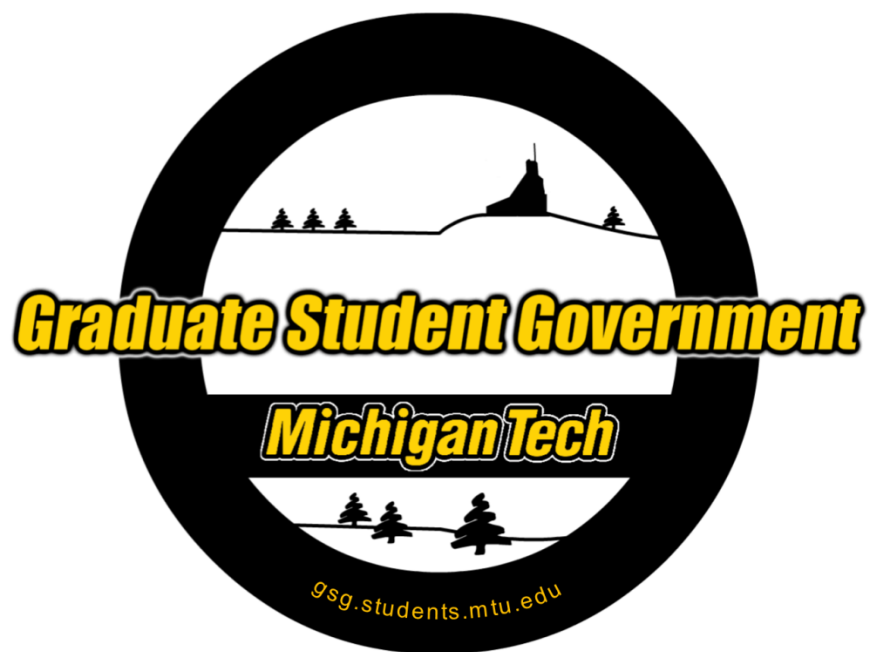


# Welcome to Graduate Student Government!

*Important Resources for New Representatives*

2017 - 2018



Dear Colleague,

**I am pleased to welcome you to Graduate Student Government (GSG)!** You have joined a student organization that plays an important role in shaping the graduate experience at Michigan Tech. GSG serves as a liaison between the administration and graduate students, advocating on students' behalf for the intellectual, social, and professional lives of graduate students. We serve graduate students in several important ways, and focus to provide opportunities for the personal and professional growth of graduate students. Below are some of the great accomplishments of GSG over the past year:

- *Participated in negotiations to cap the International Student Surcharge Fee to keep the cost as low as possible for students,*
- *Hosted an on-campus Graduate Research Colloquium with record-breaking participation,*
- *Organized a series of open forums in response to student concerns and questions regarding student health and health services, student health insurance, and University Budget and Finances,*
- *Earned a voting seat on the Alumni Board of Directors to serve as a voice for graduate students,*
- *Worked hard to help develop a strategy to alleviate student hunger,*
- *Worked with the Graduate School to develop the degree completion timeline,*
- *Began working with Career Services to have more companies that hire graduate students present at the Career Fair, as well as inviting companies hiring chemists, physicists, and computer scientists; worked with Career Services to develop an International Career Fair for students seeking work outside of the US*

You have been selected by your peers to be their voice and represent graduate students at Michigan Tech, which is no small feat! Please challenge yourself this year to think about ways in which you can make a positive impact during your time on GSG. I look forward to working with you over the next year to improve the graduate student experience at Michigan Tech.

I truly believe that listening to students' voices is an integral part of the success of GSG. I will work hard to maintain an environment where you feel comfortable and free to share ideas, comments, and concerns. If we have not had the opportunity to meet yet, please contact me to set up a meeting so I can get to know you and understand what you believe GSG should do for graduate students. If you have any suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time!

Best,

Hossein Tavakoli

President, Graduate Student Government

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page #(s)</u>
I. GSG meeting schedule 2017 - 2018	4
II. Graduate Student Government Contact List	5
III. Responsibilities of Graduate Student Government Representatives	6-7
IV. Meet & Greet event guide	8-11
V. I'm a really busy graduate student. What if I have to miss a meeting?	12-13
VI. A guide to GSG meetings	14-15
VII. Where do I go for even more information?	16

## **GSG Meeting Schedule 2017 - 2018**

May 8, 2017

June 12, 2017

July 10, 2017

August 14, 2017

September 11, 2017

September 25, 2017

October 9, 2017

October 23, 2017

November 6, 2017

November 27, 2017

December 11, 2017

January 22, 2018

February 5, 2018

February 19, 2018

March 5, 2018

March 19, 2018

April 2, 2018

April 16, 2018

April 30, 2018

GSG members are required to attend these meetings.

