I believe that I am well suited to take on the role of GSC Senator for the College of Education due to my own personal experiences as well as my commitment to bettering communities through involvement and activism. As a former K-12 educator, I have developed a deep passion for giving students ownership and real responsibility for their education. As a member of a professional community, I have experience as a department head, a member of multiple district-wide committees, and a member of many teaching organizations. I have developed significant organizational and planning skills during this time, by helping with conferences and community outreach. Many years ago as an undergraduate student, I was also involved in multiple organizations at the university-level with a host of different leadership roles. But, more importantly, I offer the perspective of a non-degree seeking graduate student who transferred into the College of Education. I have seen first-hand how different the graduate school experience is across departments and how disconnected individuals can feel from the university as a whole. I have a wide variety of perspectives and practical skills that could be well utilized by the GSC.

My experiences lead me to believe that the interests of the graduate students within the College of Education are not being fully served by the larger university community. In particular, I have noted the struggles of peers within certain programs to connect to the greater UNT community. These students lose out in many ways but the greater UNT community also loses their input and skills. GSC should feel a responsibility for connecting with and the ultimate success of these students, as well as the more traditional ones. One way I would like to help, is through the creation and utilization of a yearly survey to all the graduate students to get a sense of what students perceive their primary needs to be and to understand how much this varies department to department. This data could help guide GSC recommendations and programming. It would also help differentiate students’ perceived needs from the perceptions of administrative or departments. I also would like to see the GSC make itself more accessible. The GSC has the ability to really offer a presence and perspective to the UNT community, but it has to put itself out there and know the needs of its constituents. For example, it should be a priority to invite students to the meetings to give input, or provide virtual avenues for attendance (UNT has many graduate students exclusively or partially located online), post meeting minutes online so that students know how you the GSC is working for them, and hold themselves accountable for timely communication and accessibility. GSC is an arm of the university that really helps to make life better for students, we just need to know what those needs really are and proactively act on them for all departments. I would love to help the GSC take on increased presence in the UNT community, including the College of Education, as well as the traditional support to students and committees across the university they have provided in the past.