Senate Meeting Agenda
17 January 2017, 5:30
Kerr 1001

A. Call to Order
   1) Attendance (Please sign in and pick up ballots [one per unit])
   2) Motion to Approve Agenda

Approved verbally by the whole Senate; no opposition, no abstentions

B. Old Business
   1) Motion to Approve Minutes from 6 December 2016 Meeting

Approved verbally by the whole Senate; no opposition, 1 abstention

C. Open Forum

D. Guest Speakers: Steve Matson, Dean of the Graduate School, Graduate School Strategic Plan Discussion

Dean Matson: interested in discussing the blueprint for the strategic plan for the graduate school with GPSF Senators.
Reviews process (began 6 months ago): hired Moss + Ross Consultants who worked with Graduate School through November → Strategic Planning Steering Committee met during that time (reviews members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee) → over the summer, met with faculty focus groups (10-11 chairs or DGSs) → Key stakeholder interviews → Graduate Education Advancement Board presentation (like today’s presentation) → Administrative Board with Graduate School presentation (like today’s) → GPSF Senate → Graduate school Staff (forthcoming)
Goals: “Establish graduate education as a priority in the University’s strategic agenda and enhance The Graduate School’s stature and recognition within the University, the State of North Carolina, and the world.”
Seeks input—no response
1) “Attract, retain and prepare outstanding graduate students for successful careers in an increasingly changing world.”

Retain and prepare are purposefully used; believes that UNC has a completion rate higher than other graduate schools, although a completion rate is difficult to track.
Senator Oreper: To whom are these goals going to be presented?
   This Strategic Plan will guide the way that we think and operate; this will be public and on the website. Fits nicely with what the Chancellor is doing
Senator Oreper: In Goal I, is the final clause necessary? Personally does not find it necessary.
Senator Ronan: How do you define “increasingly changing world?”
Senator Greenwald: Would we still want to attract, retain, and prepare graduate students in a static world?
   The clause was included because the GS wants to make it clear to those who do not think about graduate education every day that not every graduate student becomes a professor.
Senator Gryzbek (Environmental Engineering and Sciences): Maybe make the wording a little more specific
Senator Fox: Maybe instead of saying “world,” say “economy or something more helpful.
Senator Won: Economy may not be appropriate because policy doesn’t seem to be included. “World” is better because it suggests an active support of innovation.
Senator Oreper: Something as simple as “in and outside of academic”
Senator Hoffner: Seconds Oreper’s statement.
Senator Traub: Change it to “competitive” or something suggesting student success versus other universities.
Senator Tritz: Likes “increasingly changing,” but maybe “rapidly changing.” By talking about research, professional students are cut out.
Treasurer Eszenyi: We are establishing a “binary” of academic and non-academic roles, talk about interdisciplinarity, and we will also be talking about funding in addition to programs.
2) “Collaborate with the faculty in their responsibilities to graduate students and graduate education.”
Seeks opinions of graduate and professional students.
Senator Watkins-Cruz: Can you provide an example?
Please hold on to that question until we start talking about strategies.
Senator Gyorke: This sounds like sharing the weight of their responsibilities—is that the purpose of the goal? I want to know how this affects graduate students.
Hopes that this becomes clearer when discussing the strategies—the goal is to help faculty help students. Acknowledges that faculty need support for graduate students.
3) “Innovate and build programs that leverage distinctive University strengths.”
Programs means academic programs, but others too.
Senator Kalyanaraman: Helpful to include wording that implies that we will not only build but also strengthen preexisting programs.
President Russell agrees that we need to adjust the wording so that it comes across with a broader perspective.
Senator Stember: This sounds like we are going to focus on the programs that are already doing well, rather than trying to improve programs that are perhaps struggling. The wording doesn’t seem to acknowledge our weaknesses.
We will discuss this when we talk about strategies, but the GS is leaning towards supporting those programs that are struggling, rather than cutting programs that are currently struggling.
Senator Pfeifler: Does this include the recruitment of new faculty and assistance to research? Is there any part of this plan that considers faculty-drive (rather than student-driven) research?
The GS doesn’t really have a role in recruiting new faculty, but we can encourage new graduate programs that could result in the recruitment of new faculty.
Goal 4 would help support the faculty-driven research.
4) “Create a fundraising and communication model to support The Graduate Schools’ unique priorities.”
Strategies for Goal 1:
1) Implement novel policies, procedures, and programs that will enable the GS to be increasingly successful in increasing the yield rate of admitted PhD and master’s students. This is a faculty-driven point; faculty do not feel that they are competing as they would like to compete. Purposefully vague about what the “novel” p, p, and ps are.
Senator Schradle: What does “yield rate” mean?
Faculty want to get the largest fraction of the best students who apply to the program to come to UNC.
Senator Gyorke: This Strategy is too vague—are we talking about bribery? Can we have examples of novel p, p, and ps?
We have another level of detail (tactics) that we are not yet prepared to share because they are still a work-in-progress. An example, though: Create something like the undergraduate Covenant program for masters students (ensures that the students will graduate debt-free if they fit into a certain economic class). This would improve access and provide students who may be excellent graduate students, but who assume that they can’t come to grad school because they can’t afford it, a means by which they can attend.
2) Build upon the diversity of the graduate student population by enhancing recruiting efforts and student services.
Senator Horrell: Should “diversity” be included within the goals statement?  
Some people felt that it was too vague in the goals statement (as long as it’s implied), but then turned into a strategy.