All graduate students are invited to attend as members of the group.

**All meetings are on Mondays at 5:15 PM**

## **Graduate Student Government Contact List**

### **President:**

Hossein Tavakoli

email:

htavakol@mtu.edu

### **Treasurer:**

Niranjana Miganakallu

email: nmiganak@mtu.edu

### **Academic Committee Chair:**

Lavanya Rajesh Kumar

email: lrajeshk@mtu.edu

### **Social Chair:**

Kaitlyn Roose

email: kmroose@mtu.edu

### **Vice President:**

Joshua Marshall

email: jrmarsha@mtu.edu

### **Secretary:**

Jennifer Dunn

email: jdunn@mtu.edu

### **Public Relations Chair:**

Leonid Surovitckii

email: lsurovit@mtu.edu

**GSG Representatives:** The list of GSG Representatives changes frequently. You can find the most up to date contact list on our website:

<http://gsg.students.mtu.edu/members.html>

# Responsibilities of Graduate Student Government (GSG) Representatives

## *I. Representative duties:*

- A. Attend and participate in GSG meetings*
- B. Actively participate on a GSG committee or as a GSG liaison*
- C. Convey important information to graduate students in your department*
- D. Host Meet and Greet events*

### *A. Attend and participate in GSG meetings*

Representatives are required to attend meetings to actively represent the interests of graduate students in their department. Attending meetings is also an easy way to obtain information that should be passed on to graduate students in their department. Representatives participate in GSG meetings by actively participating in discussion and by voting.

### *B. Actively participate on a GSG committee or as a GSG liaison*

In order for GSG to function efficiently, it is necessary for each member to take an active role in promoting the organization. By participating on a GSG committee or as a GSG liaison, each Representative helps to ensure that graduate students at Michigan Tech are properly served. There are 4 committees and 5 liaison positions that Representatives can choose between:

**Academic:** The Academic Committee investigates and develops recommendations for GSG on academic issues that pertain to graduate students. They plan and run the Graduate Research Colloquium and banquet, Graduate Professional Development Day, Lunch-n-Learn seminars, and the Merit Awards Program.

**Public Relations:** The Public Relations Committee leads the development of professional publications and media outreach campaigns to inform graduate students on campus. This committee maintains the GSG website and prepares posters and flyers for special GSG events on campus.

**Social:** The Social Committee plans GSG social events, develops new ways of building a sense of community among graduate students, and organizes special events during graduate orientation to welcome new graduate students to Michigan Tech. This committee is also responsible for providing food and beverage for all of our GSG meetings.

**Ways & Means Committee:** The Ways & Means Committee helps the Treasurer to review all of the discretionary and surplus funding requests to ensure they conform to the

requirements as set forth in the Bylaws and in the published Discretionary Funding Guidelines. This committee also presents these requests and the committee's recommendations to the GSG.

**Liaison Positions:** Liaisons represent GSG at the meetings of other organizations and they report back to the GSG on information that affects graduate students. *Some liaisons also serve on GSG committees whereas others do not.* Liaison positions are available to the University Senate, Undergraduate Student Government, Women's Leadership Council, Student Philanthropy Group, Friends of the Van Pelt Library, Food Insecurities Committee, WorkLife Programming Advisory Committee, with the potential to other groups as well. If you're interested in being a Liaison, please speak with the GSG President.

### *C. Convey important information to graduate students in your department*

One of the most important roles a Representative has is the role of a communicator. As such, Representatives are required to communicate important information to graduate students in their department. This helps to ensure that each graduate student across campus has information critical to their success – such as information about tuition, fees, stipends, and degree requirements. Without this information, graduate students may miss out on important deadlines and opportunities that affect their financial support or graduation date. Representatives also communicate back to GSG about how graduate students in their department feel about certain issues on campus. This helps each student to have a voice in framing the policies and decisions that affect their academic career at Michigan Tech.

### *D. Host Meet and Greet events*

Meet and Greet events are an essential way that GSG communicates with graduate students across campus. As these events are so important, we have created an entire guide to help you plan and host Meeting and Greet events. For further information, please see pages 8 through 11 in this booklet.

