GSA
General Assembly Meeting #1

Zoom Edition
September 3, 2020

@VTGSA

Graduate Student Assembly of Virginia Tech

Gsa.vt.edu

This meeting is being recorded

Meeting Structure

- Agenda will be posted online/emailed to delegates *Monday evening prior* to the assembly meeting
  - All meetings will be recorded and posted online with the meeting transcript.

- Open Forum: 15min
- Exec. Officer Updates: 20min
- GSA Task Forces Updates: 20min
- Comments for Resolutions/Voting: 20min
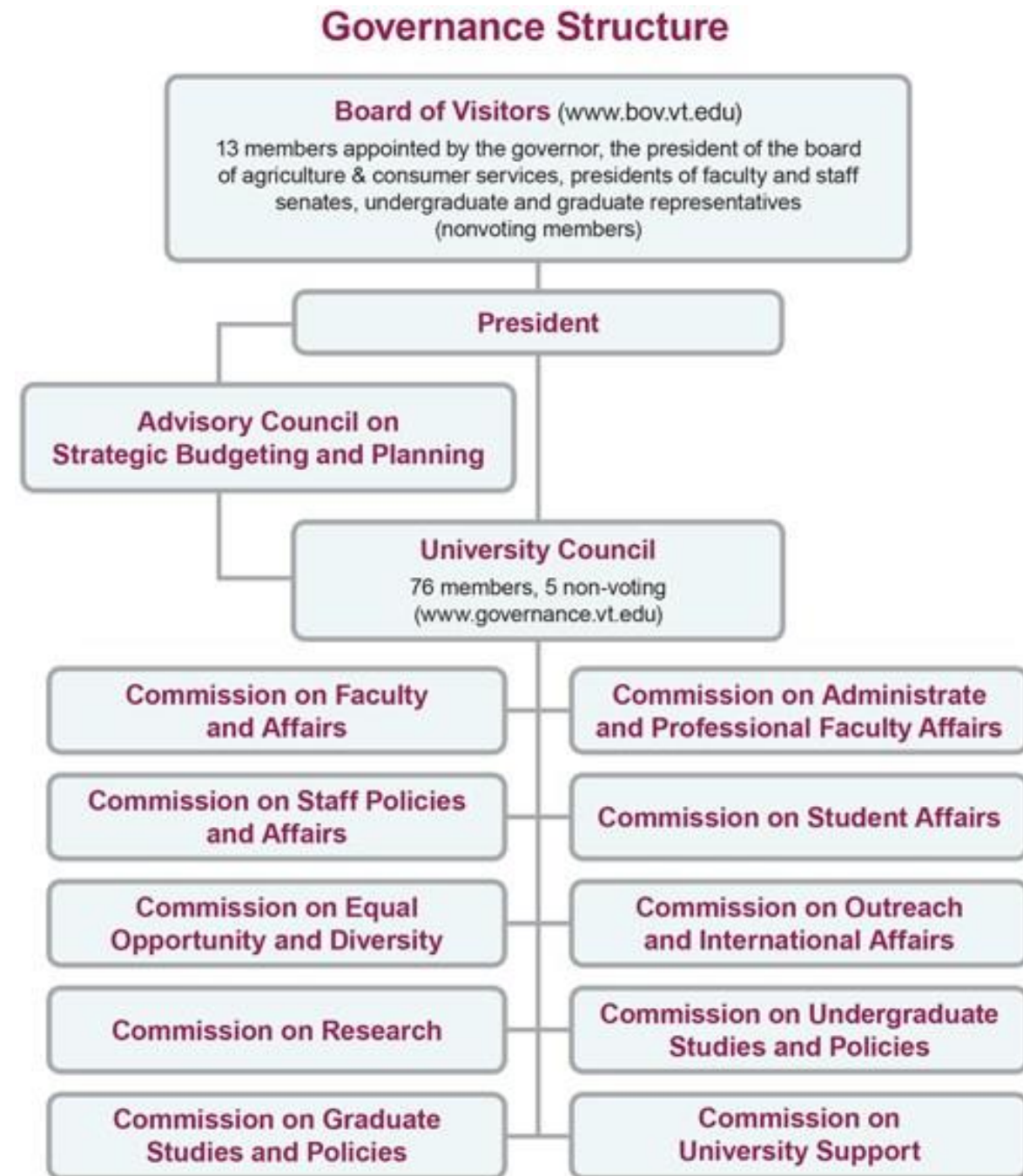
Agenda:

- VT Governance Chart/Pipeline
- 2020-2021 GSA Executive Board Intro/Updates
  - VP
  - Communications
  - Events
  - Programs
  - Finance
  - BoV Rep
- Standing Committees
- Intro to Cook Counselor for Grad. Students
- United Feminist Movement
- Climate Action Resolution
- Advocacy Initiatives (External & Internal)
- Open Forum

