REALTIME FILE

GSAVT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY-(ZOOM)
DEC 3, 2020
CART CAPTIONING* PROVIDED BY:
ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION SERVICES, LLC**
www.CaptionFamily.com

* * * * *

This is being provided in a rough-draft format. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings

* * * *

Maruf: Good evening everyone. It is 5:30 PM. At least on my clock so let's kinda begin the meeting with our open forum. Our agenda has been slightly changed. Nothing too major, since I didn't know what the resolutions were or the numbers anyways but that has been added. Anyway open forum we will do this for 15 minutes and then [seek quorum at 545].

 Kase: I had a thought on, I think we are looking at the research policy changes tonight? and if anyone knows you can just jump in, but is it common practice for universities to own intellectual property for all the research and everything that go on? I know that policy references Harvard and Yale and some of the other big... Ivy leagues, but, I don't know I wanted to get people's thoughts on that.

 Maruf: my general understanding is yes.

 Jack: I would add there is a federal law that allows for university researchers to sell the research to private companies and that has opened it up a little bit but it has not really increased academic ownership of information. It just sort of has reallocated university resources in corporate spaces and that is a federal policy.

 Kase: so if I am a... A person in a lab and I create some kind of new technology or whatever I can patent that and sell it, but it is still university's property? is that how

 Maruf: ... There is some

 Kase: does the University have partial ownership of that

 Maruf: I don't want to say something and make it sound to find or anything like that. I think the Virginia Tech thing is 50-50. So whoever the lab is and university owns... Splits it 50-50.

Mary: and so this is Mary Potter and I actually was working on the revisions. So link license and launch can help if you do create something you know, I think they are very careful about wanting to encourage individuals to create things and definitely want to encourage research. But link license and launch can actually help you if that is something you want to, if you have created something you want to sell they can actually help you do that.

Kase: is that like part of the University like

Mary: it is. Yeah.

Kase: thank you.

Sharon: [indiscernible]

Maruf: any other points of discussion?

June is looking into planning an end of the year I guess academic end of the year get together at a local brewery... Or vaccine party as she is calling it and please email her if you have suggestions.

Awad: I think if there is nothing coming up we do have quorum. So we can move on and save time at the end if there's anything needed.

Maruf: alright let's do that then. So first I guess motion to adopt the agenda, which is here.

Kase: so moved.

Maruf: is there a second?

[several voices]

Maruf: for now if we can do thumbs-up for yes or no... Thumbs-up to agree.

Aidan: Yeah

Maruf: great. Now this was, I'd like to pass this off to Awad because he wanted a motion to change voting procedures.

Awad: just so that we save time in the future meeting from this point forward we want it to be on record that for the remainder of this academic year we are going to change the voting procedures to be only four abstentions and nays and so we assume no reaction in a voting procedure that is inside the meeting to be an automatic yea so that we don't have to track thumbs-up and whatnot. And so if there's nothing, no one has anything against that if we can get a motion moved for this that would be great.

Kase: so moved.

[Several people speaking]

Jack: is there a reason we can't just use the yes no reaction buttons instead

Awad: The yes/no reactions I think a lot of people login from the phone, so we tried that previously and had no luck with that. So we are so going to have yes, no and abstains in any electronic votes we send out because we do a lot of voting electronically but if it is within the meeting I just thought it could be a much more efficient way a better use of everyone's time.

Aidan: Unless I would like to address Martina's question which was does that require amending the bylaws and I don't, unless you have a particular place that you could point out I don't recall anywhere that determines like with necessity that the voting happens one way or another. On motions.

Martina: I know we have run into this issue before. So that is why I'm looking through them right now.

Aidan: oh yeah it is totally good to check for sure.

Kase: I don't remember if I emailed someone this or not. Everything is running together. But has anyone looked at like, I know the undergraduate SGA there's literally a link they use and they just click the link in the chat and it is yes, no basically.

Aidan: that is exactly what Awad was talking about like a couple or a month ago I think.

Awad: yeah we did that with the first vote... And it worked out but then we also do the electronic votes I guess when we have anything we need between meetings. But inside meetings it has just been a little bit messy to be honest. I did look at the bylaws. Aidan is the parliamentarian so he's the person best to ask about that as well but there doesn't seem to be anything, that's not going to be a permanent change that's why on record I wanted it to be a change for the meetings for the remainder of this academic year only just so we make sure it's not anything permanent or whatever it's just the circumstances.

Maruf: any further discussion? all right motion to approve?

Kase: so moved.

Maruf: all right

Awad: all in favor still have to give thumbs-up for the time being.

Aidan: thumbs-up there we go. Yay.

Maruf: alright I will pass this off to Aidan and Awad to see two resolutions but the first one is CG PSP 2021 a and B and I think Mary here is a representative for one of them if I'm not mistaken?

Awad: I think Mary is for the one from the commission on research... So this one there is a second one that we sent out only this week so we're not going to be voting on those or commentary on those. The other one from the CG PSP... The ones on the transfer

requirements, and there is the one from the faculty affairs. Those two I sent out before the... Before the break. We did not have any comments on those. Or any questions I think everything is pretty self-explanatory unless someone has questions regarding those now if we have any comments on those?

Kase: I just want to point out in the chat that someone brought up that there was never a no vote.

Awad: I mean it was, no one asked for nays?

Coogan: I am not a parliamentarian and Aidan didn't say anything but you just kind of consent agendaed a motion to move to move to a consent agenda that seems skeptical to me.

Awad: the agenda okay

Coogan: isn't that what we just did?

Awad: the agenda was the first thing we did was a voting procedures for other things moving forward.

Coogan: I'm trying to mention the consent agenda my apologies what I meant to say is we changed the voting procedure where now the default vote is yes, right?

[several people speaking]

Aidan: I understand your point and I'm looking at the bylaws again. Yeah, so we were voting by a show of hands... Which calls for a division, which is... Counting ayes and nays. So yeah there was no... I guess there was no call for nay. But I think Maruf so if I write because I can't see everyone's hands, did you see an overwhelming majority

Maruf: thumbs-up yes. For the thumbs-up. Yes.

