

Executive Report – President, Arianne Sacramento

The following report is lengthy as it also includes some excerpts from emails and the University Senate website for more information on the committees, taskforce, and meetings. To the best of my knowledge, the information presented here is accurate. However, please keep in mind that the reports were written post-meetings and from notes taken from those meetings. I will be sure to send an update if inaccuracies are brought to my attention as well as send an addendum should more information be sent my way.

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November 2019 Meetings

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Meeting: Chief Diversity Officer Candidates ([back to top](#))

GAPSA Exec in attendance:

Arianne Sacramento (all), Noah Beltrami (all), Benjamin de Seingalt (some)

Overview:

GAPSA Exec, USG Exec, and other students were invited to meet candidates for the Associate Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development/Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). While we are obligated to keep all information about the candidates confidential, we wanted to let the Assembly know that Tulane is hiring a CDO and will hopefully fill the position next Semester.

From the position description for CDO:

The associate provost will report to the Provost, lead the Presidential Commission on Race and Tulane Values, and champion initiatives consistent with the recommendations of the Commission. Working closely with the Vice President for Human Resources via the Office of Institutional Equity and other members of the senior administration, including school and center/institute leaders, the associate provost will have responsibility for initiatives related to diversity and inclusion. As a catalyst to leverage best practices across campus, the associate provost will articulate a cohesive and inspiring vision and develop shared accountability to promote a culture of inclusion throughout the University.

As one of five associate provosts, the associate provost for diversity and faculty development will be a key driver in a reinvigorated and restructured effort to cultivate academic leadership and success throughout the faculty ranks, with a strategic focus on faculty from historically underrepresented, oppressed, or marginalized communities. In this capacity, the associate provost will work cooperatively and collaboratively with other associate provosts, and with the support of the full provost's office team, on issues and in ways that achieve the broadly defined goals related to faculty development. The associate provost may spend up to 20 percent of the time working on other projects in the Provost's Office and/or pursuing teaching or research activities. Assignments will be determined in conjunction with the Provost on the basis of office needs and appropriate fit of expertise and interests.

Meeting: Social Issues Committee ([back to top](#))

GAPSA Exec in attendance: Arianne Sacramento

Overview:

The Committee met with Sharon Courtney, Vice President of Government Affairs. Sharon provided updates about Tulane's involvement in relative legislative issues, including the College Affordability Act (CAA), Immigration, and Title IX Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM).

Sharon also mentioned that if students would like advocacy training (such as preparation or key pointers for advocating to government officials, etc.) to reach out to her office.

- Contact information: Sharon Courtney, sharonc@tulane.edu, tel: 504.988.3399

From an email regarding Sharon Courtney's role:

Sharon is the university's liaison with Louisiana's Congressional Delegation and their staffs. She monitors legislative issues of importance to Tulane and seeks funding for university projects through legislative means by working with Tulane's consultants in Washington, D.C. She also serves as a link between the university and various national higher education organizations such as the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

From the University Senate website regarding the Social Issues Committee:

<https://senate.tulane.edu/node/2441>

Functions

Executive: a) To review, in response to petitions brought forth from the faculty, staff, and/or students of the university, university policies and practices that do not fall within the purview of other Standing Senate Committees, or aspects of such policies and practices, that may be inconsistent with fundamental human values. b) To review regularly with the President of the University matters pertaining to social issues affecting the university.

Advisory: To make recommendations to the Senate concerning matters pertaining to social issues affecting the University.

Meeting: Solstice Transportation [\(back to top\)](#)

GAPSA Exec in attendance: Arianne Sacramento

Overview:

I met with the Solstice Transportation Group and Brian Lowe, Director of Transportation and Parking, to discuss concerns/feedback that was brought to me about the shuttles and TapRide. We discussed shuttle/TapRide delays, low responsiveness, and TapRide's radius of service. The Group provided their recommendations (part of an ongoing report) and Brian Lowe was invited to the December 3, 2019 Assembly meeting to present, to discuss further, and to answer questions.

I also mentioned expanding the internship-shuttle ride program for undergraduates to graduate and professional students. Brian stated that this would require a little more intel as the program would only work if the internships were qualified (met some requirements) and were vetted.

Please feel free to ask Brian for clarification and other questions you might have at the meeting.

From an email regarding the Solstice Transportation meeting:

Shuttles & Transportation has engaged Solstice Transportation Group to conduct a study to review current campus transportation services and future departmental needs. A critical component of this study is feedback from a variety of Tulane stakeholders. The information gathered will be compiled with the study recommendations to help plan and develop transit solutions that will meet specific needs of different campus departments as well as the broader Tulane population.

