

CSGS Business Meeting Minutes

12:45 pm CT, March 21, 2025
Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom
Southern Methodist University

12:48 pm, CT, Joh Hakkila began the meeting.

Jon Hakkila, President, welcomed everyone and made comments about the conference.

Nominating Committee and Elections – Mary Farmer-Kaiser

Committee members: Mary Farmer-Kaiser (Chair), Lisa Sperling, Ericka N. Covington, George Flowers, Sanjay Menon.

Elections are necessary for the following positions:

- President-Elect
- Treasurer
- Executive Committee (four positions)

The nominating committee sent out a call for nominations to the CSGS community, on January 21st, 2025, with a deadline of February 17th. The nominating committee received nominations and identified the following slate of candidates:

President-elect:

John Lopes, Clemson University

Sharon James McGee, East Tennessee State University

Treasurer:

Peter Harries, NC State University

Executive Committee:

James Black, Georgia Institute of Technology

Laurence Bray, George Mason University

J. Lee Brown, Coastal Carolina University

Debra L. Jackson, East Carolina University

Charles Onochie Ochie, Sr., Albany State University

Robert W. Stackman, Jr., Florida Atlantic University

Jessica Queener, West Virginia University

Brian Wayne, Elizabeth City State University

We counted and verified the votes, confirmed a quorum, and revealed the election results:

John Lopes, President-Elect

Peter Harries, Treasurer

Laurence Bray, Debra L. Jackson, Robert W. Stackman, and Jessica Queener, Executive Committee.

Later, we realized that we needed a fifth Executive Committee member elected to replace John Lopes, and Brian Wayne was elected based on the vote count.

Conference Program Report - Troy Terry

The full Executive Committee of CSGS met at the conference site on the campus of SMU in Dallas, TX on June 12-14, 2024. After viewing the conference facilities, the committee settled on the theme: "Riding the Open Range: Corralling Challenges and Spurring Innovation in Graduate Education." Because the site involved both the SMU student center and the Moody Graduate School, changes in a typical schedule were approved including having most of the plenary sessions and meals in the morning, and breakouts and 3MT sessions in afternoons. We left with a list of five focus areas and a plan for the Program Committee to work on over the next six months.

In September, the officers sent out the call for proposals in the following areas:

- Obtaining and Using Data to gain insights to advocate for graduate education
- Building a NEW Graduate Community – connections among and between students and mentors
- Employment Outcomes, Value Transparency, and Gainful Employment
- The unique challenges of recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff in Southern graduate education

In addition, the committee reached out to possible Plenary speakers suggested by the Executive committee. After the deadline in mid-November, we had received 29 session proposals from more than 50 of our CSGS members. The program committee reviewed all proposals and then spent two virtual meetings sharing scored proposals and making suggestions as to how to make them fit in the limited breakout slots we had available. In some cases, we asked proposers to consider combining under like themes or to rework with a collaborator who had made a similar proposal. In the end, we were able to offer more than 19 of the 29 proposals to use in the 9 breakout session slots that fit the themes of the meeting. We also were able to add a late proposal from CGS about the master's survey results received in December.

I commend the work of my very hard-working committee that includes:

Dr. Alan Itkin, EC member and SMU site representative, Dr. Irene Aiken – UNC Pembroke, Dr. Desi Hacker-Norfolk State University, Dr. Sharon James McGee – East Tennessee State Univ., and the additional Executive Committee members who helped secure our Plenary speakers, Dr. Ruth Bahr – University of South Florida, Dr. Mary Farmer-Kaiser, University of Louisiana, and Dr. Aimee Suprenant – Va Tech.

Graduate Student Program Report- Alan Itkin

Three Minute Thesis Competition participants and other graduate students attending the CSGS Annual Meeting had the opportunity to participate in three breakout sessions designed for them: Dr. Carrie Johnston, Director of Research and Scholarly Initiatives in SMU Libraries, led a session on "Expanding Research and Career Opportunities through Digital Scholarship"; Dr. Rob Pearson, Director of Graduate Career Development and Postdoctoral Affairs in the SMU Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies led a session on "Preparing for

Diverse Careers with a PhD”; and Dr. Karl Steiner, Clinical Professor in SMU Guildhall, led a session on “Sampling Games Created by Guildhall Game-design Students.” The first two sessions were intended to foster practical research and job search skills that will help the students take the next steps in their scholarship and careers. The third session allowed them to learn about the topic of game design while enjoying a break from the Three Minute Thesis competition. All three sessions were well-attended, and participants were very engaged. During the sessions, the graduate students expressed that it was meaningful to get to know one another and to learn about each other’s research and programs.

Membership Committee Report- Sharon James McGee, Co-Chair

Members: Juan Gonzalez (Co-Chair), Patricia Abril, David Shafer, Desi Hacker, Patricia Gamboa, Jessica Queener, Julie Harlin

The Membership Committee reviews the paid membership list and reaches out to institutions who have let their membership lapse and connects with institutions that are not members.

Prior to this conference, an email was sent to all first-time attendees to welcome them to the conference. Membership Committee members have made an effort to connect with those folks personally.

The Membership Committee will meet in the coming weeks to review the year’s activities and perhaps have some recommendations for the Executive Committee.

Sponsorship Committee and Treasurer’s Report – Peter Harries

The **Sponsorship Committee** consisted of:
 Peter Harries (chair), NC State University
 Irene Aiken, University of North Carolina - Pembroke
 Troy Terry, University of North Georgia

A standing goal of the Sponsorship Committee has been a **goal to raise \$20,000** for the Annual Meeting. As of March 2025, we **exceeded our goal by raising \$41,250**. This includes 2 Platinum Sponsors, 1 Gold Sponsor, 6 Silver Sponsors, and 4 Lithium Institutional Sponsors, 1 Gold Institutional Sponsor, 1 Silver Institutional Sponsor, and 20 Member Sponsors.

Company/Institution	Level	Amount
ETS	Platinum	\$5250
Center for Graduate Career Success	Platinum	\$5000
ProQuest – a part of Clarivate	Gold	\$2500
BizNets	Silver	\$1000
Eduvantis	Silver	\$1000
EdVision	Silver	\$1000

Selected Insights	Silver	\$1000
StudyPortals	Silver	\$1000
Unibuddy	Silver	\$1000
Southern Methodist University	Lithium Sponsor	\$2500
University of Texas-Austin	Lithium Sponsor	\$2500
University of Texas – Arlington	Lithium Sponsor	\$2500
University of Texas – Dallas	Lithium Sponsor	\$2500
Texas A&M – College Station	Gold Sponsor	\$1500
Texas Tech University	Silver Sponsor	\$1000
Baylor University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Dallas Baptist University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Duke University	Member Sponsor	\$500
East Tennessee State University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Florida State University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Mississippi State University	Member Sponsor	\$500
NC State University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Texas A&M – Central Texas	Member Sponsor	\$500
Texas Christian University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Texas Woman’s University	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Alabama – Huntsville	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Arkansas - Fayetteville	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Houston	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Maryland – Baltimore County	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of South Florida	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Southern Mississippi	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Member Sponsor	\$500
University of Texas – San Antonio	Member Sponsor	\$500
Virginia Commonwealth University	Member Sponsor	\$500
Virginia Tech	Member Sponsor	\$500
TOTAL		\$41,750

Profit & Loss Statement is appended to this document; see below.

Audit Report – Harold Pardue

The Audit Committee met March 20th, at which the Treasurer Peter Harries provided a financial briefing. The committee reviewed last year’s income statement, projections for this year, and several other financial documents.

The committee has no findings, meaning we submit an unqualified, clean opinion.

In summary, the CSGS's financial situation is as follows. Last year the CSGS ran nearly a \$32k deficit. Projections are that we will break even this year. By far, the largest budget item is food and beverages for the conference. The bulk of the deficit last year was due to this line item.

In the face of price increases and economic uncertainty, the committee considered recommending a cut to the food and beverage budget. However, we concluded this would substantially diminish the quality of the experience of this wonderful conference.

Therefore, the Audit Committee respectfully recommends to the Executive Committee an increase to the conference registration fee and the 3MT student fee.

The committee recommends the registration fee be increased by \$100. The early bird fee would increase from \$450 to \$550. Regular registration would increase from \$550 to \$650.

Based on a review of the fee structures of our peer conferences, this increase aligns our fees with that of our peers.

The committee recommends the 3MT student fee be increased \$50 from \$150 to \$200. We absolutely do not propose increasing the cost to students. We believe that the 3MT fee is covered by the student's institution.

The committee submits that the proposed fee increase will provide a financial cushion against price shocks while maintaining the high quality of the conference experience.

In conclusion, the Audit Committee wishes to convey its complete confidence in our Treasurer, Peter Harries. He is doing a great job and it is a ton of work. Thank you Peter.

Committee members: Harold Pardue (Chair), Kathryn Anthony, B. Ramu Ramachandran, Joy Bowers-Campbell, Robin Poston.

3MT Committee – Jill Huerta

Committee Members: Jill Huerta, Chair
Robyn Olejniczak
Marieke Van Puymbroeck
Jennifer O-Brien Brown
Aura Young (not able to attend) Laura Pagani substituted for her

CSGS held a face-to-face 3MT competition during the 2025 annual meeting in Dallas, TX. Fifty-nine institutions sent competitors who competed in four simultaneous preliminary round heats on March 20, 2025. They were judged by 16 preliminary round judges, and the two highest scoring competitors from each heat (total of 10) advance to the final round competition, which was held on March 21, 2025.

The 4 final round judges determined first and second place winners and the audience voted via paper ballot for the People's Choice Award. Prizes were awarded as follows:

First Place (\$1,000): Kathryn Glorioso, Medical University of South Carolina
Second Place (\$500): Anamik Jhunhunwala, Emory University
People's Choice: (\$250): Briana Brock, Morehouse School of Medicine

Student Awards Committee – Ethan Carver

Ethan Carver (Chair)

Members: Annette Kluck, Mark Riley, Ed Pohl, William Huckle, Clay Gloster, Caterina Bristol

Things went well. The committee did a great job with the review and selection process.

After reviewing theses, the committee chose the following winners:

Fine Arts & Humanities: Alyssa Martin, UNC Charlotte

Math, Physical Sciences and Engineering: Xena Mansoura, University of Georgia

Non-Traditional: Sydney Case, NC State University

There will be a need to replace a few of us on the committee and get a new chair, as I am rotating off the committee. We talked about maybe changing some language for the non-traditional group, but did not have anything to discuss.

Faculty Awards Committee - Andre Denham

The faculty awards committee was convened virtually in late Fall 2024, to consider the nominees. There were 14 nominations for the Outstanding Mentoring Award and 3 for the Outstanding Contributions Award. Committee members ranked the nominees using a rubric developed to reflect each nominee's relevant contributions based on the award criteria. As to be expected when attempting to decide the winner of awards of this nature, it was a very difficult decision. The committee was very impressed by the quality and depth of mentoring in our graduate community. This highlights that throughout our region there are excellent mentors who are doing excellent work in preparing the next generation of scholars. Additionally, the committee was glad to see the strong nominees for the Outstanding Contributions Award.

After discussion, we agreed to give the Outstanding Mentoring Award to:

Dr. Melissa Martinez, Texas State University

Nominated by: Dr. Andrea Golato, graduatecollegedean@txstate.edu

Dr. Melissa Martinez has distinguished herself as an exceptional mentor through her dedication to supporting graduate students at Texas State University. Known for her high academic standards, responsiveness, and supportive nature, she has successfully chaired 21 dissertations, co-chaired 4 more, and served on over 60 dissertation committees. She actively mentors through structured resources, group check-ins, and cross-cohort initiatives, greatly enhancing student success and professional development.

Dr. Martinez's mentees highlight her mentorship as life-changing, with one stating, "Her mentorship has instilled in me a profound sense of confidence in my abilities as an educator, presenter, researcher, and human being." She provides structured support, creating resources and regular check-ins, ensuring mentees achieve their academic and career goals. Dr. Martinez's impact extends beyond her institution through national mentoring roles, publications, and professional workshops, making her mentorship widely respected. As one colleague summarizes, "'Outstanding mentor' is not only something Dr. Martinez does, albeit exceptionally well, but also who she is." Another mentee emphasizes, "I currently mentor graduate students, and I am confident that what I learned about excellent mentorship I learned from Dr. Martinez."

The awards committee strongly affirms that Dr. Melissa Martinez exemplifies all the qualities desired in a recipient of the Graduate College Outstanding Mentor Award. She is most deserving of this award.

After discussion, we agreed to give the Outstanding Contributions to Graduate Education in the Southern Region Award to:

Dr. Dixie Thompson, University of Tennessee Knoxville
Nominated by: Dr. Sharon McGee, mcgees@etsu.edu

Dr. Dixie Thompson has profoundly impacted graduate education through her exemplary leadership as Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Tennessee Knoxville since 2016. Under her guidance, graduate enrollment significantly increased, innovative professional development and wellness initiatives were created, stipends were substantially improved, and a culture of inclusivity and student-centered support was established. Dr. Thompson's collaborative ethos extends beyond her institution, actively participating in regional groups such as the Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools and SEC Deans, promoting policy improvements, diversity, and data sharing.

One of Dr. Thompson's nominators shared that she creates a "person-centered culture in the Graduate School" and is recognized regionally for her collaborative ethos and generous spirit. Colleagues highlight her as "a principled and dynamic leader," emphasizing that she consistently shares insights and willingly supports others. Another nominator stated, "Her commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation in graduate education makes her a deserving candidate for this prestigious award." Finally, another colleague poignantly expressed, "All of us who have worked with Dixie will find her absence from our circles a great loss because she has improved us as leaders."

The committee feels that Dr. Thompson's contributions have notably advanced graduate education across the Southern Region, fostering lasting enhancements at local, state, and regional levels. She is most deserving of this award.

Respectfully submitted,

André R. Denham, Chair, The University of Alabama
Laurence Bray, George Mason University
Ashley Colquitt, Appalachian State University
J. Lee Brown, Coastal Carolina University
Heather Greenhalgh-Spencer, Texas Tech University

Becky de Cruz, Valdosta State University
Matthew McCollough, North Carolina A&T University
Victor R. Prybutok, University of North Texas

New Dean's Breakfast – Irene Aiken and Preselfannie McDaniels

The William "Bill" Carr Breakfast for New Deans and Associate Deans took place on Thursday, March 20. The event, led by Dr. Perselfannie E. Whitfield McDaniels of Jackson State University and Dr. Irene Pittman Aiken of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, provided an invaluable opportunity for networking and professional development. Approximately 20 attendees gathered to engage in thoughtful discussions on key resources available to graduate school leaders, the role of graduate school organizations, and general advice for those newly navigating the graduate school environment. The breakfast served as a collaborative space for sharing insights and fostering connections among individuals in the early stages of their academic leadership careers.

CHBGS Debrief – Clay Gloster

- 1) The theme of the Conference was Navigating the Academic Frontier: Advancing Graduate Education in a Changing Landscape.
- 2) The program featured excellent speakers and addressed relevant topics focused on current issues in graduate education.
- 3) We had over 50 people registered for the conference.
- 4) John Smith became the president, and Desi Hacker was elected as the President-Elect.

Thank you to Jon Hakkila

Passing of the Gavel – Jon Hakkila and Troy Terry

1: 28 Adjourn.

The Conference of Southern Graduate Schools

Profits & Loss

January through December 2024

INCOME

2024 Membership Fees	\$ 1,100.00
2024 Annual Meeting	\$ -
Registration	\$ 45,230.00
Sponsorships	\$ 18,300.00
Subtotal	\$ 64,630.00
2025 Membership Fees	\$ 21,120.00
2025 Annual Meeting	
Registration	\$ 35,200.00
Sponsorships	\$ 12,000.00
CHBGS Reimbursement	\$ 9,047.04
Hotel/Annual Meeting Reimbursements	\$ 3,743.19
Subtotal	\$ 81,110.23
Total Annual Meeting Income	\$145,740.23
Total Income	\$145,740.23

EXPENSES

2024 Annual Meeting	
Rooms	\$ 2,617.37
Meals	\$ 75,927.86
AV	\$ 18,657.56
Travel Reimbursements	\$ 3,628.72
Offsite Reception - Catering	\$ 28,950.31
Offsite Reception - Venue	\$ 1,500.00
Other (Event Insurance, etc.)	\$ 288.00
Badges and misc	\$ 95.34
Honoraria	\$ -
Award Plaques	\$ 569.50
Sponsor Posters	\$ 139.98
Payments 3MT	\$ 4,000.00
Awards	\$ 3,250.00
3MT Judge parking	\$ 80.00
Music	\$ 525.00
Refunds	\$ 3,150.00
Subtotal	\$ 143,379.64
2025 Annual Meeting	
Site Visit (Officers)	\$ 1,802.50
Deposit	\$ 5,150.00

Site Visit (Executive Committee)	\$ 14,394.52
Subtotal	\$ 21,347.02
Total Annual Meeting Expenses	\$ 164,726.66
General Expenses	
Plaques	\$ -
Services	\$ -
Quickbooks	\$ 385.00
Guidebook	\$ 3,500.00
WIX	\$ 816.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,216.33
Total General Expenses	\$ 7,917.33
Merchant Deposit Fees	\$ 4,266.15
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 176,910.14
NET INCOME	\$ (31,169.91)
 Note: Additional financial resources	
Savings Account	\$ 35,177.12
CD	
Total	\$ 35,177.12