Coogan: okay then my objection was wrong.

Jack: you still have to give an opportunity to register nos just as a point of procedures so we can get on the record who says no. So maybe just having like a belated all opposed Clap emoji or something.

Aidan: Yeah, your point is well taken, thank you for bringing that up.

Awad: I guess we see do we go back parliamentarian... How does this work to get this on the record

Aidan: let's have that again. Have a belated clap emoji... Yeah I think having a thumbs-up for approval and...yeah let's say see I want to pick red heart because that is the most distinct but I do not want love to be the denial [laughter] so yeah I would say pick thumbs-up for... The approval and how about laughing. Let's pick laughing... For disapproval. Because that is how Facebook operates.

Aimane: what about just picking the one right next to thumbs-up... Like the hand.

Aidan: that works for me I'm okay with that. How about if it is not a thumbs-up it is disapproval. This is partially... This is I think part of why we wanted to change the voting procedures. Incarnated. But is this... Do the signs work for everyone?

Hypatia: they work for me.

June: can I clarify is the biggest issue here that some people are calling in and they are not able to say yes or no but they only have like one option? because I think that is kind of the problem that we are having. There might be some people who just are not accessing

Aidan: we just have two... Okay that makes sense

June: not everyone has the amount you send if you're calling in you can do any of that stuff. All you can do our speak. So are we had people calling and I cannot vote at all except for verbally because in a way I kind of agree with Coogan that at some is impossible to count how many people are saying yes or no at this point.

Maruf: I think that is the crux of the problem.

Aidan: that is why we are going through trying to change the... Procedures. Because they are not currently smooth, successful all of the above. But I mean it is good to note that yeah, we, are proceeding was out of order. Because of that. All right so here is the rub. How about this. Let's say thumbs-up for yes and for disapproval... Or like a verbal aye for approval and for disapproval, or textual aye, all of the above and for disapproval it would be like clapping or a verbal nay or a text nay or something does that sound acceptable and all inclusive form of counting visual... Audio, that's not a word you know what I mean. And I... It is hard for me to see everything and so I'm slightly hoping that Maruf can count.

Tommy: I'm sorry I am a little confused and so are people saying on the phone you cannot do these reactions because

Awad: if they are calling in. Not if they're phoning and using the app.

Tommy: Oh I see

Awad: again let's just move on quickly with this. Any form of, aye, yea, yes text or voice approval and no comes down [indiscernible] for disapproval of voting procedures please?

Maruf: okay this is slowly coming in. Okay there we go. I think we are good. There's a lot of thumbs-ups.

Awad: and then back to those, the four resolutions we have added receive any questions or commentary on either of those. Mary is still around I think for the research one. There is the research and I think the commission on research and one or two more

that I have sent out only this weekend so we allow a 14 days for questions or comments to come before we vote on them. And so that will be just an electronic but I think in the last week of classes. But for the time being do we have any comments or do we have any questions or any other inquiries about those four resolutions on the table?

Kase: does this include the research?

Awad: No. Those were sent out to the delegates I think two weeks ago now. If so, if there is no comment can we get... And I'm not actually sure if we can do it for all four in one motion, is that a thing

Maruf: I think we have to go one by one... So motions ABCD

Awad: can I get a motion to waive the right to comment on CG PSP 2020 – 21 A?

Tommy: Yyes

Awad: Second?

Kase: Second

Awad: any extensions or nays?

Aidan: I am going to throw an aye here just for an extra aye

Awad: the motion carries to have a motion to waive the right to comment on CG PSP resolution 2020 – 21 B

Tommy: yes

Awad: abstentions, nays? the motion carries do we have a motion to waive our right to comment for CFA 2020 – 21 resolution C?

Kase: so moved.

>> Seconnd

Awad: abstentions, nays? motion carries and finally do we waive the right to comment on CFA 2020 – 21 D

Kase: So moved

>> Second

Awad: abstentions or nays? it carries.

Maruf: diversity subcommittee update Emily Burns are you on the call? your currently muted so I'm not sure if you are speaking.

Emily: a quick update from the diversity committee. So we are in the last stretch of finalizing our long-term and short-term goals. We decided that we will categorize our goals and production items under each of the major goals. And so we are hoping that

we finish all of that at our last meeting of the semester next weekend in the spring semester we will get our finalized draft goes out to everyone, and try to solicit feedback from all of you as graduate students. And then from there we will try to submit our final finalized goals to administrators. But at this point our draft long-term goals include asking the University to improve transparency as a graduate school and department level about recruitment for underrepresented minority graduate students we want to secure additional funding to support URM graduate students and then...

 Maruf: Emily are you frozen? okay. We will wait a few seconds for her to maybe unfreeze. If not... We will kind of read off the third... I mean of course you guys can read the third bullet and approve support for equitable experiences for URM graduate students and of course if you were to be involved with the entire procedure email Emily at that email address. All right. Thank you, Emily. I'm not sure if you can hear us. But if any of you have further questions I can field it for a few seconds right now. Before we move on. All right, seeing no further questions moving onto the next subcommittee graduate comp. Rebecca Salgado are you on the call?

