

Handbook for
The University of Iowa
Graduate Student Senate
2004-2005

Minor Revisions August 2004 – J Caldwell

GRADUATE STUDENTS AND GOVERNMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

There are two senates that serve the graduate population at the University of Iowa, representing two of the major aspects of the graduate experience: as academics in the Graduate College, and as students of the University. Every department with students enrolled in the Graduate College is entitled to representation in *both* of these senates.

The Graduate Student Senate is the academic part of graduate student government. One can think of it as fitting into the Graduate College organization as follows:

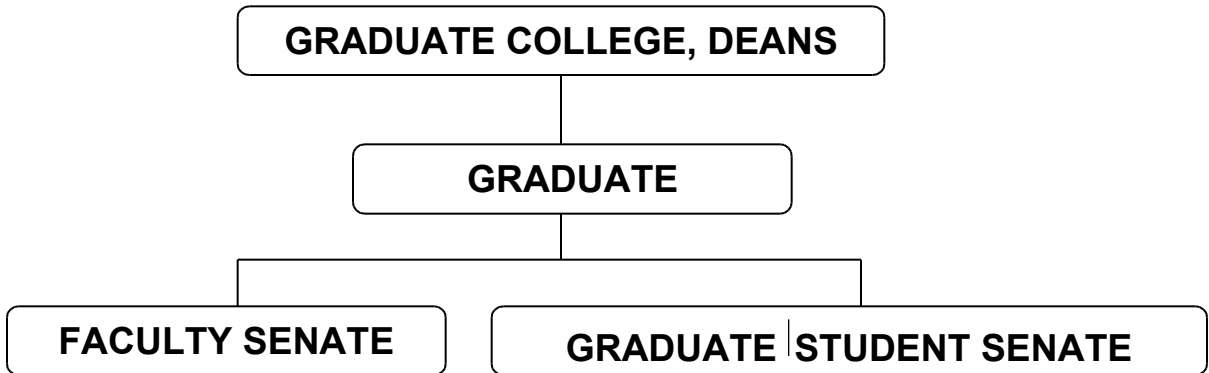


Fig 1.

The GPSS is part of the University of Iowa Student Government (UISG), forming one of the three assemblies which make up the Student Assembly of UISG. The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) fits into the UISG Flow Chart as follows:

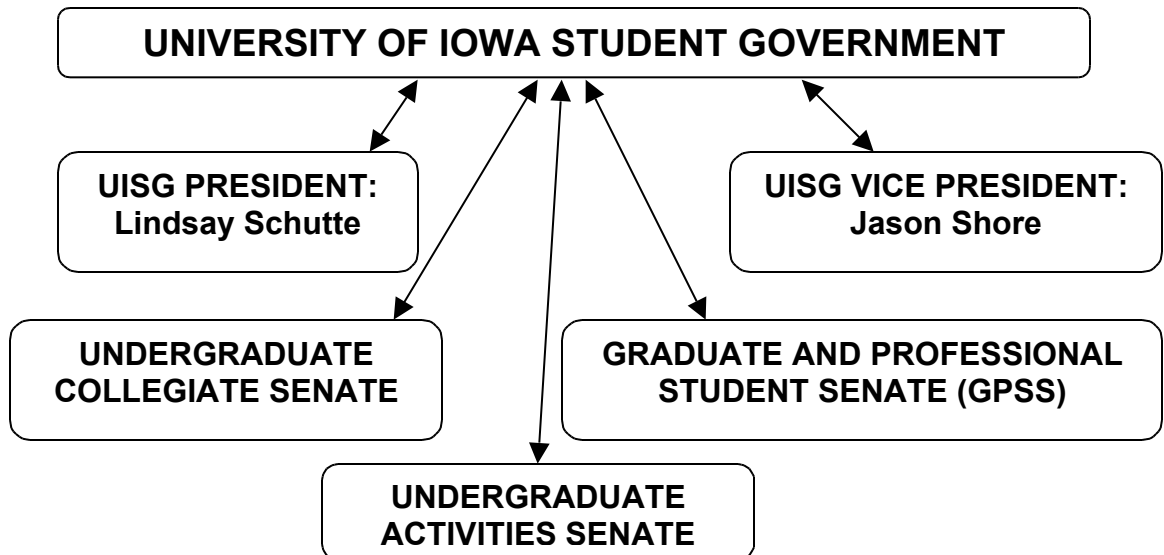


Fig 2.

