



# GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

*University of Connecticut*

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## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes 31 October 2012

- I. Call to Order: 4:35 pm.
- II. Recognition of Attendees
  - a. All Present. Presiding: Chantelle Messier, Secretary: Erin Eighan.
- III. Approval of Minutes: 17 October 2012
  - a. Approved
- IV. Officer Reports
  - a. Treasurer – Ian Yue
    - i. Generating a new GSS monthly financial report to be presented at next week's Senate meeting.
    - ii. Will not be present at the next GSS meeting but will prepare a report and give contact information.
    - iii. No one showed up to the Friday information session and yesterday's information session was cancelled due to Hurricane Sandy. Will try to reschedule information sessions soon.
    - iv. Recently met with David Clokey. If we're thinking of a graduate student fee increase, we will have to let him know by November 15, 2012.
      1. Last year, Bill (the Treasurer) said that the main reason for increasing the student fee was to stabilize the short-term loan fund. However, Beth Desjardins said that was a poor rationale.
        - a. We have to show them that the revenue coming in is just enough to cover the expenditures coming out. The only way we could justify the increase via the short-term loan fund, we would have to categorize it as a "supplement" to the short-term loan fund.
        - b. Beth thinks it would be poor form to ask for an increase when it is currently stable.
      2. Do we want to increase the Graduate Student Activity Fee? Do we want to expand our initiatives (i.e. the Professional Development Symposium)? Do we want to increase support to Tier-II groups?
        - a. Right now, the cap of our fiscal year allocations for Tier-II Groups is at \$35,000 (not including Special Allocations).
        - b. Anish: Is there any way we could know if we would receive more requests next year for funds?



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- c. Ian: I would guess so. It's possible that the two groups that lost funding because they haven't met the requirements have become much more active and involved. At least three other groups have expressed interest in requesting a budget.
- d. Chantelle: GSS has become more well-known this year and there has been more interest in our offerings.
- e. Ian: This year, the Finance Committee recommended around \$31,000. We're usually a few thousand under because some groups don't use all of their funds.
- f. Chantelle: Do you get a sense of what usually gets cut from budget requests?
- g. Ian: The first round of cuts (roughly \$10,000) were just inappropriate events (i.e. departmental parties). We had to cut between \$5,000-10,000 more after that. There's the argument about whether we ought to be funding brownbag/colloquia events. Last year's finance committee found that inappropriate use of funds and enacted a transition plan to limit the budgets for these kinds of events.
- h. Erin: We want to think about the arguments against a fee increase because I get the feeling graduate students will not want to raise any more fees.
- i. Ian: If we apply for a fee increase, it will not go into effect until Fall 2014. We will have to get 200 graduate students to sign a petition that states that they would be willing to consider this fee increase.
- j. Safet: This is something we should ask the Senates to explain to their constituencies.
- k. Chantelle: Before we ask for more money, we should figure out whether or not we need it. It would help to know what is the amount of money that we didn't fund towards events that were not ineligible?
- l. Ian: I can do that, but we also have to keep in mind that there are some groups who request outlandish budgets.
- m. Anish: The amounts requested for honoraria last year were very variable. It might be good to have a strict rule for honoraria.



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- n. Chantelle: I would argue against standardizing that because some speakers have their own standards.
  - o. Anish: I don't know if it's fair to use a large portion of graduate student funds for an event that is largely catered towards a subset of the graduate students.
  - p. Ian: In my calculations, I could also control for certain things (i.e. a certain honoraria cap). I will come up with a rough list of things I could control for and will come up with some rough numbers. We can make a final decision at the next exec meeting.
- b. Parliamentarian – Leland Aldridge
- i. Ian and Leland met with representatives from the various Tier-II Groups in the School of Education. All three of the subsidiary groups sent representatives. Also had a representative from the representative organization. They all were in agreement that it would be better to apportion their seats on a departmental basis, but they were going to go back and talk to the people in their departments. Right now, their groups are representing even more specific groups than their departments. If they feel that they want that change to happen, then they will submit an official petition to the Procedures Committee. In terms of their budgets, we are going to work to honor the budgets granted to them while adhering to the rules in the GSS Bylaws. We're waiting for a response from NGSA.
    - 1. Ian: We ought to put a deadline on their response/action.
    - 2. Chantelle: If they are going to apply for a new budget, they ought to sort this out first.
  - ii. Erin: You mentioned that Talia Shabtay is not a senator representing Art History, but I've just been recording their own reports on the attendance sheet. Has she been notified? How do we remedy this?
    - 1. Chantelle: She should be contacted personally and encouraged to run for an at-large senator seat.
    - 2. Safet: I need to review the attendance more closely and check for other cases like this.
  - iii. Leland will send an email announcing the at-large senator seats that are still available.
- c. Activities Director – Anish Kurian
- i. Thanksgiving Dinner



