

**Attendance:**

- **Present:** Vanessa Lovelace, Greg Treich, Phillip Price, Morad Behandish, Tony Patelunas, Thomas Briggs (minutes), Ross Dardani, Becca Harman, Rachel Krinsky Rudnick

**Meeting began 5.16pm**

**Guest speaker: Rachel Krinsky Rudnick, Assistant Director of Compliance/Privacy**

- Rachel explained how the Freedom of Information of Information Act (FOIA) applies to GSS. She explained that UConn has decided that Tier III organisations function like a government, as they make decisions on how to allocate public money, therefore they need to comply with the transparency and accountability standards as stipulated by Connecticut State's FOIA. She emphasized the importance of recording votes on budgetary decision, making meetings public and records of those meetings public available. She answered various questions from the GSS Executive and explained that because GSS exercises ultimate authorization of financial decisions, it is the organisation subject to FOIA.
- The GSS Executive agreed to pass on this information to the GSS Senators at the next GSS meeting.

**President: Tony Patelunas**

- GSA SOLID training requirements
  - Tony has met with Michael Gilbert, Vice President for Student Affairs, and he expressed enthusiasm to re-structure the training requirements for graduate organisations to better suit their needs.
  - Tony is meeting with Christine Wilson, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Director of Student Activities, to discuss this further.
- Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting
  - The BoT have approved the new site for the Student Recreation Centre.
- Guest speakers at GSS
  - Jim Wohl, the University Ombuds Officer, will be the guest speaker at the next GSS meeting.
  - Victoria Blodgett, Assistant Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, will be the guest speaker at the following GSS meeting.
- Temporary appointments to committees
  - The GSS had unanimously voted electronically to approve to temporarily appoint the nominees to external committees until the next GSS meeting where elections will be held. As no committee had more than one nominee this measure was deemed appropriate, however nominations for the external committee positions are still open should anyone wish to nominate themselves for elections at the next GSS meeting.

- FOIA requirements
  - The GSS Executive will work together and liaise with Rachel Krinsky Rudnick, to ensure that GSS processes are in accordance with FOIA requirements.
  - Ross, the GSS administrator, posts GSS meeting dates on the GSS website, and Tom, the Communications Director, informs the graduate body of the dates, times, and locations of all the semester's GSS meetings at the start of term. Tom also gives notification of the next GSS meeting and distributes the agenda for that meeting 48 hours in advance. He also distributes the draft of the previous meeting's minutes for approval before the next GSS meeting.
  - We also need to ensure that the agenda for the next GSS meeting is posted on the GSS website 48 hours before the next meeting.
  - Tony will liaise with Rachel and Ross to discover how to upload GSS meeting on the Connecticut State's website as required.
- Pizza
  - Ross shall look to order pizza from alternative vendors for the next GSS meeting in order to deliver better value.
- USG liaison
  - Senator Simning has informed Tony that he is attending the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) meetings in an unofficial capacity to inform GSS about any issues that may be important for GSS to know about.
- Agenda items:
  - Guest Speaker
    - Jim Wohl, Ombudsman
  - President Report:
    - FOIA

**Vice President: Vanessa Lovelace**

- Student Life and Welfare Committee
  - Vanessa will ask for volunteers for this committee and explain its importance.
- Voting procedures in meetings
  - Vanessa discussed with Phillip how she can take the lead in fully running GSS meetings.
  - They shall meet to go over the key parts of Robert's Rules, the GSS Bylaws and Constitution necessary for her to know in order to chair GSS meetings effectively.
- Agenda items:
  - Vice President Report
    - Student Welfare Committee

**Treasurer: Greg Treich**

- New computer purchase
  - They no longer sell Dell computers, for which he originally received a quote, so Greg is getting a new quote and will get back to GSS when he has received it.
  - He still intends to purchase 2 new computers and 3 monitors
- Agenda items:
  - Treasurer report
    - New computer purchase and update

**Communications Director: Thomas Briggs**

- GSS Website
  - Tom recommended that members of GSS Executive provide a photo of themselves for the GSS Executive Profiles webpage. He also suggested that it would be helpful if they could include some brief information about their interests and what their role is in the GSS Exec.
  - Tom also aims to update the names of registered GSS Senators and Committee members onto the website
- Senator registration
  - There has been a good proportion of senators who have registered. Phillip stated he will chase up the ones who have not submitted constituency registration forms
- Public Relations Committee (PRC)
  - Ross Dardani and Meera Nair have volunteered to join the PRC. We are meeting next week to discuss potential promotional items to purchase.
- Pop-up banners and table throws
  - Tom checked that the GSS Executive agrees to order these items. The Executive unanimously approved.
- GSS Manifesto ideas
  - Tom suggested the GSS Executive, GSS, and GSS Committees could work toward coming up with a manifesto about key issues affecting graduates in order to communicate to the Graduate School about graduate needs and aspirations.
- Agenda items
  - Communication Director Report
    - Public Relations Committee

**Activities Director: Morad Behandish**

- Activities budget
  - Halloween: Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>.
    - The Student Association of Graduate Engineers (SAGE) is taking the lead organizing this event with GSS.

- It will be in the same venue as the previous year
- Following feedback from attendees and the recommendation from last year's Activities Director, Morad shall buy more food to ensure there is enough. This is possible as the budget has been increased.
- There has been no follow up from the UConn Soccer team about a collaborative Halloween effort therefore Morad is not actively pursuing that option.
- Thanksgiving luncheon.
  - This year it will take place in the Rome Ballroom as it is a better venue for the event
- Grad Prom
  - The Rome Ballroom is reserved for this event
- Graduate Students of Colour Association (GSCA)
  - Morad is discussing collaborating with GSCA for joint activities and trips
- Happy Hours
  - These shall be bi-weekly, and cost ~\$500 each.
  - They will be held in the Nathan Hale. It is more convenient to work with one venue, and other options, like Ted's Bar, are more expensive and less suitable.
  - Ross informed Morad that he is not available on Thursday evenings to assist with these events if they are scheduled for that day.
- Agenda items
  - Activities Director Report
    - Halloween
    - Happy Hours
    - Other upcoming activities

**Parliamentarian: Phillip Price**

- External Committee elections
  - Phillip stated that elections shall take place during the next GSS meeting.
  - The Exec agreed that Niko Tracksdorf needs to turn up to the next GSS meeting in order to nominate himself to sit on the Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Committee.
- Marth Mentorship Award committee elections
  - Thomas Briggs nominated Ruth Yuste-Alonso for the Marth Mentorship Award committee, Greg Treich seconded her nomination. As the deadline for submitting a graduate member for the committee is October 2<sup>nd</sup>, which is before the next GSS meeting, the GSS Executive voted to appoint Ruth to this position.
- At-large Senators
  - We currently have one at-large Senator.
- Voting procedures

- Phillip wants to explain to the GSS the process of voting on motions to clarify how meetings run and ensure processes are kept as simple and straightforward as possible.
- Phillips shall explain this at the start of the next meeting after the guest speaker.
  
- Agenda items:
  - New Business
    - Phillip to explain the process of voting on motions to help meetings run smoothly.
    - External committee elections
  - Parliamentarian Report
    - Outstanding constituency registration forms

**Meeting adjourned 6.54pm**