

Minutes | Sept. 20, 2019 | General Meeting of the Kent State University Graduate Student Senate

- I. Call to Order 8:06 AM
- II. Roll Call
  - A. Absent: Architecture, Business Administration, History, Mathematics, Modern & Classical Language Studies, Public Health
- III. Approval of minutes from July 9, 2019
  - A. Motion by FLA, second by Sociology
- IV. Amanda Feaster from Student Accessibility Services
  - A. Feaster spoke at the meeting to discuss how Student Accessibility Services (SAS) can support graduate students either as students or as teaching assistants. Student Accessibility Services provides support for students (undergraduate and graduate) with disabilities of all types (e.g., physical, sensory, psychological, medical).
  - B. October is Disability Awareness Month, and SAS is putting on Kent State of Accessibility Oct. 4, 2019. The event will be focused on building a sense of belonging for students, faculty, and staff across campus. Students, faculty, and staff will share their experiences with disabilities. Lunch will be provided. Information regarding the event was just shared via email to the senator listserv.
  - C. Question from FLA: What type of accommodations do you offer?
    1. Feaster: SAS offers many different accommodations including (but not limited to) extended testing, note-taking services, ability to record classes, attendance/deadline flexibility and facilitating discussion between students and faculty. To schedule an appointment with SAS to determine availability, students may visit [this link](#).
  - D. Question: As teaching assistants, how do we help students who may need help?
    1. Feaster: First check to see if you have received an official letter regarding students' status with SAS. Typically these letters go out to instructors at the beginning of the semester to let them know what accommodations may be necessary for their students. If a student doesn't have a letter on file, encourage them to come and talk to you. Talk to the student about the behavior you're seeing. If additional support is needed beyond this, direct the student to SAS.
- V. Executive Board Reports
  - A. **Executive Chair** – Anna Solberg – [asolberg@kent.edu](mailto:asolberg@kent.edu)
    1. Report from Faculty Senate Meeting
      - President Diacon said there is now a hiring freeze across campus in response to lower enrollment rates.
      - There was talk this summer about getting a psychological services fee put into university policy. This fee did not pass at the state level, but discussion is ongoing regarding its adoption at the university. It is not expected to be a large fee, but it would be an additional fee on top of the fees students already pay. It would allow for an expansion of mental health services

for students. Details are still being worked out, but it could come into effect in the next year.

- The university is planning to release a new learning management system (LMS). More information on the review: visit [this link](#). You may also email [reckman@kent.edu](mailto:reckman@kent.edu) if you have questions.
- Minors have been approved at the graduate level. Departments are still working through the curricular process regarding specifics on when the new minors will roll out. It is likely the minors will not come online until Fall 2020. The purpose of creating the minor option is to allow graduate students to expand their discipline. The minor can be declared at any time as long as the student is still matriculating. Students may retroactively apply for a minor.

## 2. [Community Heart and Soul](#)

- Community Heart and Soul is a community-centered project that has regular meetings in downtown Kent. Their goal is to allow individuals to develop a sense of community within Kent by sharing their stories about Kent (e.g., what they like in Kent, what they don't like, etc.). The organization is trying to collect these stories from a diverse population, and Solberg would like to ensure graduate students are represented within this population. She would like to help bridge the gap between the community and the university -- especially graduate students.
- If this sounds interesting, Anna encourages you to contact her. She is planning to have someone from the organization speak at the November GSS meeting.

## 3. [Dissertation Boot Camp](#)

- A point was made to clarify that Dissertation Boot Camp is not just for graduate students working on their dissertations. It is not only for doctoral students. It is open to any student that wants dedicated time to work on their writing.
- Question: Is the Boot Camp open to undergraduates?
  - Kyle Reynolds: Undergraduate students have attended in the past, but priority will be given to graduate students ahead of undergraduates. Typically there is a waitlist for this event, so it is important to book your spot early. To register, there is a \$40 fee; however, Reynolds shared that some departments do cover this cost for their students, so he encouraged graduate students to reach out to their respective departments to ask whether this would be an option.

## B. **Executive Vice Chair** – Victoria Reynolds – [vreynol1@kent.edu](mailto:vreynol1@kent.edu)

### 1. University Committee Representation

- a. Bylaws were changed last year so now all senators are required to participate on a committee -- either a university committee or a GSS committee. When a senators attend their respective meetings, they should [submit a report](#) to GSS. Then, during the GSS meeting, these reports can be read either by the senator who

completed them or Victoria Reynolds give everyone a better idea of what is going on around the university. If you are interested in serving on any of the committees listed below, please contact Victoria.

