Date and Time: March 15th, 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
  o 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)
  o “We need to do more” – Provost Whitehead
  o “Sustainability” – Provost Whitehead. Decisions are made based on how the university can maintain stipend increases on a permanent basis
  o 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
  o The mentoring relationship
  Question and Answer
• Question from PhD Psychology: Regarding “profitable programs,” are some other programs going to be cut?
  • Response
  o We don’t really refer to programs as profitable or not because all programs cost money.
  o 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
  o 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
  o The university needs and is working on new benchmarking efforts in order to remain competitive
  o The university is working to improve processes (Assessment)
  o There is a need for the university to improve data collection and use (Institutional Effectiveness)
  o 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