VT Governance Chart

University Shared Governance has multiple Commissions, Councils, a President, a Board of Visitors, & more

GSA has representatives on:
    Board of Visitors
    University Council
    Each Commission & Committee

(Additionally, administration have periodic meetings with GSA Exec. Board members)

Governance Structure

Board of Visitors (www.bov.vt.edu)
13 members appointed by the governor, the president of the board of agriculture & consumer services, presidents of faculty and staff senates, undergraduate and graduate representatives (nonvoting members)

President

Advisory Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning

University Council
76 members, 5 non-voting
(www.governance.vt.edu)

Commission on Faculty and Affairs

Commission on Administrate and Professional Faculty Affairs

Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs

Commission on Student Affairs

Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Commission on Outreach and International Affairs

Commission on Research

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies

Commission on University Support

GSA Officer Intro/Updates
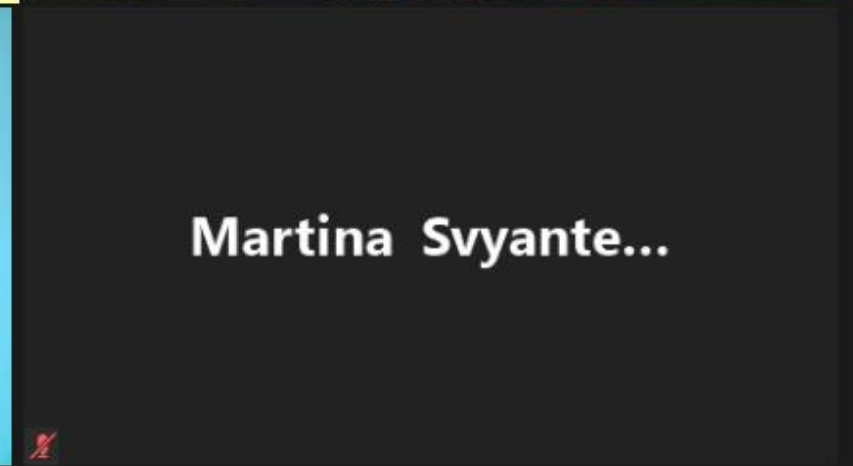
President

- 3rd Year PhD Student: Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health

- Office Hours: https://calendly.com/marufhoque/officehours

VP & Director of Legislative Affairs

- Ph.D. Student, Transportation Systems Engineering

- GSA Delegation:
  - Communication with Departments/Programs and their Delegates
  - Creating and convening Executive Working Groups to study and discuss specific University policy development.

- University Governance:
  - Recommendation and Assignment of Shared Governance Representatives.
  - Coordinating the activities of the representatives and providing summary of each resolution available for commenting during Assembly Meetings.

VP & Director of Legislative Affairs

By the numbers:

- GSA Delegation:
  - 75/125 confirmed Delegates.
  - Quorum: 30 Delegates

- University Governance:
  - 26/32 seats filled.
  - Delegates-at-Large confirmation in the next General Assembly Meeting.

University Governance Vacancies:

Commencement Committee
Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs
Commission on Outreach and International Affairs
Commission on Student Affairs (PhD Student)
Library Committee
University Council

