



## **Graduate Student Senate (GSS) President's Report**

**Board of Trustees  
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**Prepared By  
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### **Introduction:**

Since assuming the role of President of the Graduate Student Senate (GSS), our focus has been to revitalize student engagement, increase representation, and foster a more proactive and inclusive environment for our graduate community.

### **Boosting Student Engagement:**

Historically, student involvement in the GSS was underrepresented, with an average of 20 or fewer senators each year. To address this, we organized a comprehensive GSS Orientation Event at the start of the semester. Promoted extensively across various platforms, this event aimed to enlighten students on the GSS's mission, its significance, and the value of being a senator. I'm pleased to report that over 100 students attended this session, marked by enlightening presentations and open discussions. Consequently, our efforts bore fruit with the number of senators rising significantly to 33. Our aim remains to have even more students representing diverse programs.

### **Events and Collaborations:**

In our continuous efforts to foster community and awareness, we organized events like:

- **Welcome Back BBQ Event:** A social gathering to kickstart the academic year.
- **GSS Resource Fair:** An informational event directing students to various resources available to them.
- **Grad Pizza Event:** In collaboration with the Grad College, we hosted this gathering specifically tailored for new students, allowing them to mingle and understand the graduate landscape at the university.

Furthermore, our semi-annual Senator Retreat was a notable success, graced by the presence of esteemed university leadership, including the Dean, Provost, and Vice Provost for Student Affairs. This retreat serves as an orientation for senators, guiding them on their roles, responsibilities, and offering a deep dive into the GSS constitution.

## **Committee Developments:**

Aside from our standing committees – Student Affairs and Finance Committee, we've introduced several ad-hoc committees to address specific needs:

- Events Committee
- Health and Wellness Committee
- Housing Committee
- Professional Development Committee
- Stipends Committee
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee

Each of these committees, with designated chairs and co-chairs, has already initiated steps to further their respective mandates.

## **Representation on the Board of Trustees:**

A significant milestone this year was filling all vacant positions for GSS members on the Board of Trustees standing committees ensuring that the voices of our graduate students are consistently represented.

## **Looking Ahead:**

Our goals for the upcoming year include:

1. ***Outreach Programs:*** To engage more graduate programs, ensuring wider representation.
2. **Professional Workshops:** Collaborating with industry leaders to offer workshops aimed at enhancing career readiness for our students.
3. ***Mental Health Initiatives:*** Addressing the well-being of our students by organizing seminars and programs focused on mental health and stress management.
4. ***Social Networking Events:*** Plans are underway to host monthly mixers where graduate students can network with professionals from diverse industries. This will not only foster community but also present opportunities for collaborations and potential job prospects.
5. ***Cultural Nights:*** Recognizing the diversity of our graduate community, we aim to host cultural nights where students can share and celebrate traditions from their home countries. This will enhance cultural sensitivity and create a bond amongst students.
6. ***Outdoor Recreational Activities:*** Organizing group hikes, camping trips, and other outdoor activities to promote work-life balance and allow students to experience the natural beauty of our region.
7. ***Work-Life Balance Seminars:*** Given the pressures of graduate studies, we're looking to introduce seminars that offer tips on maintaining a healthy work-life balance, time management, and self-care.

In conclusion, the Graduate Student Senate under the new leadership is striving towards a more inclusive, active, and representative future, ensuring that the interests of all graduate students are at the forefront of our initiatives.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our vision.