

General Assembly Meeting
Graduate and Professional Student Senate
10-5-23, 5-7PM

Prior General Assembly Meeting

9-21-23, 5-7PM, hybrid in the GLC MPR and over zoom

In attendance

President | Rachel Maizel

Vice President | Yohan Sequeira

Senators: 46 +2 proxy

Quorum reached: Yes

General Notes

Motions

- Mins adopted
- Motion to adjourn

Exec Board Reports:

- **Director of Events:**

- GPSF:
 - 46 Programs & over 150 students attended GPSF
 - Gross Income: \$18,400
- Looking for ideas for the GPSS Halloween Social

- **Financial Audit Updates**

- Dean Surprenant's + Cyril's reply we shared out:
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c-zCIe-Lvb2Vn4w8PiDjxi7ht1HIHced/view?usp=drive_link
- Our reply:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/140GxjjC1pLyks0THLa4K1dIrvSpB4KRUA29iVYzuHfY/edit?usp=sharing>
 - Where did the money go?
 - Where is the policy indicating 'performance' is a factor for GTA 5% raise
 - Summer Funding
 - People want to add/comments:
 - Beyond the obvious power differential, students are not equipped to know what their salary should be.
 - Is there a database where we can determine if we've received the raise in our department? No. But, GPSS would be happy to help

you determine this on a case by case basis.

- Please share social media post of GPSS: @VTGPSS
- **Climate and Culture Committee:**
 - **Computer Science is conducting their own internal survey**
 - If you are interested in helping analyze the data, advertise, and/or write the report please contact **Rachel maizer@vt.edu**
- **SVPI**
 - Kelly Oaks and Meghan Kuhn coming Nov. 2nd
 - We'll send out a doc with the meeting minutes to solicit questions from everyone so they can better prepare their presentations.
 - Please make sure to communicate with constituents to solicit questions as well
- **Open commission/committee reports**
 - **Campus Development Meeting**
 - **Last meeting:**
 - **discussed general process for campus development (6 year plans, 30 year plan, etc.)**
 - **Stoplight on west campus drive. Took 8 weeks to have it reinstalled**
 - **Is air quality being measured? In air and in building**
 - **Newer buildings have systems in place. Older buildings do not.**
 - **Internet Connectivity: cell service in buildings (DD&S, Derring)**
 - **NIS (network IT Services from campus)**
 - **What should be asked.**
 - **Bus stops outside goodwin**
 - **BOV Meeting (Emily)**
 - **Agreement on compensation for grad students with amended state funding. Increase from graduate students on top of the 5%. Come december 2% increase December 10th 2023**
 - **Comprehensive fees: update to tuition &/or comp. Tuition and fees: will receive a 1 time fee relief. For Comp. fees it \$20.00. For tuition it**

is a \$200 rebate. For part time students it is a \$15 rebate per credit.

- **Does the College of Science get a 2% increase? Yes, it should be applied to your stipend step level.**
- **Mental Health Coalition**
 - Mental health event: Next Tuesday 207a in Newman library. Therapy dogs in attendance. Other mental health activities available
- **University Athletics Committee:** no UAC meeting since the last GPSS meeting. But the Hokies (finally) won a football game last week. Be sure to get out and support your favorite Hokie sportsball teams!

Old Business

- ***Bylaws: 41 yes***
- ***Strategic Affairs: Beyond boundaries vision (refresh process)***
 - Established in 2015-2016 year. What will VT look like in 2047.
 - Key Themes from Envisioning Beyond Boundaries: A 2047 Vision (as completed during the 2015-2016 academic year, full text available at this [link](#)).
 - VT Shape discovery
 - Communities of discovery
 - Nexus of discovery (destination areas on campus)
 - Office of strategic affairs was created
 - For us: What components are missing from this vision from a university in 2047?
 - Reduce excessive administrative cost. Redirected to faculty and facilities
 - Forecasting almost 30 years ahead has a MASSIVE margin of error (economists will be hesitant to even forecast 5 years away)
 - This seems moot if the university can't even pay competitive rates to their grad students. May need to go back to the drawing board.
 - Make sure there are enough classrooms for all of their students. Departments have struggled to find classroom space. Had to find a rec. Room from the door. Program: Herpetology class in the fish and wildlife department
 - Take into consideration how many undergraduates we take in. Seems like VT is trying to increase the number of undergrads. Think about city size, class size, off campus housing (around blacksburg and around satellite campuses).
 - AI Problem: needs to be addressed now (not in 2047)
 - Exponential increase in cost of education. Examine the cost to provide that education. How do we reduce cost in light of a growing university.
 - Concern of mission vs. policy (all courses in person after covid). Look at modality.

- Modality issue:
 - Sometimes zoom sucks. The joy of doing research and teaching is lost with online classes.
- A recommendation I have is to ensure that all of the campuses beyond Blacksburg are structured in a way that ensures that each one has its own resources so that they can function as truly independent campuses and students don't have to go between campuses to utilize resources. I also think that adding more community space for grad students, especially on these other campuses would be great. A recommendation I have is to ensure that all of the campuses beyond Blacksburg are structured in a way that ensures that each one has its own resources so that they can function as truly independent campuses and students don't have to go between campuses to utilize resources. I also think that adding more community space for grad students, especially on these other campuses would be great.
- Push VT Shape people out into the world
 - We've seen a lot of short term instructors and use of graduate students to provide support (via excessive grading).
 - Want to avoid changing GA's to their desk to complete obligatory task. With the influx of undergraduate students, we need to correctly account for this and not overwork graduate students.
- I agree, I think it's sort of troubling how much the university is pushing for online-only courses and less resources are put into on-campus infrastructure - most grad students will be on campus in a lab or office anyway. It's great as an additional option when people need to have that access online, and that should continue, but the in-person course should be the priority and not go away regardless for all courses if possible.
- There might be a dropoff of undergraduate students (with an increase in the number of students who want to go to college, they may want to go to trade school instead).
- People are struggling with advising. There is so little economic support for faculty. Grad. students are overworked. What does it look like to be an academic advisor in the future? Are we still going to be able to teach students good science in 30 years. Overworking students and professors leads to dishonesty in publishing. There is no formal way to monitor mentoring of students (Graduate students and undergraduate researcher)
- We have not seen the infrastructure to support the increase of students. Parking, dorms, off campus housing, etc. Do not just push for a car free campus when there is an increasing number of off campus students, professors, and graduate students who will move to the areas surround

Blacksburg given that the the cost of living in Blacksburg has increased and continues increasing

- Are there any plans to address sexual assault and sexual violence on campus. (Response from Lauren Pollard: It is not in this document or in the strategic plan). GPSS said that we would like to see this included in the plan

New Business:

Director of Advocacy

● **Candidates:**

- **Ronnie Mondal**
- **Trevor Jeyaraj Jeyaraj Samraj**
- **Voting over the next couple of weeks**

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. S.", is written below the "Signed:" label.