Director of Communications

- Ph.D. Candidate, Instructional Design & Technology
- External communications
  - Website
  - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
  - Programs and events – VT calendars, notices, releases, GobblerConnect
  - Sharing Graduate School & VT official information
- Internal communication
  - General Assembly meeting minutes – now transcription via CART
- Visual communication
  - Branding, logo, "look"
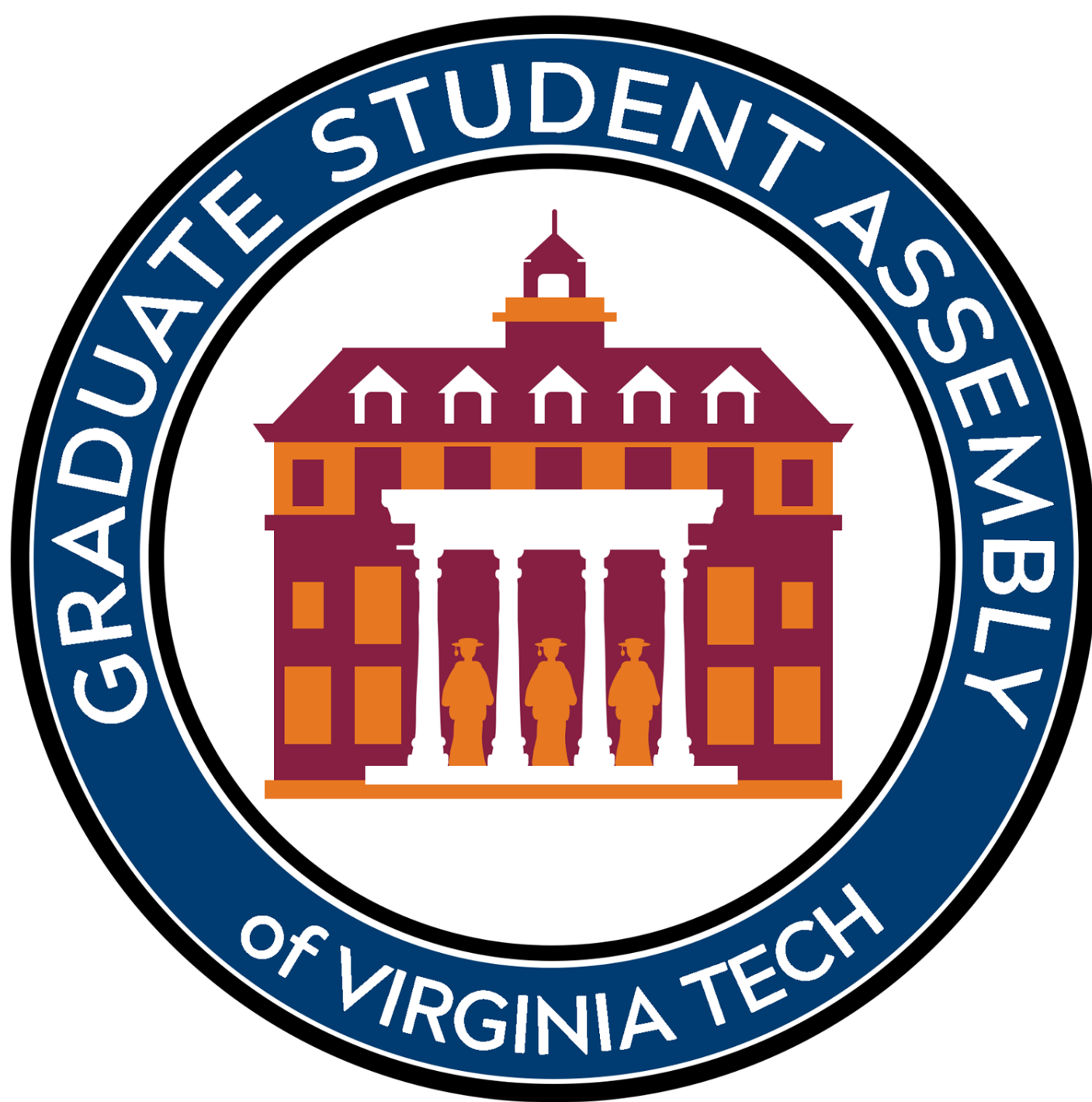
EVENTS

Gobblerfest on the GS Lawn September 30th 6pm-8pm

Buy Blacksburg!

Graduate & Professional School Fair

Oct. 7 10am-4pm

Beer & Wine Socials TBD

COVID EDITION

deals!

discounts!

the GSA BUY Blacksburg! initiative

VT VIRGINIA TECH.

FOOD

FUN

The Graduate Student Assembly is proud to present our local partners. Every business on this list offers an exclusive graduate student discount or deal. Check them out to save money *and* support our local economy!

HETHWOOD MARKET

15% off and Special Grad Student Breakfast Sandwich = Saturday morning farmers market 8-12

BLACKSBURG FARMERS MARKET

$4 off token and 10% merchandise discount

To become a partner or to learn more, check out http://gsa.vt.edu.

SAVE THE DATE !
FOR VIRGINIA TECH'S ANNUAL
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL FAIR
October 7, 2020
10:00am-4:00pm

Calling all recruiters! It is that time of year... time for Virginia Tech's Annual Graduate and Professional School Fair. This fair is hosted by the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), the official representative body of all graduate and professional students, in conjunction with the Graduate School's Office of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives (ORDI). Every year, recruiters from across the nation gather to meet with hundreds of our students at this event. This different! Due to COVID-19, we have decided that the safest way forward is to host this much-anticipated event *virtually*.
virtual expo platform Brazen™. Unlike a generic web conferencing

GSA Programs

- [Chair Applications open](#) until September 9th
- Programs include
  - Travel Fund Program (TFP) – Fall will support VIRTUAL only
  - Graduate Research Development Program (GRDP) -under review
  - Dr. Rich's Cap and Gown Program (low cost cap and gown rentals for graduation)
  - Research Symposium and Exposition (GSARS)
- Funding: Programs manages budget for TFP/GRDP; raises funds for GSARS operations and awards

Tahsin Mahmud Chowdhury

Ph.D. Student, Engineering Education
MS Student, Industrial and Systems Engineering