Senator Hoffner: Elaborate on the meaning of “student services.” There are additional student services that would be helpful, for example, there could be an expansion of student health services so that graduate and professional students’ healthcare needs are better supported.

Anything that enhances the skillset that a student walks out the door with, anything that improves the working relationship between a student and their advisor; anything that serves a student. This is intended to be very broad so that the GS can do anything they want.

Senator Pradilla: Can we talk about protecting diversity, as well?

The institution would benefit from saying such a thing.

3) Heighten awareness of and preparation for career opportunities for all graduate students to highlight how their graduate education can be of value to academic, government, non-profits, and industry.

Senator Stone: A lot of PhD students don’t go into academia, and he’s happy that is recognized. It would be helpful to encourage faculty to be more aware of realities.

Senator Stember: (1) Get good people here, (2) Get diverse, good people here, (3) Get those good people to go where they want. Where is the retention piece here? And how will this happen?

The second question will be dealt with in the tactics section. The retention piece is necessary.

Senator Thompson: No problems with the “changing world” wording, but there is no definition of how the world is changing and what skillsets are necessary.

Skillsets can never be defined because we are not sure what jobs may be around in the future; this is where it’s important to work with alumni – this will be part of the tactics. Understanding what the environment of the working world is will be an important piece.

Senator Buckner: There is no explicit mention of funding—to attract and retain people, funding is one of the key areas that must be discussed. Describe what funding looks like, and talk about maintenance of funding for job fairs and networking opportunities after graduating.

Funding becomes important, but we cannot lace funding throughout the goals to the point that the only point coming across is funding. A balance must be struck – there are things that can be done without too much funding.

Senator Oreper: Wording could be more direct, like “Heighten awareness and preparation for career opportunities, for example academic, government, non-profits, and industry…”

Senator Essman: Is this geared more towards graduate students or to faculty as well?

Strategies for Goal 2:

(1) Provide faculty career development resource information that they can share and discuss with their students.

Senator Butera: Wording point: sounds like career development resources for the faculty, rather than for the graduate students. Consider rewording for clarity

Senator Dollar: Is there a general consensus across the University regarding what the faculty’s responsibility is to their graduate students? Are we leaving this up to the departments to determine what should be done?

