



**General Assembly Meeting**

February 28, 2025

11:00am – 12:30 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
Biosciences, PhD	Madeleine Becker
Business Analytics, MS	Bansi Jignesh Mehta
Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering, PhD	Shreya Guha
Climate Dynamics, PhD	Austin Reed
Counseling, MEd	Amanda Williams
Cultural Studies, PhD	Stephen (Toby) Hickson

Education, PhD	Sahar Wahidi
Global Affairs, MA	Justice Marie Roney
International Security, MA	Jake Boggs
Linguistics, PhD	Pu Meng (proxy for Nilima Hakim Mow)
Mathematics, PhD	Joseph Franks
Neuroscience, PhD	Lindsey Bertin
Nutrition, MS	Solomon Aboagye
Physics, PhD	Paula Fudolig
Political Science, PhD	Sanggyu Suh
Sociology, PhD	Wonmai (Maia) Punksungka
Software Engineering, MS	Ashima Sharma
Statistics, MS	Tiffany Lin
Writing and Rhetoric, PhD	Kelby Gibson

### Guests

Julissa Zelaya Barrera (Sociology, PhD)

Rose Pascarell (Vice President of University Life)

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

### Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
11:00am - 11:05am	GAPSA Recap of Recent Events
11:10am - 11:20am	Updates: GAPSA and Grad Life Happenings
11:20am - 11:45am	Doctoral Hooding Discussion
11:45am – 12:00pm	GAPSA Elections for 2025-2026
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Conversation with Rose Pascarell, Vice President of University Life

# GAPSA Recap of Recent Events ([Slide](#))

## January GA Meeting:

- **Guest Speaker:** Michael J. Meese, Vice Rector of GMU Board of Visitors
- Topics Covered:
  - Overview of the Board of Visitors
  - Opportunities for construction on West Campus
  - Vote on institutional neutrality
  - Government impact on graduate students
  - Open discussion

## Graduate Life Events:

- **Graduate Student Life 14-Day Writing Challenge:** Feb. 19 - March 4

## GAPSA Events:

- **Graduate Life/GAPSA Men's Basketball Game Tabling:** Feb. 15
- **Town Hall @ Fairfax:** Feb. 24 - Discussions on graduate student concerns

# Updates: GAPSA and Grad Life Happenings

## GAPSA Updates

- **All GAPSA meetings for the remainder of the Spring semester will be held via Zoom 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM**
- **GA Newsletter Spotlight:** Interested members should contact the Director of Communications (neabaggr@gmu.edu)
- **March GA Meeting:** March 21, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (not the last week of March)
- **Sci Tech Interview Prep Workshop:** March 25, 1:00 - 2:30 PM via Zoom
- **Mason Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference:** April 4, 8:00 AM @ Merten Hall, Fairfax (attend or volunteer)
- **Graduate Student Spring Picnic:** April 25, 12:00 - 2:00 PM @ Merten Lawn

## Activities

- **Maximizing Productivity During Graduate School: Motivation & Goal Setting:** March 4, 3:00 - 4:15 PM
- **Graduate Student Career Conference & Networking Event:** March 10, 9:30 AM - 7:00 PM @ Van Metre Hall, Mason Square ([Event Details](#))

- **Graduate Student Career Workshop:** March 18, 2:30 - 4:00 PM ([Translating Academic Skills to Industry Careers](#))
- **Ramadan Gathering for Graduate Students:** March 19, 7:00 - 9:00 PM @ Fenwick Main Reading Room ([Event Details](#))
- **Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week:** March 30 - April 5

If you have questions about any Graduate Student Life events, contact Muna or email [gradlife@gmu.edu](mailto:gradlife@gmu.edu). All events are listed on Mason360.

## Announcements

- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Contact [bstinson@gmu.edu](mailto:bstinson@gmu.edu) to help make GMU Campus more accessible
- **West Campus Town Hall Meeting:** March 4, 3:30 - 5:00 PM @ Merten Hall, Room 1201
- **AAUP Meetings:** March sessions on university issues and community building. For inquiries, contact [kelby.gibson@hotmail.com](mailto:kelby.gibson@hotmail.com)

Please find more details in the slides.

