



Faculty Meeting Report Spring 2026

Mission

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) has as its purpose to provide a student forum for discussion of common needs, to work cooperatively with the faculty and administration to build a recognized and respected institution, and to develop student fellowship and social activities. Since the last faculty meeting, GSA has successfully continued or initiated several key projects that align with this mission, including:

Fall 2025 Report

Orientation: GSA hosted three events during orientation on Friday, August 22, 2025. The first event was welcoming the students to Houston and providing tips and tricks throughout graduate school. The second event was the Peer Mentorship Program lunch, which was highly successful and will be touched on below. The final event was on behalf of the 2023-2024 GSA officers and budget, the Friday Afternoon Club (FAC). We had a great turnout for all events.

GSBS Mentorship Program: The GSBS mentorship program hosted an event where students from different areas of campus were on a panel to discuss the pros and cons of working in their buildings. This event was great, around 30 students attended in person and had many questions. This also let some students offer up parts of campus that people did not initially consider and the perks that are available. We are now looking to have another similar one where the students can learn about what their first committee meeting should entail. This way there is a format for them to at least have in their pocket to follow. We would also like to host one more lunch to see what would benefit the students.

- November – Campus Location Panel – Completed
- January – Holiday Break
- March – Navigating First Year of Graduate School – Guest Speaker: Thi Nguyen
- May – End of year wrap up

Town Hall: Students attended a town hall with the administration. They were able to get answers to pressing questions that were anonymously submitted. The Dean and the team did a great job at addressing these concerns and I was able to send a summary for the students who were not in attendance. We will work more with the administrative team to help host this event. I will send out another survey for the students to see if there are more concerns.

Spring 2026 Report

- Graduate Student Appreciation Week –
 - Town Hall Meeting
 - In planning stages
- McGovern Teaching Award – Voting Ended on Feb 24.
 - Will send out the notice of the winner to be announced.
- Paint Night
 - Successful night. Had a turnout of around 15 students who all painted a Bob Ross Painting

Future Initiatives and Events

Spring 2026

Dusk and Dates Event: Event to celebrate the breaking of fast for the month of Ramadan. Students contacted the GSA to potentially partner and host an event to help welcome people into learning about the cultures that are represented at the GSBS.

Board Game nights- March

We are currently reviewing our budget for this upcoming year to plan and host events. Our fantastic officers have great ideas to build community, such as hosting open mic nights, board game nights, powerpoint presentation practice, following events are what has been planned so far:

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 rene.a.girard@uth.tmc.edu**

Sincerely,

2024-2025 GSA Officers

President: René Girard

Vice President: Llaran Turner

Treasurer: Ciara (Shuaitong) Chen

Secretary: Mackenzie Wienke