



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, June 29th, 2020; 6:30 PM
WebEx Meeting

- I. Call to order 6:30 PM
 - i. Roll Call – *via poll*
 - ii. Statement of Quorum by the Chair – *summer quorum met (1/3 of current senators met)*
 - iii. Approval of Meeting Notes from May 2020 - *approved*
 - iv. Amendments to the Agenda – *NONE*
 - a. *Added Dr. Graves to the agenda under Speakers*
- II. Speakers
 - i. *Dr. Reginald Stewart: I am going to have you let me know what you want to talk about, I didn't put notes together, but I'll do my best to maintain engagement and I am impressed that so many of you are engaged in this.*
 - a. *VP Klimavicz: opens the floor, what measures ISU is taking to address diversity?*
 - b. *Every time we talk about D/I and inclusion, I ask people to zoom out, but everything that we experience on campus is a manifestation of a sometimes more combustible version of what is happening in the United States. We could talk about populations, etc. Education before conversation is very important, and I am tactfully not answering your question. We should decide of what are we talking about, including the specific nuances and unique challenges. There is everything to unpack. We could talk about monuments and statues for the next 2 hours, and discuss Princeton and Woodrow Wilson, and Catt Hall, but if we are going to discuss this, we should zero in on a specific topic or concept. Otherwise we will do a surface snapshot that is unfulfilling. Inclusion is an ongoing goal and is a very different dynamic. I am from California, and rarely we discuss diversity because the population is diverse in many ways. There is a lot to get to, but this is how I try to help people understand the magnitude of the ask.*
 - c. *VP Klimavicz: with graduate students and professional students in smaller area for standards they may be. The difficulty of the narrowness of the environment is*
 1. *Support you in the graduate pursuit; it can be lonely! There is some measure of disconnect (whether it is family, community, etc.). It is very symbolic when you are hooded because you are isolated. There is some understanding of you being alone in this journey, but you must get outside of your cohort. The diversity that you seek may be outside of your sphere of influence. That may be difficult, but identity and affinity in spaces that you are comfortable with do exist, but you must navigate that difficult road because it does exist. If you are trying to find community, reach out to us so we may be a broker or bridge to those communities. I was the 'Black guy' in graduate school, and it was exhausting, but I use that to connect that experience.*
 2. *National conversation of BLM – why is it resonating now? Why is it different now?*
 1. *Senator Johnson: just to clarify you are asking why it is different (from before)?*
 2. *Stewart: correct, you see a sort of societal change than in previous iterations*
 3. *Senator Johnson: people are forced to sit with it more (from Corona) and we have been*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

building this and talking about this with students forever and ever, and it became worse in 2016, so we are forced to sit with it and compare what they had to see before and what they see now

3. *Exactly, we are at home staring at our computers and watching him being murdered in real time (historically people are shaken). People could not look away from it. I addressed this in Stage but thinking about the often millennial phrase of “Okay boomer”, but the reality is that that is the case, Millennials are saying that ‘we aren’t taking it anymore’ in contrast to the Baby Boomers. When you say enough is enough you will pass law and policy and do something different from the rhetoric. When you look at the Civil Rights movement, it was about boycotting and pushing the economics, and that is what we are doing. Understanding the approach to make the change as well as the patterns being seen is fascinating*
- d. *Last year students were facing diversity and inclusion issues, and now they are worried about getting sick; can you address what is being done to address these concerns?*
 1. *Stewart: As the Chief Diversity Officer on campus, your job is to challenge the status quo so you are not always the most popular person in the boardroom. When we first started talking about COVID19, I was talking about the disproportionate effects on Black and Brown and Navajo folx, and discussing with a colleague the language behind essential workers; in a idealized way are police, etc. and other central workers (hourly wage workers) that are at the highest risk because they are service workers. The language of essential is difficult, and I often think the word that people really think is ‘disposable’. This is just me talking now; this is not just the institution per se. I just want you to understand that even the way we are currently set up to have a disparate impact on people with this virus, right? So as such very early we opened up on the DI home page, the first thing you see is COVID19 with resources about racial disparities including addressing how East-Asian presenting people were blamed, and then other communities faced a sharp stigma. We are all affected by this, but we are not all going to recover in the same way. When looking at catastrophes, first-generation students, people of color, and other groups do not recover at the same way. As scholars we need to pay very clear attention to this disparity. If you direct students to my office, we can always broker them to the right place, and we have great people in the right place. The CARES Act did not go to students that were international or DACA, so even the relief that was built was disproportionate. We did not even all get the same help during this time, so we will not all recover the same.*
- e. *Senator Iennarella-Servantez: I apologize for the technical difficulties, as this is my first time doing a web meeting. This is not going to come out clean or polished, but I want to echo some things within veterinary medicine as well as BLM. I’m picking up on a lot of frustration from classmates that they understand big systemic changes don’t happen overtime, but they feel that the administration at the college and university as well have been slow of taking note of things, whether it’s building or certain attributions campus named after figures that had controversial racial pasts, things like that. My question is how do I help students across the board so this isn’t an individual, but navigate some of those interactions with administration in order to say “hey we actually need big changes” and “it shouldn’t always have to be after an immense amount of student pressure”.*
 1. *I’m going to agree with 93% of that, but the 7% that I would say: change on college*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

