

Graduate Student Senate Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 7:00 pm
Liberman Graduate Center (DUC 300)

Meeting Agenda

Welcome dinner and drinks for senators and executive board start at 6:30 pm.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Remarks by Association of Gender Minority and Women Graduate Students (GeMWGS) with Natalia Guzman Solano and Emma Merrigan (Co-Presidents).
 - a. One of the goals is to advocate for more inclusive environments, especially for gender minority and women graduate students, but not limited to those groups.
 - b. Testimonies from peers on experiences using new parent leave and accessing childcare
 - c. Graduate Student Childcare Subsidy
 - i. For one child, \$1,750 per semester; for two children, \$2,650 per semester; for three or more children, \$3,550 per semester
 - ii. <https://graduateschool.wustl.edu/day-care>
 - d. Question: What does “more robust” mean? What would you change?
 - i. Some possibilities:
 1. Having access to affordable childcare
 2. The waitlist is so long. Guaranteed spots for graduate student children would make a difference.
 3. Fully funded semester versus 60 days.
 - e. Question: Are you working with the graduate student union?
 - i. Working together is a key component but there’s a limit with student group interaction.
 - f. Question: Are there daycare centers on campus?
 - i. Yes, there is one on WashU campus but the pricing is high and the waitlist is ~3 years.
 - g. Question: When was the policy last revised?
 - i. Possibly two years ago, but not certain.
 - ii. Went in effect 2018-2019 year, though.
- III. Remarks by Bethany Morgan, President of Graduate Students with Children
 - a. Group has been inactive for 1-2 years (after the last president graduated). There will be another co-president.
 - b. Initial plan: variety of social functions, different times of the day to accommodate the children and gather feedback.
 - c. If there are graduate students with children, email Bethany (bethanymorgan@wustl.edu)
 - d. Future: workshops? Partner with other organizations for administrative changes.
 - e. Departmental implementation of new child leave policy is not even.
 - f. There needs to be more work with the mental health services with new parents (ie for post-partum and stress).
 - g. Question: Are there family planning resources for graduate students?
 - i. Not that she is aware of.
 - ii. There’s a lot of stigma around it, so there should be.
 - h. Question: Did you have classes while you had your children here?
 - i. She ended up taking the class for less credit (3 vs 2 credits). Still participating via online discussions and essay postings.
 - ii. Unclear about how the policy asks students to handle classes and falling behind, etc.

Graduate Student Senate Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 7:00 pm
Liberman Graduate Center (DUC 300)

- i. Is there a policy about bringing children to campus? Not certain.
- IV. Discussion on graduate student childcare concerns
- V. Vote on the Diversity and Advocacy Committee
 - a. The Diversity and Advocacy Committee recommends that GSS create one liaison position to the Graduate & Professional Student Advisory Council (GPAC). The liaison will attend all GPAC monthly meetings and report back to the Diversity and Advocacy Committee and the Senate.
 - b. Motion passes.
- VI. Upcoming Events
 - a. GPAC events (<https://gpac.wustl.edu>)
 - i. DiversiTea - A discussion group of a different kind
 - 1. 4:00-5:00 pm (CDI, DUC 150), Tuesday, November 12th, 2019.
 - ii. Snacks in the City
 - 1. Snacks on GPAC
 - 2. 6pm, Thursday, November, 14th, 2019.
 - 3. Masala (6170 Delmar Blvd)
 - 4. RSVP by emailing gpac@wustl.edu
 - iii. Diversity Coffee Hour with GPAC @ Brown School
 - 1. 12:00-1:00 pm, Thursday, November 21st, 2019.
 - b. GeMWGS Conversations: Navigating the Academy
 - i. Catered. Speakers.
 - ii. 12:00-1:30 pm, Friday, November 8, 2019. Hurst Lounge, Duncker 201.
 - c. Black Graduate Council presents Trap, Soul, and Paint: Sip Wine, Eat, Socialize & Create Art!
 - i. 6:00-9:00 pm, November 11, 2019, Liberman Center in the DUC (3rd floor).
 - d. Graduate Artist Organization presents Parabola.
 - i. Annual exhibition for graduate students. Interdisciplinary. Submissions for non-traditional artwork.
 - ii. If you are not artsy, they will link you to an artist who will create a piece of art based on your research.
 - iii. 2019 theme: Extraterrestrial.
 - iv. Submissions are due by: November 25, 2019 (at midnight).
 - v. For more information go to: samfoygao@gmail.com
- VII. New Business
 - a. Library liaison
 - i. If you have concerns or things you want from the library, please email Laurel Taylor (the Library Advisory Liaison) at laurel.taylor@wustl.edu
 - ii. Student Engagement Committee has talks of a wine event to attract graduate students. Activity fair in spring that GSS is invited to have a table at.
 - b. Art history stipend master stipend issue:
 - i. Not being paid through the Graduate School.
 - ii. They no longer can be paid as a monthly stipend and has to be paid out through HR.
 - iii. Right now they are coming at uneven increments.
 - iv. Possibly a grad council issue.

