

Open Forum (5:00–5:30)

Sign-in Link: tinyurl.com/GPSSOct6SignIn

Slides Link: tinyurl.com/GPSSOct6Slides

Sign-in Link: tinyurl.com/GPSSOct6SignIn

Voting Link: None!

Contact Us: GPSS@vt.edu | www.gpss.vt.edu



Senate Meeting

6th October, 2022

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Meeting Agenda

1. Opening remarks & senator sign-in
2. Exec Board Reports: Housing, TFP, GRDP, Resolutions, Health Insurance, Policy 6210 (3 ad hoc committees!)
3. Commission and Committee Reports: Open remarks
4. Ad hoc Reports: Graduate Stipend
5. Unfinished business: None
6. New business: CEOD 2022-2023A, CUSP 2022-2023A, Director of Finance
7. Closing remarks: Reminders, Communication, Events!

1. Opening Remarks

Sign-in if you have not! tinyurl.com/GPSSOct6SignIn

If you have not registered as an Senator yet (haven't received the info emails this week) please email VP Chloe Robertson (chloerobertson@vt.edu) to be added to the roles!

1. Notes on Zoom

Voting: Only senators and designated proxies may vote. Vote using yes (green checkmark), no (red X), and abstain (coffee cup away) emotes.

Speaking: Everyone will be muted and you will have to use the raise hand feature to unmute yourself. Priority will be given to senators over general graduate students.

Please RESET your emote after voting or raising your hand. We cannot distinguish between leftover emotes and current emotes so it is on you to remember to remove your answer after the vote concludes. If you do not lower your hand we may not call on you.

The most important rule is that you MUST show off your pets and tell them they're very good courtesy of the GPSS.

1. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes from the September 8th meeting. Sept 22nd meeting was cancelled due to University closure.

<https://gps.vt.edu/the-senate/senate-meetings-minutes/minutes.html>

Director of Finance

GPSS Budget, beginning of the year:

- Budget Board: \$23,461.76
- Generated Fund: \$77,996.26
- Spent so far: ~\$16,000
- Generated: ~\$25,000

GSBB:

- Total: \$91,000
- Allocated: ~\$11,000

Student Fee Allocation Board

Director of Advocacy

Please take the housing survey, and encourage all other graduate and professional students to do so as well!

<https://virginiatech.questionpro.com/GPHousingSurvey22>

Director of Programs

TFP and GRDP updates and summary for fall cycles

Travel Fund Program (TFP)

- *Most popular – money provided by graduate school*
 - Allocated by GPSS Programs
 - Increases VT's profile among scholars
 - \$30,000 originally allocated for fall cycle + \$10,000 one-time extra money
- For grad students presenting research done at VT
 - In-person
 - Virtual
- Can cover:
 - Travel costs (airfare, gas, parking, rideshare)
 - Attendance fees (abstract, registration)
 - Meals and incidentals
 - Lodging
- Each student eligible to receive one per academic year

Fall 2022 allocation process

- Financial need based → Expressed need = Total fundable expenses - total guaranteed external funding
- Applicants funded in descending order of need
- Applications checked for completeness and eligibility by 2 grad student reviewers + GPSS Dir. of Programs
- First-author presenters of original research prioritized

Fall 2022 TFP summary

- Awards distributed in 3 tiers for in-person travel:
 - \$300 – 118 awards
 - \$500 – 9 awards
 - \$750 – 2 awards
- \$200 available for virtual conferences (no awards)
- 129 total awards (6 through appeals, 32 awarded due to one-time extra funds)
- \$41,400 distributed

Graduate Research Development Program

- *Merit-based* GPSS grant program to support graduate research
- Funds from Virginia Tech Graduate School
- *Run for graduate students, by graduate students*
- Distributed 2 times per year (Fall and Spring)
 - ~\$17,000 awarded in fall cycle
- At least 4 awards to STEM projects + 4 awards to business, education, humanities and social sciences

Fall 2022 allocation process

- Each proposal reviewed by 3 graduate student volunteers
 - One within top 3 disciplines
 - One using same methodology type (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods)
 - One outside top 3 disciplines
- Reviewers evaluated proposal on 10 questions, each 1-5 scale
 - All ratings for 3 reviewers added for ***total points***
 - Ex. A proposal has 150 pts if all 3 reviewers rate it 5/5 on all 10 questions

Fall 2022 awards summary

- Total eligible applicants – 63
- Total recipients – 17 (success rate >25%)
 - \$1000 - 16 awards
 - \$940 - 1 award
 - Social sciences - 5 awards
 - Humanities - 1 award
 - Education - 1 award
 - Science - 8 awards
 - Engineering - 2 awards
- Maximum award was \$1500, but opted to partially fund more applicants to increase number of beneficiaries

Next steps for TFP and GRDP

- TFP Winter Cycle funds travel starting from 1/1-3/30
 - Planning to open from 10/15-11/15
 - Decisions by 12/1
 - \$34,000 available (\$30,000 + \$4,000 one-time extra from Graduate School)
- TFP Spring Cycle
 - \$20,000 available → allocating from **next year's budget**
- GRDP Spring Cycle
 - Planning to open from 11/15-1/15/23 (approximate dates)
 - Decisions by 3/1/23
 - \$10,000 available → allocating from **next year's budget**

Director of Programs: Ad Hoc Committee

Committee to look at historical data for the TFP, conduct a study on graduate student conference travel and create a report for the grad school asking for **Increased Funding**.