- b. All of the committees now have primary representatives, but GSS is still looking for alternates for the following university committees:
    - i. University Teaching Council
    - ii. University Accessibility Committee
    - iii. University Council on Technology
    - iv. University Diversity Action Council (UDAC)/Student Diversity Action Council (SDAC)
    - v. Transportation Advisory Committee
    - vi. Public Safety Advisory Committee
    - vii. Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
    - viii. Educational Policies Committee/Graduate Council
    - ix. College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee
    - x. Advisory Committee for Academic Assessment (AACA)
  - c. Internal GSS committees that still need representatives are as follows:
    - i. International Travel Award Committee
    - ii. Research Award Committee
    - iii. Bylaws and Charter Committee
      - 1. Under this committee, representatives are needed to review the guidelines for all GSS awards (RA, ITA, DTA, SCA).
  - d. Cindy Stillings introduced the need for committee representation for two additional university committees:
    - i. Graduate Student Grievance Policy Committee
    - ii. Expectations for Graduate Education Committee
  - e. Question from Psychological Sciences: How will we reinforce the committee representation requirement? Are there enough committees?
    - i. Solberg: This is a good question, and it is something our Bylaws and Charter committee can and should look into, as it is not clear in our current bylaws.
- 2. Report from the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee:
    - a. Preliminary talk about graduate minors.
  - 3. Report from Mitch Powers regarding renovations to the Kent Student Center
    - a. The university is determining what to do with the second-floor space in the Kent Student Center. Organizations (such as CAVS) are currently moving their offices to this space. It is anticipated this will be a 2- to 3-year project.
  - 4. International Travel Award (ITA)
    - a. The ITA is a competitive award that offers a maximum

reimbursement of \$1,500. It can cover expenses such as conference/workshop registration, transportation and lodging that occurs outside of the contiguous US. This award can be received one time during the academic year (fall through end of summer). If someone just received the award for Summer 2019, this person could apply for it again during this cycle.

- b. ITA is now open and will close on Oct 18 @ 11:59 p.m. Applicants will need a letter of reference for this application, so students are encouraged to begin asking their references for these letters. Applicants are also encouraged to double check that their applications are *fully* blinded.
- c. If you're applying for the award, you cannot sit on the review committee.

**C. Finance Chair** – Xin Hong – [xhong1@kent.edu](mailto:xhong1@kent.edu)

1. Xin Hong discussed a draft of the budget for the 2019-2020 academic year. The budget draft is included.
  - GSS rolled over \$93,552.99 from the 2018-2019 academic year. Student leadership and student organization funds are estimations from previous years. It is assumed the numbers will be relatively the same, but GSS is still waiting on money from RASP and the president's office. As of now, GSS has less money than 2018-2019 year.
  - Question from Psychological Sciences: Why is the funding for the Executive Board increasing?
    - Hong: Previously, funding for the administrative chair came from the Operating Expenses account (an account separate from the executive board). This was changed, so the funding for the administrative assistant now comes out of the Executive Board account to create more transparency. The administrative chair position was also changed to a graduate assistantship, so GSS now pays for the tuition as well as a stipend for the administrative chair. Additionally, it was approved last year for each of the executive board member's stipend to increase by \$500.
  - The Special Contingency Award is currently suspended, so no money has been allocated to this account.
  - Question regarding funding for NAGPS: Why are we allocating less money for NAGPS?
    - Anna Solberg: Past experience with NAGPS was not great. The organization has gotten into trouble for embezzlement. Money was kept in case GSS does want to get involved in some way with NAGPS, but it will likely not be sending anyone to NAGPS.
  - Question regarding reimbursement from GSS awards: No confirmation email is sent to let individuals know their reimbursement documents have been received. How can we fix this? Could we have someone send out an email?

- Anna Solberg: Nothing is set up like this currently, but she would be interested in rolling something like this out. She said there is a new platform called Engage that would allow GSS to change how it disperses money for awards. Instead of reimbursing students, GSS would be able to provide the funds up front for graduate students. This is not ready to roll out now, but it is coming. As for the solution for this year, Anna Solberg said she will talk to the administrative chair (absent from meeting) about sending out follow up emails to let students know their reimbursement packets were received.
- Question: What is the activity fund used for?
  - Xin Hong and Cindy Stillings: The nature of these accounts requires them to leave a balance in the account, so that it doesn't drop to \$0. If you drain the account, it deactivates the account, so that's why you see \$5,000 there.