# Meet & Greet Events

## *A Guide for Graduate Student Government (GSG) Representatives*

### *I. Contents*

- A. What are Meet and Greet events?*
- B. Why am I required to host a Meet and Greet?*
- C. How many Meet and Greets do I have to host?*
- D. Who is invited to a Meet and Greet?*
- E. How do I organize a Meet and Greet event?*
- F. How much money can I spend on a Meet and Greet?*
- G. How do I pay for a Meet and Greet event?*
- H. What should I talk about at this event?*
- I. Okay, I've successfully hosted a Meet and Greet! Now what?*

### *A. What are Meet and Greet events?*

Meet and Greets are meetings sponsored by Graduate Student Government (GSG) Representatives within their departments. The goal of these meetings is to check in with graduate students in your department, your constituents, to see if they have any questions or concerns about any subject related to Michigan Technological University including but not limited to housing, parking and transportation, shuttle services, Graduate School policies, and healthcare.

### *B. Why am I required to host a Meet and Greet?*

Meet and Greet events are an essential way that GSG communicates with graduate students across campus. Meet and Greet events are critical to obtaining feedback from graduate students so that we may better serve the interests of the graduate community. Additionally, departmental Meet and Greet events are required of GSG Representatives in accordance with the GSG Bylaws.

### *C. How many Meet and Greets do I have to host?*

Representatives are required to hold departmental Meet and Greets at least once per year. This means that sometime between the fall and spring semesters, you need to host at least one meeting with your constituents. However, in order to best serve the graduate community, it is highly suggested that each department host Meet and Greet events during both the fall and spring semesters for a total of two meet and greet events. Hosting a meeting each semester helps to ensure a continuous flow of information between GSG and graduate students, better informing them about important campus issues and possible changes.



### *D. Who is invited to a Meet and Greet?*

All graduate students in your department should be invited to this meeting. You should also try to have a member of the GSG Executive Board (Eboard) present at the meeting to help answer particularly difficult questions. Due to time constraints during normally scheduled GSG meetings, the Eboard often has to cut some of the details out of our reports. If we are invited to Meet and Greet events, we can use this time to give interested graduate students the full report.

It may also be a good idea to invite your department's graduate program director and department chair, although this is not a requirement. These individuals may have important insight regarding some of the issues graduate students have and they may have the ability to directly solve some issues.

### *E. How do I organize a Meet and Greet event?*

- 1. Set up a meeting time and location.** This should be a location that every graduate student has access to such as a lounge, conference room, or classroom. It is up to you to determine the best time to meet with students in your department. In the past, some Representatives have had great attendance when they schedule the meeting around meal times.
- 2. Invite people to your event.** A simple email to your department's graduate student email listserv informing them of the event should be more than adequate. Please remember to invite a member of the GSG Eboard and consider inviting your graduate program director and department chair. Personal invitations to the program director and department chair typically have a better success rate of attendance than emailed invitations.
- 3. Purchase snacks for the event.** You can purchase snacks for your constituents to enjoy during the Meet and Greet. You can keep it simple (chips, soda, cookies) or you can offer a little more (pizza, sandwiches, tea). You may choose any items you would like to purchase for this event. However, GSG funds cannot be used to purchase alcohol, apparel, or free giveaway items.
- 4. Prepare a list of discussion items.** Peruse the GSG Meeting Minutes from this academic year to remind you of important discussions. These may be good subjects to bring up during your meet and greet event. For instance, living conditions in Daniell Heights, parking fees and availability, healthcare, tuition, stipends, and computer issues tend to be topics that will really get people talking at your event.

### *F. How much money can I spend on a Meet and Greet?*

#### **Departments with 1 GSG Representative:**

Departments with 1 GSG Representative can spend up to \$50 on each hosted Meet and Greet event (one each semester). If only one event is hosted during an academic year, the allocated funds may be combined for a total of \$100 for the event.

### **Departments with 2 GSG Representatives:**

Departments with 2 GSG Representatives can spend up to \$75 on each hosted Meet and Greet event (one each semester). If only one event is hosted during an academic year, the allocated funds may be combined for a total of \$150 for the event.

### **Departments with 3 or more GSG Representatives:**

Departments with 3 or more GSG Representatives can spend up to \$100 on each hosted Meet and Greet event (one each semester). If only one event is hosted during an academic year, the allocated funds may be combined for a total of \$200 for the event.

