
- a. *Biological Sciences*: Is the SCA offered during the summer as well?
 - i. *Maneesh*: Yes.
 - b. *Mathematics*: Some of my constituents have been asking when the summer DTA application is opening up. Is there a reason why we delay the summer application until May? Could we consider opening the application sooner, like in April for example?
 - i. *Maneesh*: The summer award covers conferences between May 20, 2021 and August 25, 2021. We try to wait for the summer semester to begin before this application opens. Additionally, the new Executive Board takes over in early May so if they want to make changes or adjustments they can do that before the application opens.
 - ii. *Claire*: We can start advertising this more as well so that students can think ahead about which award to apply for. It is important to note that the award openings and deadlines are set by our Bylaws. If you want that change, the Senate can make a proposal and vote to have amendments made.

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

- 1. Research Award Updates
 - a. The Spring Research Award is now close and 26 Awards were funded for a total of \$41,959.47.
 - b. Award letters for these RA have gone out. Remember: If you still have not requested your money from a previous RA, do so before November. Please contact Anna if you have any questions about that.
 - c. Thank you to the review committee for all of your hard work!
- 2. Graduate Assistantship Review Committee Updates
 - a. We are working on setting a minimum stipend and working on a leave of absence as well as a grievance policy. We are in the process of making another survey specifically for GAs. Please fill this out once it gets sent to you!
- 3. Anti-Racism Task Force Town Hall
 - a. This town hall is taking place on April 8th at 5:00pm. The Anti-Racism Task Force will present their recommendations at this meeting. You can register for this town hall [here](#).
- 4. Moving forward with Advocacy
 - a. If you have any concerns, complaints, or feedback, please reach out to Anna directly so that she can make sure that she can

advocate on your behalf.

5. Questions:

- a. *Biological Sciences*: Related to the RA: Our Business Manager has told me that they are not able to process orders for me anymore now that the money cannot go to departments. Is there anything you can do?
 - i. *Anna*: I reached out to all of the Business Managers and let them know that this was the only option for GSS moving forward and we did not hear any negative feedback about this process. We are continuing to work on this to make sure it is a smooth process for you and appreciate you bringing issues such as this to our attention! If anyone else has this issue, please let us know - we will find a way to figure this out.
 - ii. *Claire*: We will definitely find a way to figure this out if it continues to be an issue, but moving to an upfront award process actually made us the one of the first organizations to be in compliance with how the administration wants us to process these things, so this is definitely coming from the top down and will become a school-wide thing. We will continue to work on this!
- b. *Political Science*: Are you considering international students as you are reviewing GA positions on the committees?
 - i. *Anna*: Yes, thank you for pointing that out. We can make sure to include that information in the survey. If you have any other specifics that you think we should be asking, please send me an email!

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

1. You received an email from us with detailed Symposium information - please make sure you share that with your departments as well. It includes the symposium schedule, the final list of poster and oral presentations, keynote speaker information and more.
2. If anyone asks you about the format of their presentation, please let them know that they can pick their format and the size depending on what makes sense for them and their research. Students will be able to zoom in and out of their PowerPoint or PDF slide. Additionally, they do not need to send us their slides in advance. You can review the presenter instructions on our website [here](#).
3. Teams information:
 - a. To join the sessions on Symposium Day 1 click [here](#).
 - b. To join the sessions on Symposium Day 2 click [here](#).
4. Questions:
 - a. *Biomedical Sciences*: What is the Keynote Speaker talking about?
 - i. *Payel*: You can find that information on the FAQ section of the Symposium website page [here](#).
 - b. *Biological Sciences*: Is it a research presentation?
 - i. *Payel*: Yes, he will talk about his research.

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. Gradfest is happening tonight at 7pm!
5. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter ([@KSUGSS](#))

VI. Old Business

- A. N/A

VII. New Business

- A. N/A

VIII. Announcements

- A. Kyle: Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW) is happening from April 5-9. You can find the schedule of events and all of the pertinent information related to GSAW [here](#).
- B. Claire: The vaccine is free and you do not need to be a US citizen to receive it. However, sometimes when you log in to register for an appointment the website may ask you for a social security number. Most of the time, you can just enter 9 zeroes and the system will accept that. You also do not need insurance to register for a vaccination appointment. These barriers can discourage people from getting the vaccine, so we wanted to make sure to share this information with you.
- C. Please take the Climate Survey if you haven't already!

IX. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn from Psychological Sciences, second from Biomedical Sciences. No discussion. Meeting adjourned at 12:25pm.