## 2. Domestic Travel Award

- Question: Some of my constituents have not been paid for the DTA from summer.
  - Xin Hong: Sometimes the award letter can end up in the spam folder. Some of the awardees may have received the letter in their spam folder but not known. Spam folders delete items that have been in the folder for more than 30 days. This could result in someone not seeing the award letter if the spam folder is not checked frequently.
  - For summer awards, if students are not enrolled in summer credits, the reimbursement will come in fall (when they're registered for courses).
- Xin Hong discusses funding for the Domestic Travel Award. If funding is allocated for the DTA as outlined in the proposed budget, GSS would be able to fund 153 awards for fall, 199 for spring, and 88 for summer. If more applications are received for spring, GSS will pull money from summer so less students will be funded for summer because the majority of DTA applications come during spring. In order to fund the fall applicants, the budget *only* for the DTA has to be approved at this meeting.
- Question from Biological Sciences: Assuming we get the money from RASP and the president's office, would there be an increase in funding for these awards (currently \$300)?
  - Anna Solberg: I would think it would be better to fund more people for less money. More discussion of this can happen when and if the money does come in. That's why GSS is only approving the budget for the DTA today rather than the full budget.
- Question from Biomedical Sciences: Is only the fall DTA budget

being approved?

- Anna Solberg: Yes.
- Anna Solberg: I need a motion to pass the Fall DTA budget.
  - Budget was approved. Motion by Psychological Sciences. Second by Nursing.
    - Fall award letters were sent to DTA applicants following the meeting.
- 3. Question from Political Science about endowment: Weren't we supposed to be setting up an endowment fund?
  - Anna Solberg: We cannot set that up currently because we don't have the funding to be able to set up an alumni event. The alumni event was supposed to be an opportunity for us to ask alumni to donate money. Until we have the resources, the event and fund are on hold.

**D. Advocacy Chair** – A.J. Giorgi – [ajgiorgi2@kent.edu](mailto:ajgiorgi2@kent.edu)

1. Books @ Work Update

- Books @ Work is an organization based out of Cleveland that puts on literary seminars for individuals in the workplace. A.J. Giorgi was hoping to have a partnership established with the organization in which some sort of volunteer opportunity was created. This is still under works. The ultimate goal would be for the organization to hire graduate students to put on these seminars as a means of extra funding.

2. Other Philanthropy

- Still looking for groups that GSS is interested in. If you're interested in a local philanthropy, please let A.J. Giorgi know. Currently, he is working with Habitat for Humanity to set something up -- potentially with USG.

3. Progress on New Final-Year Fellowship

- Working to put together an award/fellowship through GSS for students whose assistantship runs out before they have finished. Unlike many of the awards offered by departments, A.J. Giorgi wants to extend this award to master's students as well. The purpose would be to allow students the opportunity to focus on finishing the program without the added stress of trying to find additional funds to live.
- He requested that senators check with their departments about any awards that may exist like this. He'd like to use these as a foundation for creating the new award/fellowship through GSS. The funds would come from the Research Award in order to keep the budget balanced.
- Cindy Stillings: Graduate Studies has identified several areas of fundraising priorities, including Last Dollar and Emergency Funds for graduate students.
- Question: What about any award that can support summer payment for international students? It is hard for international students to find a job over summer.
  - A.J. Giorgi said he was willing to pursue this as well.

- FLA Senator: The Office of Global Education offers an emergency fund that is meant for international students. Information can be found at [this link](#).

#### 4. GSS Office Hours

- A.J. Giorgi shared that GSS has an office that is underutilized. He is working with the rest of the executive board to put together office hours for the board so the board is more accessible. This will create more transparency between GSS and the rest of the university.

#### 5. Research Award

- The Research Award is live on the website. The deadline to apply is October 14th. Though the budget is not finalized, the plan is to divide the award money in half, so half of the funds go to fall and half go to spring.

### E. Research Symposium Chair – Srijana Bhandari – [sbhandar3@kent.edu](mailto:sbhandar3@kent.edu)

1. 35th Graduate Research Symposium theme update: *Nurturing Students' Research, 35 years and beyond*
2. 35th Research Symposium registration and abstract submission deadline: 1/31/2020
  - Registration for the symposium is non-competitive. More information on the symposium can be found [here](#).
3. Keynote speaker has been confirmed and the contract process has been completed.
  - Paul J. Anderson, MD, PhD. Professor of Harvard Medical School and Senior Vice President of Research @ Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA.
4. Computer Sciences Senator shared he would like to donate money to the symposium; however, questions exist regarding any tax implications, as the funds are cryptocurrency. Srijana Bhandari suggested he reach out to her, so they can discuss this in more detail.

