

**General Assembly Meeting**  
*Graduate and Professional Student Senate*  
03.30.23

**Prior General Assembly Meeting**

03.19.23

Yes

**In attendance**

President | Ben Beiter: Present

Vice President | Chloe Robertson: Not present, proxied by Noor Tasnim

Senators: 45

Quorum reached: yes

**Motions**

Call for a motion to approve the minutes

Motion made by: Ben Beiter

Vote: 25y, 0n, 0 abstain

Call to waive the right to comment on resolution CGPSP 22-23D by the senate

Motion made by Ben Beiter

Vote: 25y, 0n, 0 abstain

Call to waive the right to comment on CUSP resolutions 2022-23C, 2022-23D, and 2022-23E by the senate

Motion made by Ben Beiter

Vote: 25y, 0n, 0 abstain

Motion to adjourn the meeting early

Motion made by Ben Beiter

Vote: 27y, 1n, 1 abstain

**General Notes**

- Elections
  - We have the results of the elections for the 23-24 GPSS Executive board for the following positions
    - President: Rachel Maizel
    - Director of Advocacy: Elizabeth Bucklan
    - Vice President: Yohan Sequeira
    - Director of Finance: Quiyana M. Murphy
    - Director of Programs: Aran Garnett-Deakin
  - We are still looking for applicants for the following positions:

- Director of Events
    - Director of Communication
  - A special election for the two vacant positions will be open until 04.12.23
  - The GPSS has a full-funding assistantship through the graduate school and the position is open for the 23-24 academic year
- Executive Board Updates
  - Director of Programs
    - The cap and gown program is closed
  - Director of Finance
    - The last day to apply for GSBB funding is 03.31
    - Anyone who has questions regarding the GSBB can email: [gsbb@vt.edu](mailto:gsbb@vt.edu)
    - The GSBB is working on recommending finance-based policy changes for next year. They should be able to present this at the next meeting but, in the meantime, people can give their feedback and/or suggestions [here](https://bit.ly/gsbb-policy-comments) (<https://bit.ly/gsbb-policy-comments>)
  - Vice President
    - As we get towards the end of the semester, please reach out to: [chloerobertson@vt.edu](mailto:chloerobertson@vt.edu) to let her know if you'll be leaving the GPSS at the end of this academic year or reprising your role next year
    - If you are stepping down as a senator, please try to find a replacement from your department
  - Director of Events
    - The date for the spring social is TBD
  - President
    - Board of Visitors Meeting
      - The state of Virginia did not pass a budget for themselves which means the universities do not have budgets yet. As such, no decisions have been made regarding finances
      - They have a meeting planned on 03.21.23 to make those decisions
    - SVCC Presentation
      - There is planning in the works for a follow up conversation with Katie Polidoro and Martha Glass
      - Reach out to Ben if you would like to be part of the follow up conversation
    - Statement on Discrimination
      - Following a number of attacks against people and groups on campus, the GPSS and USS are in talks to write a joint statement on discrimination
      - The executive boards have been talking to student affairs to see how student organisations can be held accountable if they are involved in attacks against other groups on campus
    - Working Group Representatives
      - Reps needed for:

- The Google Workspace Committee: On the Use of Community Services
  - Access and Affordability: Student Experience Working Group
    - Tim Sands is very vocal about there being no financial barriers at VT for those who want to attend
    - preference is for candidates who have been or currently are representative of our target underserved undergraduate student population, that is, Pell eligible, have significant unmet financial needs, etc.
- Ad Hoc Committees
  - The housing survey team is looking for one qualitative researcher to review coding of the survey response data
- Presentation titled *Academic Incentives and Impact Metrics* by Rachel Miles on Academic Metrics
  - She is a Research Impact Coordinator at the library and the operations officer of the faculty senate
  - The presentation covers:
    - Research impact metrics
    - Incentive system and social effects of metrics
    - Efforts towards responsible use of research metrics both internationally and at Virginia Tech
  - Why do we want to learn about metrics?
    - Metrics are increasingly used or required for:
      - Grant proposals
      - Promotion and tenure dossiers
      - Annual reviews of faculty and researchers
      - Recruitment of faculty and researchers
    - Metrics can help you...
      - ...identify influential paper (positive and negative)
      - ...identify influential journals in a discipline
    - There is a lot of misinformation, misuse, and abuse of metrics within academia
  - There are two main levels of research evaluation, micro and macro
    - Micro
      - It can be at the individual level, article level, or output level
      - Individual metrics can be used to support qualitative assessment and, when this is done, it's often called 'informed peer review'
      - A research output could be an article, chapter, or book
      - An example of a metric for a research output could be, 'how many times has this article been downloaded?' or 'how many times has this book been cited?'
    - Macro

