General Assembly Meeting

October 1st, 2026

Attendance:

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Attendance**
3. **Ombudsperson Briefing (15 mins)**
    a. 4 standards and code of ethics
    b. What can Ombudsperson do and cannot do
    c. How to contact
    d. Slides available on MS Teams
4. **Approval of Sept Minutes (place voting link here)** - Approved
5. **Executive Council Introductions and Reports**
    a. President: John Stevenson
        i. 3 Minute Thesis- university-wide competition where graduate students present their research to a non-specialist audience using a single slide and no jargon.
            1. **Important Dates**:
                a. October 2 - Registration Deadline (11:59 PM CT)
                b. October 8-9 - Preliminary Rounds
                c. November 6 - Finals & Awards
        ii. 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
        iii. GPSG approved the 2026-2027 Budget so we will have funds to support our initiatives and grants this year!
            1. Most funds went to Jacobsen, followed by social and services
        iv. Committees have been established, and chairs have emailed their members. If you are a senator and we do not have you listed on a committee, see me after the meeting and we will assign you. THIS IS REQUIRED FOR ALL SENATORS
            1. Introduction by the various committees on their planned activities/initiatives
        v. Amendment Reading
            1. “Human rights amendment” was proposed to comply with University’s human rights policy which was changed on Jul 1, 2026, which would have caused conflicts.
    b. Vice President: Shri Vishalini Rajaram
        i. Jakobsen Committee updates
    c. Treasurer: Emily Hagan

i. Walk through the 2025-2026 Budget
ii. Total allocation this year: 15,592.6; 85% would go to Committees; 15% would be for Executive Council Honorarium

d. Executive Associate: Augustine Hung
e. Membership Officer: Rachel Valentine
    i. New members recruited after reaching out to DGS; though responses from some departments are still pending
f. Parliamentarian: Aidan Schlichting
    i. Parli Pro Crash Course
    ii. To follow up after passing the Amendment
g. Webmaster: Manisha Keim
h. Social Media Director: Paul Ntasin
i. Travel Funds Director: Sabrina Ahmed
    i. Funding cycle 1 update
        1. 41 eligible applications received; 27 funded, 9 pending documents
        2. Funding available for cycle 1: 21,500; 67,97% used (14,614.35)
    ii. Funding cycle 2 update
        1. Timeline: for travel during Oct 1st – Dec 31st, 2026; application opening on Oct 7th until Dec 2nd

6. **Voting on the 2025-2026 Budget (link)** - Passed
7. **Amendment Reading & Vote or Table (link)** - Passed
8. **Graduate College Updates**
    a. Injunction on duration of status (D/S) for international students would be in place until litigation completed; close contact with ISSS would be maintained
    b. Changes to TOEFL requirements – subscores Grad Council; new proposal will be tabled for vote
    c. Next DGS meeting (Oct 14th) regarding PhD Exit survey. A 3-4 student panel would be formed to share students' experience and needs
    d. Fellowship opportunities and small grants for research were available
    e. Acknowledge anxiety and stress felt by international students, and financial hardships experienced by students
9. **COGS Updates**
    a. Recruitment goes well, attendance at the monthly hangout was encouraged
10. **GSEC Updates – Priyanka, Brendan**
    a. **Clarifying language on dispersement on payment, discuss childcare and who qualify for materiality leave**
11. **GPSG Updates – Justin, Aidan**
    a. A shared session with government representatives would be held next week to discuss new strategy plan;
    b. Vote on amendments (housekeeping)
12. **Grad Council Updates – Sabrina, Paul**
    a. Discussed teaching and learning issues, including AI and its implications on teachers
    b. The significance of the MIT study on policies (link)

13. Positions that need to be filled:

a. Senators came from 90 programs; 10-12 still pending responses from DGS, rest were covered; 75% need alternates

14. GSS Senator Email Examples

a. Found in presentation

15. GSS Committee Establishment, Chair Welcomes and Introductions

16. Open Discussion

17. Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 6:37pm