**Attendance:**

* **Present:** Greg Treich, Morad Behandish, Tony Patelunas, Phillip Price, Thomas Briggs (minutes), Ross Dardani
* **Absent:** Vanessa Lovelace

**Meeting began 5.13pm**

**President: Tony Patelunas**

* Invited speakers
  + Victoria Blodgett, Assistant Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, will be the speaker at the next GSS meeting and shall provide updates from the Graduate School.
  + The GSS Executive discussed the guest speakers to invite to the remaining GSS meetings.
    - Kay Gruder, Career Consultant, Graduate School, shall speak at the following GSS meeting on 18th November.
    - Matthew Dunn, Connecticut Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, shall speak at the final GSS meeting of the semester on 9th December.
    - Melanie Chenette, the Graduate School Advocacy Officer, could speak at the first GSS meeting of the spring semester.
    - Scott Jordan, Executive Vice President of Administration and Chief Financial Officer of UConn, and William Wendt, UConn’s Director of Transport, Logistics and Parking Services, are potential guest speakers we could invite to speak in spring semester.
* GSS Emergency Loans
  + The GSS Executive discussed and clarified the current process to repay GSS Emergency Loans. A student who has taken out a loan has 90 days to repay it (with the possibility of an additional 30 days extension). After this time period, the Bursar’s Office will then make payroll deductions from the student’s pay-cheques in installments spread over the following semester.
  + The GSS Executive discussed changing the Bylaws to state that a student can take out one loan per semester, and three loans per year.
* GSS liaison with the GEU-UAW
  + The GSS Executive discussed the flow of information between the Graduate Employee Union and GSS in areas where issues overlap. It was decided that currently there is good information sharing between the two organisations so that an official liaison position is unnecessary.
* Parking
  + Tony stated that the University Parking Advisory Committee representative, Brandon Benevento, has not heard anything from UConn regarding the parking situation at the Fine Arts Complex brought to the attention of GSS by Darren Brown at the last GSS meeting. Tony has not heard anything from William Wendt, Director of UConn Transport, Logistics, and Parking Services, but he is due to meet with him soon.
* Provost’s Library Advisory Committee (PLAC) nomination
  + Michael Ambroselli was the only graduate to respond to the call for nominations to the PLAC. The GSS Executive unanimously voted to nominate him for this position. The election will take place at the next GSS meeting.
* Funding Cuts to the University Library
  + Tony stated that the University is making substantial funding cuts to its Library Services. He stated that a letter of protest has been written by the Languages, Cultures and Literature faculty, and that there is an online petition endorsing this letter against the cuts.
  + The GSS Executive discussed the significance of library services to graduate students and in general to the functioning of UConn as a research intensive university. They decided to bring this issue to the next GSS meeting, and to hear the report from Michael Ambroselli, the graduate representative on the PLAC, before deciding to endorse any protest letters.
  + Tony advised that it is preferable for GSS to draft its own motion about the funding cuts to library services rather than automatically endorse letters written by people outside of GSS.
* Agenda items:
  + Guest Speaker
    - Victoria Blodgett, Assistant Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
  + New Business
    - Provost’s Library Advisory Committee election
  + President’s Report
    - Funding Cuts to Library Services
    - Parking update

**Vice President: Vanessa Lovelace (absent, Thomas Briggs reporting on her behalf)**

* GSS Student Life and Welfare Committee.
  + Tom mentioned that he has been contacted by Michelle San Pedro, the current graduate representative for the Senate Student Life and Welfare Committee, who has requested to sit on the GSS Student Life and Welfare Committee. She has asked GSS to let her know what it believes are the graduate interests she needs to bring to the attention of the Senate Student Life and Welfare Committee. She is presenting her external committee report at the next GSS meeting and can ask GSS for feedback then.
  + Tom stated that Michelle also asked that GSS help develop a Public Speaking workshop as part of their Professional Development. Michelle shall discuss this at the next GSS meeting.
  + Tom has also been contacted by Nancy Wong, last year’s graduate representative for the Senate Student Life and Welfare Committee, who has offered to meet with Michelle to discuss her experiences and insights. Nancy intends to attend the next GSS meeting.
  + Tom stated that it would be good to have both Michelle and Nancy on the GSS Student Life and Welfare Committee, and that he would like to sit on this committee himself. It is important to encourage other senators to sit on this important committee to help create a coherent set of goals and policies that GSS can communicate to the university.
  + Tony also suggested that it would be useful for the GSS Student Life and Welfare Committee to suggest a set of best practices regarding issues such as Professional Development training, and office space for graduates in the library.
* Agenda items:
  + Vice President’s Report
    - GSS Student Life and Welfare Committee
  + Issues forum
    - Public Speaking training

**Treasurer: Greg Treich**

* Special Allocations for the next GSS meeting
  + Pariksheet Nanda of the Graduate Organisation: Molecular and Cellular Biology (GO: MCB) have requested to present a Special Allocations request at the next GSS meeting. The GSS Executive voted unanimously agreed to this request.
* Pizza ordering
  + Ross is ordering the pizza, and they are starting a new system whereby Kimberly Miller, Finance Manager of Student Activities Business Office (SABO) pays in advance using her card.
  + Greg has instructed Ross to tip at 15%.
* Greg informed the GSS Executive that unfortunately he will not be able to attend the next GSS meeting
* Agenda items:
  + New Business:
    - Special Allocations GO: MCB

**Communications Director: Thomas Briggs**

* Graduate Student Organisation (GSO’s) attendance at GSS.

