



**General Assembly Meeting**

January 31, 2025

12 – 1:30 pm

Zoom meeting

**GAPSA Executive Officers**

Carolyn Faith Hoffman (President)

Xiaorong (Sherry) Shan (Executive Vice President)

Dhiman Goswami (Vice President of Fairfax)

Bree Buker (Vice President of Mason Square)

Selina Martin (Vice President of Science and Technology)

Naessiamba Eab-Aggrey (Director of Communications)

**GAPSA Advisors**

Dr. Julie Choe Kim (GAPSA Advisor and Director, Graduate Student Life)

Muna Hashem Al Taweel (GAPSA Advisor and GPA, Graduate Student Life)

**Program Representatives**

Anthropology, MA	Livia Santos
Arts Management, MA	Gloria (Jiaying) Dai
Athletic Training, MS	Lila Abu-Saleh
Bioengineering, MS	Alessandra Coogan
Biosciences, PhD	Madeleine Becker
Business Analytics, MS	Bansi Jignesh Mehta
Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering, PhD	Shreya Guha
Chemistry and Biochemistry, PhD	Brandon Speed
Climate Dynamics, PhD	Austin Reed
Computational Sciences and Informatics, PhD	Md Mahfuzur Rhaman
Counseling, MEd	Amanda Williams

Criminology, Law, and Society, MA	Mackenzi Moran
Education, PhD	Sahar Wahidi
English, MA	Jonathan Nichols
Finance, MS	Eray Tulun
Global Affairs, MA	Justice Marie Roney
Health Administration, MHA	Shelby Morrow
Global Commerce and Policy, MA	Marcus Lewis
Information Technology, PhD	Hadeel Elyazori
Interdisciplinary Studies, MA	Kristin Metzger
Law, JD	Jaclyn Jones
Law, JM	Dhrav Parikh
Linguistics, PhD	Nilima Hakim Mow
Mathematics, PhD	Joseph Franks
Neuroscience, PhD	Lindsey Bertin
Nutrition, MS	Solomon Aboagye
Physics, PhD	Paula Fudolig
Political Science, PhD	Sanggyu Suh
Public Health, PhD	Julia Mandeville
Sociology, PhD	Wonmai (Maia) Punksungka
Software Engineering, MS	Ashima Sharma
Statistical Science, MS	Tiffany Lin
Statistical Science, PhD	Tengyu Song
Writing and Rhetoric, PhD	Kelby Gibson

### Guests

Jeba Humayra (Sociology)

Alyssa Cazier (Sociology, PhD)

Michael J. Meese (Vice Rector, Board of Visitors)

Dr. Laurence Bray (Senior Associate Provost for Graduate Education)

Juliet Blank-Godlove (Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students)

### Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
12:00pm – 12:20pm	Welcome & recap of November GA meeting Graduate Life & GAPSA General Activities Updates
12:20pm - 1:00pm	Conversation with Michael Meese, Vice Rector of the Board of Visitors

1:00pm-1:30pm

GA Debrief

## 1. Introduction of Officers ([slides](#))

- Brief introductions and updates from officers.

## 2. Recap of November Meeting

- **November GA Meeting Highlights:**
  - Guest Speaker: **Dr. Laurence Bray**, Senior Associate Provost for Graduate Education
  - Review of **Executive Board Committee Commitments**
- **Graduate Life Events:**
  - **International Graduate Student Orientation:** Held **Jan. 16**
- **GAPSA Events:**
  - **Life Sciences Building @ SciTech:** Held **Jan. 28**
  - **CHSS Coffee Break @ Fairfax:** Held **Jan. 30**

## 3. General Assembly Meeting Schedule

- GA meetings for the rest of the semester will be held **11:00 AM – 12:30 PM** via Zoom
- Upcoming Meetings: 2/28, 3/21, 4/18

