



## Faculty Meeting Report Spring 2024

### Spring 2024 Report

The Graduate Student Association's (GSA) mission is to provide a student forum for discussion of common needs, cooperate with the faculty and administration to build a recognized and respected institution, and develop student fellowship. Since the last faculty meeting, GSA has successfully completed, continued, or launched several initiatives that align with our missions. These include:

#### Student Townhall: Senate Bill 17

GSA hosted a Student Town Hall on Thursday, December 14 in collaboration with the Association of Minority Biomedical Researchers (AMBR) student group. The Town Hall aimed to inform students of Senate Bill 17 and address any concerns. Before the Town Hall, a survey was sent to students to collect questions and the presentation throughout the Town Hall was tailored to those questions. A summarized list of questions from students can be found [here](#).

In attendance were:

Sharon Dent, PhD, GSBS Dean ad interim

Alejandro Aballay, PhD, incoming GSBS Dean

Cherilynn Shadding, PhD, Associate Dean of Graduate Education

GSA & AMBR Officers

Invited Representatives:

o Tanedra Booker, MBA, Associate Director, UTHealth Houston Office of Student Success

o LaTanya Love, MD, Executive Vice President for Student Affairs UTHealth Houston

o William (Liam) McElhiney, JD, Senior Legal Officer, UTHealth Houston

o Ashley Palermo, JD, Senior Legal Officer, MD Anderson Cancer Center

The complete agenda for the Town Hall can be found [here](#).

The main presentation was given by Liam McElhiney, JD, with a summary of SB 17 followed by Cherilynn Shadding, PhD, who delivered the GSBS SB 17 Compliance Actions.

The following resources were sent to students after the Town Hall:

[SB 17 Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[UTS 197 Compliance](#)

Approximately 35 students attended in-person and 20 students attended via Zoom.

#### Housing Transportation Survey

GSA has collaborated with the MD Anderson Research, Education and Training Office to create a Housing and Daily Commute Survey. Currently, GSA is also working with the MDA GEC Housing, Parking & Mobility, Safety & Security task force to improve the survey in the context of adding more specific questions related to transportation and safety. The original survey can be found [here](#). The updated survey will be sent to students later in March.

#### GSBS Mentorship Program

The GSBS mentorship program is an initiative spearheaded by GSA to allow incoming GSBS have a smoother transition into graduate school by peering them with current GSBS students. The Peer

Mentoring Program currently consists of 56 mentor-mentee matches. For Spring 2024, GSA has implemented monthly discussion topics to encourage more active discussion between mentors and mentees. The discussion topic for February is '**Identifying and addressing challenges faced by graduate students**'. We have provided mentors with guide questions to help facilitate discussion. To assess the success of the peer mentoring program thus far, we have also sent out a survey to participants. From the results collected, 80% of mentors-mentees have met since the start of Spring 2024 semester and have found the Peer Mentoring Program beneficial up to this point.

### **McGovern Award for Outstanding Teaching**

The GSA drafted and distributed a survey to students to accept nominations for this year's McGovern Award for Outstanding Teaching. The form to vote has been sent out to students and voting will close on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. We had a total of 9 faculty members nominated including:

**Drs. Ambro Van Hoof, George Eisenhoffer, Guangwei Du, Humam Kadara, Jian Hu, Michael Beierlein, Michael Galko, Nicholas Navin, and Pamela Wenzel**

Based on students' vote the final recipient will be selected and GSA will present the award at the 2024 Commencement ceremony in May.

### **Future initiatives and events**

#### **March**

Peer Mentoring Lunch: Selecting a Primary Research Mentor/ Research Lab

#### **April**

Graduate Student Appreciation Week

#### **May**

Student Town Hall: Meet the New Dean

GSA would like to thank the Deans, faculty, and GSBS staff for their continued support, assistance and encouragement. Together we will continue to make GSBS the best graduate school for our students. **If there are any recommendations for future events or initiatives, please email me at [ttmckenzie@mdanderson.org](mailto:ttmckenzie@mdanderson.org)**

Sincerely,

### **2023-2024 GSA Officers**

President: Takeese McKenzie

Vice President: René Girard

Treasurer: Yimo Sun

Secretary: Alexandra McConnell