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1. 11:30 – 2pm, food service will end at 1:30 because we need to physically be out of the space at 2:00 due to another event.
  2. A few people from the activities committee will be able to help for the event. If anyone else is available from Exec, that would be helpful. I still need a few more people. If it gets to the next full meeting, I can ask the Senators at our next meeting.
    - a. Chantelle: You can always ask Bing to staff the event and he can redirect his office hours to the event.
  3. Reviewing the catering order now.
  4. There will not be a storyteller this year. We will have light music to play in the background.
  5. Asked catering to make bigger signs for specialty-diet foods.
- ii. Movie Night
1. Blue Cow is printing out vouchers for popcorn and a soda for the event.
  2. Provost Choi will give some introductory/welcoming remarks.
  3. So far the grad school is paying for the movie and snacks. They may pay for the space as well.
- iii. Depending on the budget, we may do one more Ted's Social Night or an Ice Cream Social.
- d. Secretary – Erin Eighan
- i. Still drafting a committee report form.
  - ii. Submitted a descriptive blurb and logo to Dean Chafouleas to customize the GSS link on the new grad school website.
  - iii. Ian raised an important question about including external committee documents in our own public records. What if a committee report wants to include a document distributed during the committee meeting?
    1. Erin's initial response is to minimize any redundant information. Any documents that are publically available elsewhere through a committee should not also be included in our own internal reports. However, if a representative needs to reference this document, it would be best to include a link to that committee's website with the pertinent information. Committee reports are meant to be succinct summaries of relevant information for our constituencies. As such, representatives should take time to summarize, quote when necessary, and direct readers to records for more information. Other thoughts?
      - a. For the University Budget Committee, it would be helpful to give people access to these tables. A lot of these are public



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- records, but the way the University is set up it would take a lot of time and effort to find this information. It would be beneficial to include them in the minutes.
- b. Chantelle: If you're creating these committee report worksheets suggest that we prefer to attach a link rather than an actual document.
  - c. Safet: Sometimes there is a delay.
  - d. Chantelle: You could direct them to the place where it will be likely to show up.
- iv. No comma between "Vice President" and "Safet Berisa" in GSS Minutes.
  - v. Public Relations committee did not meet due to Hurricane Sandy.
  - vi. *The Commons*
    1. Received positive feedback from grad population. One student requested a column on raising children during grad school. Hayley Kilroy proposed a column on green initiatives and grad life.
    2. Chantelle: I'd like to see an event separate that is separate and not to have them become redundant.
    3. Ian: Create an agreement for the purpose of the blog that stipulates what the blog expectations are.
    4. Chantelle: You can also ask them to revise posts to fit general interest.
  - e. Vice President – Safet Berisa
    - i. Draft of the GRADS\_ANNOUNCEMENTS-L Listserv Usage Guidelines
      1. Should we include a clause about the subscription to or removal of subscription to the listserv?
        - a. Safet: I think we should include it on our website, but not in the guidelines.
        - b. Ian: Can we add this clause to the signature of the listserv emails?
          - i. Anish: It could be something like "You're receiving this message through the GRADS\_ANNOUNCEMENTS-L Listserv. To adjust your interactions with this listserv..."
    - ii. Either this week or next week, the Student Life Committee will hold its next meeting.
      1. Chantelle: Have you gotten a chance to review the resolution on graduate student handbooks yet?
      2. Safet: Not yet.



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3. Chantelle: Would you be able to review it before our next Senate meeting?
  4. Safet: Yes, we will reschedule a meeting to discuss the Resolution.
- f. President – Chantelle Messier
- i. Update on the Breakfast with the President
    1. Well-received and overall a good meeting. We should try to schedule this more in the future.
  - ii. Whetten 200 will be our new official meeting space. We will probably want to take this space in the Spring. They have to give us an official designee key. It sounds like they only want to give us one key because there are secure records in that building. They also like that it affiliates GSS with the Grad School in a tangible way. The Vice President will never again have to book a room.
    1. Safet/Anish: It would be nice to get two keys.
  - iii. UConntact and Graduate Student Groups
    1. Student Activities is looking into a solution for free copying for graduate student groups. As far as the enrollment requirement difficulties, Chantelle made them aware of the graduate organizations that cannot meet these requirements or that these requirements aren't functionally relevant. Apparently the policy has been in place for two years, but they've never enforced it. They don't sound like they're willing to reconsider the rule, but Chantelle is going to continue negotiating with them.
      - a. Safet: Can we make an exception for graduate student groups to only put officer on there?
      - b. Ian: Can we ask them to put together a rationale? And then we can respond to their rationale.
    2. They did also say that there are only two graduate student groups that have been effected by this rule and are currently frozen.
  - iv. Professional Development Symposium
    1. If you do know an alumni who is successful outside of academia, please put Chantelle in touch with him/her.
    2. Melanie Sinche as a speaker for the symposium? Chantelle's opinion is that she would make a really great keynote speaker.
      - a. The symposium could culminate with her talk in the evening. We could also reorganize our food funds: rather than hosting a breakfast and lunch, we could hold a lunch and a reception afterward.



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- b. Anish's main concern was with the timing, but if it's in the meeting, then that should be fine. It will be most accessible to graduate students.
    3. We've revised the scheduling model from last year. We do not want to split our audience into separate rooms. We would like to model this on the Humanities Institute conference in which one talk is held at a time
    4. Much bigger advertising effort. Last year we discussed doing bus ads, and we would like to push this effort this year.
    5. Date: Thursday, February 28 (8-8 pm), Student Union Ballroom
  - v. Meeting with CT Rides on Thursday. Safet and the Student Life Committee will be there.
  - vi. Meeting with the Student Union on Friday.
  - vii. Graduate Student Orientation
    1. We should keep this on the radar of the administration before too much time passes.
    2. We had some suggestions with people. Chantelle assumes that this will be coordinated with GAIN.
    3. Leland: It would be good to include information about the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of Diversity and Equity and the roles those can play for graduate students.
  - viii. Transportation and Parking
    1. Would it be valuable to put together a bulletin on transportation and parking issues?
    2. Yes, send it out over the listserv. Should we post this on our website? Should we also post this in *The Commons*?
    3. Chantelle: will draft a bulletin and send it to Erin for formatting and then to send out onto the listserv.
- V. Prepare Agenda for the Next Meeting
- VI. Adjournment at 6:30 pm.