

General Assembly

Friday, 17th March 2023, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Attendance: 8 Executives and 38 Senators

Meeting Started: 3:02 pm

Call to Order: By the Vice President

Roll Call: By the Secretary (we had a quorum with a total of 8 Executives and 38 Senators in attendance).

Approval of Minutes and Agenda: Seeing no changes requested, meeting minutes were approved.

❖ Guest Speakers

- Dr. Joe B. Whitehead; Provost, BGSU
 - Provost Whitehead introduced himself and what he does for the university
 - He deals with the academic issues of the university, and he also serves as the senior vice president for academic affairs at BGSU
 - Leadership Studies doctoral representative asked: What accommodation are being implemented for International students looking at cost of living and increased fees?
 - He said he has been communicating with the International Programs and Partnership Office and Dean Waldron from Graduate College to try and find ways to resolve issues such as this. He acknowledges currently that there is a structural issue that needs to be addressed before these issues can be fully resolved

- Higher Education Administration doctoral student asked:
What is his biggest challenge that he has been facing in an everlasting changing environment such as academia?
 - He said that his biggest challenge is gaining momentum especially with people always having differing opinions and ideas. However, the important thing is to understand the people or individuals that you work with at least to a certain level to keep progressing. He said the biggest challenge in life can also be seen as the biggest opportunity
- Leadership Studies doctoral representative asked: How would you address the continuing decline in student enrollment and the need to focus on International students to fill this gap? On that comment of opportunity, what happens after graduation of international Students who want to work in the US? What mechanism does BGSU provide?
 - He said it is important that international students are not brought in to fill the gaps in the school, however, they are brought in to make use of opportunity to develop themselves and the communities around them
 - The challenges of enrollment can be seen in three parts, parts to it: enrollment, recruitment, and retention. In addition to enrolling students, the university must continue to ensure that whilst enrolment of students takes place, they must also be given the necessary support and provided the required opportunities to be successful in whatever field they find themselves in. It is also important that all these resources are readily available to the appropriate bodies or individuals

- As regards to the mechanisms that BGSU provides for international students to get jobs after completion of their degree(s), the most important thing is to prepare them for the world after school in terms of requisite skills that is in global demand. With this, they will be productive and competitive to match global standards. Also, the university has been helping foreign students to understand the cultural differences in the United States which is also an important aspect outside school life
- Graduate Diversity and Belongings Representative asked: Are there any task forces/committees that bring people from across the campus that all levels to be in conversation with Ohio legislative leaders?
 - There are two ways to answer this: Yes and No. President Rogers usually meets with a couple of legislative officers. Universities have met with a couple of legislative officers to discuss the pros and cons of the artificial intelligence software; ChatGPT, in their institutions
- Sociology Masters Representative asked: In line with the idea of a gap on international students, the overall lack of diversity on campus is an issue that is not being fully addressed by performative acts of diversity. What real actions is the University planning to take to help increase diversity and help these students succeed?
 - The university must be more intentional in terms of the way enrolment is being conducted. Currently, there are countries in the world, who are enrolling and recruiting a lot of foreign students into their system for different reasons. In the United States, it is very different in

terms of culture and beliefs, hence the most important thing is to be very strategic and intentional when this process is being conducted

- As regards the action that is being done to increase diversity and help students succeed, recruiting and retention process should be looked at more. The university currently has initiatives that require us to review data and figure out the loopholes. The university must do more for all students in general
- The GSS President asked: Can you offer some advice to graduate students who want to create change at BGSU?
 - It is important to be well informed and engaged the school hierarchy on issues to give their perspective on those issues and how the university system works in general
- Mr. Ben Batey; Chief Health Officer, BGSU
 - He introduced himself and his role is to oversee the commonwealth of the BGSU graduate committee and community care
 - The Division of Health and Wellness incorporates: the counseling center, the accessibility services, wellness connection, falcon health center and student insurance. These bodies work together to ensure that health related issues are readily addressed
 - This collaboration was in response to the COVID pandemic
 - It is important that individual first take responsibility for themselves. We are tasked to make decision for our health and life in general. However, there may be a need to reach out if we cannot take care of some health issues personally. Resources have been readily available for everyone to access:

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<https://bgsu.thrivingcampus.com>. and BGSU Counseling Center: <https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html>.