 Rebecca: I am on the call can you hear me okay. Thank you so much everyone who took time out to respond to the survey that was sent out a couple weeks ago. We got over 200 responses from people in Blacksburg and in Roanoke as well as the DC area. And so okay excuse me and so basically now that we have kind of a big general picture of sort of what are kind of the financial concerns of Virginia Tech graduate students, we are looking for graduate students from a variety of departments. It doesn't really matter what department you are from if you would be willing to answer more detailed questions about your financial situation and sort of what you would like to see improved on. And obviously for that, the only really identifiable information that would be I guess known is what department you are in. And so obviously your name, your year. That would be included. Because there were a lot of factors in the previous survey that was sent out that were not necessarily taken into consideration. And so we thought it would make more sense if we had a smaller pool of people who would be able to answer more of those detailed questions. So if you would be interested in doing that, please email me at that email listed below and I also like wanted to comment that a lot of sort of the feedback we received from the survey was in terms of student fees that graduate students are paying. And so we definitely recognize there are a lot of opinions on student fees especially right now with Covid, and maybe not necessarily being able to access certain things that the student fees cover but just want to be transparent and with everyone and our main goal is not necessarily to cut your student fees by some number the main goal is going to be to advocate to the administration and let them know what is the financial situation for like an average graduate student at Virginia Tech and things like that. So just want to be transparent about the actual goal of this subcommittee. So if you have any questions or if you would be interested in participating in that more detailed survey, please you can email me at my email address r Salgado 97@VT.edu it is on the slide right there.

Maruf: all right thank you. I will pause for a quick moment to field any questions if there are any.

Aidan: I had one quick question.

Maruf: Sure

Aidan: I wanted to confirm based on what she was talking about to rephrase and summarize just saying okay well the goal is no one specific thing but just to capture and advocate on the overall financial status of graduate students.

Rebecca: yeah that is really what the goal is, there is not some kind of monetary value that we are aiming for just because there are so many students from different departments. It is really critical that we get kind of an overall picture.

Aidan: Yeah I just wanted to make sure that that summary did hit what you were saying.

Rebecca: thanks for clarifying. Yeah.

Maruf: any further questions?

June: has your committee may be discussed, was this a decision you all came up with together not to come up with an advocacy goal? did you decide to remain neutral because you think data is more effective? or maybe were there ideas that you just think are not going to work right now.?

Rebecca: sorry can you repeat the first half of your question? I didn't really hear it too well.

June: could you talk to us about the discussions you had around this about why you chose neutral data as opposed to figuring out what people want and would want in terms of a certain stipend level or fees? could you tell us maybe what your discussion was about why this is what you are doing versus something else?

Rebecca: yeah that is a really good question and so I think really sort of our way and how we have discussed about it and talked about it is that what we kind of move forward with the best decision is by using the data we can essentially use this as a way to show. So essentially we are using the data to advocate for ourselves. Because sort of the overall feel that a lot of graduate students are expressing is that they are struggling financially. And I don't think necessarily people in the administration necessarily know what is going on. And so it doesn't really make sense I mean kind of what we decided is it doesn't really make sense if we have five graduate students go to the administration like oh, here is my stipend I want basically a higher stipend. It would make more sense to kind of get a general overview of sort of what the situations of graduate students at Virginia Tech is like, and by having kind of that larger pool of data we can show the administration that these concerns aren't shared by isolated students but by the vast

majority of Virginia Tech graduate student so in short we are using data to advocate for ourselves to make the administration aware of what is happening.

Maruf: if I can add an additional comment to that, the spending on who you speak with at the University some individuals [indiscernible] so if it is hard for us to make that kind of a, let's take a position on this first it's more let's see where we actually stand before we take a real position on this. Even though

Jack: so to build on that point the University actually has the data about the stipends. Because these are sort of two separate issues and I don't mean to speak for other people but for me personally, I would be less concerned about the use of fees and how they get spent to support things like health services that we don't necessarily have access to, if we got paid more to compensate for that. And that information is... Has already been made public by the graduate student task force that evaluated us against other universities and found that we are actually in the lower I want to say it is like under 30th percentile of graduate students on average [indiscernible] the data has already been collected and our stipends and have been found wanting so that might be a path for advocacy and save us time on data collection.

Awad: I will just add two things to this. After the survey, it got around, I've spoken to some administrators about it some people from the budget office and have been connected with a few other people in the graduate school so we will be getting more detailed stipend data from the graduate school and this will increase the pool of data that we have so that is also more reliable data. But I think the biggest task of this would be that there is so much discrepancy. There are graduate students making $15,000 a year. There are graduate students making $35,000 a year. And so the gap of double stipends is absolutely absurd. And actually the gap in what we looked at in terms of what remains after everything is taken out everything being the fees... Housing and utilities and so just the cost of being a graduate student and keeping a roof over your head varies a lot with

this varying stipend. And so a lot of people agree the University that having 50 level pay skills for graduate students is absurd and it turns out nobody knows why that exists. So I would say that in my opinion the biggest target would be addressing that inequality and not in anyways advocating that people should all be paid absolutely at the same feat leaning lowering others but uplifting the people who are underpaid because there's a lot of people who are underpaid that I think would be the main target but I think the task force would just keep updating the Gen. assembly on this but really if I have one request I would make especially from the delegates attending, when we get those surveys out please make sure they are disseminated to your constituencies because some do, some don't and then we get data because things very a lot by department so I really want you all to be conscious of that.

Rebecca: yeah I'm getting some questions in the chat so let me pull it up and make it bigger. So in terms of how let's see there is a question about the cost of living

adjustment. In terms of the stipend. So that is kind of, because everyone has there are a variety of different living situations across graduate students. That is why kind of we want to come if people would be willing to do an additional survey to get more detail into like just exactly how someone's stipend is being spent because obviously there area variety of graduate students who have extremely diverse living situations, extremely diverse financial situations. And so I think so, June I think I'm a little confused by your question. I'm not sure which survey, or

June: can you tell us what you asked about besides the stipend level so we are just clear about that?

Rebecca: yes of the survey that was sent out previously basically asked stipend level and also asked for annual how much is spent on living and also annual, how much is spent on utilities and also it asked for an end sort of net worth you had. At the end if that makes sense.

Awad: so just a correction on that, it was the stipends housing and utilities and it was just calculated out of those of people did not enter that. And again it is not to capture what people are spending it is just to capture what is the cost of you being a student at Virginia Tech, paying compulsory fees and having a roof over your head and that's it looking at nothing else again because Becca mentioned those things vary from person-to-person.

