



## **Graduate Student Senate actions 2015-2016**

Summary published May 10, 2016

### 1. *GSS Committees*

- a. ***Graduate Success*** (Chair: Andrew Metzger) – Invited speaker for the [Careers Outside the Academy](#) Conference and assisted with putting it on. Reached out to all departments to maximize participation in the University of Iowa's second annual [3 Minute Thesis](#) competition.  
Next year: involve the Humanities and Arts more, and expand to Masters' students.
- b. ***Graduate Voices*** (Chair: David Harman, ad-hoc committee) – Assembled questions for, and led, our meeting with President Harreld (see section 2 below). Coordinated research and efforts to release a [statement](#) about the Aspire rent increases. Connected graduate students with the Grad College to best showcase the work graduate students do.  
Next year: as an ad-hoc committee, its status is up to the GSS body.
- c. ***International Student Committee*** (Chair: Mohanad Nada) – Established a collaboration and partnership with UI International Student & Scholar Services. Also, we helped ISSS distributing a survey to assess the need of our international students.  
Next year: start early and plan one big event to bring international and domestic students together, maintain collaboration with ISSS office.
- d. ***Jakobsen*** (Chair: Tawny Tibbits) – Organized and facilitated a successful conference with over 200 people in attendance. This year a major part of our reception was focused on honoring the late Dr. Jakobsen as well as integrating 3MT. We had a wonderful turn out for both oral and poster presentations with a record number of winners in attendance at our reception.  
Next year: Start early, get organized. Make sure your committee knows their individual responsibilities and can operate as individuals. Get in contact with the IMU Event Services and IMU Catering in February to start on paperwork.
- e. ***Service & Social*** (Chair: Yunlu Zhao) – Organized 2 pizza parties and the 2016 Spring Fling, each with many hungry graduate students in attendance!  
Next year: Grad student appreciation week (April): coffee hour? Reserve the Spring Fling Venue at the end of fall semester and advertise earlier.
- f. ***Travel Funds*** (Chairs: Dong Yu & Russell Ricker) – GSS Travel Funds has thus far recommended funding 132 graduate students for conference travel this Fiscal Year (with 1 cycle to go). The chairs analyzed funding decisions to see whether there was a bias in favor or against some divisions, and found no evidence that supported bias: there were similar funding rates across graduate divisions.  
Next year: improve and streamline the application and reviewing process (e.g., changing it from 2 abstracts to 1 abstract that is written according to the "public abstract" guidelines) so that more students are eligible and thus more excellent graduate work will be funded.



## **2. General Body**

- a. General Assembly minutes are posted [here](#). Events that occurred outside the usual activities of the general assembly are described below.
- b. September 10: Twenty seven senators met to co-write a [statement](#) about the lack of transparency in the selection of the new UI President. During the September 15 general assembly, the GSS body expressed a vote of No Confidence in the Iowa Board of Regents and voted to release the above statement.  
Coverage: [Daily Iowan](#), [Little Village](#).
- c. November 12: Graduate Student Finances event with invited speaker Emily Roberts of [Grad Student Finances](#). Dr. Roberts led us this unique grad-student-oriented finances workshop. Her hour-long talk was comprised of a significant amount of information that was complemented by the worksheet she [provided](#). Please do not distribute outside University of Iowa graduate students; it is intended as a resource for University of Iowa graduate students only, and provided as a professional courtesy.
- d. November 18: Held a public discussion with UI President Harreld, with questions written and decided upon by GSS. The meeting was led by members of the GSS Graduate Voices Committee. Questions and opening statements by the GSS President are [posted](#).  
Coverage: [Press-Citizen](#), [Daily Iowan](#).
- e. Thank you to these exemplary senators:

Tawny Tibbits, Michael Petrie, Stephanie Kuper, and Mark Miller, as executives who went particularly above-and-beyond for their work on the GSS Graduate Survey and/or participating on a committee.

Dong Yu, Russell Ricker, and Yunlu Zhao put in significant time and energy as chairs of the Travel Funds and Social & Service committees.

Exceptionally excellent committee work was done by Sarah O'Neill (Social & Service, Travel Funds), and by Naomi Hertsberg and Maria Morabe (Jakobsen).

Our *GSS Generalist* award goes to Laurena Bernabo (Travel Funds, Jakobsen, Grad Council), and our *GSS Reppin' It* award goes to Melissa Marchal (Graduate Council and Graduate & Professional Student Government.)

## **3. Graduate Council Representatives**

- a. Grad student representatives heard proposals for the recommendation of creating, modifying, or closing graduate programs. We asked questions to determine that these proposals were in the best interests of grad students, and cast our votes accordingly. (The votes of the council are not the final say; program changes must be approved by multiple other groups.) We also presented the data from the GSS Graduate Student Survey.



