

General Assembly Meeting

February 5th, 2026

Attendance:

1. **Call to Order – 5:31**
2. **Attendance**
3. **Student Legal Services Presentation**
 - a. **Free for students**
 - b. **Confidential;**
 - c. **Representation, immigration consultation, mediation, notary public, etc.**
 - d. **Civil/criminal**
 - e. **Most cases focus on tenant's rights**
 - f. **SLS looking to better serve graduate surveys, collaborate on outreach surveys**
 - g. **University issues farmed out**
4. **Approval of [December 2025 meeting minutes](#)**
 - a. **"it passes. Yay."**
5. **Executive Council Reports**
 - a. President: Travis Fischer
 - i. Happy New Year and start of Spring Semester!
 - ii. Congratulations to our fantastic [Dare to Discover 2026](#) recipients!
 - iii. [UI Employee Assistance Program](#)- (UI EAP) is a confidential, short-term counseling and referral service provided at no cost to UI faculty, staff, postdocs, medical residents, their spouses/partners, and insurance-eligible dependents living in Iowa.
 1. [Support and Crisis line, Emergency Hardship Fund, Grief and Mourning Support Group, Peer Support, Substance Use, Sleep, Mental Health and Well-Being Course](#)
 - b. Vice President: John Stevenson
 - c. Treasurer: David Ramotowski
 - i. Update on budget status
 - ii. Preparing documentation on how to use p-card requests with SOBO
 - d. Executive Associate: Sabrina Ahmed
 - e. Membership Officer: Joey Small
 - i. Reminder to email DGSs and program offices updates from GSS GA meetings
 1. [please email your DGS's about what we discuss in the GSS meeting.](#)
 2. [if you do not have alternates please find alternates for your program.](#)
 - f. Parliamentarian: Caleb DeWitt
 - g. Webmaster: Obatola Layiwola
 - i. [new senators please send the headshots for the website](#)
 - h. Social Media Director: Kshitija Kale
 - i. Travel Funds Director: Maleeha Naseem

i. Funding cycle 2 and 3 updates

1. application- 57, funded-38 and 1 pending.
2. almost 60% funding is available
3. currently locked out of the GSS email so do not send email to GSS account. Please email GSS executive committee member.

6. Graduate College Updates

- a. fund raising for food pantry, hosted with the UI Retiree Association. Venue fee waived; 10% of sales donated to the campus food pantry
- b. Light appetizers provided; additional food/drinks available for purchase
- c. funding season is well underway and applications have started to come. Please check the deadline for summer funding (next Wednesday)
- d. The university is monitoring policy changes affecting international students and graduate financial aid. Updates will continue to be shared as more information becomes available.
- e. Saba Ali officially appointed (no longer interim) as Associate Provost for Graduate and International Education.
- f. Graduate College is meeting with federal and state financial aid offices to monitor upcoming changes. Federal financial aid policy changes will primarily affect new students next year or students changing programs. Possible elimination of certain federal subsidized loan programs under discussion (uncertain outcomes).

7. COGS Updates

- a. The university is anticipating approximately a 10% reduction in TA positions next year, and departments are preparing for potential decreases in assistantship availability while awaiting further details.

8. GPSG Updates – John Stevenson, KK, Travis

- a. GPSG passed a joint graduate–undergraduate resolution encouraging (not requiring) instructors to record lectures to improve accessibility for students.
- b. GPSG supported a late-night transit pilot shuttle operating approximately 9:00 PM–4:00 AM. The shuttle runs on a regular interval schedule (every 30 minutes) serving the Aspire/campus route. Students must present a physical university ID to ride the shuttle.

9. Grad Council Updates – David

- a. Discussed the Jacobson conference updates
- b. voted to close MA and professional improvement program of African American Worlds Studies, also BA may close pending board of regent, we are trying to stream the process for new programs and certificates to approve easily.
- c. The Council discussed streamlining approval procedures for new certificates and graduate programs to better align with established review processes.

10. Positions that need to be filled:

- ~~a. Fine Arts and Humanities – Grad Council~~
 - i. Farrow Ulven

11. GSS Reference Presentation for FAQs pinned in General Teams page

12. GSS Committee Chair Updates

- a. Jakobsen- John Stevenson
 - i. Important dates and times
 1. call for artwork and talk/poster went out
 2. should be on screen across campus
 3. finalize the catering and products
 4. anticipate lots of billing for the next month
 5. trying to involve the professors to review
 - a. Calls for artwork and research submissions have been released and shared with DGSs and will be posted on GSS platforms.
 - b. Submission deadlines: February 21 (talks) and February 28 (posters).
 - c. The Jacobson Interdisciplinary Research Conference will be held March 4, 4:00 PM, with food provided.
 - d. Planning is underway for faculty and postdoc reviewers, a full-day schedule, and a panel on emerging technologies in interdisciplinary research.
- b. Teaching- Alexandra Herron/Travis
 - i. Teacher Lounge Event
 - ii. Committee members, please stay after the meeting so we can discuss logistics
 1. working on a peer observation
 2. know your rights presentation
 - a. The committee's previously scheduled event was postponed, with rescheduling discussions ongoing.
 - b. Work is in progress on a peer observation framework to standardize teaching evaluations on an annual basis.
 - c. A "Know Your Rights" presentation with the ACLU of Iowa is being planned for graduate student instructors.
 - d. Committee leadership is transitioning, with interim responsibilities being reallocated to maintain continuity.
- c. International Student- Md Abu Ebrahim Siddique, Milad Arzani
 - i. meet up with ISSS about providing clear instruction about the federal decisions that are affecting international students
 - ii. Want to know more about if we encounter with ICE what we should do.
 - iii. Dailey Iowan
 - iv. Call for resources about how to be more proactive rather than re-active.
 1. ISSS fee increase: International student service fees may increase (potentially returning to ~\$250/semester); GSS plans to meet with ISSS to understand the rationale and raise student concerns.
 2. The committee is tracking changes with ICE and immigration policies, which are creating stress and uncertainty for international students.

3. Efforts are underway to coordinate informational sessions and legal resources (e.g., law clinics) to help students navigate visa and policy changes.
- d. Travel Funds- Tyler Woodward
- e. Service and Social- Airiana Mohr, Malayna Stober
 - i. Friday Night Vibes event is scheduled for April 10, with confirmations from vendors and catering in progress.
 - ii. The committee is coordinating with local businesses and food providers for the event.
 - iii. \$500 in prizes was approved to support the event if not covered by the general budget.
 - iv. Planning continues to ensure wide participation and smooth logistics for attendees.

13. Open Discussion

- a. 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
- b. [Basic Needs for Winter Preparedness](#)
- c. [Tax Questions and Help from Johnson County](#)
 - i.
- d. From the floor?
 1. Communication gaps: ISSS policy updates are sent to students but often not to advisors or departments, creating confusion; broader dissemination to DGSs/advisors was raised as a need.
 2. Student impact & advocacy: Ongoing federal immigration policy uncertainty is causing significant stress for international students; GSS committees are identifying resources and advocacy strategies.

14. Adjournment