Emily: can I ask one question no I did fill out that survey, this is Emily Burns. And I did not calculate Internet costs in utilities and now like I pay for my own Internet, which is not working very well and hopefully you can hear me I just realized. But, and I do that for my I have to do it for my GTA and I do not get compensated for that. And so I'm just wondering, when you say utilities does it include Internet? and I also wonder about transportation costs and including that.

Awad: I think when I sent it off I did mention this utilities you pay for your house so that would include Internet. But again a few people mentioned and if you did not, the overall averages do cover up for one another because again we are just looking at the bigger picture. But again, that is where we have the need of getting a more detailed survey like the one that Rebecca is speaking about now. Because the stipends for everything else you can, after getting the self-reported data we can get actual data from the institution and compare it to that but there's not really a lot of data on that. A lot of people emailed me and spoke about things like international students who pay a lot more extra tax. That should be factored in. We do not factor those things in. But when you look at the bigger level data collection standpoint of you that would be a necessity. The Dean spoke about, or the graduate school they haveactually this hopefully really promising project they want to work on of showing perspective students kind of like a dashboard of and I'm not sure how they are planning to collect data for that but that would be also a good thing to work with. I think it's a good thing for people to come in to know exactly how

much they're going to keep at the end of the day because most people are blindsided by that.

Maruf: all right any further comments or questions?

Hypatia: sorry I missed one thing, did you guys say that's also considering the location of the position? or is it the same pay across... All the campuses?

Awad: we do have the three different, the three main campuses because I mean there's also Richmond and other places but we do have the NCL, Roanoke and Blacksburg.

Hypatia: all right thank you.

Maruf: all right anything else? any other questions on this topic? there is a question in the chat. I can't remember if this was in the original survey for housing but does it take into consideration roommates?

Rebecca: it did not. I mean obviously people, how much they spend on housing is going to count how many people you live with but that was not an explicit question in the survey, do you have roommates.

Maruf: all right. Last call for questions before we move on to the next topic. This is more keeping in the time. Alright let's move on. Standing committee we will start with finance. Tahsin and Quince. Are either of you on the call?

Tahsin: Yeah I am. My video off to save some bandwidth but talking about student fees we have some positive knees on the proposed graduate student budget board fundings. So after several discussions and negotiations with the student affairs they have agreed to allocate a budget for us to conduct a pilot project next year that is dedicated to the graduate students in terms of budget allocation. The detail includes, we plan to start the graduate student budget board pilot phase 1, we call it, on March 1, 2021. Which will include all of the requests coming in from graduate student organizations that will be fundable through August 1, 2021. This pilot project will only fund organizations that currently has graduate in their name, during the first phase and the reason is we haven't yet defined what a graduate student organization should be for the Virginia Tech and I will discuss more about that in the following slides after conducting a survey on behalf of the committee. And so our committee will basically establish the structure of the board and also get establishment of funds and currently are on the verge of starting to draft a policy that needs to be approved by the CSA on the February 10 timeline and so we are planning to do the draft beginning this month this month and before we get it approved by CSA and and based on the pilot project of the first phrase we would reconvene during the summer of 2021 to understand how well it works, how well it did not and in terms of the policy that we made and the [indiscernible] use budget allocation to move on to budget pilot phase number two that will be taking place 2021 through 2022 academic year starting this fall and Maruf you want to comment on this because you are involved as well

Maruf: and so yeah, basically this is everything I have been wanting for the past 18 months coming to fruition kind of now. The most important part of this that I wish to really convey is, this is giving the graduate student assembly, so you guys direct financial control of student activity fees. And so please do participate because if participation goes away, this power eventually goes away. So we have do not worry about what the current budget meetings are, it is in our power right now to draft policy as we see fit for the graduate student body. Policy of course as Tahsin mention needs to be approved by this commission on student affairs sometime if we wish to keep the timeline sometime in February but this overall is extremely positive news. The things that we have been asking for our, I do not see some of the stuff being funded by Covid because of course travel is happening now. But I'm fully expecting conference travel and registration fees to be covered by this.I am expecting food items to be covered by the RSOs that have the word graduate in them and what is the last thing? if any form of outreach events are planned by the graduate student body that should be funded as well and of course all GSA operating costs would also have through budget funding and so all of that I see coming into one big pot.

What we need the most help on is what our pilot phase 1 amount is going to be. And that is where we have not made an official number of what to ask for you. But that number needs to be asked by end of January sometime in February. And I'm hesitant to ask of a number until I see real policy written down in some way so we can project what will be spent between March and August of next year. Does all of this make sense to you guys? Especially to the CSA reps that are on the call.

Tahsin: I just wanted to add before anyone asks

Maruf: yes go on Tahsin

Tahsin: sorry I just wanted to add before we drop the policy we also conducted a survey I'm going to share some of the response results. That's also kind of like a key part in terms of shaping the policy because it is a completely new policy that we are going to need. And so I guess it is an ongoing process. So I kind of encourage everyone here to participate in the survey and also as Awad said to [communicate] it with department phones and encourage them to participate because we need more of voices opinions and feedback in order to understand how we want to ship the policy and we got a very good number of response but we need to more understand about the whole graduate body needs and requirements.