4. ***Graduate & Professional Student Government (GPSG) Delegates***

- a. Delegates worked on a number of proposals, including regarding increasing student fees to increase staffing at University Counseling Services. See [news](#) and [minutes](#). Next year, all GPSG delegates will be formally asked to serve on one of the committees (currently Diversity, Sustainability, and Campus Safety.)

5. ***Actions of the GSS Executive Council***

- a. Fall 2015 – Spring 2016: Implemented and analyzed a campuswide doctoral survey to gather graduate students' thoughts about their programs. The goals for these data are to advocate for program changes to better meet graduate students' needs, and to contribute to the Graduate College's revision of doctoral programs. Executive summary and summary data are [here](#).
- b. [October](#) 2016: the University of Iowa Registrar asked GSS Executives for feedback about a proposal about a one-time Combined Fee assessed only to newly registered students as of Fall 2016. After deliberation and a vote, this [statement](#) was sent to the Registrar in reply.

6. ***Ongoing/misc:***

- a. 2 GSS members (Joanna Krajewski and Nicole Jardine) were appointed by GPSG to the Presidential Task Force on Graduate TA/Teacher Training.
- b. Nicole Jardine, the outgoing GSS President, is a member of the group developing the next UI Strategic Plan.

7. ***Thanks everyone!***

This has been a year of change for the University of Iowa. Many of us have felt this across campus, in our departments, or at an individual level. By balancing some new initiatives, amplifying graduate students' voices, and staunchly sticking to the core of GSS – its Committees that serve graduate students – I hope GSS helped provide a force of stability and vision. Thanks everyone! Congratulations to those who are graduating, and for those who are sticking around, I hope to see you around campus! -- *Nicole*





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*Giving Grad Students a Voice...*

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## **Graduate Student Senate 2015-2016**

### ***2015-2016 GSS Executive Council***

President: Nicole Jardine, *Psychological & Brain Sciences*

Vice President: Tawny Tibbits, *Earth & Environmental Sciences*

Executive Associate: Stephanie Kupfer, *French & Italian*

Treasurer: Mark Miller, *Biochemistry*

Parliamentarian: Francis Smith, *Psychological & Brain Sciences*

Membership Officer: Jeralyn Westercamp, *Health Management & Policy*

Public Relations Officer: Anna Mikhaylova, *Second Language Acquisition*

Webmaster (appointed): Michael Petrie, *Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Science*

### ***2015-2016 Graduate Council Representatives***

Humanities & Fine Arts: Laurena Bernabo, *Communication Studies*

Physical, Mathematical, and Engineering Sciences: Kevin Gerstle, *Mathematics*

Social Sciences & Education: Nicole Jardine, *Psychological & Brain Sciences*

Biological & Health Sciences: Melissa Marchal, *Genetics*

The Graduate Council, comprised of these GSS members and some Directors of Graduate Studies (see members [here](#)) met approximately every two weeks on Thursday mornings during the Fall and Spring semesters.

### ***2015-2016 Graduate & Professional Student Government Delegates***

Biological & Health Sciences: Melissa Marchal, *Genetics*

Humanities & Fine Arts: Kelsey McGinnis, *Musicology*

Physical, Mathematical, and Eng. Sci: Catie Patterson, *Applied Mathematical & Computational Sciences*

Social Sciences & Education: Hannah Walsh, *Political Science*

At-large representative: Nicole Jardine, *Psychological & Brain Sciences*

The Graduate & Professional Student Government ([GPSG](#)) is an assembly of graduate and professional students who represent their respective constituents across campus. It met once a month in the evenings, with additional service dependent on committees.



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*Giving Grad Students a Voice...*

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## **Graduate Student Senate 2016-2017**

### ***2016-2017 GSS Executive Council***

President: Laarena Bernabo, *Communication Studies*

Vice President: Ian Faith, *English*

Executive Associate: KaLeigh White, *Sociology*

Treasurer: Andrew Metzger, *Biomedical Engineering*

Parliamentarian: Shane Solst, *Biosciences*

Membership and Publicity Officer: Christopher Clough-Hunter, *Communication Studies*

Webmaster (appointed): open as of May 9, 2016

### ***2016-2017 Graduate Council Representatives***

Humanities & Fine Arts: Laarena Bernabo, *Communication Studies*

Physical, Mathematical, and Engineering Sciences: Ellen Black, *Hydroscience & Engineering*

Social Sciences & Education: Todd Bagby, *Urban & Regional Planning*

Biological & Health Sciences: Maria Morabe, *Microbiology*

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### ***2016-2017 Graduate & Professional Student Government Delegates***

Biological & Health Sciences: Anh Ngo, *Pharmacy, Informatics*

Humanities & Fine Arts: Ian Faith, *English*

Physical, Mathematical, and Engineering Sciences: Tejasvi Sharma, *Mechanical Engineering*

Social Sciences & Education: KaLeigh White, *Sociology*

At-large representative: Laarena Bernabo, *Communication Studies*

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