

Graduate Assembly Meeting Minutes

Nov 21, 2019

Venue: Meeting Room A, JC

1. Natalie motioned to approved meeting minutes.
2. Natalie presented an overview of GAPSA to reps.
3. Member asked what committee Natalie sits on.
 - Uni. leadership (UL) with Rose Pascarell
 - Board of Visitors meeting
4. Newsletter - added members of the Grad Std Assembly to the listserv
It's a monthly newsletter, goes out mid-month
We are always looking for content from grad students university-wide
At the moment, its events, employment opportunities, but I hope to also expand to updates,
Welcome contributions, announcements, volunteer, even research news from your departments
5. Atis, Octavia, and Natalie shared about their experiences at the JMU conference.
6. Welcome Grad Assembly members to join Mason360.
7. Austin led the voting on the definition for active membership in GAPSA
Friendly amendments:
Every academic year, Austin will send a name list of eligible graduate students for the additional \$50 for GSTF to the Office of the Provost.
Meeting for Grad Student Assembly - time. Will reps get to have their input?
Representatives can designate a proxy.
Can people attend virtually? No.
8. Members request that scheduling of Grad Std Assembly can be placed on other days so reps can have opportunities to attend. This is to ensure all will fulfill the requirements and be in good standing.
 - To attend one meeting per semester
 - Representatives do not miss more than one meeting per active semester without a proxy.
9. Doodle participation - scheduling for future Grad Std Assembly
10. Natalie presented topics for next meeting: President Student Advisory Board
11. Among raised questions/topics:
 - To add shuttle for games (from Arlington to Fairfax campus)
 - Question on maternity and paternity leave for Grad Stds as there is nothing at the moment
 - Mentoring and Professional development opportunities for future GRA/GTA/GPA

Julie and Austin presented an overview of graduate student compensation and funding.

Dr. Laurence Bray attended as guest speaker

- There was a minimum raise this year for graduate assistants
- A funding enhancement working group has been established on how to better fund graduate students
- Working on adding more research intensive programs and PD dev opportunities for students
- Course fees (\$200) is now included as part of the coverage
- Covering more tuition, in-state availability for students
- Handshake is advantageous, program coordinators, professors, but connections with academic units will be more effective over time
- Working on a new graduate education website
- To have a central place where different units can advertise their assistantships rather than in individual depts
- Current decentralized way of funding graduate students
- Ideal stipend (min. stipend) average compensation varies from discipline to discipline
- Same compensation rates GRA, GTA, and GPA
- MA and Ph.D. students will take more adjustment
- The average stipend is \$16,000 - 17, 000
- Postdoctoral opportunities within Mason - encouraged students to pursue a postdoc fellowship at another uni, or at a different university to be more competitive
- Working on providing better support for postdoc students, or apply for faculty positions
- Working on increasing grant funding from faculty toward hiring more GAs
- Incremental change - better communication