campuses has always been driven by student need and student demand and I will always go back to the seminal Strike of San Francisco State and the Third World Liberation front brought to light the issues. So the idea that administration should be more locked in on the issues, I don't disagree with you; I think simply put: that the way education is built, and education repeats itself, it's a feedback loop, and true social change has always been pushed for by students. I do not have a well-developed answer to dismantle that, but that is my college experience and in general what happens. Students get to a tipping point and push and then change takes place. Illustrations of something like the Confederate statues or names on buildings, some of that has to do with what I call the policy window. A policy window opens in a specific set of circumstances and that's why change seems to happen (sort of what I was saying with BLM). You can make the same argument over and over, but a set of circumstances that seems to compel changes and it never takes place in the clip that we want it to (I'm not trivializing it) but the objective behind the university is always (at its core) the perpetuation of the university. As such, you must maintain agent fluctuation at a minimum. At commencement, hoods and caps and gowns on you replicate English knighting ceremonies, etc. we have this longstanding legacy to tradition and history, which frustratingly makes the pace of change slow. I agree with you, but at the same time, knowing that this is the process, the question becomes how do you open policy windows and striving for change, and do you have everything in place when they do open. How did Princeton get Wilson removed from campus, but you are talking about a former US president, and no one would think that would take place, and yet they aligned to make it happen. All I can say is that this fight, if you are in it for the change while you're here (not just you, collective you), you're in it for the wrong reasons. You need to want change for the future generations. 8th graders right now. In response to veterinary medicine directly, part of my conversation was this: often organizations work on climate issues, and they work on things that they can see directly. They say we are "working" on these issues, but you may be work on a climate issue, but what you may have is a culture issue. And a culture issue effectively is how your organization functions and what your organization values and the ideas behind it is a cultural issue. The culture of any work you do on climate will placate the surface, but not address the system change which is needed to change a culture. Systemic change is cultural change and it is slower. I will stop there since I know you have a lot on your agenda.

- 2. Senator I-S: I would like to respond to that I would like to challenge you on two things, one on behalf of me and one on behalf of those I represent. I have been a college a long time, and as much as I sit in a classroom and can learn anatomy and histology, and I see my instructors as experts in their fields. And one of the things that I think that in most institutions, not just ISU, that we are deficient on, is that we are also learning how to be professionals from our professors and administration, and so if something is not a priority because they are slow, and these changes they want to stay the same, which I agree with your points, if we don't see that at every level of leadership, then we're not learning those skills as students. And it may not be outlined in Los and syllabi, but it is still fundamental to our education. On behalf of the people that I represent, and I am telling you this because I am excited to see you take over, but we are tired. Professional students are exhausted, as*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

there are profound mental health issues already within our community. It is falling disproportionately on minority students and allies of the instrument of change which creates yet a further barrier to their education on top of the laundry list of ones they already have. So, I appreciate your comments and I just want to leave you with those thoughts, and I am very excited to see you take on this role.