## Doctoral Hooding Discussion

### Background:

- **Past Years:** Hooding ceremonies occurred during the university-wide ceremony, limited to 2 hours.
- **Spring 2024:** GAPSA learned that hooding had moved off-stage, raising concerns.
- **GAPSA Advocacy:**
  - Open letter sent to President Washington and senior administrators (May 6, 2024)
  - Administration response: Time constraints necessitate the off-stage format. Hooding will remain off-stage for this year

### Concerns Raised:

- Doctoral students should receive proper recognition after years of study.
- Faculty and advisors may support a more formal hooding ceremony.
- Could undergraduate and graduate students have separate graduation ceremonies?
- Could hooding happen at college/school ceremonies?
- **Next Steps:**
  - Carolyn will create a form to gather GA members' input on sending another letter to the administration.
  - Possibility of drafting a resolution for stronger advocacy.

### Reference Materials:

- [Doctoral Hooding Open Letter](#)
- [Photo of Doctoral Hooding \(2021\)](#)
- [Photo of Winter 2024 Hooding](#)

## GAPSA Elections for 2025-2026

- **Review of GAPSA Elections Code (Article IV in the [Bylaws](#)) that was passed by the General Assembly in April 2024:**
  - Formalized election processes, including ballot options and vote counting.
  - Run-Off Elections & Special Elections: To be determined via General Assembly (GA) meeting or online vote.
- Applications for Executive Officer Candidates for 2025-2026 will be available beginning March 4, 2025, on the [GAPSA Elections webpage](#).

### Executive Officer Elections Timeline:

- **Candidate Applications Available:** March 4, 2025
- **Applications Due:** April 6, 2025, 11:55 PM
- **Review Period:** April 7-11, 2025
- **Candidate Announcement & Campaigning:** April 14-24, 2025
- **Meet the Candidates:** April 18, 2025
- **Voting Period:** April 22 (12:00 AM) - April 24 (11:55 PM)
- **Election Results Announced:** April 28, 2025
- **Transition Meeting/Retreat:** May 9, 2025

### Executive Officer Positions:

- President
- Executive Vice President
- Vice President of Fairfax Campus
- Vice President of Mason Square (Arlington) Campus
- Vice President of Science and Technology Campus
- Director of Communications
- **Elections Information:** [GAPSA Elections Page](#) (Updated by March 4)

### Election Questions:

- **Can graduating students vote?** Yes, current part-time and full-time graduate degree seeking students can vote.
- **Work Commitments for Officers:**
  - President: 10 hours/week on average (GPA contract)
  - Executive VP: 7 hours/week on average (scholarship-funded)
  - Other officers: 5 hours/week on average (scholarship-funded)

- International students: Must comply with 20-hour/week work restrictions.
- Please contact Julie Choe Kim or Muna Al Taweel, GAPSA advisors, with any questions.

## Guest Speaker: Rose Pascarell, Vice President of University Life

- Information about the Division of University Life: <https://ulife.gmu.edu/>
  - List of [University Life \(UL\) offices](#)
- Services available to all students, regardless of status
- Support in well-being, engagement, leadership, career transitions
- Graduate student-specific needs being addressed
- Commended Carolyn for her representation as graduate student member of the Board of Visitors. Specifically noted Carolyn's comments during the BOV meeting on February 27 regarding the antisemitism resolution that was discussed.
  - BOV voted to approve the resolution with revisions.
  - Original draft (p. 281), revised version (p. 322) available in the [Full Board Meeting Book](#)
  - Discussion begins at the 5:46 mark in the [BOV Meeting Recording](#)
- **Discussion about graduate student concerns:**
  - How can students express their concerns about the BOV's actions and decisions?
  - BOV's meeting on April 1 will include an open comment session for students and anyone else to address the Board.
- Further information about the BOV, including meeting recordings and official documents (see Meeting Postings page), is available at the [BOV website](#).
- If anyone has questions or concerns about the BOV, they can reach out via the GAPSA email ([gapsa@gmu.edu](mailto:gapsa@gmu.edu)) or contact Carolyn ([choffm5@gmu.edu](mailto:choffm5@gmu.edu)) directly.