There is not one single, unified university policy. With the RA/TA Bill of Rights, there might be further clarification of what is meant by this

VPIA Coussens: There are resources that the faculty are not aware of; thinks that it is important that the wording is maintained.

(2) Engage faculty with training and resources for student mentoring.

Senator Ronan: Suggested or enforced training and resources?

There is a lot of discussion regarding enforcement; currently, there is no enforcement. The GS is working with individual programs that have successful training and resources, and spreading those to other
programs that do not have such programs in place. The GS is currently working towards getting more programs on board with necessary training.

Senator Kalyanaraman: One of the strategies should be recruiting faculty who promote diversity and protect diversity; we should make an attempt to catch those people who are engaged in mentorship earlier in the process.

The GS does not recruit faculty, but the GS can try to word their goals

Senator McCullough: Rather than enforcing training and resources, can we provide incentives? Things like the mentoring awards are good starts, but it is just the beginning. Incentivizing best practices is a next step.

(3) Enable faculty with data needed to improve their graduate programs.

All GPs fill out an exit survey—it is detailed, anonymous, and gets a good response rate. All of the data are compiled, so that the programs can improve.

Senator Tritz: Good that the programs that are under review get the data, but what happens to the programs that are not under review?

A huge amount of information is published at the broad-program level. On the program level, those data are shared as soon as there are enough students who have responded so that the answers are anonymous.

Strategies for Goal 3:

(1) Facilitate a collaborative conversation among University leaders to help graduate programs adapt, evolve, and innovate for the future.

Every program would benefit from some time for reflection; the GS wants to facilitate that conversation that helps graduate programs begin to reflect upon their practices.

Senator Stember: There are no pieces regarding the students? There are only implications that students are a part of this.

Senator Alves: Change language of “distinctive University strengths”—seconds Senator Oreper’s comment. There is a lot of benefits derived from talking to students as they are in the school, rather than when they graduate. Ask current students how to increase interdisciplinarity, and others.

If the GS put together a survey, taking 20 minutes—how many students would complete it?

(2) Encourage additional growth in graduate interdisciplinary education and promote it as a hallmark of graduate studies from the sciences to the humanities.

Not entirely sure what the form this takes, but there is real value in having interdisciplinary education. Most of the work that goes on today is at the intersection of disciplines, and involves teams that have different perspectives.

Secretary Percy: It may be beneficial to add some of this language to the strategies for goal 2, as faculty buy-in will be necessary for the full implementation of this strategy.

The biggest impediment to doing something in an interdisciplinary way are worried about credit. Students are also worried about that! The GS has created several modular courses that are offered across disciplines to show how this can be done.

Senator Clonch: Emphasize the importance of an interdisciplinary and personalized education experience

(3) Lead efforts to expand boundaries of graduate education.

Senator Oreper: All three of these strategies don’t focus on distinctive University strengths, but rather focus on interdisciplinarity

Senator Nyankima: The location of our University is one of the great strengths; perhaps the strategies would benefit from the inclusion of our great location so close to other universities, RTP, state government, and others.

Hopefully that this is implicit from the inclusion of “distinctive University strengths.”

Senator Bham: Describe what “expand boundaries of graduate education” means.

A number of things should be included in this that are not traditional graduate education; for example, internships, jobs that would result in credit, novel ways of providing graduate education, fully-online programs. The intent is to allow people to think and not define this so narrowly that other ideas can fit.
Strategies for Goal 4:
We are trying to show how graduate education is changing.
(1) Increase private support of The Graduate School. No one can really disagree with this.
(2) Establish The Graduate School as a high priority for scholarship and fellowship fundraising in the UNC campaign.
   Secretary Percy: How is the GS positioning itself in the upcoming capital campaign?
   The strategic plan will hopefully position ourselves better as the UNC campaign continues. It’s important that we don’t end up with a contest between schools over what the support is being used for—the GS is trying to support as much money coming into graduate education across the University
(3) Ensure that internal and external communications focus on building awareness and advocating for graduate education. The GS has to show how important graduate education is to people who do not necessarily understand what a graduate education means and involves.
(4) Promote the value of graduate education and its impact on the economy, society and the entrepreneurial community of North Carolina.
   Senator Kalyanaraman: It may benefit from a Strategy 5, which would emphasize the importance of a university-level policy structure that shows how the University supports priorities with policy.