The GPSS, as part of the UISG, takes part in overseeing more than 300 student groups at the UI, and has a vital voice in how the funding for student organizations and programs is dispersed.

In order to effectively serve the graduate student community, we must learn to collaborate more often with the GPSS and to use our position to work more closely with the Graduate College. As a GSS senator it is recommended that you to attend at least one GPSS meeting this year and stay up-to-date with UISG activities (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~uisg/>)

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE LEGISLATION

The Recommendations and Opinions of the GSS arise as the result of the legislation that is passed by the GSS body. Before each meeting the Executive Assistants will e-mail all members an agenda of business to be conducted at that meeting as well as minutes from the previous meeting. If legislation is due to be voted on, members will receive a copy of it, plus any other pertinent information. Hardcopies will also be available at the meeting. Members who wish to bring up business at the next meeting should submit the appropriate legislation to the GSS office at least a week before the meeting. GSS legislation typically falls into one of three categories: a resolution, a bill or an allocation.

Resolutions:

When a member of the GSS feels that our organization needs to issue its opinion on a topic, the member should submit a resolution. An example of such a resolution, passed at the 8 April 1997 meeting is shown on page 5. When submitted to the GSS office, one of the Executive Associates will assign a number to it. In this case the resolution was numbered GSS-990-01. The number 990 indicates that it was submitted in the 1999-2000 school year, and the number 01 indicates that it was the 1st item to come to a vote that year. In addition to this information, the date of submission and the name(s) of the person(s) who submitted are included. When writing a resolution, one typically enumerates a (short) list of reasons for submitting the resolution; each reason is preceded by the word 'Whereas'. The "list" is followed by the conclusions, which are preceded by the phrase 'Be it so resolved'. Any member of the GSS may submit a resolution at any time, on any topic that he/she seems appropriate, and which does not infringe on the University's collective bargaining agreement. Note: other members will always be willing to help you with the wording when you are ready to submit a resolution for consideration by the GSS.

Bills:

Closely related to resolutions are bills. The difference between a bill and a resolution is that a resolution issues a statement, while a bill calls for more direct action on the part of GSS. For example, if one wanted to amend the GSS Constitution one would submit a bill, not a resolution. An example is shown on page 6, numbered GSS-A-967-01. The "A" is used to denote the fact that this is an amendment to the GSS Constitution.

Allocations:

An allocation will usually be submitted to a committee, such as the Forum or Travel Funds Committees, so that the GSS body can approve the allocation of these funds.

Sample Resolution: GSS-990-01

WHEREAS graduate students make up approximately 25% of the total student body at the University of Iowa; and

WHEREAS graduate students are concerned about the lack of attention given by the University of Iowa administration to graduate student needs; and

WHEREAS this years 4.3% proposed increase in tuition would constitute a 8.8% increase in tuition over only two years; and

WHEREAS the proposed new fees of \$154 over two years is in addition to tuition increases; and

WHEREAS the University of Iowa administration is not currently addressing graduate student concerns about cuts in serial acquisitions; and

WHEREAS the University of Iowa libraries are lagging behind peer institutions in the acquisition of new books needed for graduate research; and

WHEREAS no definitive plans have been made to spend tuition and fee money to significantly improve library collections and services necessary for graduate student research;

WHEREAS no means for measuring the outcomes of the 2.0% tuition increase for "quality" have been determined,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: WE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE DO HEREBY REQUEST that the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, reject the proposed tuition increase as well as the new fee categories submitted by the University of Iowa.