Maruf: let me actually do this. Let's go through the survey before we take questions on this entire

Tahsin: yeah, sure. Yeah, so... The overall participation was we got around 100 survey responses. And I believe it was sent right before Thanksgiving week so it was pretty slow. But again I'm expecting more responses from graduate students through the delegates. So I'm going to share some important outcomes from the results [indiscernible] the full survey and the first one is understanding the overall perception of

the graduate student budget board. So we kind of asked a question about how do you feel about the student activity fee following the formation of the graduate student budget board and so in order to enrich the overall graduate experience. And interestingly we got very good responses in terms of somewhat better or much better which was around 60%. Some of you have said Same. But I believe I guess we don't have in our survey one of the limitations was we could not explain it more in a comprehensive or detailed way so that you would more understand about the overall perception of the feeling of the graduate student budget board and so we are going to use that in order to make it more elaborated and more articulated so that everyone can understand what it's all about. Can I have the next slide? all right, so in terms of defining a graduate student organization is probably one of the primary parts of when we shape up the policy as I just mentioned the first pilot phase will only consist of funding student organizations that have graduate in the name. But that's not our intention to actually put up what a graduate student organization should be. So when I asked about the survey, most of us have responded about having a majority number of graduate students, that is more than 50% of the graduate population when it comes to [indiscernible] graduate student organization and so we are going to work on that based on the opinions but the more responses we get the better it is for us to make decisions. Okay next slide? in terms of budget allocation I think Maruf share the top three expenditures that are currently we thought about and interestingly came out to be the same when it came to understanding the requirements of student organizations when it comes to club spending in terms of their finances. And what we found out the top four categories in terms of expenses of organizations are mostly on food. Conferences. Outreach programs and events applies materials or any kind of fees related to events. And when asked about if given more budget that it is from the graduate student budget board, what you want to spend the most money on and the top four categories were the same, with everyone always wants more money for food more money for conferences, outreach programs and event - related expenses.

So which kind of aligns with what we actually initially thought about where should the money mostly go to. And so again as we have more responses coming in from you all then we can shape up the policies based on that and I also asked about a few ... Like how much do you want to spend on it and we got a few numbers and we're going to discuss that more with student affairs when we are deciding on the cap for the budget as well. I guess that is all we have Maruf, if you want to continue or if anyone wants to ask questions.

Maruf: No, I think we will open the floor for questions and so

Tahsin: the last thing I just wanted to add is before anyone asks a question or has feedback we also plan to do a focus group discussion. I think that's a very important part for shaping up the policy as well. A few of us have responded to be interested in taking part in the focus group discussions we are going to send out emails very soon based on our survey responses and if you are interested again I'm going to send my email

address here and you can let me know whether you are interested to participate. Because the policy is open and we are the ones who are going to build the policy.

Maruf: alright I will open the floor for questions. There is a question in the chat from Sophia. Do you know how many organizations would qualify as graduate in his name. I think we have a rough count of 50 right now.

Tahsin: yes. Kind of like that because at this point we are just looking at graduates. So the list was sent by student affairs. It is around 50 but this will be changed after the pilot project for sure.

Maruf: again I think just to clarify just a bit, the only reason we are focusing on groups with the word graduate in their name right now is because that is the only way to classify them at this present moment and that's why we brought this down into phase 1 and phase 2. Just so we can get something started this academic year. And we did not have to wait for things later. In terms of the question do they need to be registered as grads now or have the name grads registered next year, that issomething I think we're going to look into over the summer. It's also one of the reasons why we are doing a phase 1 and phase 2 [indiscernible] if we can get more participation like next academic year when I'm hoping everyone is vaccinated... You know, I think it will go up and I think we can have conversations on how do we actually define a graduate student organization. That is the question of how do we actually define a graduate student organization is I think very critical for us to define next semester

Awad: just to clarify, right, this is going to be for the pilot that they have the name graduate but the existing sitting budget board is going to still support whatever graduate organizations if they don't have the name graduate throughout, until the end of the academic year. Like I think that is what people are already worried about.

Maruf: yes. We are not breaking apart the current student budget board now. We are basically taking a small pool of money or the plan is to take a small pool of money from there and have the GSA control it.

Kase: two quick questions. Who composes of the graduate student budget board. I'm assuming it's not just the general assembly it's like a subset?

Tahsin: No, so that hasn't been decided yet, so that's another question we had in the survey. And interestingly we had a few options there in terms of who should control it and we got equal responses when it came to the survey outcome we asked about whether it should be the graduate student, the director of finance or treasurers of a lot of graduate student organizations who would take control or whether it should be the current GSA finance committee who should take control or whether it should be the larger body of graduate students organizations who are elected and should take control of it. And actually we got equal responses from every one of us. So we are kind of still working on that and need more responses to understand that. Based on this response

were going to work with student affairs as well in terms of trying to shape up who should be in the board.

Maruf: I think to further clarify that question I think that is something everyone here can do fine. As to how should this be done. My opinion was I think the GSA finance committee should do it. But again

Tahsin: in that case we need more members because at this point we just have three members in the finance committee including me who's also part of the GSA executive board. So if that is the case we need to think about expanding on that. If everyone agrees.

Maruf: most definitely. We can put this on just thrCAndee people to do for everyone. Kase I know you had another question.

Kase: yes so kind of a question kind of a comment. So you answer the question about the current budget board keep funding organizations who do not fall in that so that was good. And the last thing was could... And if we are just trying to keep things super simple and keep it graduate in the name but I was thinking another one I saw a comment where some colleges are only graduate students so they do not bother to put it in their name but we could potentially look at, are the membership graduate students because in that case I think it would be clear that it's only graduate body. But that is just a thought.

Maruf: if I can respond to that, I think that is more of a logistical technicality I think that we could probably put in. Because I do think, now that you mention it I think we can [add that] but that would be up for us and student affairs to kind of work together to have some kind of membership oversight to ensure that this is what they say [indiscernible] Kayla?

Kayla: I had a quick question point of clarification. So the phase I is only funding organizations that have graduate in the name regardless of whether that organization is classified as a graduate student organization? because there are multiple organizations, I just went through the list, that are classified as graduate student or that do not have graduate in their name.

Maruf: yes unfortunately that is unfortunately the only way to like I guess stratify this. In like a very quick way. Or that is what kind of student affairs suggested and so ... So if you have graduate in your name that the only way we can classify it as a graduate student organization right now. We realize that many student groups will be left out in phase 1. Because of the lack of naming and the lack of student affairs not exactly classifying what a graduate student organization is historically. And this is also why, just to reemphasize this is why we built in phase I and phase II so we can kind of figure out all of these logistical questions that you're asking. Like summer 2021. And so in phase 2 kicks in, that should be a lot bigger pool of money that we have that we can deal with and we should be more inclusive of the graduate, the overall graduate student body for

next year. And to be completely honest about it, I felt okay with it because I don't think many organizations will be asking for money this upcoming semester anyways. So this for me was a perfect time to just be like okay, let's deal with what we have right now. Let's keep moving the ball forward. Summer 2021 we will actually sit down and reorganize this entire process to be fully inclusive of the graduate student body. And then next academic year, in theory everyone, like it should be a completely fair system with I think a very final revision summer 2022 to ensure whatever kinks are in the system completely ironed out.

