

## Graduate Student Senate- March Agenda

Date and Time: March 15<sup>th</sup>, 3-5pm

Location: Olscamp 113/Zoom with approval

### **Call to Order**

- 3:02PM

### **Roll Call**

- Quorum was met

### **Approval of Minutes**

- Minutes stand approved by unanimous consent

### **Speaker(s)- Provost Dr. Joe Whitehead**

- Tabled until Provost arrives

### **Officer Reports**

- **President: David M. Fisher**
  - Elections for SEC officer positions
    - First set of elections March 22 from 3-5PM
    - Second set of elections during the April meeting
    - Elections split into two days to fit into the 2-hour window for meetings
    - Applicant info was shared in advance of this meeting
    - It is a senator's right and duty to ask questions, deliberate, and vote on the candidates

### **Old Business**

- N/A

### **New Business**

- **Constitution Updates**
  - The Governance Committee did significant work this year to rewrite the Constitution and Bylaws
  - The Constitution and Bylaws underwent extensive amendments last year
  - This year the amount of change within the proposal is far greater than last year and far greater than is usual
  - A proposed document has been shared in advance of this meeting for senator reviewal
- **Distinguished GSS Alum Service Leader Award**
  - A new award has been created
  - It is not designed to be an annual award but instead serve as a mechanism to honor the highest quality leaders of GSS
  - Amanda Grace Taylor has been nominated by the SEC with unanimous support
  - The process for granting the award will include two parts, (1) nomination from the SEC by unanimous vote and (2) confirmation by the Graduate College

### **Speaker(s)- Provost Dr. Joe Whitehead**

#### **Presentation**

- Trends in higher education may look bleak, but there is always opportunity
- The university is adding in new programs in areas with higher enrollment

- The university's budget is dependent on tuition and state funding
  - State funding is based on performance including grades achieved and graduations
- Provost met with the chancellor of the University System of Ohio (Chancellor Gardner) earlier in the day.
- The university is tasked with making educated guesses on the trends of higher education and enrollment.
- Regarding Stipends (The 3% stipend increase for doctoral students)
  - "We need to do more" – Provost Whitehead
  - "Sustainability" – Provost Whitehead. Decisions are made based on how the university can maintain stipend increases on a permanent basis
  - The university will try to continue the stipend increases
- Many things in America have changed that impact higher education
- Many things in higher education have changed
  - The mentoring relationship

### **Question and Answer**

- Question from PhD Psychology: Regarding "profitable programs," are some other programs going to be cut?
- Response
  - We don't really refer to programs as profitable or not because all programs cost money.
  - The university has been reviewing programs
    - Classifying programs based on enrollment and retention (Program Vitality Analysis)
    - A clean up of programs is happening, but it is a process
  - Low class sizes are not a great learning experience for students and part of what the university is doing is to avoid low class sizes.
- Question from Doctoral Leadership Studies: Is it possible to extend work on improving mentorship to all students
- Response: All graduate students are being considered with the work on improving faculty-student mentorship.
- Question from MA Sociology: What exactly are the goals does university have before there are more stipend increases and what does the university need to see those increases?
- Response
  - The university needs and is working on new benchmarking efforts in order to remain competitive
  - The university is working to improve processes (Assessment)
  - There is a need for the university to improve data collection and use (Institutional Effectiveness)
  - Goals: (1) Increase stipends to make graduate education at the university more livable and (2) to be more competitive

- Stipend changes and the processes involved in stipend changes are a moving target.

### **New Business**

- **Feedback on proposing a benchmark assessment to the provost**
  - Presentation:
    - Some students may find that they have unmet needs for developing skills and/or experiences.
    - Benchmark Assessment is a separate and additional mechanism for students beyond things like preliminary exams
    - PowerPoint Attached
  - Question: As a person with test anxiety, I love the idea. What opportunities are there if there is still going to be a preliminary exam.
  - Response: It is an open idea. This is a way to bring alternatives or other options forward.
  - Comment from Data Science: this looks good for PhD students, but not such a possible option for master's students.
  - Question from English: This looks like it affects the Advisor-Student most
  - Response: It could be more than just the advisor-student relationship. GSS has been working towards improving the Mentor-Mentee relationships and faculty-student professional relationships in general.
  - Comment from Professional Development Officer: The relationships aspect can be difficult to navigate.
  - Comment from Doctoral Music: We do something similar in our program. Could this be framed as an extra mechanism. If it was, it could be made into an exhaustive list which could become a good student resource.
  - Response: This wouldn't replace the current academic systems.

### **Announcements**

- **Shanklin is April 1 all day!**
- **Elections**
- **Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional Programs Jennifer Waldron**
  - Dean Waldron will be stepping down from the position of Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional Programs May 3 of this year.
  - There is no news from the university of a transition process

### **Adjournment**

- Motion to Adjourn by PhD Psychology
- Second by Sociology MA
- 4:39PM