Invites students to send Dean Matson an email to provide further input.
   Senator Grzebyk: There is a person from the National Academies of Science who will be visiting the campus on Thursday, looking at the future of STEM education.
   Senator Stember: Will we see an updated version of this before this becomes published to the public? Yes.
   Senator Won: 3:30 Thursday under the Professional Development at the Graduate School
   Senator Thompson: What is the date at which this strategic plan will be finalized? There is no deadline, but aiming for the end of the semester.

E. Resolutions / Bills
   1) 17-01 Appropriations (January 18–February 7)

Senator Dollar: Three applications, all straight-forward (note bill 17-01 for specifics)

No questions

F. Ballot Voting on Resolutions

All in favor of voting on bill

G. Nominations for Open Committees
   1) Select Committee on Senate Election Process (1 Seat)

Nominations: Senator Nyankima from Biomedical Engineering

All in favor of voting

H. Committee Reports
   1) Appropriations (Chair, Nathan Dollar)

No reports
   2) Finance (Chair, Orrin Stone)

No reports
   3) Resolutions Development (Chair, Aubree Honcoop)

No reports
   4) Senate Election Process (Chair, Vicky Bham)

No reports
   5) Travel Awards (Chair, Candace Buckner)

No reports
   6) Special Projects (Chair, Stephanie Watkins-Cruz)

No reports
   7) Future of the GPSF (Chair, Katie Stember)

No reports
8) Graduate and Professional Student Rights (Chairs, Lindsey Horrell and Sarah Owens)

No reports

I. Executive Committee Reports

1) Vice-President of Internal Affairs – Brian Coussens
For GAPS Rights committee, President Russell and VPIA Coussens are meeting with Dean Matson, Dean Lerea, and Vice Chancellor Crisp.
If there has never been a nametag, please alert Brian.

2) Vice-President of External Affairs – Anel Jaramillo
Going to Capitol Hill for SAGE; trying to write some white papers for that visit

3) Chief of Staff – Megan Broad
Senate voted to approve Megan’s update to the beginning of the meeting. Reviews the Second Semester Check-In event; there are openings for the GPSF cabinet; Excellence in Graduate Student Services Award—explains briefly; GradFIT Run Club is starting for students interested in early morning workouts

4) Treasurer – Marie Eszenyi
Happy to explain how the reimbursement process works.
Money things are okay!

5) Secretary – Madelyn Percy
No report

6) President – Dylan Russell
Good news: Starting with the upcoming student election, there will be two separate student governments. Chancellor Folt signed that into law, each will have equal powers. There will be the creation of a joint-council that will deal with all-student concerns. We will maintain our current speaking rights, and we may gain a seat on the University Affairs Committee. The student fee structure will be adjusted, meaning an increase in $200,000 to our budget. We must amend our constitution as soon as possible for the upcoming fall election (although it won’t be all that difficult because we did some planning). First time since 1977, we will have fair and adequate representation as graduate and professional students.
BoT is next week.

J. Results of Ballot Voting
Resolution 17-01 passed: 48 yea, 2 abstentions, 0 nays
Gloria Nyankima’s appointment passed: 46 votes in favor of Senator Nyankima

K. Announcements

1) Next Meeting: February 7, Location: TBD
2) GPSF Appropriations Deadline: January 20 (February 8–March 7)
3) GPSF Travel Awards Deadline: February 1
4) Second Semester Check-In: January 26
5) Don’t forget to send out your STOF!!

L. Adjournment

Adjournment passed.