

Minutes:

I. Call to order

President Jack Leff called to order the first Fall 2021 Meeting of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate Meeting at 5:30pm on **August 26, 2021** at Owens Banquet Hall and on Zoom.

II. Sign-in

Senators in-person and on Zoom signed in via Google Forms.

III. Approval of agenda

Jack read this meeting's agenda. The agenda was passed.

IV. New Business

a. GSBB Policy and Procedure

Director of Finance and Chair of the GSBB Anusha Prasad explained the policies and procedures of the newly formed GSBB and answered questions from the audience. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

b. GPSS Resolution 2021-22A

Jack read the resolution to establish a university policy governing task forces and working groups. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

c. GPSS Resolution 2021-22B

Jack read the resolution to make 12-month graduate contracts the default contract. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

d. GPSS Resolution 2021-22C

Jack read the resolution to improve financial transparency and exercise oversight of the Virginia Tech Foundation. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

e. GPSS Resolution 2021-22D1

Jack read the resolution to expand ethical oversight of researching and developing policing and surveillance technologies with GPSS Resolution 2021-22D2. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

f. GPSS Resolution 2021-22D2

Jack read the resolution to broaden ethical oversight for anti-immigrant research projects with GPSS Resolution 2021-22D1. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

g. GPSS Resolution 2021-22E

Jack read the resolution to change the constitution to move the transition of power to spring. The motion to advance to a second reading passed.

New business for next week is on the [website](#).

V. Adjournment

President Jack Leff adjourned the meeting.

Discussion Highlights + Submitted Commentary:

2021-2022A:

Clarification is needed for stakeholders:

How are stakeholders are being determined (and by who)?

How are conflicts between stakeholders resolved?

How to balance the forward momentum of taskforces and equitable representation?

2021-2022B:

Clarification is needed for:

Is it opt-in or opt-out of 12 month contracts?

Do hours change over the summer? Who decides this?

Where does funding come from for departments who do not teach over summer?

How does this change for folks funded by a grant (GRA) versus those funded as a GTA or GA?

Strong support was expressed for international students who would greatly benefit from 12-month contracts.

2021-2022D1+D2:

Concerns were expressed that:

These proposals were too broad, potentially impacting non-related projects.

Over-stated the relation between surveillance technology and race / immigration

IRB Process is already long enough and should take care of such problems

Resolutions are overly political for a student senate

Unclear why the moral responsibility VT has to combating these issues

Counter-arguments to these statements were presented:

Concede: more citations would be helpful and the language could be sharpened and more “fierce”

Counter: UAV and surveillance technology disproportionately and overwhelmingly impacts immigrants and people of color. More sources are easily found.

Counter: The IRB does not fully examine or address the social and justice oriented harms of these technologies or acknowledge these populations as ‘vulnerable subjects’.

Counter: GPSS should definitely be involved in tightening research oversight for these projects as endemic and systemic racism impacts all graduate students, some more than others.

Counter: VT has repeatedly and publicly called for embracing diversity, taking accountability for racist histories, and to “address it [racism] better together”. VT itself has committed to a moral stance and institutional responsibility to combat racism. GPSS members expect this to be followed throughout the entirety of the university, not just used as a marketing tactic or virtue signaling at the expense of VT’s student body.

2021-2022E:

Request that a specific date be established in the document for clarity.

General Meeting Comments:

Zoom / IRL debate is not well balanced

Too many resolutions are being debated in one meeting

An open forum is needed

Zoom bombing / audio problems

Zoom updates changed voting icon parameters.

Unclear Senator expectations

Not flexible enough on attendance

Should not be forced on a committee

More info on committees / commissions should be added to website