- f. *Senator *Adam: When we get into some of these topics, they are very emotional and so a lot of people don't want to be confronted by the facts, which can make it difficult. With my personal experiences, I do not have a lot to go on, so do you have any resources for those who are not as receptive to the BLM movement?*

1. *Doing this is like going to the gym until you get used to it, and developing the bandwidth, and stability while maintaining the conversation. Some of us have just done this longer, even when things spiral out of control. If you think about it, think about people turning hoses or dogs on you, and I use it as fuel to make it my obligation to keep this conversation going. Use your graduate brains to unpack why people are so resistant. People often talk about how they do not want to address this PC stuff. I posit that PC does not stand for politically correct. I think PC stands for polite company. Polite company, for those of you raised in the US, effectively you do not talk about race, religion, socioeconomic status, sexuality, sexual orientation, essentially diversity and inclusion. You have a ton of people raised in an environment that it was IMPOLITE to discuss these topics, and they haven't developed the vocabulary to have this conversation and they are in positions of extreme authority and so you created this imbalance, and it's the first time now that you know more than your parents. I see this with my own kids. Taking that to an organizational standpoint, and it makes it disappointing to have discussions with leadership that do not have those competencies. It is not just an ISU issue. Yours is the generation that will require you to have these competencies, but it is disconcerting for the people who are currently in the workforce, since it is seen as a loss of autonomy in a way.*

ii. **Grassroots Organization**

- a. *Vivian Cook – I am currently a graduate student in sustainable agriculture and community and regional planning, and an incoming graduate assistant director with the Writing and Media Center. And then Carolina if you want to introduce yourself...*
- b. *Dhruv Rapture – I am a first year coming up to the first time I came to Iowa and I am in the Material Science and Engineering Department, and a member of Students Against Racism.*
- c. *Caroliena Cabada - I am a current graduate student in the English Department studying creative writing and environment. And I am also part of the incoming cohort of the graduate college emerging leadership academy*
- d. **Discussion**
1. *Cook – discuss what GPSS is and can do regarding the opening within the Fall, we sent out some emails, etc. If all of you received the information, we will do a brief overview of the primary concerns, etc. At the end we will discuss collaborations and effective communication on safety and equity, especially with employee rights, etc. On the screen here, you will see primary concerns; GPSS is able to contact the entire graduate and professional student body, and you also have a relationship with administration. Our primary concerns include safety, equity, and accessibility.*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

1. *Choice: to work and learn remotely in the Fall*
2. *Online-only: classes may have widespread appeal to graduate students and are a much safer alternative; why is this not being considered?*
3. *Ames community assumes a greater risk with little voice in the university's decision*
4. *Communication: is one-directional and lacks transparency*
2. *Trends:*
 1. *Action from university administration due to external shocks should be expected within 20 days*
 2. *Action from university administration due to student activism should be expected within 40 days*
 3. *University administration either coordinates or is blindsided by BoR decisions*
 4. *Suppression from university administration of student activism should be expected within 1 day*
 5. *We have less than 30-40 days to account for extended move-in of undergraduates, etc.*
3. *Immediately actionable*
 1. *Choice: demand clarification and expansion of the earlier statement that no instructor will be forced to teach in person classes to include ALL employees (making sure no one feels coerced to work on campus)*
 2. *Online only: survey graduate student to determine preference and concerns on reopening and then also online resources*
 3. *Ames: demand that the university state that they will act based on the recommendations of story County Board of Health*
 4. *Communication: seek clarification on deadline to make alternative work arrangements, demand an extension for those who do not fall into the high-risk category, communicate rights and choices, and demand transparency and inclusion in decision-making*
4. *GPSS's role*
 1. *How can GPSS achieve actionable steps?*
 2. *What concerns have you collected and voiced to administration*
 3. *What channels of communication are open to GPSS to communicate to administration and graduate students and how can we collaborate?*
5. *Opened for questions*
 1. *Klimavicz: elected by peers and talk to some administrators, but we are limited to expressing concerns, but we do not have a tremendous amount of power, even with the Graduate College being helpful. Sometimes the problem is just making people aware that we exist and matter. What do you envision for us?*
 - (i) *Raturi: we have this common goal and multiple ways to get there. As a grassroots organization, we are at the absolute bottom level. We have sometimes no one to contact within organizations. We are hoping you may be able to help us work from the top down, since you have wide birth with academic committees, etc. If we do not have support now, we will likely have students facing a situation they do not want to be in such as in person courses.*
 - (ii) *Klimavicz: to clarify, we have concerns passed to us from constituencies to their senators and then we can pass them on to administration*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

