

General Assembly Meeting Minutes

September 4th, 2025

Attendance:

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Approval of [May 2025 minutes](#) - Voted and approved
4. [Presentation from Corey Pass, office of Ombudsperson](#)
 - a. Stand alone
 - b. Confidential safe space to share conflict
 - c. Support come up with a plan for resolution if there is a conflict
 - d. Communicate through email (just to set up meeting, not any kind of information sharing)
5. **Executive Council Introductions and Reports**
 - a. President: Travis Fischer
 - i. Designs the agenda and runs all GSS meetings (including executive meetings); appoints the chairs of all committees; serves as the At-Large delegate for GPSG.
 - b. Vice President: John Stevenson
 - i. Aids the president in carrying out functions of the GSS; acts as a liaison between the GSS and University sponsored organizations and committees; serves as an alternate for GPSG meetings when any delegate cannot attend.
 - c. Treasurer: David Ramotowski
 - i. Plans the annual budget for the GSS; prepares a report on the current finances of the GSS once a semester.
 - d. Executive Associate: Sabrina Ahmed
 - i. Keeps the minutes of GSS meetings (including executive meetings); is the contact for any legislation to be brought up at GSS meetings and let the president and executive committee know; works with the webmaster to keep the website up to date.
 - e. Membership Officer: Joey Small
 - i. Prepares a list of departments and programs eligible for representation in the GSS; in charge of periodically letting departments/programs know there is not a current senator from their field; lets senators know when they are not in good standing; maintains an up-to-date list of GSS members and the ListServ
 - f. Parliamentarian: Caleb DeWitt
 - i. Calls GSS meetings to order; recommends changes to the GSS constitution on an annual basis as they see fit; in charge of researching any rules and regulations at the University that affects the GSS or graduate student population.
 - g. Webmaster: Obatola Layiwola

- i. Maintain and update the GSS website; uploads meeting minutes after they have been approved (minutes will be approved at the meeting after which the minutes were taken).
 - h. Social Media Director: Kshitija Kale
 - i. Keeps the Instagram/Twitter pages up to date with GSS events and news; works with other organizations and departments to advertise GSS events.
 - i. Travel Funds Director: Maleeha Naseem
 - i. Schedules meetings with the Travel Funds committee to score applications; deidentifies all applications; approves/rejects applications based on committee scores; inform the Administrative Affairs Coordinator how much to allocate applicants; is the primary contact for anyone with questions regarding funding from the GSS; discuss budget allocations with the Administrative Affairs Coordinator
 1. Current state restrictions on DEI terminology.
 2. Proposal to adjust application language (e.g., “educational advancement” instead of DEI).
 3. Mark the DEI survey question as “optional” for now.
 4. Longer-term: committee should draft a new proposal/survey and bring it for legislation if they want to formally change it.
 5. Possible workaround: rephrase DEI language as “educational advancement” or “equal opportunity” (still legal wording).

6. Graduate College Welcome and Updates

- a. introduction of the senate members (name, department, fun fact).
- b. introduction of the Deans of grad college
- c. New interim dean Dr. Saba Ali started working
- d. Continue working on international students needs
- e. Contact if you like to talk to Dean Rodriguez
- f. Deadlines of the fellowships will close soon
- g. Working with Maleeha and Tylor for travel fund
- h. GSEC will still continue to work for professional students

7. COGS Updates

- a. Introduction of COGS
- b. Concerns about tuition differential not being covered between College of Education and College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.
- c. Proposal to amend academic freedom policy to explicitly include graduate teaching assistants.

8. GPSG Updates – John Stevenson, KK

- a. First Meeting is September 9th
 - i. Onboarding retreat completed.
 - ii. spent time on learning how to draft and present the bills
 - iii. Student Impact Grants now open (deadline: Sept. 26).
- b. GPSG Student Impact Grant – research, thesis, travel award funding
 - i. [Information](#)

ii. [Application](#)

9. Grad Council Updates – David

- a. Approved creation of Collaborative Piano graduate program.
- b. Ongoing review of graduate education challenges.
- c. Need for a Fine Arts & Humanities delegate.

10. Graduate Student Senate (GSS) nomenclature

- a. **Full senator:** Primary representative for their department or program. They have voting rights on any matter brought up at GSS meetings. Each full senator must serve on a GSS committee unless they are on the executive council or a GPSG delegate
 - i. [Ask your DGS to send the number of students to GSS to determine the number of full senator per department](#)
 - ii. [Only full senators may vote on legislation.](#)
 - iii. [Alternates may vote only if filling in for an absent senator.](#)
 - iv. [After two consecutive absences without notice, senators are removed until reinstated.](#)
- b. **Alternate senator:** Attends meetings when the full senator cannot. Encouraged to attend all meetings but can only vote on issues when the full senator is not present.
- c. **Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG):** Governing body of all graduate and professional students.
- d. **Graduate Student Employment Committee (GSEC):** Discuss matters related to graduate student employment benefits.
- e. **Graduate and Professional Allocations Committee (GPAC):** Review funding requests for student organizations.
- f. **Grad Council:** Academic policy-making body for the Graduate College; members include graduate students, professors, and deans of the Graduate College.

11. Positions that need to be filled:

- a. Fine Art and Humanities Delegate for Grad Council
- b. GSEC Delegate

12. GSS Committees

- a. Graduate Student Voices Committee: In charge of highlighting the important work of graduate students across campus. ([dissolved](#))
- b. International Student Committee: Bring forth questions and concerns from the international graduate student population. Previous events include the World Dance Tour.
- c. Service and Social Committee: Planning events that are both philanthropic and social in nature. Previous events include GSS coffee hour.
- d. Graduate Student Teaching Committee: Provide resources and professional development to aid graduate teaching assistants.
- e. Jakobsen Graduate Development Committee – John Stevenson: Host the annual Jakobsen Research Conference to showcase the work of graduate students from across campus.

- f. Travel Funds Committee – Tyler Woodward: Allocates funds to graduate students for their travel to present their work.

13. What to include in the email for GSS Senators to Send to their Departments

- a. Don't just send the meeting minutes! These contain too much information that is not always relevant to what your students should know!
- b. A summary of what was discussed, upcoming events, funding opportunities (grants cycles), policy changes, presentation slides from our guest speaker, etc.
- c. For the first email, introduce yourself! Being a representative means being available for your constituents to ask you questions!
 - i. **Senators reminded to send summary reports to their departments (include funding links and opportunities).**

14. Open Discussion

- a. University Counseling Service Student Advisory Board
 - i. <https://counseling.uiowa.edu/about-us/student-advisory-board>
- b. Information videos for students
 - i. **Payroll Presentation:** Learn about pay schedules, tax forms, direct deposit, and Employee Self-Service access.
 - ii. **Billing Presentation:** Get a breakdown of the University Billing process, including monthly statements, payment options, COGS funding, financial aid disbursement, and key myUI resources for graduate students.
 - iii. **Benefits Presentation:** Understand graduate student health and dental insurance at the University of Iowa, including plan options, costs, assistantship benefits, enrollment deadlines, and how to manage coverage through myUI.
 - 1. **Informational videos on payroll, billing, and benefits available to share with constituents.**
- c. From the floor?
 - i. **Concerns about Meal Share program cuts (reduced meal allotments, high impact on international students).**
 - ii. **Clothing closet program discontinued.**
 - iii. **Proposal for resolution to advocate for expanded food access resources.**

15. Adjournment- Meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM