GSA Meeting Report Template

Tips for using this document:

- Find out what will get people in your department to read GSA meeting reports. Ask around to find out what issues or events your classmates are most interested in, and ask your friends for feedback after your first couple of reports to help you get a sense of what works well and what doesn't.
  - In my experience, the most relevant things are almost always graduate student funding and graduate student housing
  - Information about student organization funding may also be particularly relevant
  - Consider also ensuring that information that is relevant to minorities within your department (people of color, international students, LGBTQ students etc.) appears, even if it may *not* be relevant to the majority of students
- Adjust this template as you see fit to the needs and culture of your department. My department culture is quite casual; when I was the primary GSA representative my classmates enjoyed occasionally reading (brief) snarky commentary on issues that pertained to them, and I included a picture of a cute animal at the bottom of my emails as a "reward" for reading through to the end. That strategy might work for some departments, but not all; you know your departments and your classmates best.
- Consider the timing of your emails. Since announcements are usually not announced but only appear in the minutes, you may want to wait to receive the email with the minutes to send around a report so that you can include any relevant information from the announcements in the body of your email (since most people will not open the document with the minutes themselves). However, if there is time-sensitive information to pass on (an event happening Thursday evening, for example), you might send a report on Thursday morning and forward the minutes separately.
- Consider putting times, dates, and locations in bold or italics to make them stand out, or changing the color of some important text.
- If you would like input on a bill, or if your classmates should contact you for more information about a particular issue, feel free to add a note to "contact me and I can connect you to so and so about this" or "please let me know if you have any input about how I should vote on this"
- Try to keep your emails as short as possible, with the most relevant information at the top. Blocks of text are hard to read so bullets and sub-bullets might help people get through it, as long as it doesn't stretch your email out so it looks endlessly long or make it confusing.
- Instructions are underlined and should be deleted/replaced before you send this email as should, obviously, all examples.
- This document is as format-free as possible so that you can take notes in it and then copy/paste it into an email. You may have to do some additional fiddling with gmail to make it readable, or you can type directly into an email with this as a guide.

Report Template
Hello (X department) students,

I attended the GSA meeting on (date); here's what came up at that meeting:

List here the most important 1 or 2 things discussed at meeting, as pertaining to your department. Feel free to give a one sentence description that cites further information below. Ex: "we talked about graduate student housing. See point number 7/heading *open forum* for more information" or "If you don't have much time, skip to points 3 about X, 7 about Y, and 12 about Z, which I think are the most relevant for the majority of us."

Special Presentations:
Usually this section is short and can be omitted if a) there were none or b) the special presentation is not at all relevant to your department. I recommend including the following information, which can usually be condensed into a sentence or two: name, affiliation, one sentence summary, and important info (dates, websites, etc).

1. Ex: "Gregorio from the grad student labor task force gave us an update on funding. They're holding a town hall on XX date, RSVP by XX date at website YYYY.org/email XXXX@utexas.edu"

Open Forum:
I tend to include only those things that are relevant or interesting for my department, so if there's a one-off question that doesn't spark debate and is particular to the department whose representative asked it, no need to include.
2. Ex: "Rep from American Studies was wondering about if we have any updates about housing. *Answer:* Yes, executive team has been looking into it, said UHD has made some changes like changing X and Y. Contact UHD with concerns."

Events:
Be sure to include dates, times, and locations. Consider putting these in order of relevance to your department. For example, if there's an event hosted by the business school and you're in art history, that's probably of less general interest than a play put on by theatre and dance. You know your classmates.
3. Ex: "Screening of a film about XXX put together by fine arts students on **May 10 at 6PM in CMA 5.102,** no cost to UT students."
4. Ex: "Semi-professional headshots on **SAC patio on April 12 from 10-1.**"
5. Ex: "Picnic on **4/27 from 11-3 at Eastwoods Park**. There will be games and food and event is open to all graduate students."

Announcements:
Definitely put these in order of interest, with things that people can join or can provide input on at the top and purely informational ones toward the end. Feel free to leave out officer reports like "the GSA budget committee finalized the budget for next semester."

6. Ex: "SAGE meeting went well, met with a variety of offices on topics related to funding, campus climate, and immigration. Talk to X (email@utexas.edu) or Y (email@utexas.edu) if you'd like to join."
7. Ex: "CREED has put out various recommendations to the provost about tenure processes/promotions in response the issue brought up two meetings ago about faculty members of color not being accepted to tenure"
8. Ex: "Faculty committee on X met and decided Y"

Legislation:
Include the name of the bill, a one or two sentence summary of what it does, the main points of debate about it, and whether it passed or not (if it was voted on). If there was a lot of legislation or it was really important, you can jump this section up before the Announcements/Events section or highlight it in your intro so that people look at it.
9. Ex: "The Endorsement of UT Sustainability Master Plan and Goal of Zero Waste Campus bill is a formal endorsement of the sustainability plan, which aims for a reduction in waste on UT campus by XX amount by XX date. It's old business and is the same as last week. We made some friendly amendments and passed it."
10. Ex: "We debated the "Resolution in Support of Expanding the Scope of GSA Travel Awards which would allow expanded eligibility for the travel awards and ask the next executive board to request a higher amount of funding in the budget for the awards. Awards will still be reimbursement and not preemptive but research as well as conference travel will be covered. We discussed possibilities for future changes in the structure to allow it to be awarded before the expense is incurred instead of reimbursing after the fact, which is more complicated and out of the scope of this legislation. This legislation was friendly amended and passed."

As always, minutes are attached (or will be sent around separately when made available, depending on when you send your report), so you can look at those for more information. If you have input for me about any of the issues discussed in this meeting, please feel free to contact me and let me know.

However you sign your emails,
Your name