



**GRADUATE STUDENT  
ASSOCIATION**

**Agenda for Graduate Student Association General Assembly**  
January 23<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The January meeting of the University of Toledo Graduate Student Association was held on Health Science Campus in the HEB 105. The officers present were the President (Alisa Nammavong), the Vice President (Sahar Atshan), the Treasurer (Kristy Kagy), the Main Campus Secretary (Shelby Kesterson), the Health Science Secretary (Ethel Tackie-Yarboi), and the Communications Specialist (Brandi Kimbrough).

**Representatives Present:** Laura Morillo, Devante Russell, David McMurray, Abdullah Al Saad, Ibeh Omodolar, Jeanna Tran, Katsumi Takeno, Robert Worthington, Darren Gordon, Hallie Dolin, Ian Clifton, Prabhani Rajakaruna, Zachary Douglas, Sujata Pandey and Omar Issa.

**Representatives Absent with Proxy:** Sydney Miller

**Representatives Absent without Proxy:** Brittany Jones, Christina Jones, and Sabrinne Gibson,

The call to order was made by Alisa Nammavong at 6:11pm; 78 people were in attendance.

Robert Worthington motioned to approve the December 2018 minutes and Omar Issa second the motion.

Ms. Kagy introduced herself and her role, then presented the budget update. She asked the audience if they had any question about travel reimbursement. She mainly discussed what travel reimbursement is, how much a student receives based on their membership status and encouraged the audience to look over the criteria for reimbursement. She noted that active status was valid for 6 months and pre travel form is to be submitted 14 days before the travel. She also recommended that students reach out if they had any question regarding the process.

Mr. Worthington: How much do we have left for funding?

Ms. Kagy: About \$13,000 and two people will be presenting today for funding

Ms. Abby Don was introduced by Ms. Nammavong to discuss the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT). 3MT will take place on the HSC on Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2019 @ 6:00 pm. Ms. Don went over the idea of 3MT, the requirements, and showed a video of what the competition looks like. She mentioned that students will be judged on communication, engagement, and audience understanding.

Eligibilities

1. PhD students who are in good standing and have passed qualifying exam or submitted your application for candidacy



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2. Masters students, who are in good standing, have completed two semesters and have completed your research form.
3. Graduated students can not compete

For the competition, you are only allowed one slide with no effects and 3 minutes to give your talk. If you go over the allocated time you lose the competition.

Ms. Don mentioned that the deadline for the competition is Feb. 1<sup>ST</sup> and there are prep sessions that will help the student with the competition. There will be qualifying rounds and whom ever wins that round will be able to go to the nationals with expenses paid. The application can be found on COGS website. If you want to volunteer that is also an option for the program, you just have to contact Mrs. Terri Green.

Ms. Dolin: Can you participate if you are a member of GSA?

Ms. Don: Yes, you can.

Ms. Nammavong presented updates from the external committee meetings.

For the President's Advisory Council, Randy Gardner was recently as the Ohio's Chancellor of Higher Education. Ms. Nammavong informed the audience of the concerns which continue in regard to Bowling Green State University purchasing Mercy College due to the proximity of UT and BGSU. At her meeting she was informed that there is no statute in Ohio law preventing universities from being within same boundary.

New international enrollment for graduate students has increased by 39 students while graduate professional students by 88 students. The donated Well Tower space will be used as the Center for Alumni Donor and Engagement.

UT Branding campaign will be conducted with MadHouse, a local Toledo-based marketing company. The Branding switchover will begin over this summer.

Student Health Insurance moved from the Office of Student Affairs to the Human Resources Department, much like that of UT employees. This change will allow trained insurance staff to help with plan designing, administration, and managing health insurance plans. Tonya Tressler (Student Insurance Management Representative) will continue to be the consultant on rocket central solutions, student accounts, and other student concerns. Ms. Nammavong asked the audience to communicate Tonya if they had any concerns. The websites and materials will be updated on the UT website to eliminate paper application and problems associated with the old method. The goals for the Fall are to create a simplified plan with a single rate for undergraduate



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and graduate, and to find means to reduce student health insurance costs. UT is working with the legal team to take the necessary actions due to SEBT bankruptcy and they are also handling outstanding balances for students. Dr. Flapp Cockrell and Dr. Bryan Pack wanted to make sure students were receiving emails. They mentioned that Jan 31 is the deadline to opt in or out of the health insurance. SICK has made it possible to compare the plans, allowing you to choose the one suitable for you. The goal of GSA at this time is to provide you a timeline as to when these things happen.

UT TARTA buses have new skins. TARTA with UT will continue on Sundays despite changes to the city's TARTA schedule.

Provost Andrew Hsu will be transitioning into his new position with Charleston University. With this new change, the Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will be Dr. Karen Bjorkman, former Dean of the College of Natural Science and Mathematics.

At the Graduate Council meeting Ms. Nammavong discussed the Diversity Plan which will be developed in the Provost Office with Kevin West, Senior Director and Faculty Labor Relations and Academic Inclusion Office. The council's goal is to put in place recommendations for committees to increase diversity at UT.