- (iii) *Johnson: between rock and hard place, tried to gather information and then squashed by administration saying that wasn't supposed to go out yet and so right now it's hard for us to give room to student voices, but more that we try to grasp what you're doing and making noise is important. We also have access to social media platform.*
2. *Cook – do you have access to all graduate students?*
- (i) *Klimavicz: no, all information is sent out to senators, and it is on them to disseminate the information (game of telephone); could you describe your organization a little bit and what is your organization*
- (ii) *Saturi: we must take advantage of the different strengths and weaknesses that we all have, and to find our people with the same self-interest. Our self-interest is like administration and staff/faculty but not necessarily undergraduate students. Within these categories of graduate students, employees, and employees in general, we should build a sort of consensus and gathering information to call out administrators and operate outside a certain level of protocol. We want to maximize the chances of an online only instruction, and we know that people have different resources and networking to utilize.*
3. *Dr. Cutrona: Bill and I have talked about this several times; we are very concerned about this. I am 69 so I understand that teaching in person is not a great idea for me or for others. One thing we thought about is creating a clearinghouse for departments to post TA opportunities they have and if they want them to be online or in person. There are some graduate students that may prefer F2F, but I know the university is focusing on first year (undergraduate) experiences). Another idea is if you turn down a TA experience, is there a guarantee that you will get an experience later, or if you are not comfortable teaching something in person, etc. We are listening and we are very concerned, and I will give it over to bill.*
4. *Dr. Graves: We are concerned about GAs and focusing on campus being safe. We are trying to make campus as safe as possible this fall. I can offer some information is this: one thing of your primary concerns included the July 1st deadline for HR process. The leader of HR she said the July 1 deadline was only for staff/faculty, not GAs/TAs (so one bit of factual news). I would want to emphasize that GAs is often associated with major professors, but you all should also try to approach it at an individual student level. Each GA should be able to sit down and reach out to discuss concerns and expectations. Individual issues may be able to be resolved with honest communication. I think the faculty will identify with fears/concerns and want to work with you to maintain the assistantship. I encourage you to have these conversations.*
- (i) *Carolienna Cabada: thank you for sharing that about the extension for assistantships, I am personally grateful for that. I want to work backwards with the comments: you talked about discussion on the individual level and local level. While I agree that is important to have that relationship, I do wonder about how cross-disciplinary instruction/collaboration will be affected. How can we be sure that they will be aligned across the board, so having continuity is crucial (stressing a baseline). I work with freshmen as a TA, and while yes I would love to teach in*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

- person, I know from a safety standpoint teaching online would be safer, and we have the time to actually be imaginative to care for those students.*
- (ii) *Raturi: The 2020-2021 first year students will have a different experience regardless (and thinking otherwise is living in denial). 'Safe' reopening is an oxymoron. I do think that it is contradictory in many ways since I must go to classes too. I think that when people arrive here that it could be very dangerous, and I personally don't know how I'll cope, and I may make the decision to drop out for a semester; for those wondering I have not enrolled in courses yet.*
 - (iii) *Cook: Part of the problem is transparency, and I don't think all graduate students know they can have these discussions, because right now it makes it sound like if you're not in particular risk categories according to HR that you can't request anything.*
 - (iv) *Graves: The university has acknowledged in a letter by Wintersteen that we cannot eliminate risk completely. We also sent out communication as to how to address this on a local level, but we are also here for you in case you need to. You can also use the OMBUDS office as well confidentially (unless you want them to take a kind of action). We do not want a graduate student to feel trapped, or an unreasonable level of risk, we do not want anyone to feel uncomfortable in what they are being asked to do. At heart we are older graduate students essentially, and we are here to stand up on behalf of students. Anyone who needs support, we are here for it and here to facilitate conversations.*
 - (v) *Cutrona: if you know someone who has a serious mental illness, there is also the disability accommodations, and I handle those for graduate students in their assistant ships. You do not have to be mentally ill to know that this is dangerous; some people at this university who have real mental health difficulties that will prevent them from venturing out. You guys aren't 'crazy' because you know it's dangerous, you guys are sensible because you know its dangerous, but if you do know somebody that is terrified to go out because of this virus, send them to me please.*
5. *SIO Karakaya: As a graduate student, I am from the educational department, and the classes I'm teaching are already online, but my friends and graduate friends who are concerned about going to labs or doing fieldwork, and I have heard many concerns.*
 6. *Klimavicz: to clarify, is there any last-minute comments for our guests?*
 - (i) *Karakaya: I think at some point this is not a way for graduate students to be informed. Like it does not matter for graduate students to be well very well informed, such as solving problems at local levels. I think advisors and supervisors should be aware that they should not force students to go to labs or fields. I have friends who are considering dropping the degree and returning to their country, or a friend with a child who needs daycare and yet must be in a lab all day.*
 6. *Cook: we have provided you resources to spread to your constituents, and we would love to stay in contact.*
 7. *Rahuri: Ozlem, thank you for story, your friend sounds like me. I just want to say that there is not such thing as safe reopening. And these resources that have been mentioned, and I*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