- Opportunities are also offered to faculties, staffs, and students to improve well being such as yoga sessions at the REC center, fitness classes and so on
- He also said that they conduct a lot of health assessment survey such as the healthy minds survey for undergraduate and graduate students. Also, the National College Assessment survey is another platform that has been utilized. The data and information gotten from these surveys are then used to make informed decisions and programs
- From one of the surveys, it indicated that 3 out of 5 teenage girls are suffering from depression and anxiety hormones. Hence, he said that they are trying to come up with classes that discusses all of these aspects. There may be a need to collaborate with the counseling center on this project
- He addressed the question raised on unavailability of counseling center: <https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html>.
- He also addressed the question raised on training that they offer such as the first aid training. He said that these sets of training are in modules and steps are being made to ensure that they are concise and helpful
- He addressed the question that asked how does the body account for those most in need of care from mental health issues
 - It is no doubt that the number of individuals having mental health crises has increased over the years. A good thing is that the counseling center here in BGSU has a platform that allows individuals to access and share their needs virtually without having to leave the

comfort of their homes, hence, encouraging people to be more open about their issues

- Are these services free for BGSU students?
 - Yes, you have access to the BGSU counseling center as a student of BGSU
- Dr. Jennifer Waldron; Dean, Graduate College, BGSU
 - GSS Priorities and collaboration with the Graduate College
 - She appreciated the role of the GSS SEC and their advocacy for graduate students in BGSU
 - GSS SEC sent out a survey to graduate students to know at least the top 3 things that they wanted a change or review on and this include:
 - Student Stipends/ Funding for graduate students
 - Student Health Insurance
 - Transportation
 - She noted that data has been used to analyze and spot the gaps in graduate student stipend. Also, a comparison among universities that shares similar characteristics with BGSU has also been utilized in this analysis. This information has been forwarded to the bodies that matters for a review. It is important to note that the university recognizes the importance of its student's welfare and is adequate steps to find lasting solutions
 - It is important to note that things such as policy implementation etc. takes time in any institution, however, it is equally important to be aware that steps have been taken to address this

- As regards the student health insurance, it is more complex because a lot of factors/levers (such as federal level and health care regulation) will have to be taken into consideration and these factors vary for each different hence, making it difficult to make progress on this

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❖ Officer Reports

- President

- Student Resource Hub
 - Dr Glenn Davis offered to work with BGSU GSS on this project. The Representative-at-Large is spearheading this project
 - A comprehensive module would be built
 - Resources available to all students
 - Resources available to graduate students
 - Resources available to undergraduate students
 - Resources available to Bowling Green community
 - Call for volunteers and contributors
 - A link would be shared subsequently for individuals who are willing to contribute/volunteer for this project
- Graduate Student ITS Survey Report (Academic Affairs Rep. Proxy)
 - The Academic Affairs Representative is spearheading this project
 - From the ITS Survey report, there is a need for IT unit research lab where graduate students software can be readily accessed

- A consolidated report from this survey would be sent out at a later date
- End of Academic Year Remarks
 - The President was appreciative for the opportunity to interact, advocate and serve as the GSS President. The theme for service was termed Community Convergence; active listening, diversity and inclusion, advocacy, and community engagements
 - The President highlighted programs and activities of GSS for the past one year
- Vice President
 - Shanklin Awards Colloquium
 - The event will be held on the 5th of April 2023
 - Shanklin Research Panels
 - BTSU 315
 - Students will be giving 5-7 minute presentations regarding their research abstracts
 - Shanklin Research Abstract Poster Presentations
 - BTSU 202A
 - Students will be showing their research posters and explaining what their research is
 - Award for Research Excellence Presentations
 - BTSU 308
 - Top 6 Award for Research Excellence presentations will be present to the University Deans
 - Shanklin Awards Colloquium
 - 6:45 - 9 pm
 - BTSU 202A (Ballroom)

- Any interested volunteer for the Shanklin Awards, kindly send an email to: gss@bgsu.edu
- Election
 - Taking place over Zoom to allow for a full house and the right amount of votes
 - Application created
 - This was done on Microsoft forms
 - 13 positions available
 - For the role of President and Vice President, applicants are required to have prior GSS experience
 - Application will be opened from March 17th - March 31st
 - April GA meeting on Zoom because of the election exercise
- Treasurer
 - FPD Update
 - Most applicants in the Spring semester
 - Applicants requesting for \$107,632 for the FPD and this amount is double the BGSU GSS annual budget
 - The breakdown for the FPD allocation is:
 - Conferences: 109 applications received; 102 approved and 7 declined
 - Membership: 40 applications received; 38 approved and 2 declined
 - Other Categories: 7 applications received; 5 approved and 2 declined
 - The total funds allocated for the Spring 2023 FPD is \$34,675