Ms. Nammavong thanked Dr. Cyndee Gruden, Interim Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs, for continuing to advocate for graduate student health insurance

At the council meeting, Drs. Amy Thompson and Christine Fox of the Course Evaluation Ad-Hoc Committee presented possible course evaluations that could be used throughout the university in all disciplines that focuses on core, unified, and holistic themes. The evaluation would be used on Qualtrics, Blackboard, or other college-preferred survey host. This new form of evaluation changes the negative review of a professor but shifts it to focus on the course as a whole as well as returning responsibility to the student. Examples of questions asked would be, Was grading in the course fair, I was comfortable expressing views and ideas in this course, I put forth my best effort in the course, and feedback was helpful at improving my performance in the course.

The College of Graduate Studies is considering developing a role such as an ombudsman for students that could promote mentoring, student well being, and assist with advisor relations, which could potentially help with issues like academic standing.



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In meeting with Interim Provost Karen Bjorkman, she pointed out that the most important thing is student success. She wants to make sure faculty and students were able to communicate with each other to address all problems. Conversations were had about competing with the BGSU/Mercy merger. Currently, UT is having meetings with BGSU/Mercy, so we do not undermine their programs. We want a fair competition because UT and BGSU.

There was also conversation about accessibility to grocery stores that Provost intends on following up.

At Ms. Nammavong's Midwest Graduate Student Leaders meeting, they discussed Title IX proposed changes and how the different universities in the group are addressing the change. Ms. Nammavong also spoke with Diane Miller, Interim Deputy Chief of Staff/Associate Vice President for Government Relations, about how GSA could contribute to these conversations with the university. The leaders also discussed possibly starting a centralized Ohio graduate community/organization to maintain conversations and support for all graduate senates/governments.

Some of the E-board members met with the Bowling Green State University Graduate Student Senate. This was an introductory meeting to compare roles and current status of the GSA. At this point the UT E-board wants to maintain social interaction since our goals do not align.

From the Student Health Insurance Meetings from Winter Break, a formal report was generated which will include GSA President's notes from 3 separate meetings.

Payer Fusion, LLC will be replacing SEBT under an 18-month contract. Payment plan are available for mandated and opt-in. Mandated students are able to enroll in the payment plan to be included in their student accounts by contacting Financial Aid. Mandated students also have the option to divided the amount over 4-months. Opt-in students are able to enroll in the payment plan such that their amount will be divided over 7-months. Payment dates will be on the same day every month and it will be spread out from January to July. There is an administrative fee of \$60 if you want to opt into a payment plan. Spring-Summer rates will keep the student insured until August and there have been discussion on the tier ratings for health insurance. Eliminating tier could possible simplify the student health insurance options. There also has been some discussion on increasing the pool to include undergraduate and graduate in order to address previous concerns brought up about the UT population

We will be welcoming Bryan Pack as the Director of Benefits and Wellness, Human Resources at our next meeting. Mr. Pack has wealth of knowledge in terms of insurance handling.



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Dan Boyle and Bryan Pack will be working together. THEY WILL BE AT THE NEXT MEETING.

Ms. Nammavong congratulated to the Graduate Research Award 2019 Recipients!

- i. Sarah Carter (MS Ecology, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics) – \$2000
- ii. Cara DeAngelis (PhD Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine and Life Sciences)- \$2000
- iii. Austin Hulbert (MS Biology with Ecology Track, College of Natural Sciences and Medicine)- \$2000
- iv. Srimathi Kasturirangan (PhD Molecular Biology, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics)- \$1997.09
- v. Prabaha Sikder (PhD Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering)- \$1972.50
- vi. Total Amount Awarded: \$9969.59

Midwest Graduate Research Symposium (10 minutes): Sahar Atshan – Introduced herself and MGRS. It is a free event. Registration ends March 10<sup>th</sup> for both the abstract and the registration. Keynote speaker is Dr. Gilbert. The registration link does not work as of the moment but it will be working soon. The symposium is on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the Student Union and Memorial Field House. Ms. Atshan introduced the coordinators and they gave a short synopsis of what they do or will be doing. The steering committees are

- i. Lead Symposium Co-Coordinators: Alisa Nammavong and Sahar Atshan
- ii. Keynote Coordinators: Alisa Nammavong and Sahar Atshan
- iii. Contributions Coordinator: David McMurray
- iv. Recruitment Coordinator: Katsumi Takeno and Dave Sherman
- v. Judges Coordinator: Navid Namdair and Raina Dawson
- vi. Scheduling Coordinator: Hossein Abedsoltan
- vii. Program Coordinator: Zeinab Zoghi
- viii. Volunteers Coordinator: Daiana
- ix. Press & Media Coordinator: Madeleine Nelson

At this time the committee is looking for people to register. If you know of a faculty who wants to bring their undergraduate class to the program, they are welcome to do so. Also the committee is looking for judges, if you know of anyone who will want to be a judge (professor, PhD or masters holder) that would be great.



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Ms. Atshan went through on how to access the registration website through the GSA website.