really need to find out who to contact to drop out; I have mentioned it three times.

1. *Cutrona: My husband teaches statistics and he has had students contact him and ask him for online content so he is recording his lectures for online content so you can take it either way. It may be worth a chance, if there are a couple of classes that are required to contact the professor but could be taught online.*
2. *Klimavicz: I would also recommend talking to the Ombuds coordinator.*

iii. *Dr. Cutrona: just know we are very concerned, and we are listening*

iv. *Dr. Graves: we want to help; please contact us if you need us.*

III. Executive Reports to the Senate (5 min each) – **PLEASE REER TO EXECUTIVE UPDATES**

i. Report of the President

- a. *Memo in March that restricted travel for employees and graduate students; people really shouldn't be traveling for conferences*
- b. *PAG is in limbo, but only a small amount of PAG that got through*
- c. *BoR may make a statement on travel, so just know we are part of the campus community*
- d. *Virtual conferences will still be eligible for support*
- e. *A lot changing in the fall, so keep an eye out for what is coming from your department, but we cannot provide anything that is not already made public, which does slow down communication*

ii. Report of the Vice President – *no updates*

iii. Report of the Treasurer – *finally have access to account, and am working through Spring allocations now that I have access*

- a. *Senator Morris: is there a formal procedure to rolling funds over to the next year if we do not spend them?*
 1. *Not to my knowledge, but I have a meeting coming up*

iv. Report of the Chief Information Officer - *none*

v. Report of the University Relations and Legislative Affairs Chair - *none*

vi. Report of the Graduate and Professional Student Research Conference Chair - *none*

IV. New Business - *none*

V. Senate Forum

i. *Senator O'Leary: is this our last meeting?*

a. *No, we have one more meeting*

ii. *Senator Viju: I had brought this up previously, but a student had been injured with a needlestick, and usually you fill out a form, there is a follow-up and you discuss procedures as to how to prevent this in the future. So one of my colleagues had a needlestick injury, but when we went through the procedural incident, we received an email back saying that this does not qualify as an employee-related incident even though this incident took place during a time educational in purpose. I am a little concerned because most of us work in labs, so I wanted to get a discussion on this.*

a. *Klimavicz: the university likes to make it abundantly clear to us that we are not employees even though many duties overlap with employees. We are students first, but the university has sent mixed messages, such as calling us employees and keeping out information out of the employees tab. It is not always clear, but we are not employees, so we do not have the benefits of employees. Dr. Cutrona or Dr. Graves want to add to that feel free, or anyone else.*

1. *President Field: It is a great example of how we fall into a precarious point. Everything is case by case. This was obviously deemed to be a student incident, but it just highlights an*



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Student Senate

uncomfortable place that we are in.

2. *Klimavicz: and we do not have a good answer for this issue*
- b. *Viju: what is the active policy then, to maintain the safety culture of the college as a whole? This was the first time it was brought to my attention, so I wanted to bring it to the floor.*
 1. *Klimavicz: it is important for us to note these concerns so thank you for bringing it up.*
- c. *Morris: a lot of us take notes and then give feedback, and often don't get feedback from students without having an in-person meeting, so I would recommend that modality.*
 1. *Losby: connecting with your DOGE and virtual office hours are also a possibility too to open communication*

VI. Roll Call and Announcements - none

VII. Adjournment – 8:55P