- Meet several times between now and February → e-mail cissym@vt.edu if interested

Historically: Budget of \$100,000 for TFP+GRDP per FY

Right now we have extra money rolled over from last year so current TFP's budget is higher.

Vice President: Resolutions Summary & Intro

What are they?

GPSS resolutions express the opinion of the GPSS as a body on certain topics and propose amendments to, or creation of, current VT policy and practices.

Who can write a resolution?

The Policy & Internal Affairs Committee are in charge of writing most resolutions, *but* any senator can put forward a resolution as a motion for the GPSS to review!

How can we write a resolution?

I am currently working with our GA to create a “How To” sheet on writing resolutions. Once this is finished, I will be sending it out via email.

When do we bring a resolution to the senate?

Once you have a resolution written, you must give 2 weeks notice before bringing it in for the “New Business” portion of the meeting.

Vice President: Current resolutions

Here are the current resolutions that will be proposed this year:

- 2022-23A Resolution to Provide Sanitary Products for all Campus Bathrooms
- 2022-23[x] Resolution to create a Graduate Student Harm Prevention Board
- 2022-23[x] Resolution to create a Training Program for Graduate Student Advisors
- 2022-23[x] Resolution to define Graduate Teaching Assistants as Students for the Purposes of Disability Accommodations
- 2022-23[x] Resolution to Establish Birth Control Guarantees at Schiffert Health Center

Vice President: 2022-23A “Sanitary Products”

We will do a first reading of “2022-23A Resolution to Provide Sanitary Products for all Campus Bathrooms” on October 20th, 2022.

Please read the resolution ahead of the next meeting:

<https://tinyurl.com/GPSSResolutionA>

A PDF of the resolution will also be sent out in the Minutes email and you are invited to share the resolution with your constituents to garner feedback ahead of the first reading.

President: Health Insurance & Ad Hoc Committee

Discussion: What would you like to see different in our health insurance policy? What feedback should we gather from grad students as a whole?

- In network vs out of network
- Prescription and appointment costs
- Vision, Dental, Physical therapy, Chiropractic Services
- Mental Health Services

Committee: Draft a survey within the next month, analyze the data and make recommendations in the new year.

President: Graduate Contract Policy 6210 & Ad Hoc Committee

“Management of Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Remission”

(<https://policies.vt.edu/6210.pdf>)

- Contract Clarifications and job descriptions
- Protections for hours worked
- Disability Accommodations for TAs
- Separate Policy on Instructors of Record, General Graduate Employment

Committee: Meet together and with grad school **at least weekly for the next month.**

External Committees/Commissions

CGPSA updates

All senators who sit on external committees and/or commissions are welcome to use this time to give updates on what their respective committee or commission is working on.

Ad Hoc Committee: Graduate Stipend Taskforce

Currently using cost of living of \$2,672/month or \$32,069/year for students on assistantships

- Based off “cost of attendance” + health insurance - tuition
- Does not include taxes

Currently Investigating

- First Draft Recommendation: Cover all Comprehensive Fees
- Data on current funding steps of students
- Projected plan for raising average stipend (\$2250/mo) to COL
- Small group on international student considerations
- Small group on additional support for grant applications
- Small group on writing initial drafts

Ad Hoc Committee: Graduate Stipend Taskforce

International Student Considerations

- Can't get jobs over the summer
- Unclear or disingenuous summer contract guidelines
- Additional costs from the university (fees etc.)
- Additional immigration costs

tinyurl.com/intergrad

Old Business: None

We have no old business to revisit in this meeting.

New Business: CEOD Resolution 2022-2023A

Comments on Resolution: by Oct 25th

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vaU-U9ZRys5aI5_qJjSt3u7pgBjm-GlR/view?usp=sharing

New Business: CUSP Resolution 2022-2023A

Comments on Resolution: by October 17th

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Thoxcuc8JlU34nDnmiTkGHZCFIHs85od/view?usp=sharing>

New Business: Approval of Director of Finance

Our Director of Finance, Jonathan Gendron, is stepping down. Please join us in thanking Jonathan for his service!

The current vice chair of the GSBB, John Barbish, is stepping up to take on the role of Director of Finance.

7. Closing Remarks: Communication

All Senators are expected to communicate with your constituents.

- Send out Senate Brief to everyone
- Anonymous Feedback Form:

Comments to ME Senators

This form is a way to submit comments, questions, raise issues, and any other communication to the two graduate student Senators who represent the Mechanical Engineering department in the Graduate and Professional Student Senate: Ben Beiter (-----@vt.edu) and ----- (-----@vt.edu).

The GPSS is the governing body at Virginia Tech made up entirely of grad students. We discuss and create resolutions that go through the shared governance process at VT, as well as host events for all graduate students at VT. Each department gets to send two senators to the GPSS, and we, as the senators for ME are here to hear anything you'd like to bring up to us, and we can bring it up to the Senate at large.

All comments made in this form are anonymous (the form does not save your email). If you feel comfortable sharing your name and email or would like a response from us, please enter your name and email below (we will not share your info with anyone).

7. Closing Remarks: Events

Get ready for some fun events already planned, more to come!

1. **BGSO Game Night:** October 7th, Owens Ballroom
2. **Halloween Costume Party:** October 27th, Moon Hollow
3. **Fall Social:** November 14th, Rising Silo

Follow the GPSS Calendar to get updates!
<https://tinyurl.com/GPSS22Calendar>



Conclusion

Motion to Adjourn!

Senate Discord:



tinyurl.com/GPSS22SenatorDiscord

Public GPSS Discord for all grad students:
tinyurl.com/GPSS22GradDiscord