## 4. GAPSA Updates

- **Newsletter Spotlight:** Reach out to the **Director of Communications** ([neabaggr@gmu.edu](mailto:neabaggr@gmu.edu)) if interested.
- **February 15th EagleBank Arena Basketball Game:**
  - GAPSA will have a **table**.
  - **Free food and student tickets** (one free guest ticket per student).
  - More details will be shared via **Grad Student Life, University Life Mason Square, and University Life SciTech** newsletters (including how to get tickets).
- **Mason Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference:**
  - **Call for Proposals Due: Feb. 9**
  - **Conference Date: April 4**
  - [More information about the conference](#)

## 5. Graduate Student Updates & Events

- **Graduate Student Career Workshop: *Exploring Research Careers Outside Academia***
  - **Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2:30–4 PM** ([More info available](#))

- **Maximizing Productivity During Grad School:** *Graduate Student Note-Taking Workshop*
  - Thursday, Feb. 6, 3–4:15 PM ([More info available](#))
- **Doctoral Research Scholars Application Open:**
  - Due: Feb. 19 ([More info available](#))
- **Graduate Student Career Conference & Networking Event:**
  - Monday, March 10 @ Mason Square
  - Open to all graduate & professional students.
  - More details coming in the grad newsletter and also available at [this link](#)

## 6. Guest Speaker: Michael J. Meese, Vice Rector of GMU Board of Visitors (BOV)

- **Board of Visitors (BOV) Information:**
  - Website: [BOV Website](#)
- **Upcoming BOV Meetings (Open to the Public):**
  - Feb. 13: In-person committee meetings @ Fairfax, Merten Hall
  - Feb. 27: In-person full BOV meeting @ Fairfax, Merten Hall
- Mike Meese, Vice Rector of George Mason University's Board of Visitors, provided an overview of the role and function of the BOV. He also addressed recent BOV decisions and discussions and responded to questions from representatives.
- **Q&A:**
  - Contact: Michael J. Meese – [michael.j.meese@gmail.com](mailto:michael.j.meese@gmail.com)
- **BOV Overview:**
  - **16 members**, each serving up to **8 years**, with **4 new members appointed annually by the Governor**.
  - Responsible for **funding, tuition, budgets, faculty promotions, and university policies**.
- **Concern about tuition and funding for international students expressed by program representative Recent BOV decisions: Institutional Neutrality & DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion):**
  - **DEI:** The BOV has **limited engagement** in DEI programming.
  - **DEI: "Just Societies" undergraduate coursework is optional** and not a university-wide requirement.
  - **Institutional Neutrality:** GMU maintains a **neutral stance** on socio-political matters while supporting diverse perspectives.
- **Concerns About Policy Changes & Graduate Student Impact:**
  - GMU has **navigated political shifts before** and remains committed to supporting students.
  - Graduate students are encouraged to **engage with GAPSA, attend BOV meetings, and use campus resources** to voice concerns.

## 7. Student Concerns & Action Items

- **Addressing Policy Uncertainty:**

- If students feel **unsafe or uncertain**, they can reach out to **GAPSA** for guidance.
- **Attend BOV meetings** to stay informed and advocate for student concerns.
- **OIPS Immigration Session (Feb 18):**
  - Open **Q&A with an immigration attorney** (*details to be announced in the OIPS newsletter*).
- **How to Increase Student Engagement:**
  - Need **more structured discussions** on advocacy and policy.
  - Consider **hosting more forums** to engage students on pressing issues.
- **Potential GAPSA Actions:**
  - Create a Microsoft Teams channel for GA representatives and Executive Board members
  - Create a running list of resources regarding current domestic and international affairs
  - Invite student life offices to speak during our upcoming GA meetings (i.e., LGBTQ+ Resource Center, QT BIPOC Initiative, Office of Disability Services)
- **Access to University Resources:**
  - Students can contact **Juliet Blank-Godlove (Assistant Vice President of University Life and Dean of Students)** at [jblank@gmu.edu](mailto:jblank@gmu.edu) for student advocacy concerns or contact Graduate Student Life at [gradlife@gmu.edu](mailto:gradlife@gmu.edu).