Submitted By Mike Innis

Approved by GSS, October 13, 1999

Sample Bill: **GSS-A-967-01** (Constitutional Amendment)
Submitted by Helland, Young, Thurmond, Sheridan, Zellers
November 6, 1996

WHEREAS the University of Iowa administration does not wish to infringe upon the rights of the collective bargaining agent selected by graduate assistants, and

WHEREAS the operation of GSS, including unfettered discussion of any issue relevant to graduate students, provides significant benefits to the UI community, and

WHEREAS Vice-President Small has requested an amendment to the GSS Constitution to ensure the preservation of the rights of the collective bargaining agent,

BE IT ENACTED that the University of Iowa Graduate Student Senate INSERT before Article III, Section A, Paragraph 3 of the Constitution:

3. The GSS is prohibited from negotiating, advising, conferring, or recommending policy to the UI administration regarding issues that are the subject of collective bargaining for graduate assistants. This function is reserved for the collective bargaining agent selected by graduate assistants.
 - a. As part of the routine business of the GSS and its committees, the debate or discussion of any issue relevant to the graduate student body or parts thereof shall not be restricted.
 - b. Discussion or debate conducted as GSS business may be communicated to the public, including the UI administration and the graduate assistant collective bargaining agent, at the discretion of the GSS in accordance with Article VI, Section F. The purpose of such communication shall be to provide information regarding GSS business and shall not be construed to violate the prohibition cited in Article III, Section A, Paragraph 3.
 - c. Dissemination of factual information regarding issues relevant to graduate students that may be pertinent to graduate assistants represented by the collective bargaining agent shall be at the discretion of the GSS in accordance with Article VI, Section F. Such activity infringes upon neither the rights of the collective bargaining agent nor the rights of the UI because neither party is under any obligation to the GSS regarding the use of such information. Furthermore, the GSS is under no obligation to either the UI or the collective bargaining agent regarding the discussion of any issue related to the graduate student body or parts thereof.

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that the subsequent paragraphs and all references be renumbered appropriately

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

To expedite matters when conducting business, the GSS follows Parliamentary Procedure as listed in Robert's Rules of Order. Complete familiarity with this text is not necessary, as GSS meetings are generally quite informal. The following are some basic rules:

A **quorum** of the GSS shall consist of the members present at the beginning of a regular meeting, and at least twenty percent of the members in good standing for a special meeting.

All members have equal rights, including the right to make motions, debate and vote. A 2/3 vote is needed in order to deprive members of basic rights, such as closing or limiting debate and closing nominations. No member will be forced to vote.

Only one main motion may be considered at a time, and only one person may speak at a time. When a member wishes the GSS to take action on a subject, s/he will make a motion. To do this s/he should first be recognized by the chair and preface the motion with words, "I move that...." A short list of the most frequent motions is given on the following page. For motions that require a second, anyone wishing to second the motion may just call out "I second the motion", without waiting to be recognized. If a motion requires a second but does not receive it, the chair will move on to the next agenda item. If a motion is made and seconded (if necessary), the chair will then restate the motion, which is termed the main motion. Discussion begins. To ensure order, a member must be recognized by the chair before s/he may speak.

The purpose of an amendment is to change a motion already under consideration. If a member thinks that the right topic is being discussed, but wants to modify the wording of the motion, s/he calls for an amendment. A motion may be amended, and the amendment to the motion may be amended, but no further amendments may be made. Amendments are motions, and as such, they require a discussion and full debate.

To end debate, you may interrupt a discussion and say "I move/call the previous question." After voting to end the debate, the previous motion itself can then be voted on. Most votes are taken by voice; the chair will call for those in favor of the motion and those opposed. If s/he thinks that the motion has carried, s/he will then say "I will rule that as having passed." If you disagree with this decision, such as during a close vote on a motion that you think should have actually been ruled as defeated, then you should respond by saying '**division**' and the vote will proceed by a show of hands.

On the next page is a table of parliamentary procedures for the motions most frequently used in GSS meetings. Use this as a reference during meetings: you need not memorize the whole page.

The motions are listed in general order of precedence; ie., while any motion on the list is pending, any motion further down on the list generally is permitted. The motions are proposed in descending sequence, and put to vote in ascending sequence.