Tahsin: Yeah, so there's probably a lot of confusion as to whether other RSOs or student organizations don't have a graduate student name. They can still apply and receive [indiscernible] funds and so we are kind of not cutting out anyone at this point. We are just allocating a small portion of the money to understand how we can shape up the policy for future when we have our independent body of graduate student

Aidan: Yeah to me the summary sounds like right now let's get a plan where we have this overarching idea of we have money. We give it to people and later the who... Can get like hammered out more. Over the summer was what Maruf said basically

Maruf: yeah, and so basically what I see people missing out on immediately is food purchases. And so for like three months of the academic year that is just about it right now which I hope that will be trade again when fall 2021 comes around because like conferences and outreach aren't really happening at this time and I do not see it happening next fall. I mean this upcoming spring.

Tahsin: and I guess internally the goal is also to get money out of student affairs as well so that we can actually make it possible and give them confidence that we can be independent.

Kayla: I have a question. I don't know if this would probably be a big because like you said there might be not very many student orcs that are applying for money but if we are saying that separating this out next semester and basically if you have graduate student in your name you would be applying for funds within the graduate student board but if you don't and you're still a graduate organization you would be able to apply for the regular SBB but is there going to be anyI mean are the people on SBB going to look at it and say this is a grad student organization and they have their own thing? so I guess I'm a little concerned on the medication between those two. Hopefully it's not going to be a problem.

Tahsin: I'm part of the SBB as well some going to clarify to the board don't worry.

Okay cool.

Maruf: any additional questions? all right. Let's move on. Internal affairs judicial, so the GSA Constitution overhaul. I will pass this to Aidan. And whoever else is on the.

Aidan: yes so I'm going to summarize what the issues we saw in the Constitution as currently written Constitution and the bylaws are and our approach to those and plans for changing. And so just these couple problems like if a grad student has an issue where do they go? there is no built-in way to keep lines of communication with other important organizations like the Roanoke GSA. The executive board gets a lot of stuff proportionate to like the number of people that are in this assembly. And every year it is like a jumble to refresh. If a person that previously filled your role is gone and now you are in this role, how do you know what you're doing? and above all picking up the documents and the bylaws are like the Constitution and the bylaws are just, they are not easy to get through because they have a bunch of stuff in them. In looking and comparing our Constitution to other universities, our Constitution length was the same as the Constitution and bylaws put together. And so it is like our Constitution and bylaws are like double the amount of stuff that other similar universities have. It is just unmanageable. To use as a reference. And so you I can't change the slide. So I think on the next slide... What we sent out a survey about a while ago was how like take a step back think about what is the goal of the GSA? And is this something that the members actually hold as those goals. And so we crafted this mission statement to serve as a unified collective voice and to advocate for people to decision-makers and so on. I put this here because this is the text as we currently have it. Which will be at the beginning of the Constitution to make it clear what we are and what purposes. I'm not going to read through the whole thing because the summary is on the next slide.

So we saw these as the four main goals of but the assembly for three of these you saw in the survey I sent out, or that Awad sent out for me a well ago the advocacy community building and scholarly professional development. The thing that got added in talking with Maruf and Awad in the past president [Hannie] and Jack when he once showed up [laughter] was movement building because it is dealing, going back to the issue of how does an individual studen who has a concern raise an issue to the proper place where it can get dealt with. Beyond going and emailing Maruf it is rather unclear. So one of the things we wanted to see and try to happen was to help departments kind of have an internal structure for advocacy so the mechanical engineering department has their own department specific student group. That advocates just for the students and organizes events and for the mechanical engineering graduate students and if everyone, if all of the…I used departments loosely but department's programs and so on had such a structure in some way, then it would be easier for I think a graduate student in any given department or program to bring an issue that they haven't helped to get passed along. With community building I think even before that... Moving toward some kind of structure for each individual department would be helpful.

So that was one of the biggest things we added on to the other goals that we had. So was not in the survey. Movement building is there now. Just so you guys know. I think the next slide would be good. Oh, thank you. Solve all the problems we talked about or I talked about I love Maruf smile every time I say something silly he is like okay yeah will I guess you're right I guess. [Laughter] anyways, so with the list of issues that we

identified with the Constitution and how we currently operate here are some of the structural changes that we wanted to, that we want to implement. And so very first thing is to restructure the documents. I'm going to have a whole flight on that follow. I would like to add some positions, a position focused entirely on advocacy, a position for the president [indiscernible] that there can be helping kind of passing the baton for the issues. That the GSA will be working on. And the Chief of Staff position to help serve I like the phrase serve as a buffer between groups of people in the exec board that are concerned with policy decisions and the day to day kind of stuff like event planning and so on because currently the exec board has to do all of these things and that makes it difficult for people to actually to talk about policy if other things keep coming up. With this, with the idea of moving towards a more policy focused exec board we wanted to have a cabinet constructed of people constructive in groups like the Roanoke session and perhaps a representative for postdocs. We are hammering that out. That is still in the works. But just some kind of way for the presidents to get information that they need to to make decisions... On stuff I did not have any fancy words there. So the last big structural change, apart from the document change, is to move elections to instead of the end of the academic year to put it in the middle of the standard academic year.