**Group Funding Requests:**

Ms. Cara DeAngelis gave the presentation. 2019 Graduate Research Forum- March 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 on Health Science Campus (15-20 minutes)-Cara spoke on the Graduate Research Forum. Held on this HSC. Day 1 will be preliminary poster and oral. Day 2 will be the final round of presentation for the 4 final presenters. Dr. Janet Iwasa from the University of Utah in the Department of Biochemistry. Registration is closed at the moment.

**Audience member-** how much are you going to dip into?

**Ms. DeAngelis** -\$513

**Audience member-** is there any funding for the event from your department?

**Ms. DeAngelis** -No

**Audience member** - Why is the department not supporting you?

**Ms. DeAngelis** -Because they know that GSA will be asked for the forum.

**Audience member** - Do you have feedback on the event?

**Ms. DeAngelis** -We give students the feedback they get from their presentation

**Mr. Darren** – the program was beneficial to learn about what others were doing it and they will try to get outside funding next year.

**Ms. DeAngelis** - It is a nice way for student to prepare for MGRS.

**Audience member** -If you don't get the full amount then how will the program be funded?

**Ms. DeAngelis** - Money from a pull will be used.

**Audience member** - Have you tried involving the student from the biomedical engineering student?

**Ms. DeAngelis** - No but the students are welcome to come have lunch with the students

**Audience member** - How long does the process take for funding?

**Ms. Kagy**- It will be expedited and it will be sent out on the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month.

**Audience member** - Will the email just be sent to HSC or to the main campus?

**Ms. DeAngelis** - I can send the email to the reps so everyone gets them.

Floor was then opened for the reps to propose the amount they will like to be funded. The last amount proposed was voted on first, and then the first amount will be the last to be voted on.

**Ms. Dolin**- proposed that we give the \$4513.60 (**Mr. Issa** second motion) (8 total votes)

**Mr. McMurray**- proposed that we give the \$4513.60 with the condition that they will contact the different department involved for \$1000 each then give it back if they get that funded (**Mr. Omodolar** second the motion) (4 total votes)



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Floor reopen for debate on David's proposal by Robert- On the condition of \$1000, it is difficult for department to fund something they have not budgeted for, also going around will be more work from the people involved.

With the vote of 8 votes in favor of funding the total amount, the group was awarded the total amount they requested.

Mr. Roberto- presented this budget proposal. Careers in Science Expo will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 on Main Campus. Expand the avenues for graduate students when they graduate. The aim of the program is to provide and educate the graduate students on the different career opportunities. The keynote speaker for the event will be Dr. Christa Pawlowski. The program will allow graduate students to network with potential employers.

The website for the event gives the students the opportunity to schedule a one on one meeting with the speaker and also register for the elevated speech.

Department was able to give them \$500 for the event

Amount requesting \$2551.19

The food is open to anyone who attends.

**Audience member-** Are engineering students allowed to attend?

**Mr. Roberto-** Yes, they are.

**Audience member-** Do you get funds from the companies?

**Mr. Roberto-** No, there are no funding from the companies

**Audience member-** Are the companies shown the only companies coming to the event?

**Mr. Worthington** voted for the full amount (**Ms. Morillo** second the motion) (14 total vote)

With the vote of 14 votes in favor of funding the total amount, the group was awarded the total amount they requested.

**Committee Session: Updates**

- a. Public Relations Committee - had no update
- b. Professional Development Committee- had no update
- c. Social Events Committee - had no update
- d. Research and Development Committee- proposing a scholarly activity definition and what should be regarded as a scholarly activity. It has been sent to Kristy and she approved and Dr. Cruden is yet to approve that. Research trip is not included in the list and that has to be defined.



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- e. Constitution Review Committee- **Article 8 SECTION 6. Amendment was made, indicating that an officer can not present or request funds (Robert approved and Laura second the motion (13 reps voted in agreement))**
- f. Budget Review Committee- had no update
- g. Special Interest Committee on Health - had no update

**New Business**

- a. Hybrid Attack Mitigation- February 22<sup>nd</sup>
- b. February 12 General Assembly: Guests in regard to student health insurance: Brian Pack and Dan Boyle (Office of Student Advocacy and Wellness)
- c. **Open Discussion Topics was motioned to be discussed at the February meeting (Zachary voted in agreement and David second the motion)**
  - i. What questions are students having in regard to change of provider and registration for insurance? Any changes we would like to see SICH address with health insurance, such as price of insurance?
  - ii. If students were in an opt-in system, what credit hours seem appropriate for students enrolled to be mandated into system? Do we want an opt-in and opt-out system?
  - iii. Per Provost Bjorkman: Were there any concerns with registering for classes? Is there flexibility in the classes and do the credit hours present on transcripts correctly?

**Upcoming Events**

- a. Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>: Future of Higher Education Forums presented by Christopher Martin, PhD; Main Campus, Carlson Library Room 1005
- b. Feb 1<sup>st</sup>: Three-Minute Thesis Registration Deadline  
<http://www.utoledo.edu/graduate/currentstudents/3mt/>
- c. Professional Development Survey Continues:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MK7JZTB>

Ibeh Omodolar motioned to adjourn and Robert Worthington seconded at 7:36 pm.