Below are some definitions which you should familiarize yourself with before proceeding to the list on page 9:

- Motion-** The item of business at hand: a bill, an amendment to the bill, a vote, etc.
- Purpose-** The reason for the motion.
- 2nd Needed-** Whether or not another member of the GSS must agree to 'co-sponsor' the motion.

Amendable- Whether the worth of the motion can be discussed by GSS, or if it must proceed directly to a vote on the motion.

Vote Needed- The fraction of the GSS that must approve the motion.

Interrupt- Whether or not the person speaking can be interrupted to make the motion.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Motion	Purpose	2nd	Amend	Debate	Vote	Interrupt
Main motion	To introduce business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	No
To postpone indefinitely	To defer an action indefinitely	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.	No
To postpone to a certain time	To defer for a specified length of time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	No
To amend	To modify a motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	No
To amend an amendment	To modify an amendment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	No
To defer to a committee	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	No
To limit or extend debate	To modify time restrictions on debate	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
Order the previous question	To close debate	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
To lay on the table (as with a resolution)	To defer indefinitely	Yes	No	No	Maj.	No
To take from the table	To consider a tabled motion	Yes	No	No	Maj.	No
To reconsider	To reconsider a defeated motion	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.	No
To rescind (repeal, annul)	To repeal	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	No
To suspend the rules	The take action contrary to the rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	N
Leave to modify or withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Maj.	No
Motion to divide	To consider in parts	Yes	Yes	No	Maj.	No
Object to consideration	To suppress action	No	No	No	2/3	Yes
To call for a roll call vote	To verify a voice vote	Yes	No	No	1/5	No
Point of order of information	To correct a procedure or ask a question	No	No	No	Chair	Yes
Appeal decisions of the Chair	To reverse the direction of the Chair	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Cal for orders of the day	To force consideration of a proposed motion	No	No	No	Chair	Yes
Point of personal privilege	To make a personal request	No	No	No	Chair	Yes
To adjourn	To end a meeting	No	Yes	No	Maj.	No

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE OFFICES

The following is a list of GSS offices. Elections for these offices are usually conducted at the second to last meeting of each school year. Officers take over immediately following the last meeting of the academic year.

President: The GSS president is the chief executive officer of the GSS and acts as an advocate on behalf of the Graduate Students both to the Graduate College and the University Community at large. The specific duties of the President will vary from year to year, but the main responsibilities of the office include setting general meeting times and convening special meetings for various reasons during the year. The President chairs all meetings of the GSS and is an *ex officio* member of all standing committees. The President is automatically one of the four GSS representations to the Graduate Council.

Vice-President: The Vice-President assists the president in carrying out the functions of the Graduate Student Senate and shall assume the duties of the office when the President is absent. The Vice-President is automatically the chair of the Committee on Committees.

Treasurer: The GSS Treasurer is responsible for the administration of the GSS funds and GSS business affairs. The Treasurer serves as chair of the annual Finance Committee. The Treasurer prepares periodic statements to the GSS body on the state of the GSS accounts.

Executive Associate(s): Each year two Executive Associates will be elected. Their primary purpose is to assist in the running of GSS: they are in charge of keeping minutes of general and special meetings, monitoring attendance, sending out agendas, taking minutes, and other jobs assigned by the president. One Executive Associate will serve as chair of the Membership/Publicity Committee.

Parliamentarian: The Parliamentarian is the sole advisor on constitutional issues. The duty of the parliamentarian is to ensure that meetings are conducted in agreement with Robert's Rules of Order. In the absence of the Parliamentarian at any meeting of the GSS, all duties of interpreting Robert's Rules of Order shall be given to the chair of the meeting.

Graduate Council: The Graduate Council is the academic policy making body for the Graduate College, and is composed of 12 representatives from the faculty, 4 graduate students and the Graduate College Deans. The Graduate Council usually meets twice a month. The GSS selects the four students who serve on this body. The President is automatically one of the graduate student representatives on the Graduate Council. The other three graduate students that serve on the Graduate Council are GSS senators who have been elected by the GSS members. The election of these representatives should be representative of disciplines across campus including: fine arts/humanities, social sciences, life sciences, computer science and engineering. The three elected individuals are to be drawn from categories which are not represented by the president.