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- The deadline to claim awarded fund is on the 28th of May, 2023
- It is also important to note that, the departments should be the first line for funding support for graduate students in BGSU on any professional development assistance
- New FPD Policy
 - Change in vacation rental facility expectation
 - University introduced a new policy against reimbursement for vacation rentals such as Airbnb and related platforms
 - The University will not reimburse students/employees of the university that patronize such platforms because it is elevated risk factor in terms of safety factors and contract issues of these platforms discovered by BGSU's purchasing agents
 - Vacation rentals are not always subject to the same level of inspection, fire code, insurance and so on when compared to franchise hotels/motels
 - The expectation is that students/employees associated with BGSU are expected to stay in hotels recommended by the facility of the events
 - This does not mean that a vacation rental is prohibited by the university – This simply means that the university will not be responsible for reimbursement (either through FPD or university funds) on accommodation when students/employees uses vacation rental

- Alternatively, students/employees can come up with valid comparisons as to why vacation rental platforms would be better suited than franchise hotels/motels during application for reimbursement. Additional documents will be requested by the university and only when these comparisons and documents are validated can such application be accepted
- Co-Sponsored Programs
 - 6 inquiries have been received
 - 2 submitted a completed application and this has been approved by GSS
 - Ready or Not Young Women in Leadership Conference hosted by Women in Business Leadership
 - They requested for \$500 to assist their initiative, however, GSS was able to approve \$250 (35 or more graduate students will be involved)
 - Graduate Communication Association Conference hosted by Graduate Communication Association
 - They requested for \$465 for their event, but GSS was able to approve \$200 (30 or more graduate students will be involved)
 - Reach out GSS SEC or the Treasurer if you have any event that can benefit graduate students and you need sponsor
 - Please note that these events should align with the GSS initiatives and philosophy
- Graduate Diversity and Belonging Representative

- Senate Bill 83
 - SB83:
<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/sb83>
 - 3 different layers in this bill
 - Reworking the tenure and promotion process for faculty in the State of Ohio
 - The Graduate Diversity and Belongings Representative advised and implored to read through the bill and understand its implications
- Environmental Affairs Representative
 - Mental Health Resources
 - Training for graduate assistants/teaching assistants on mental health crises is important
 - Hazing Reporting line: 419-378-HAZE(4293)
 - Office of the Dean of Students: 419-378-2843
 - Counseling Center: 419-372-2081
 - To report affected/disturbed students
 - [Bgsu.edu/report-incident.html](http://bgsu.edu/report-incident.html)
 - To report any hazing incidence
 - 419-378-HAZE(4293)
 - Email: odos@bgsu.edu
 - 419-372-2843
 - See It, Hear It, Report It:
<https://www.bgsu.edu/report-incident.html>
 - BGSU Ecofair is on Wednesday, April 12th, 10 am - 1 pm
 - Any interested volunteer to reach out to the Environmental Affairs Representative
 - Rain Plan: Olscamp 101
 - Hosted by Office of Campus Sustainability

❖ Old Business

- None to Report.

❖ **New Business**

- Graduate Student Professional Development Representative
 - The presentation given is to prepare the house for deliberation and voting for the proposal and revision of the Constitution and Bylaws Revisions
 - Types of proposed changes include:
 - Formatting, Grammatical, Concise Writing, Document – Action Alignment and Document – Belief Alignment
 - The document will be sent out to Senators in the coming weeks
- Ratification Encouraging Information Literacy (President)
 - The library organizes an introduction course for Masters and PhD students
 - Plans to have a representative from the library have an introductory 6000 level course with new students: educating them about information literacy, academic writing/structure, and providing students with the needed resources such as the Writing Center and the Learning Commons
 - The President plans to collaborate with a representative from the library to work on this ratification

❖ **Announcement**

- BGSU EcoFair – Wednesday, April 12th.

❖ **Meeting Adjourned: 5:04 pm**

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