

GSSA Assembly Meeting Agenda  
August 27, 2026 / LBC - Stibbs

- I. Call to order - 6:18pm
- II. Approval of minutes and adoption of agenda **Approved**
- III. Officer Reports
  - A. President – [president.gssa@tulane.edu](mailto:president.gssa@tulane.edu)
    1. Introduction! Carlie Epstein **X**
    2. **Fall Assembly Dates - 8/27, 9/23 (zoom), 10/21, 12/3 (zoom) X**
    3. Peak Hurricane Season: GSSA has historically provided funds to grad students in need. In the event of an emergency, check your emails for information to receive funds from GSSA, TU Student Emergency Aid and Assistance Fund, etc. **X**
    4. Let's hear from **Michael Cunningham**. Ph.D., Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research **X**
      - a) **Announces September 15 event, please RSVP. Will be a mixer for all the grad students. Fair amount of higher-ups will be there**
      - b) **Federal update - July 1st, 2027 GRAD Plus loan eliminated (talk to your adviser and financial aid if you want to take a leave of absence or drop to part-time); End of duration of status - FG says you can only get a Visa for four years; you'll have to renew if you want to stay longer. People here already (before Sep. 15) will get grandfathered in. If you leave and come back, that'll start your four years then (stay in touch with OISS in case it gets overturned)**
      - c) **Every year, you should be getting feedback in writing from your advisor. If you don't, you can escalate. He's advocating to actually communicate to grad students in!! Writing!! Love to see you arrive, but also love to see you go**
      - d) **Q&A - reach out to Michael Cunningham (mcunnin1@tulane.edu) if you need**
      - e) **Newsletter every Tuesday from Office of Graduate and Post-Doc Studies**
    5. **Fall Travel Fund Reimbursement Packets and Updates**
      - a) **Jennifer O'Brien Brown X**
        - (1) **Welcome to University Bureaucracy! :)**
        - (2) **GSSA's event submission and Wavesync; both need to be completed (how event staff around the university keep track of everything). Allows staff to clarify with you, and you to clarify with staff. Minimum submission time is three weeks in advance, but the more you've got going on, the earlier you should submit. And you can always cancel your event; you can't submit it too late. Make sure you get attendance to turn in!**
        - (3) **If your event is small (30 or less people) and open only to your department, it's a little more flexible, but still shoot for**

that three-week mark. You don't have to have everything finalized to turn in your submission (Wavesync event approved, etc.)

- (4) Food - Distributing = giving/handing out food. So if there will be food in your event, you need to check the selling/distributing box
- (5) Cleaning fee - currently all events with food on campus have a minimum \$15 cleaning fee but can go up. Will not be less than that. They have to send a janitor; they can't take our word for it. Needs to be included in your event budget. The cleaning staff can bill up for an hour; if they try to charge for longer, they need to provide proof. Will be charged regardless, but talk to Jennifer if you think you need to get an exception
- (6) Travel Reimbursements - the evil of Waveworks (Won'twork); things take longer than they used to. The new forms will be posted to the website for everyone to access. Reps are an important part of the review process, so make sure you have a firm understanding. Use the new forms!!! If you have a grad student who used the wrong form, let them know. Go to the source: the GSSA website. Fill out the full paper, but especially your email (and make sure to check your email for the reimbursement). Candex will reach out to you to handle the payment; no longer direct deposit (got rid of that nightmare). If you're submitting one for yourself, consider getting another rep or a friend to double-check and make sure you're not missing anything. Jennifer will be able to share the slides, so we have access to them. Fill out and turn in both the expense itemization sheet and the checklist (they need to be signed). Be very clear on who paid the expenses up front.
- (7) On the expense itemization sheet, make sure the whole first section is filled out. Reimbursements are not taxable, but they have to ask the tax question on the paperwork anyway. Mileage is only if you drove to the conference; it does not count for taxis. In said Transportation questions, only fill out what's relevant. They can reimburse a student and a department for one event if the costs were split. Be clear but concise. Finish by signing
- (8) Completed reimbursement packets should be sent to Nha ([nnguyen14@tulane.edu](mailto:nnguyen14@tulane.edu)) and Jennifer ([jbrien2@tulane.edu](mailto:jbrien2@tulane.edu)). Everything should be combined into one pdf before being sent over. This goes for event paperwork as well when you send it to GSSA execs and

Jennifer. Only include relevant receipts (we don't reimburse hotels, for example) and confirm that the student did in fact pay out of pocket.

(9) Tulane is getting strict!!! Make sure you follow all the steps, or they might reject your reimbursement. Not using Concur for flights is almost always not an option if you want to get reimbursed. Students who fill everything out properly, they should receive an email in about four weeks. If nothing has been heard in six weeks, talk to Jennifer. (Incomplete or incorrect forms slow down the process for everyone)

(10) Submit packets by two weeks after return

(11) Donut day outside the library next week :)

(12) Q.A. - This all starts now!!

6. Include your masters students! Ph.D. students, find out how you can get your department's Master students listservs so that they can also get included in all of your emails

7. Hazing Training 1 AND 2 - VectorLMS is real, and we all have to (as representatives) do part 1 and 2. Everyone on campus has to do part 1. We're special for doing part 2.