For your information, a brief overview of the scope of the study is provided below:

- *Are transportation services in line with the university goals of:
 - Undergraduate student experience
 - Teaching and research
 - Financial Sustainability*
 - *Are the hours of operation and the services offered through the various Shuttles & Transportation operations aligned with the academic needs and student quality of life needs of the Tulane community in the year 2019 and beyond?*
 - *What would be the benefits of merging Shuttles & Transportation and Parking Services into one department from a branding standpoint, budgetary standpoint, efficiency standpoint, and staffing standpoint?*
 - *Are transit services offered at Tulane comparable to peer institutions?*
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Meeting: Course Evaluation Taskforce ([back to top](#))

GAPSA Exec in attendance: Arianne Sacramento

Overview:

The Course Evaluation Taskforce, under the University Senate Committee on Assessment, held a kick-off meeting. Discussion revolved around the current course evaluations, ways to improve the number of responses from students, and ways to gain meaningful evaluations from students. The hope is to have an instrument to be used for all evaluations (across all schools) by the end of the academic year.

From an email regarding the taskforce:

It has been many years since Tulane's course evaluation instrument(s) have been reviewed and there seems to be general consensus that the time has come for this work to be done. Student input will be critical to this process and I know you will have much to offer the work of the taskforce. I am pleased to say that Dr. Angelo DeNisi, Professor and former Dean in the A.B. Freeman School of Business, has graciously agreed to serve as faculty chair of the taskforce, with the Office of Assessment & Institutional Research providing support for the taskforce's work. We expect this taskforce to complete its work by the end of this academic year, so are hoping that this will be a relatively limited and finite time commitment for you. The charge of the taskforce is below.

Charge:

The Course Evaluation Taskforce, under the Tulane University Senate Committee on Assessment, will develop the common instrument to be used for all evaluations of Tulane courses. This instrument shall be comprised of questions that are clear and focused in purpose with an agreed upon scale of measurement. The common instrument shall be an appropriate length to both produce meaningful feedback while also facilitating maximum response rates. Taking into consideration best practices, the taskforce will also make recommendations regarding policies and procedures for administering the evaluations and disseminating the results.

Schools, departments/programs, and instructors will have the flexibility to append additional questions to the common instrument to meet their specific needs. The taskforce will provide guidance and recommendations for the development of these additional questions, based on best practices in course evaluation and survey question design. This may include developing a question "bank" to provide standardization when possible while easing the burden on Schools, programs, and instructors to develop questions to meet their needs. Taskforce members will work in their respective schools on specific question development.

Meeting: GAPSA Exec – Equity Resolution Authors [\(back to top\)](#)

GAPSA Exec in attendance:

Arianne Sacramento, Benjamin de Seingalt, Noah Beltrami, and Jennifer Siew

Equity Resolution Authors in attendance:

Kamiya Stewart, Deja Wells, Abi Mbaye, and Tabita Gnagniko

Overview:

GAPSA Exec met with the Equity Resolution Authors to discuss some comments/questions brought to Exec, and to do a thorough review of the document. The goal was for Exec to give suggestions to improve the resolution and for the authors to re-draft another document for the Assembly to review and distribute to their constituents. Exec will keep the Assembly informed of any new developments and forward an updated documented should we get one. The authors were invited to the December 3, 2019 Assembly meeting, but the authors stated that they would not be able to present at this time.

Agenda, abbreviated post-meeting minutes:

- Introductions
- GAPSA Assembly Process (review, approval, etc.)

GAPSA's process

- Proposal reviewed by a committee. In this case, GAPSA Exec served as the reviewing committee.
 - Assembly was sent a draft and were encouraged to gather concerns from their constituents and to possibly obtain a consensus for their division.
- Proposal presented to Assembly. Assembly can motion to approve, approve an amended version, deny, or table the proposal.
- Process can repeat until Assembly feels comfortable voting on the proposal.

After passing through GAPSA → sent to University Senate (Arianne and Ben)

- Proposal sent to standing committees of the University Senate (similar to GAPSA)
- Budget Review, Equal Opportunity and Institutional Equity, Student Affairs
 - Budget Review - Arianne
 - Equal Opportunity and Institutional Equity - Ben and Noah
 - Student Affairs - Arianne, Ben, and Peter

After passing through University Senate → Board of Trustees (Arianne)

- Equity Resolution Authors' overview of resolution
- Graduate and Professional Student comments/questions (as presented in [email](#) from Arianne; see below)

Please note that while I believe that GAPSA Exec/Assembly and the authors of the Equity Resolution meet at common ground (i.e. Tulane has a lot of work to do to reach equity and

inclusion), GAPSA Exec/Assembly would like to ensure that we pass a resolution that is likely to be well received by the University Senate. The comments/questions below were developed from the initial review with GAPSA Exec, the Assembly, and students who took the opportunity to reach out. Many of the comments/questions overlapped and are chunked in a clean and concise manner. These are the comments/questions sent to the authors to begin the conversation in improving the resolution and may not reflect every detail brought up to GAPSA Exec.