 December January. So thatthe transition can happen while the old members are still around. So I mean, imagine, I know I felt like this, I don't know about anyone else here, but speaking just for myself like I kind of took up this role as a delegate and I thought to myself okay well now what? because I had not done this before. I mean luckily I could still contact the other past delegates from the previous year, but if that were not the case that would have made it harder toknow what my role in this position was. And so I think that moving the elections there would help. And for like the transition to that I don't know how that would work. But just in the future that could be a good thing to have. Now I am going to loop back around to the very first bullet point on the next slide which is restructuring the document. So the Constitution should only have really high level stuff. High-level structures, long-term goals. There should not be any nitty-gritty specific stuff in there. And so the mission statement, that is an example of something that is , that broadly captures the purpose of this assembly. That is the kind of thing that should be in the Constitution. And offices that... Will always need to exist. I am trying to keep an eye on the time so I don't just keep blathering on. So there's a lot of stuff in the Constitution right now that is not that.

 So part of the plan is to move that all too bylaws. That should be the specific stuff, the day to day stuff. But even in the bylaws, like I mentioned before our Constitution bylaws pair is like twice the size of other universities Constitution bylaws pair. And that is because the bylaws also contain a bunch of stuff. I can answer Jack's question ... Just going through this document structure. Yeah, the bylaws have a bunch of stuff that should not be there that is not exactly regulations and legislative stuff, so our idea was to have a handbook that would not have any legislative influence. It would suck all the stuff from bylaws that is not, should not be in the bylaws that is not pertaining to any sort of legislative anything. And take that and we can add to that things like expectations of

delegates. Expectations of the different standing roles like and so on and with that having people around from previous years with midyear elections and having, for the president, having that having the president emeritus position be officially formed. I think that that these things could make it a lot easier to transition, so things do not come to a grinding halt in May. I think the next slide captures the biggest thing. So structurally that is what is happening. We are taking all of the words and we are shoving them somewhere else. There is some stuff we are changing. I talked about that stuff. But of all the things that I would like to see happen like... This is the big one. There should not be... There is so much stuff in the Constitution that should not be there. It should be in the bylaws. There is so much stuff in the bylaws that should not be there. It should be somewhere else. And so that is our idea is to really gut everything and make those tweaks that I talked about but mostly trim the fat that is around. And I think with that the next slide just asks if there's any questions. I mean there is the one that Jack... Chat, are postdocs.

 Maruf: if I can answer that it's like a random suggestion from think that is modeled by University of Kentucky which I don't think they are proposing that this will happen. It's like it can happen. But I agree with you. I do not think that postdoc should be represented in the graduate student [indiscernible]

 Jack: I want to be clear that I think that they deserve more representation because they are definitely underserved by the University but I think it should happen in the faculty Senate where they are more able to address the specific needs and problems of postdocs.

 Aidan: and that is a specific issue that we can definitely talk about more, focus on more. But like it is funny to reference the last slide but like I said on the last slide, the biggest thing is just push all the garbage where it needs to go, where it is better served... Yeah. Like the specific stuff should be in the bylaws [not the Constitution] the random stuff should be in something like a handbook or just [indiscernible] instead of in the bylaws but that's a good point. Thank you for raisin

 Hypatia: I have a question. One of the reasons that I came to this GSA is because you know I was trying to build community between nova and Blacksburg. I never thought of this as a popularity context or anything like that. And I had so much difficulty getting answers and the only reason I'm getting pushback is because I'm not ruffling anybody's feather in the sense that I am not stepping too far out to make any comments that people in northern Virginia might not like. And so where would the structure be not saying that it should be in the Constitution bylaws or the handbook. But whoever takes over after I leave. Where do they go? how do I get, how do I get to become a delegate? what do I need to do. Is the assembly, is the GSA... Northern Virginia connected to the GSA in Blacksburg in any kind of shape or form? how do we work together or not? where would that go.?

Aidan: so I can answer that in kind of a broad way that would not actually answer your question but let me say what I'm going to say. And if I did not answer your question maybe you can tell me. You don't have to say oh your answer was fine. And so what our goal in the committee is is to make these overarching changes to the Constitution and bylaws so that the kinds of things that you are talking about can be more easily considered in the future.

So for example I joke about that we are taking words and pushing it somewhere else, but really changing the Constitution requires this whole process going through external bodies. Bylaws do not need as much. Which makes sense because the day to day proceedings should not need like University approval. Adding things like the midyear elections and having access to that through past delegates is something that we hope will again kind of address the questions you raise. And so I think that is, that is what I would say I do not have an answer. To your specific question perhaps, but the goal of the committee is that in these broad changes people will find the space and the ability to address those issues more easily than they are currently.

Ben: hey, Aidan I can probably maybe answer that question a little bit. As an introduction I am Ben I'm also on the Constitution committee. To answer your question Hypatia a space for the Northern Virginia graduate student representation, we sort of mentioned it briefly of having a cabinet for the cabinet whichis a group of people who represent the different graduate groups. So for example the president of the Roanoke graduate student group and the North Virginia would be on the cabinet and it would be a formalized way for them to have an ear to the president of the GSA to have them I guess have the issues of those graduate students heard by the president of the GSA and the second is what we mentioned earlier about the movement building of really trying to focus on building the smaller graduate student groups within each department and location and program that has delegates, and we want to make sure that each of those individual departments has programs that can focus on the specific needs of the department that the GSA doesn't really see and so that is how we would try to assist in those individual departments we want to be delegates can have support from the GSA to figure out how to do that.

Hypatia: I'm sorry I want to take a few more minutes if you guys don't mind because this is something that is important to me... Or I don't have any time.?

Aidan: absolutely. Yeah.