## *G. How do I pay for a Meet and Greet event?*

- 1. Econo Card:** There are multiple Econo Cards in the Treasurer's office in Admin 405. These cards work like a debit card and can only be used at Econo Foods in Houghton. When you make a purchase, the funds are taken directly out of the GSG account and you are not personally charged for any purchases. These cards are located on the desk by the door in the Treasurer's office. Please sign-out the card when you take one and be sure to sign-in the card when you bring the card back. There is a sheet available for this by the Econo Cards. Please turn in your Econo Foods receipt with your full name, M number, and department name written on the receipt for the Treasurer's records when returning the Econo card.
- 2. Reimbursement:** You are not required to purchase food at Econo Foods for your Meet and Greet event. You can order pizza, sandwiches, or other items for your event. However, you must personally pay for these items up front. GSG has tax exempt cards available for you to check out that will make your purchases with local vendors tax free. The tax exempt cards cannot be used at Walmart. After your Meet and Greet event, please take all receipts to the Treasurer so that they can reimburse you for your purchases. Please write your full name, M number, and department name on each receipt. If this information is not included on the receipt, the Treasurer cannot reimburse the purchases. This reimbursement process may take several weeks, especially during busy times of the year.
- 3. Department Assistance:** Sometimes your graduate program director or department chair may have some available funds to help sponsor a bigger event. You have the option to discuss this with them, but this is not a requirement. If they do fund all or some portion of your event, please be courteous to extend an invitation to your event.

## *H. What should I talk about at this event?*

The Bylaws state that you should announce GSG activities, share current discussions from meetings, and solicit questions and concerns to report to the GSG. Sometimes it helps to prompt your constituents with questions. The following are examples of questions typical of Meet and Greet events:

- If you could make one change on campus, what would it be?
- What do you not want to change on campus?
- How do you feel about healthcare offered by the University?
- Do you have any opinions regarding parking or shuttle services?
- How are the living conditions in Daniell Heights?
- Have you heard about the Apartments' Residence Council?
- Are there any policies you would like to change within the department?
- Are you happy with the amount of classes available to graduate students in the department?
- Do you have any computer or networking issues?

## *I. Okay, I've successfully hosted a Meet and Greet! Now what?*

Thank you for hosting a Meet and Greet event within your department! Please organize all feedback from the meeting and submit them to the GSG Secretary in our online submission form:

<http://gsg.students.mtu.edu/MeetNGreetForm.html>. Please be prepared to report some of this feedback during our next regularly scheduled GSG meeting. The GSG Eboard reviews all feedback from the Meet and Greet events and they work to find solutions to all issues. If you feel that concerns from graduate students in your department are not being properly addressed, please do not hesitate to discuss this with an Eboard member.

If you have any receipts from your Meet and Greet event, please be sure to turn them in to the Treasurer with your full name, M number, and department name written on the receipt. These receipts are used for the Treasurer's records and are also used to reimburse you for your purchases, as necessary.

Now that you have met with graduate students in your department, you should try to keep them updated on a periodic basis concerning important discussions and policy changes.

## **I'm a really busy graduate student. What if I have to miss a meeting?**

### *1. Email the Secretary to let them know about your absence*

If you must be absent from a meeting, please try to email the Secretary before the meeting to excuse your absence. This helps to ensure that meetings run smoothly and it also helps to hold everyone accountable. If you do not email the Secretary before the meeting you miss, you might get a kind reminder email about absences.

### *2. Consider appointing an "alternate"*

If you cannot attend a GSG meeting, you can ask any graduate student in your department to attend for you as an "alternate". By appointing an alternate you get a "free" absence – an absence that doesn't count against you.

### *3. If you are the only representative from your department, talk with someone to find out if you missed any important information*

If you cannot find an alternate to attend the GSG meeting for you, it's important to try to talk with someone who was at the meeting. A lot of information that is discussed during GSG meetings should be conveyed to graduate students in your department. This information helps to ensure that they have the latest information regarding things like tuition, fees, stipends, and degree requirements. If you miss a lot of meetings and don't talk with someone about the information that you missed, graduate students in your department may be missing out on this important information.