Comments/questions:

- *Please elaborate on the fee rate and percentage allocations. Why \$240 per student? Why these specific percentages? Were there historical information/budgets used to set these numbers?*
- *Please elaborate on the usage of the Equity Fund. Can you speak to what the money is going to? The resolution was broad, but are there specifics in mind? Specific programs, specific initiatives, etc.*
- *Please add more substance. While you have some numbers, there is room for improvement. For instance, are there plans for a more official survey with more numbers? We see the value in having a larger scaled official survey.*
- *There are some programs/offices that we felt could be added. For instance, international students currently pay student activities fees and make up ~20-30% of graduate students. Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) was not mentioned.*
- *We also have comments on **the** structure of the proposal, but that is something we can discuss more in person?*
- Discussion/possible reconciliation of comments/questions

The following represents the “highlights” of the meeting. The meeting lasted over an hour and productive discussion occurred. GAPSA Exec made sure that the authors understood that our feedback were suggestions. Also note that the discussion involves more than the comments/questions initially presented above (in blue).

- *Authors stated that they had numbers/calculations to speak to the \$240 fee as well as to the percent allocations for the programs/departments/offices. GAPSA Exec suggested that it would be useful to have that presented in the resolution. For instance, if the authors were told that a program needed \$800,000 more funding to service students, that should be stated. They can then work their way backwards to the percent allocation for the program. Other suggestions included a description of the programs/departments/offices (what do they do? Who do they serve?) in a form of an appendix and some sort of budget example in a form of an appendix. GAPSA Exec pointed out that for graduate and professional students, it would be beneficial to know how many graduate and professional students are serviced to help explain the percent allocations.*
- *GAPSA Exec and authors spoke about adding substance to the resolution. It was explained that it would be difficult to do a larger scale survey as the results would likely not be unbiased. However, other means for obtaining data was discussed – such as data from Institutional Research. Exec mentioned gathering data on*

retention (i.e. the number of black students who transfer out of Tulane) and more to add substance to the resolution.

- Authors stated that they will be talking to the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) to determine need.
 - GAPSAs Exec discussed how the resolution could benefit from being clear and concise. Exec mentioned that we were not sure that the authors would get a chance to speak to the University Senate and standing committees of the Senate, and therefore may not get the chance to answer questions if the members had any. Thus, GAPSAs Exec stated that the resolution must answer any possible questions. The Authors were made aware that GAPSAs Exec (and USG Exec) will be present in the standing committees and University Senate.
 - GAPSAs Exec suggested that the thesis of the resolution should be mentioned sooner. If the purpose of the \$240 fee is to service all marginalized students, that should be stated sooner. The resolution should also clearly define terms to avoid confusion (equity vs. equality).
 - GAPSAs Exec and authors also discussed putting the responsibility of the equity fund on the administration/University and not the students. Exec discussed the value of a more detailed explanation of previous attempts, which led to the eventual Equity Resolution.
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Meeting: JEC ([back to top](#))

GAPSA Exec in attendance:

Arienne Sacramento, Noah Beltrami, Alyssa Fears, and Benjamin de Seingalt

Overview:

GAPSA Exec met with USG Exec for the second Fall 2019 JEC meeting.

- Capital improvement ideas (use of reserve money)
 - USG Exec mentioned Zip Cars as a possibility.
 - Recently, USG approved funding for solar panels at PJs. The panels will power individual charging ports.
 - GAPSA Exec brought up Recycle's requests for funding for water bottle filling stations should Campus Services need it.
 - Collaboration – Townhall events and USG Committees
 - USG Exec invited GAPSA to take part in some of their town halls (LBGT, mental health, sexual violence)
 - USG Exec also invited GAPSA Exec to join their events team – possibly Noah and Alyssa to join and represent their respective campuses
 - GAPSA Exec will be sending representatives to committees (as listed in approved standing committees list). Of note is the student safety committee.
 - Equity Resolution proposal debrief (discussed meeting detailed above)
 - Possible project – blue bike system expansion
 - Event: December 8 – Yell-BC
 - Cathartic and sporadic screaming!!
 - Ramadan fasting period – accommodations for students during Final exam week
 - If graduate and professional students want to discuss further, please contact us and we can link you with the USG initiative.
 - However, Educational Policy Committee should have a policy in place for this by February.
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