Hypatia: I guess what I was trying to address more than having a place I mean of course that is important but I'm talking about structure. It appears to me, and it appears to me because I am unable to find information clearly stated anywhere what is the, where is the connection between GSA, NOVA and the GSA Blacksburg or any other remote campus? do we have anything because... You know without that, people are not, it's going to be very difficult to attract people because you are working in a vacuum. I mean I felt for a long time that I'm working in a vacuum. Like I don't know where to go

and every time I want to take a step I have to check with Peter Paul Mary and everybody and I get different answers and then I get like really I don't know where I am supposed to go and so just trying to navigate things kind of in a vacuum. And so is the structure going to be anywhere in the future so people in the future don't have these issues that they do not know where to go? right now there is no clear path to resources in Blacksburg. There is no clear path to make concerns heard. I can kind of do that but because I don't know what authority I have or not authority, but what path I have to communicate that... It is kind of difficult for me to do that because I have always said my main goal is to graduate. It is not to find the entire Virginia Tech community about anything I want to get. And so if the path was clear, if the structure was clear somewhere, but when you say that you're going to give us space are you saying that that is going to be a clear, a very clear path to get there? there is going to be an appointment in one of the remote campus I mean what are the steps to become that person, that delegate without having to ask 20 different people and get 20 different answers?

Maruf: Hypatia, if I can answer your question I think you are addressing the problem that we are trying to solve. Like there is no step right now. So we are trying to say that okay we are going to restructure this and we will get you guys involved and then we will formalize this in the Constitution.

Hypatia: okay well that is...

Maruf: we fully acknowledge and we realize that it is not there. And that is the purpose of this entire rewrite process.

Hypatia: I didn't see that clearly. That's why I was asking I'm not judging or questioning I'm just saying if it is going to be there. Now that you are saying that I understand and I appreciate that. Not for me so much because I have been working in a vacuum for so long that I'm kind of used to it, but for the people that will come after me and hopefully this is going to be also connected to the innovation campus, where there is going to have to be some fluidity between the GSAs in between the campuses. Because people from Blacksburg, when they come up here and they want to have access to the resources that they are used to etc. etc., and so I think everybody would really benefit and I appreciate that's going to be one of the things that's going to get done it will be done because I've been told before not by GSA but by other people yeah we are working on it. We are doing this. I thought that in northern Virginia somebody was working in their own structure and I am thinking how can you work on your own structure if you don't even know what Blacksburg is doing or how... Or attempting to connect. My thing, my personal thing, my personal goal has always been to create community. And when I see northern Virginia trying to go on their own, that kind of... But then again I cannot blame them.

Maruf: Hypatia, I'm listening to all your concerns and looking at the clock more than anything else right now. And due to time and the remainder of slides I'd like to move on

because there's a few things we have to cover. And we can come back to this topic at the very end if there is time left over. But I would like to respect everyone's time of finishing by 7 PM.

Aidan: and I would like to say as a last comment I'm willing to stay around for a little bit afterwards to continue the discussion of people have questions. I'm good with that.

Maruf: all right executive board... Actually they did not submit a slide so Martina programs.

Martina: sure so we have completed the fall travel fund... Travel in quotations always for virtual conference registrations. We will have more, again virtual travel fund program application cycles open in 2021. Spring 21 we will have the G RDP. Updates will be available and made public on GSA's website and social media and on the weekly GSE listserv. GSAR as someone pointed out to me recently set up for graduate student a simile research symposium. We currently have over $20,000 raised in sponsorships internally. And the majority of our submissions are going to be virtual and synchronous. So prerecording... Research presentations and captioning them and having judges review them before a live Q&A. The virtual components are going to again still be the majority of... And by virtual I mean asynchronous in the situation, are still going to be the majority of the presentations for spring 21. Which leaves cap and gown. There is a virtual commencement this fall so we are not doing a lottery to run the cap and gown program. If you are interested in renting a cabin down for... Photography... I cannot speak right now. Photographic purposes. Please contact the email listed on the slide. In front of you. Which is GSA –cap-and-gown-g at BT.edu we are discussing of having a rental cost but having all materials dry cleaned by renting them and returned at the renters expense to prevent holds on student accounts. To just streamline the process and make it as easy as possible. Those are my updates. If you have questions or comments please use the chat function while we move on with the rest of our slides

Maruf: I think the next light is mine. So I will only need a minute or 90 seconds to tell it. I will give Awad, you have any updates for us?

Awad: nothing from you.

Maruf: Sharon any updates?

Sharon: sorry I could not find my mask. No updates from me.

Maruf: June, updates?

June: everybody should keep using the buy Blacksburg stickers please get them in the center or if you see me, I can hand you one to somewhere and as I mentioned before I'm looking into having an actual in-person end of semester event that is is of course we can still do that but it looks promising. Maybe there will be a vaccine by then maybe we will be administering it at that place but if you're optimistic like me and you want to figure out how to do this, but also may be a fun way to make up for the terrible semester and

year we have had, please contact me so we can plan something fun for everybody that's worth everybody's time. And safety. I think that is all for me.

Maruf: that would actually be a really good idea have a vaccine administration party. Amazing I think. You know, you would like it Jeff. Stop shaking your head my last but I would like to host a town hall I think if you guys sitting on the position I sit in with a lot of things being gone I see a lot of threads being connected and I would like to put it together in a way that it kind of makes sense that does not hold the constraints of the silliness with voting in this assembly meeting and things like that. Soit will be next week December 10 at 6 PM. That is the link to register. And the thing I would really like to talk about is how shared governance really works here. And how I think GSA can be effective at advocating for change. Those are like the two overarching themes that I would like to talk about there. I may mention names and departments. So because of that, this meeting will not be recorded.

So please attend if you want. And say... I think there is a Qualtrix or something or other out with you having the ability to submit questions of course please feel free to do that and I will talk and with that, that finishes our agenda. So do I have a motion to close or I guess any questions about [indiscernible] or anything else before I close?

Tommy: are details for it on the GSA website?

Maruf: this slide is probably more detailed I think. And I have been kind of debating what to call it and how to structure it, but the theme that I really wish to instill to everyone is, as mentioned how shared governance really works here. And how the GSA can be effective at changing everything. At least in my opinion.

Yeah we will put it in the slide. All right I can't do this. So unless you guys want to stay around forever

Kase: motion to adjourn.

>> Second.

Aidan: I looked and we do need a vote. Has to be a majority vote. So thumbs-up if you would like to adjourn.