### *4. Try to keep track of the number of absences you accrue each semester*

It's inevitable that each of us will have to miss a meeting here or there throughout the year and that's okay. However, to ensure that graduate students across campus are still getting the important information they need, we have to limit the number of allowable absences. GSG members are allowed up to 4 absences each fall and spring semester (8 absences total). Each semester, we are each offered 2 excused and 2 unexcused absences:

**Excused absences:** Up to 2 absences for which the Representative emailed the Secretary ahead of time.

**Unexcused absences:** Absences for which the Secretary was not emailed ahead of time or any normally excused absence in excess of the 2<sup>nd</sup> excused absence.

If you miss too many meetings (more than 4 in a single semester), you will be asked to leave GSG because you simply do not have enough time to commit to serving graduate students in this capacity.

This not only impacts you, but it impacts every graduate student in your department because excess absences make your entire department lose their “good standing” status:

**Good Standing:** This is a way to assess each academic department on campus with representation within GSG. Good standing is attained by having at least 1 Representative that has fulfilled all of their duties and remains in good standing without excess absences for the fall and spring semesters of the session.

**Loss of Good Standing:** If an academic department on campus loses their good standing status, no graduate students in that department will be eligible for GSG travel grants until good standing is attained. Good standing can be attained by electing a new Representative from the department who fulfills all of their duties without accruing excess absences.

Special attendance considerations are given for individuals with extenuating circumstances, so if you have a concern please don't hesitate to email the Secretary!

# A Guide to GSG Meetings

GSG meetings operate on a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order. For new (and even experienced) GSG Representatives, this can sometimes be confusing. To help acclimate everyone to our meeting style, the following guide has been developed to answer some of the frequently asked questions.

## I. Frequently Asked Questions

- A. When is it okay for me to talk?
- B. If I'm new, is it okay for me to vote?
- C. Do I vote for how I feel or how I think students in my department feel?
- D. What is an abstention in the voting process?
- E. How do I bring something up to vote?
- F. What if I agree with an opinion that someone else states?
- G. We have been talking about something way too long! How do we limit discussion?

### A. When is it okay for me to talk?

You are welcome to talk and contribute to GSG meetings at any time. Please raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged prior to speaking. This helps to ensure that only one person is speaking at a time.

### B. If I'm new, is it okay for me to vote?

Absolutely! All GSG members (Representatives, Committee Chairs, and Principal Officers) are required to vote. Only members-at-large and advisors cannot vote.

### C. Do I vote for how I feel or how I think students in my department feel?

As a representative of all graduate students in your department, you should vote for how students in your department feel about a certain issue.

### D. What is an abstention in the voting process?

An abstention allows an individual to participate in the voting process while not voting either "yes" or "no". You should consider abstaining if you feel you have a significant conflict of interest that prevents you from voting fairly or if you feel you do not have enough information to make an informed decision.

### E. How do I bring something up to vote?

If you would like to bring something up to vote, all you have to do is make a motion. To make a motion you raise your hand and say, "I move to..." or "I would like to make a motion for...". For example, if you want to approve the proposed agenda you could raise your hand and say, "I would like to make a motion to approve the agenda". This brings the motion to a vote.

## F. What if I agree with an opinion that someone else has stated?

GSG has a tradition where individuals rap their knuckles or “knock” on the table when they agree with an opinion expressed during a meeting. This may seem odd, but it helps meetings to run more efficiently because time is not spent voicing several identical opinions.

## G. We have been talking about something for way too long! How do we limit discussion?

Sometimes it is necessary to limit discussion during a GSG meeting. This can be done at any time during a discussion by making a motion to limit discussion. Typically the individual making the motion would specify a limited amount of time that discussion can continue. For instance, “I move to limit discussion to 5 minutes.” This means that discussion can only continue on a particular topic for 5 more minutes. This motion must be seconded and approved by vote to go into effect. While this is necessary during some meetings, please be courteous with limiting discussion since this type of a motion may seem rude at times.

## Where do I go for even more information?

**GSG website:** <http://gsg.students.mtu.edu/>

This website contains important information such as our governing documents (Bylaws and Constitution), up-to-date rosters, information regarding academic and social events, and a group calendar.

**GSG online blog:** <http://gsgmtu.wordpress.com/>

The blog contains information about non-GSG events and this website is also used as one method to convey important news to graduate students about tuition, fees, stipends, and degree requirements and to evaluate their opinions about these topics.

**GSG Facebook page:** [Graduate Student Government](#)

The Facebook page is used as a more casual form of communication and it is frequently used to direct graduate students to information on our GSG website and GSG online blog.

**Please don't hesitate to speak to a member of the Executive Board if you have any questions or concerns!**