Director of Finance, Graduate Student Assembly
2020-2021

- Responsible for all financial matters within GSA

- Advise both the Executive Council and the Assembly of the financial situation of the GSA as appropriate

- Work closely with other members of the Executive Board to ensure there are sufficient funds for the effective operation of all aspects of the GSA

- Responsible for identifying funding sources, and the drafting of the GSA annual budget, to be approved and adopted by the Assembly

"teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations"- Senge (1990)

Graduate Representative to Board of Visitors - Sabrina Sturgeon

- Board of Visitors is the highest governing body at the University

  - Represent graduate students to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

- My platform was on…

  - Mental healthcare access

  - Food insecurity

  - Graduate assistantship security

- My focus = Your needs

Agenda Items

Standing Committees

Introduction to Cook Counselor for Graduate Students

UFM Collab

Climate Action Response

Standing Committees

- Judicial
  - Should understand Robert's Rules
  - Chair will be Parliamentarian

- Finance
  - Contact Tahsin (Director of Finance; tahsin@vt.edu)

- Internal Affairs
  - Contact Awad (VP; atarig@vt.edu)

Introduction to Cook Counselor for Graduate Students

- Rita Klein

United Feminist Movement & GSA Collab

1. Expel students found guilty of rape.
2. Human Resources must enforce the mandatory Title IX training for employees, rather than leaving responsibility to individual supervisor discretion.
3. VTPD must provide more timely warnings of sexual violence on campus, specifically monthly summaries when indvidual cases are unable to be disclosed.
4. Title IX information must be added to the University communications plan, in order for students to directly receive information from the Title IX office.
5. The University must also make students aware of all Title IX committees, working groups and advisories and provide regular updates on their progress.
6. An external, independent investigation of the Title IX process must be made.
7. Add BIPOC counselors and staff at the Women's Center, in ratios representative of the student body (as of now, all staff are white)
8. An online portal should be made available to students to allow them to check the status of their Title IX case.
9. The University must publicly respond to all relevant petitions regarding sexual violence on campus.

- This is a draft of demands to the university by UFM
- They are wishing for GSA to sign on to the demands upon finalization

Climate Action

- Resolution needs to be voted on By Oct 1. Sent to delegates by email and Slack.

- Jack Leff (GSA Delegate) was one of the authors and will field questions.

Advocacy Initiatives (External to GSA)

- Graduate Student Compensation
  - Charge: evaluate graduate student compensation at VT, better health/dental insurance, etc.
- Student Services
  - Charge: increased access to mental health, wellness, career services, etc.
- Diversity
  - Charge: make recommendations to improve hiring, recruitment, retention, and graduation status of URM
- Capital Planning Projects
  - Charge: dedicated 'affordable' graduate apartments and parking services
- Going Green
  - Charge: Make recommendations to the university to be carbon neutral, energy savings, etc by 20XX

Timeline for External Initiatives

- Today: form a GSA Taskforce for each initiative. 5 delegates volunteer to chair each Taskforce

- Oct 1: Present questions that will be used to gather data from the graduate school and other sources at VT

- Nov 5: Present data, provide recommendations that will be shared in multiple settings at the university.

Diversity Task Force Update

1. Discrimination/Experience (climate survey or exit survey data)

2. Stipend differences (I have access to this type of data and it could be summarized)

3. International student experience – yes this is a variable we have access to, international students are their own group within race/ethnicity, but we do also have their country of residence. What specifically are you looking for?

4. Degree completion/Retention – this data is on the By the Numbers page I shared

5. Job placement – the only data we have are from the Exit Survey.

I cannot give you detail level student data and I do not have time to conduct any quantitative analysis to really answer your questions. However, if you have someone with experience in quantitative tests such as chi-square/t-tests I can help set up the data in a way that I can share it with you. Did you have a plan for how you wanted to analyze the data/determine if any differences between these groups are significant?

Advocacy Initiatives (Internal to GSA)

- Taskforce to Overhaul the Constitution (Internal Affairs/Judicial)
  - Charge: re-write this, make it make more sense. Analyze the function of delegates and the executive board
  - *Organization name change may occur* to GPSA or GPSS
- Taskforce to implement a Graduate Funding Council (Finance)
  - Charge: Rules and regulations that guide disbursement of student activity fees paid by graduate students to graduate students.
    - 3 main funding items: travel conferences, outreach, small food items (departmental gatherings)
    - Verbal promise that this will go into effect Jan 2021.

Advocacy Summary

- 3 Standing Committees (join 1)

- 7 different task forces
  - 2-3 delegates/students (minimum) should be apart of each
  - 1 delegate should chair each task force, keep documentation, records, etc.

Reach out to GSA Exec (Maruf/Awad) for support if needed

Open Forum