B. Vice President – [vp.gssa@tulane.edu](mailto:vp.gssa@tulane.edu)

1. Introduction! Mitchel Nuland X

a) Handling all social events (mixers in the fall and spring)

b) Questions about event -> go to this guy :)

C. Treasurer – [treasurer.gssa@tulane.edu](mailto:treasurer.gssa@tulane.edu)

1. Introduction! Jordan Lopez X

a) Check-in about the travel fund and when that'll be coming out (soon)

2. New budget - Substantial budget increase and Cody upped conference travel. So more shmoney overall, so apply for it. Entertainment is events

a) We cannot reimburse anything for alcohol. Immediately no, legally

D. Secretary – [secretary.gssa@tulane.edu](mailto:secretary.gssa@tulane.edu)

1. Introduction! Kearán Sparks X

2. 1 GSSA rep needed for every 15 graduate students enrolled in your department's graduate program (Masters and PhD students combined)

Please e-mail [secretary.gssa@tulane.edu](mailto:secretary.gssa@tulane.edu) to let us know who will be your GSSA reps for the 2026-2027 year. Each rep will receive the following:

a) WaveSync access (to submit event requests)

b) They will be listed on the GSSA Departmental Representative webpage

c) Listserv for GSSA representatives X

3. Robert's Rules Basics X

Funding event request guidelines- all funding requests **must be submitted by 11:59 PM 4 full days before the next scheduled GSSA Meeting**; you can only make requests for events planned for the upcoming month (events in between 2 meetings) **X**

- Note - we can semi-approve something. Doesn't happen often, but is legally allowed
- Will double-check, but even if sold through a third party with drink tickets will not be reimbursed
- If you have more than one event that totals to over \$300 or \$11 per person, you will need to provide an itemized budget

Questions to answer when you introduce an event

1. Introduce yourself and your department
  2. What is the event?
  3. What will the funds pay for?
  4. Will your department offer partial funding?
- Events under \$300 or under \$11 per person

| Requestor's Name    | Requestor's Department | Event Title                    | Event Start Date | Estimated # of attendees & Affiliation | Amount Requested | Per Person \$ |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Tofunmi Fatimilehin | Chemistry              | CGSA Departmental Meeting      | 9/9/2026         | 43                                     | \$300            | \$6.98        |
| Daniel Stearman     | Philosophy             | Philosophy PhD Student Meeting | 9/8/2026         | 20                                     | \$150            | \$7.50        |

Both approved by clear majority

Events over \$300 or over \$11 per person

| Requestor's Name | Requestor's Department | Event Title                 | Event Start Date | Estimated # of attendees & Affiliation | Amount Requested | Per Person \$ |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Naufil Sarkan    | Mathematics            | Graduate Student Colloquium | 9/8/2026         | 40                                     | \$250            | \$8.33        |
| Naufil Sarkan    | Mathematics            | Graduate Student Colloquium | 9/22/2026        | 40                                     | \$250            | \$8.33        |
| Isabel Nichoson  | Neuroscience           | Downtown Uptown North Shore | 9/18/2026        | 30                                     | \$275            | \$9.16        |

|                   |                                       |                                        |           |    |       |         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|----|-------|---------|
|                   |                                       | Neuroscience Krewe                     |           |    |       |         |
| Isabel Nichoson   | Neuroscience                          | Neuroscience Mentorship Program Social | 9/23/2026 | 30 | \$300 | \$10    |
| Augustine Nwokoye | River-Coastal Science and Engineering | RCSE Back2School Social Gathering      | 9/18/2026 | 22 | \$298 | \$13.55 |
| Abby Coldwell     | Ecology & Evolutionary Biology        | September CREEP meeting                | 9/2/2026  | 25 | \$515 | \$20.6  |

Everything passes with a clear majority

IV. New Business

A. Jewish Graduate Student Representatives - Collaborative Effort

1. Chaya Rivkin

- a) Mainly work with med and law school Jewish students, but branch out
- b) For people who want a Jewish community here at Tulane: social events, high holidays, meals
- c) Mixer next week - let your Jewish friends know

B. Determine representatives to sit on each of the following committees:

- 1. GAPSA - 3+1 on reserve - Rosen, Wanlass, Coldwell - Reserve: Faith
- 2. SSE Graduate Council - 1 - Agbomola
- 3. SLA Graduate Council - 1 - Font
- 4. SLA Graduate Studies Committee - 2 - Okpokpa, Mutter
- 5. SSE Graduate Rep - 1 - Blahusiak
- 6. OISS Liaison - 1 - Efotte
- 7. Honor Board Volunteers (2 from SLA, 2 from SSE) SLA - McKinley, dupe-vete-congolo, SSE - Rodriguez x2
- 8. Faculty Award Committee - 4 - Koch, Sekran, Stearnan, Garcia Zorba
- 9. Finance Committee - 4 - Nicholson, Fatimilehin, Luo, Ramirez
- 10. Event Committee - 3 - Daye-Doyle, Lyon, Parada
- 11. Legislative Committee - 4 - Blahusiak, Rosen, Darkwah, Katelyn Rodrigueuz
- 12. History Advisory Board - 2 (and Secretary) - Brooke Rodriguez, Parada

V. Old Business X

VI. Announcements X

VII. Adjournment 7:56pm