**Graduate Student Senate Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 7:00 pm
Lieberman Graduate Center (DUC 300)**

- v. **Send an email to the gss@wustl.edu if you have a master's program in your department with how much they are getting paid, how its getting taxes, and any other useful information, questions, or concerns.** This way we can see what consistency there is between departments.
- c. Mental health services are not available to students outside of the country (like students who are traveling for research).
 - i. Give students resources for out-of-country mental health in the field.
 - ii. Anthropology is planning something in February with mental health services, possibly.
 - iii. Hard enough to get to while you're here.
- d. GPAC is taking on gender inclusive bathroom issues.
 - i. **If anybody has tried to do this in their department and has been shut down, please let GPAC know gpac@wustl.com**
 - ii. Bathrooms have to have a door and lock. Cannot convert just stalls.
 - iii. Map of current gender inclusive bathrooms:
https://diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/GenderInclusiveRestrooms_09012016.pdf
 - iv. GPAC is hunting down the policy about this.

VIII. Adjournment

If you ever cannot attend one of the GSS Monthly Meetings, please send a replacement from your department to attend in your place.

If you wish to be placed on the agenda in advance of the meeting, please contact our VP of Communications Amanda Price (acprice@wustl.edu). The GSS welcomes and encourages participation in its discussions. If you have an issue that you would like the entire senate to discuss, please feel free to bring it to our attention.

Calendar

December 3 **GSS Monthly Meeting**
7-8 pm @ Lieberman Graduate Center

February 4 **GSS Monthly Meeting**
7-8 pm @ Lieberman Graduate Center

2019-20 Graduate Student Senate Executive Board

Thomas Howard – Co-President
Rebecca Jordan – Co-President
Amanda Price – Vice President of Communications
Mark Sellers – Vice President of Finance

Contact

thomas.howard@wustl.edu
rebecca.jordan@wustl.edu
acprice@wustl.edu
mark.e.sellers@wustl.edu

GSS Website: gss.wustl.edu

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram: @GSSwustl

Lieberman Graduate Center: graduateschool.wustl.edu/liberman-center

GSS WUGO: grouporganizer.wustl.edu/organization/gss

GPC Website: gpc.wustl.edu

Graduate Student Senate Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, November 5, 2019, 7:00 pm
Liberman Graduate Center (DUC 300)

Current Graduate School New Child Leave policy

(<https://graduateschool.wustl.edu/policies-procedures>):

Full-time graduate students in Arts & Sciences, including PhD students in Engineering, Business, and Social Work, may request a New Child Leave to assume care for a new child. They should maintain full-time student status. Students on new Child Leave are not expected to participate in mentored teaching or research experience for up to 60 calendar days while they receive their current stipend support. Additional time off without receiving a stipend for up to a full semester will ordinarily be granted by the Graduate School if approved by the student's Department.

Unlike the leaves of absence discussed above, new child leave does not affect the student's full-time status and will not appear on the student's transcript. New child leave must be taken within the first year after the child's birth or adoption. Students should contact their department to request a New Child Leave.

To whatever extent is possible, a new child leave's beginning and ending dates should coincide with those of the academic term (fall, spring, or summer). If longer periods of leave are desired, students will be expected to apply for a Leave of Absence. Students who receive support from external agencies should consult the policies and guidelines of the sponsor.

ENROLLMENT STATUS: Full-time Enrollment

COURSE CODE: Any full-time graduate registration

PROCEDURES

- Academic & funding clock does not stop
- Student notifies their department and department submits form to the Graduate School
- Student does not participate in research or teaching activities while on New Child Leave

STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Provides 60 calendar days of paid leave
- Students maintain health insurance

NOTE

- Benefits and funding support will vary by school. Please refer to the policies of your home department
- All international students should consult with the Office of International Students & Scholars before applying for a leave of absence to determine how it may impact their visa status

NPL Testimonies

Collected by the Association of Gender Minority and Women Graduate Students (GeMWGS)

Specifically, the additional leave mentioned in the first paragraph was highly discouraged, and the department emphasized that if the new parent took more than the 7.5 weeks, her status as a student would change, and that this would compromise her place in the department. The policy explanation also states that New Child Leave “must be taken within the first year after the child’s birth or adoption,” which implies that students can choose when to take that leave. In my colleague’s case, the child was born during winter break, so she only received 5.5 weeks of leave. Because there was no direction or precedent from the department, she had to contact the department chair and administrative assistant in the days immediately following childbirth, which caused unnecessary stress. We asked whether the student knew what kind of medical documentation would justify additional leave and she indicated that the department administration spoke about it as though it was not an option and requesting a leave of absence if needed was never mentioned. Quote: *“I was told in my 8th month of pregnancy that the start date of my leave would be the day of her birth, not the first day of the new semester as I was originally told. So, since the first two weeks of my leave were during winter break, I only got 5.5 weeks of leave. If she had been born on her due date, I would’ve gotten even less than that.”*