Tom explained that certain GSO’s have not sent a representative to GSS meetings thus far this year and are at risk of not fulfilling their obligations in order to be eligible for future funding from GSS. He has emailed the following GSO’s regarding this issue:

* + Neag GSA
    - Their President, Danielle Bousquet, has replied stating that they are disbanding.
  + Civil and Environmental Engineering GSA
    - Their representative at GSS last year, Edward Eskew, replied stating that they are disbanding after this year.
  + Chemical and Biomedical Engineering GSA
    - Their President, David Gamliel, has not replied.
  + The Optical Society
    - Their representative at GSS last year, Pariksheet Nanda, has not replied.
  + Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)
    - Their President, Xiaoxuan Zhuang, has not replied.
    - Tom stated that he could not find any records of any representatives from CSSA in the attendance list in the GSS meeting minutes from Spring 2015. Tom stated that he contacted last year’s GSS Parliamentarian, Pat Butler, who explained that possibly CSSA were sending a representative but they were writing down their academic constituency instead of CSSA on the attendance sheet, and he suggested that one of the Economics senators may have been acting as the CSSA representative. Tom stated that he contacted one of this year’s Economics senators Jun He who told him that he is not a representative of the CSSA.
  + Tom will remind representatives of GSO’s about attendance at the next GSS meeting.
  + Greg stated that it is the duty of GSO’s to fulfil their attendance obligations and not of GSS to chase up representatives.
* GSS website
  + Tom stated that Ross has posted a list of registered senators and a list of active committee members onto the website. Phillip stated that he has received some more constituency registrations that he will send to Ross to put onto the website.
  + Ross will upload a spreadsheet of GSS attendance at the end of the semester.
* GSS Committee registration
  + Phillip informed the GSS Executive that internal GSS Committee members need to be approved by the Senate.
* Promotional items
  + The Public Relations Committee (PRC) have decided upon a short list of promotional items: pens, scratch pads, power clips, ice-scrapers, adhesive mobile phone wallets, mobile phone stands, coffee mugs, travel tumblers, hand sanitizers. They will order some samples and then reduce this list to 2-3 items to meet the PRC’s budget of $500.
  + Tom and Ross stated that they have contacted Graduate Art Alliance (GAA) about developing a GSS logo design but have received no response yet
* FOIA compliance
  + Tom stated that all GSS processes regarding making minutes and agendas publically available and distributed in time are in accordance with FOIA requirements
  + Ross needs to contact Rachel Krinsky-Rudnick, Assistant Director of Compliance/Privacy, to find out the correct process for uploading GSS meeting agendas onto the Connecticut Secretary of State website.
* Agenda items:
  + Communications Director’s Report:
    - Attendance
    - GSS website updates
    - Senate Committee report
  + New Business
    - GSS Committee elections

**Parliamentarian: Phillip Price**

* Bylaws
  + Phillip shall present a motion at the next GSS meeting to amend the Bylaws to prevent one senator representing multiple constituencies
* Recreation Student Advisory Committee
  + Phillip expressed his concern that the Recreation Student Advisory Committee merely automatically approves decisions that have already been taken, and that it does not have a serious role in making decisions about the new Student Recreation Centre. He also expressed concerns that important committee decisions are being delegated to sub-committees on which graduate representatives do not have the time to sit and are therefore being excluded.
  + The GSS Executive agreed that the graduate voice needs to be heard regarding decisions about the Student Recreation Centre, such as the need for appropriate changing facilities and the need for storage space.
* Graduate Faculty Council
  + Phillip reported that the Graduate Faculty Council had suggested that the library may only keep UConn dissertations in electronic format only, rather than as a hard copy in order to save money producing and storing dissertations. The GSS Executive did not express any serious concern over this proposed change,
* Agenda items:
  + Old Business:
    - Bylaw amendment – preventing multiple constituencies
  + External Committee Reports
    - Recreation Student Advisory Committee report
    - Graduate Faculty Council report

**Activities Director: Morad Behandish**

* Halloween.
  + Morad stated that the Halloween event is on Friday 30th October and all preparations are going well. He has set up a Facebook Event and will be advertising this event. He can use the GSS Tumblers to fill them up with candy.
* Happy Hours
  + Morad stated that he is still waiting to hear from the Nathan Hale Inn about setting up these fortnightly events.
* New trips
  + Morad stated that he would like to have a new trip between Halloween and Thanksgiving and is open to new ideas and suggestions. Tom suggested a trivia night.
  + Morad stated that he is looking to set up a trip to Salem, Massachusetts, with the Graduate Students of Colour Association (GSCA).
  + The GSS Executive discussed the problem with having a trip to Mohegan Sun as previously there had been potential difficulties regarding the connection to gambling and UConn policies about gambling.
* Agenda items
  + Halloween
  + New trips

**Meeting ended 6.35pm**