

The Graduate-Professional Student Organization met on November 3, 2016 in room 248 of the Miller Learning Center. At 6:30 the meeting was called to order by Secretary Jacob Hoyle. In attendance were 17 graduate and professional students representing at least 10 of UGA's 17 schools and colleges.

Comment [JC1]:

Comment [JC2R1]: How many students and schools were there?

I. Update on recent GPSA Activities

a. Jacob Hoyle reviewed several recent initiatives GPSA has recently been involved in, including: STEM Outreach Program funded by President Morehead's Venture Fund, a future scholarship and snack break at the 2017 Georgia Science & Engineering Fair, and IRIS.

II. Address by President Morehead

- a. President Morehead requested we go around the room and introduce ourselves.
- b. President Morehead discussed several new initiatives the Dean of the Graduate School, Dean Barbour, has been working on with his support, including: increasing graduate enrollment, finding new funding sources for graduate students, developing more integrative programs across disciplines, and the development of two new fellowship programs focused on inquiry and integration.
- c. President Morehead also mentioned several new developments on campus, including: Center for Molecular Medicine which will focus on human health concerns, new building for Terry College of Business will be completed in summer, the old Terry College of Business will then be available for other uses, and the Board of Regents has just approved a new interdisciplinary building which will increase the link between research and growing graduate students. There has also been a 14% increase in spending on graduate research.
- d. President Morehead then discussed the launching of the "Commit to Georgia" campaign, which will introduce a new face of UGA. The idea behind this campaign is to raise money to eliminate funding barriers and enhance the learning environment at UGA for all students. This is being done to jump start funding. The campaign starts officially on campus on November 10th and publicly on November 17th.
- e. Additionally, there is currently an effort to clean up Lake Herrick. UGA would like to restore the surrounding area enough to potentially allow for limited recreation. UGA is looking into the best ways to restore this area, as well as funding for this endeavor.

III. Q&A with President Morehead

a. (Graduate student from microbiology) asked whether it is possible to reduce or eliminate the “special institutions” fee graduate students are currently required to pay. President Morehead responded the fee was enacted during the recent recession in order to ensure many programs and staff would not be cut due to decreased state government funding. Although UGA would like to eliminate the fee, there is a need for these funds and no other alternative funding source as UGA would like to avoid raising tuition for now.

Comment [JC3]: What was her name? Haley?

b. Jessica Chappell asked about the 2020 UGA Strategic Plan and how the goals for graduate education were currently being addressed and whether graduate students themselves could do anything to help achieve these outcomes. President Morehead responded that the only real goals of the Strategic Plan involving graduate students was securing more funding to support more graduate student fellowships. Thus, there isn't anything graduate students can do to help.

c. Jacob Hoyle asked President Morehead whether he would be able to attend IRIS this year and whether he still supports the conference. President Morehead responded he would like to attend if possible.

d. (microbio student again) asked whether there was anything being done to increase mental health support for graduate students, and whether there could be any free classes related to this, such as yoga or stress therapy. President Morehead answered that although he understands the importance of the mental health of graduate students, these services do have a cost associated with them and they would be funded through the health fee. However, Dean Barbour may have some available fees to help support mental health issues for graduate students.

Comment [JC4]: Same student as the first question

e. Kristen Lear asked whether there was a plan to make some services, such as the dental services, available to graduate students on a payment plan which is currently not allowed. President Morehead said he was not aware of this issue but will investigate a solution. Additionally, the summer student health fee direct payment issue, which can draw multiple times per month, and the payment plan which charges a fee was mentioned. President Morehead responded he would look into this issue.

f. Reni Kaul and the (microbio student) asked about whether it was possible to raise support for graduate students as fees have also been rising. President Morehead responded that fees have not been increased within the last few years, and that he thinks this is more of a department issue. Students countered that although departments do try to raise fees, it is sometimes a difficult process and make take several months to years to see their stipends increased, during which time they will be paying more in fees.

Comment [JC5]: Am I remembering this right? I don't remember if the issue was resolved or not, also...

g. Reni Kaul asked in what way does President Morehead's duties directly impact graduate students. President Morehead responded he is in charge of primarily through raising funds which will support graduate student fellowships.

h. Jacob Hoyle thanked President Morehead for his time and President Morehead left the meeting.

IV. Consideration of September 22, 2016 minutes

a. No one had seen the minutes from last meeting so approval of the notes was tabled.

b. (guy from Warnell) suggested to have the minutes emailed to the meeting attendees and all other department representatives in addition to being posted on the website.

Comment [JC6]: Can we look up this guy's name?

V. Consideration of Academic Calendar proposal for 2018-2019

a. Several concerns were brought up by the graduate students concerning the calendar, particularly the scattering of days off throughout both semesters.

b. Reni Kaul mentioned that for graduate students teaching labs, and for undergraduates taking labs, this schedule would likely not work. Currently, lab courses are offered Monday through Friday. The policy is that if there is one day off during the week, such as for Labor Day, labs are canceled for the week as all labs must be on the same schedule. If there were to be several weeks where there was one day off, this would not work for any of the lab based courses.

c. Another student proposed that the days off be restricted to just lecture courses, keeping the spirit of the suggestion alive by allowing professors to have the day off to catch up but maintaining the lab courses on track.

d. Another student asked whether the Council had considered UGA students are in school for a substantially longer time than most other campuses.

e. Approval of the Academic Calendar Proposal was tabled for the next meeting.

Comment [JC7]: Do we need a name here?

VI. Call for IRIS Volunteers

a. A call for volunteers was issued and interested students were asked to stay after the meeting for an organizing session.

VII. The Meeting was Adjourned at 7:30 PM.