“My department allowed me to make the start date of my Leave for the first official week of Spring Semester 2017. This means that I did not return to school until the first week of March 2017, when my son was just about 3 months old. (I also had other medical things going on during this pregnancy that necessitated a true Leave. I actually had (emergency) surgery while pregnant in November and AGAIN in February. I was recovering from a lot.) I was enrolled in a film class that semester. We worked it out with the professor that I would watch the films each week from the beginning of the semester (they were streamed on ARES) and would submit Blackboard posts with the rest of the class each week. I began attending the class officially in person in March. I received 2 credits for this course instead of 3 credits. This was pre-arranged. I was relieved of teaching duties while on Leave and returned to teaching at the beginning of March. We co-teach a lot in our department though, so this was not difficult to arrange...it seems as though each department interprets the Leave guidelines differently in application.”

“I never even bothered applying for leave. You have to maintain full-time student status, which after coursework means you’re blowing through funding time, and you only get 60 days off from TA-ing. I remained in full-time status and didn’t do any TA or RA -ing, using a semester of extra funding from a fellowship from outside my department. Dean Mitchell’s attention should be drawn to the fact that [...] cis-female parents [often] have to eat into funding time over the course of graduate school parenting...”

“Two large problems. First, UHC is a crappy insurance [policy]. I don’t have words to describe how bad it is. Not only are there tons of things it doesn’t cover, but they are unclear. They don’t give you information when you request it—they never know what they’ll pay for [cover] and what they won’t pay for. Their customer service is outrageous. Sara¹ is almost 8 months old and we’re not sure if we’re going to get another monstrous bill any day.

Second, in my case, there was no maternal [leave] policy. They did not give me an extra semester to finish the program. When I explained that I would not have enough time to finish the dissertation, then the Chair decided to give me a couple of classes to teach last semester so that I could earn what I was being paid any other semester, despite it being much more work (which, on top of having a baby, made it almost impossible to work on my dissertation). Moreover, those classes were not assigned to me immediately. It’s terrible living with that uncertainty. On another note, I’ve always had a sensation that faculty disapprove of my not having finished the program on time. I don’t believe the department has a maternal policy at all, and they should. Frankly, I believe that if for whatever reason I don’t finish the dissertation in the next weeks, the department won’t offer any support whatsoever.

Transportation

“It’s really complicated if I want to go by myself. The green line bus has nothing to travel safely with a baby. I used it on Monday and I had to carry my baby in my arms, trying to not fall down. The driver did not care either since she was frantic for seeing my ID to check if I could use that bus, in a very cold rainy day! Anyway, we came back home unharmed despite the lack of security.”

“I agree with Anna² that there is basically no safe way to bring a baby to campus. We came twice and parked at Millbrook Garage, but there are no ramps for strollers and a lot of steps leading up to campus. Also, as Anna said, there are no changing stations anywhere. I think there are nursing rooms in the business school and in the graduate student center. Affordable daycare would be nice. Right now, I think it is \$1700/month at WUSTL (which is way above what other places charge)--I’m not sure if we have a student discount. Having the baby during the fellowship year gave me more flexibility to work from home. Other things such as maternity leave and insurance coverage seem pretty standard at WUSTL.”

Insurance

“United Health care paid a significant percentage of the bills, and that is wonderful. The service at Barnes Jewish Hospital was EXCELLENT in every single aspect (C-section, nurses, physicians, anesthesia, suites, procedures, organization, help, medication, attention...) However, we could use more money/coverage since having a baby is very expensive.”

Facilities

“I went to Habib Health services and it has zero changing stations. I had to change my baby’s diapers in somebody’s chair. The nurses helped me hold my baby while I organized the whole procedure. I have some questions: Do we have a place in the bathroom at RLL (Romance Languages) for changing diapers? Do we have a place in RLL for breastfeeding? Can I do it there

¹ Pseudonym

² Pseudonym

20 February 2019

as soon as my maternity leave ends? Can I go there with my baby? Can I go there with his stroller?"

Daycare

"I cannot afford it. It's incredibly expensive. Besides, I have been meaning to find a baby-sitter to look after my kid but it seems impossible!"

"There is no way to afford childcare on our stipends. Even if we could manage getting a spot at WashU's day care, it's inaccessible to most students because we cannot pay for it. Childcare is like a middle-class luxury. I also feel like International and [cisgender] women graduate students are disadvantaged when it comes to having a baby, especially if we need to take a semester leave if we've had delivery complications."