

GAPSA General Assembly

October 14, 2020

Meeting Notes

- Welcome from Officers
- Attendance
- Guest Speaker: Dr. Laurence Bray
 - New funding opportunities:
 - Achievement Award (\$4000, about 3-6 credits)
 - Will be launching in about 2-3 weeks, for Spring 2021
 - A new one will launch in the Spring for Fall 2021
 - Dissertation Completion Assistantships (full time, part time, etc.)
 - Available now here:
<https://provost.gmu.edu/academics-and-research/graduate-education/awards-and-grants>
 - Both awards are competitive and TBD how many
 - Asking about racial-ethnicity on grant and scholarship applications
 - Multiple people expressed concerns over bias if they include that information
 - One suggestion is to ask the question after awards are made
 - Also important to create spaces for diversity of perspectives, especially on tough topics such as race and ethnicity
 - Question about use of the library during the pandemic
 - Dr. Kim reminds everyone that they can request books to be pulled and made available to students in a no-contact exchange
 - We are looking for 3 graduate students to get involved in the anti-racism task force (20 hours per week, paid student wage), starting as soon as possible
 - If anyone is interested, Dr. Bray can share the descriptions
- Discussion on Spring 2021 Schedule (and Spring Break)
 - Faculty Senate is voting today at 3p between early finish and late start
 - To find out more about the Faculty Senate:
<http://www.gmu.edu/resources/facstaff/senate/>
 - To find out more about this vote:
http://www.gmu.edu/resources/facstaff/senate/FS_AGENDA_10-14-20_FINAL.pdf
 - Many students are voicing frustration over not being aware of this until last minute (when it's too late to weigh in options)
 - Importance of Spring Break: time off, mental health, stress, etc. especially given the current circumstances
 - Concerns that have been heard from graduate students
 - Faculty aren't able to give students a week off (even if they'd like to) because it reduces instruction time to just 13 weeks
 - Early finish is nice due to longer summer (especially out of state students who would like to return home)

- At the same time, there are major concerns from PhD students who would be unable to finish their dissertations a week earlier (and thus would be unable to graduate)
 - Also, unsure how this affects programs that run on an alternative module schedule (e.g., MBA program and law school)
 - This won't affect the 100% online asynchronous Wiley programs (e.g., MPS in Psychology) though
 - Other options that are being suggested
 - Offer one week of classes with no due dates in lieu of Spring Break
 - Move Spring Break later in the semester, then go online for the rest of the semester
 - Do the "Patriot Days" option with 1-day breaks spread out
 - **VOTING RESULTS**
 - **14 for early finish, 8 for late start**
 - **15 for some "other" option: one assignment-free week, or later Spring Break and move online after, or "Patriot Days"**
- One new concern: GAPSA needs to know about these important changes ahead of time
 - We should advocate to have an undergrad and grad student non-voting "observer" sit on the Faculty Senate
- GAPSA Overview
 - SciTech: please join us for an informal online meeting tomorrow!
 - Director of Communications: please send in any information on events or programming that you'd like GAPSA to help advertise on social media and/or our monthly e-newsletter!
 - Submit here: <http://bit.ly/gapsanewsletter>
- Committee Structure and Topics
 - Potential Topics
 - Quality of online education
 - COVID-19 safety
 - Funding and transparency
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Growing the General Assembly
 - Other topics?
 - Professional development opportunities (both academic and non-academic)
 - Fixing the communication gap between GAPSA and other boards
 - Finding other forms of support for virtual professional development (e.g. conference support funds are currently only for in-person travel)
 - Note: is GSTF available for online conferences? Dr. Kim will look into this and let us know
 - Cross-program networking
 - Procedure moving forward
 - A Google Form will be sent around for people to vote on which "committees" they'd be most interested in