- Large groups of researchers (departments, colleges, university discipline, etc)
  - Impossible to do these analyses with qualitative assessment alone
  - Indicators should be used holistically
  - When doing macro metric evaluation, there needs to be outside guidance from experts on data sources, metrics, and interpretation
    - For example, Rachel provides this guidance for some groups
- The Journal Impact Factor (JIF)
  - It was made to decide what should be included in the first bibliographic index (formerly called the Science Citation Index and now called the Web of Science)
  - 'High Impact' journals must be listed on the JIF and this method of classing journals has led to a 'prestige economy'
  - Most journals in the JIF are from the global north and published only in English
  - STEM is the most common journal type, with social sciences being next and then very few in CLAHS
  - Because of all the people submitting to these high impact journals there is a 'clogging effect' or, essentially, a very protracted turnaround time that can cause papers to be delayed by up to 5 years
  - During Covid, a lot of people started putting their papers in pre-print repositories because of the clogging effect
    - Pre-print repository where you can upload your paper ahead of submitting it to a journal. This is a good way to garner some peer review
  - Always be wary of emails from journals asking for work. This can often be spam from a predatory journal
  - JIF has a really short citation window
    - Not effective for inter-field comparison
  - JIF can be easily skewed by popular papers
  - It has inflated in the last two decades, but this reflects more journals being on there, not better quality
  - JIF relies on citable items and journals can 'game' the system
- Other research impact metrics
  - Bibliometrics
  - Scientometrics
  - Altmetrics (formerly known as webometrics)
- Background and history on research assessment initiatives at VT
  - 2019 - Faculty Senate Research Assessment Subcommittee
    - They put out a survey to faculty to ask their perceptions on research assessment, research metrics, and salaries
  - 2020 - Faculty Senate Subcommittee on Assessing Faculty

- They put out a survey on teaching, service, and research. The research portion reiterated their findings from the 2019 subcommittee
  - 2021 - Faculty Senate Responsible Research Assessment Statement Task Force
    - In June 2019 the subcommittee wrote a constituency report and the 2021 task force is trying to complete one of the recommendations from that report
- Rachel Miles explains graphs from her presentation which can be found here (<https://bit.ly/GPSS-research-metrics>)
- Social effects of metrics
  - Matthew Effect
    - Coined by a sociologist who was trying to find out why scientists who were successful got more credit than a researcher who was less successful, even if the less successful researcher had higher quality work
  - Goodhart's Law
    - When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure
- Statement on the Responsible Use of Metrics at Virginia Tech
  - They incentivise research that is well thought out and slow-growing
  - The statement will go to Faculty Senate on 03.07 where it will be approved or disapproved
  - Getting the statement approved at the university level will mean it has to go through one of the commissions (like the Commission on Research)
- Q&A
  - Given that the metrics system can be flawed/skewed, Ben asked if there are tools that universities can/are using when using metrics to hire and/or promote faculty.
    - Responsibility and accountability metrics are started because of these desires, which happens a lot at European universities. The reason it's easier for European, Australian, and New Zealand universities to have these responsibility and accountability metrics is because there is a central place through which they're funded and governed

### **Old Business**

- CGPSP 22-23D (Resolution to establish a master of professional studies degree in climate leadership)
  - There is no discussion on this

### **New Business**

- CUSP 2022-23C (Resolution to Approve New Major, Nutrition and Dietetics, in Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise)

- There is no discussion on this
- CUSP 2022-23D (Resolution to Approve New Major, Exercise and Health Sciences, in Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise)
  - There is no discussion on this
- CUSP 2022-2023E (Resolution to Approve New Major, Technology Education, in Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education, CTE)
  - There is no discussion on this

### **Closing Remarks**

- 03.04.23 Spring Safety Walk
  - Has a rain date of 03.11.23
  - Walkers should please meet the campus police in front of the Public Safety Building, 330 Sterrett Drive, at 7:45 pm that evening
- Cranwell International Center Virtual Tax Workshops
  - [https://international.vt.edu/Immigration-Services/on\\_off\\_campus\\_employment/international-tax-information.html](https://international.vt.edu/Immigration-Services/on_off_campus_employment/international-tax-information.html)
- Privacy and GobblerConnect
  - If you signed up as a senator through GobblerConnect then anyone can access your email through the roster
  - You can change the privacy settings on GobblerConnect using these instructions (<https://engagesupport.campuslabs.com/hc/en-us/articles/204033014-Changing-your-Privacy-Settings>)

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chloe Robertson', written over a horizontal line.

Chloe Robertson