### F. Info Services Chair – Grace Murray – [gss.info@gmail.com](mailto:gss.info@gmail.com)

1. If you have published/presented recently, let us know. We'd like to spotlight you on social media.
  - We will start using #GSSFunded to track all of the awards and progress across the university.
  - Discussion about potentially sending a survey to award recipients about how they plan to use the award as a mechanism to create more content for social media.
2. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter ([@KSUGSS](#))
  - Senators requested more photos be shared from GSS events and suggested an Instagram account be established.

### V. Old Business

- A. No old business

### VI. New Business

- A. Motion to add discussion of the bylaws and charter to new business
  1. Motion by Biological Sciences; second by FLA

2. Anna Solberg: A bylaws and charter committee has been established to update and revise both, as both the bylaws and charter are out of date.
3. Biological Sciences Senator discussed the committee and current progress. A lot of factual clarifications have been made to make the bylaws true to how GSS actually functions. Currently, the committee has two members, and Biological Sciences is hoping to have more representation from across all academic units to make sure their voices are heard. The purpose is to find all of the issues with the bylaws and charter now, so GSS doesn't have to keep making changes year after year. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please contact Victoria Reynolds.
4. Anna Solberg: In regard to the charter, changes can't actually be approved at this meeting. The Cabinet and Board of Trustees has to approve the charter before GSS can actually approve it. Please look through the charter and let me know if any changes should be made.

VII. Announcements

- A. If you are interested in participating in or volunteering for a 12-hour dance-a-thon for Children's Miracle Network, please contact KSU Flashathon. You can send an email to [ksuflashathon@gmail.com](mailto:ksuflashathon@gmail.com). The money raised will go to the hematology and oncology departments of Akron Children's Hospital.
- B. Graduate Studies Networking Social, Tonight (5:30-7:30 pm)
- C. Grad Fest tonight at Fred Fuller Park (6-8 pm)
- D. Climate march at noon today outside the Student Center.

VIII. Adjournment @ 9:52 am

- A. Motion by Nursing. Second by Chemistry and Biochemistry



**AY 2019-20 BUDGET DRAFT**  
**(Updated on 9/18/2019)**



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY  
**GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**

**Expected AY 19-20 Revenue Streams**

Balance Forward:	\$ 93,552.99
Student Leadership:	\$ 45,144
Student Organizations:	\$ 162,863
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 301,559.99</b>

INDEX	EXPENSES AY 18 — 19	Budget <sup>4</sup> AY 19 — 20
<b>Research Grant</b> Research Awards	\$ 103,313	\$ 44,000 <sup>5</sup>
<b>General Operating</b> Domestic Travel Award Operating Expenses <sup>1</sup> Special Contingency Award Flex Fund <sup>2</sup> NAGPS <sup>3</sup>	\$ 244,317.35 \$ 207,900 \$ 19,817.35 \$ 13,500 \$ 3,100	\$ 148,459.99 \$ 132,000 <sup>6</sup> \$ 13,000 \$ 2,459 \$ 1,000
<b>Activity Fund</b>		\$ 5,000 <sup>7</sup>
<b>Executive Board</b>	\$ 21,500	\$ 49,100
<b>Research Symposium</b>	\$ 33,396.38	\$ 25,000
<b>International Travel Grant</b> ITA Awards	\$ 42,600	\$ 30,000 <sup>8</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 445,126.73</b>	<b>\$ 301,559.99</b>

<sup>1</sup> Operating expenses include cost of food at GSS general meetings and GradFests, GSO resource fair, GSS social events, organization funding, annual report, phone and internet, external labor (design/setup), fees and subscriptions, advertisement (magnets and flyers), office supplies, and misc. supplies.

<sup>2</sup> Flex Fund will be used as an emergency fund or for ad hoc expenses associated with GSS.

<sup>3</sup> National Association of Graduate-Professional Students.

<sup>4</sup> This is an estimation. Revenue streams are assumed the same as AY 2018-19.

<sup>5</sup> Up to \$2,000 per award, 22 full awards.

<sup>6</sup> \$ 300 per award, 440 full awards. Number for full awards per semester: 153 Fall 19 (~35%), 199 Spring 20 (~45%), 88 Summer 20 (~20%).

<sup>7</sup> It is required by University to put in \$5000 because GSS is a student organization.

<sup>8</sup> Up to \$1,500 per award, 20 full awards.