

Attendance:

- **Present:** Greg Treich, Phillip Price, Morad Behandish, Tony Patelunas, Michelle San Pedro, Thomas Briggs (minutes), Ross Dardani, Jeremy Jelliffe (Board of Trustees graduate representative), Faris Virani (CTYP)

Meeting began 7.15pm

Guest-speaker: Faris Virani (President and Co-founder of Connecticut Young Professionals)

- Faris explained how the Connecticut Young Professionals (CTYP) organization originated, and how similar networks exist in other States on a larger scale. He stated that currently CTYP has over 1,400 members and is continuing to grow, and has recently incorporated a lot of smaller organisations of young professionals in Connecticut. He explained how it aims to bridge the divide between academia and young professionals among the wider community, and that it is active on a State-wide level which makes it unique in Connecticut and distinguishes it from other young professional organisations. He also explained that CTYP is not affiliated with any particular town or their Chambers of Commerce so they do not have any conflicts of interests and serve solely the interests of young professionals in Connecticut. He explained CTYP's mission to provide social and professional events, and to increase civic engagement, boost local arts and culture, as well as help the health and welfare of young professionals in Connecticut. He stated that they have been partnered with Yale University and held professional and social events (around 2-3 per county per month), community works, interviewed the mayor of New Haven about initiatives to attract and retain young professionals in the area, and held an all-day Young Professionals Symposium attended by local and federal government officials, and had a keynote speech by the Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut. He explained that one can find more information on their website <http://ctyp.org/>.
- Faris explained how he is looking to partner with the University of Connecticut and would like to work with GSS to help graduates benefit from the work done by the organization. He explained that the first event would be a social event co-hosted by GSS and CTYP.
- Morad asked about CTYP's relationship with Hartford Young Professionals (HYPE). Faris explained that HYPE are the only organization of young professionals in Connecticut with more members than CTYP, however they only concentrate on the Hartford area. Faris stated that they do joint events together and have one event upcoming in March.
- Tony stated that he was very keen about fostering a partnership with CTYP and that the UConn administration are very supportive of this as well. He said that we should try to fulfil Connecticut's potential to retain and recruit talented young professionals and that forming a partnership with CTYP would be highly beneficial to graduate interests. Faris explained that one of the reasons General Electric recently relocated from Connecticut to

Boston is because of the lack of graduate and young professional talent available in the State.

- The Executive discussed the first kind of social event that CTYP/GSS should try to hold. They discussed a Happy Hour and assessed the likely attendance. Faris said that members of CTYP regularly travel to attend their events and they are well-attended. Tony estimated that there may be possibly around 100 attendees for this event. The Executive discussed options such as the Alumni Centre, Pub 32, Dog Lane café, Sports Bar and Corleone's. They thought Corleone's may be the best option, but agreed to ask the Senate at the next GSS meeting for suggestions and their preferences.

Approval of minutes: The Executive approved the GSS Executive Minutes for 6th January 2016.

President: Tony Patelunas

- Remote meetings. Tony informed the Executive that the next GSS meeting will be recorded and telecast online. He stated that there will be 4 microphones: 1 for the Vice President; 1 for the Executive; and 2 for the audience. There will also be an online chat-box for people online to write questions to the Executive. Phillip volunteered to monitor the chat-box and read out any relevant questions that we receive. Ross was assigned to do the roving microphone at the meetings. A person from tech-support will help set-up the system before the meeting.
- 24 hour hold-release for a graduate with an outstanding GSS loan. Tony informed the Executive about an individual who required a 24 hour hold-release to allow her to register for courses.
 - The Executive voted unanimously in favour of granting a 24 hour hold-release for the graduate.
- Tony explained that the Executive meeting times will be at 5.30pm now which will allow all Executive members to attend, as well as the Board of Trustees graduate representative, Jeremy Jelliffe.
- Agenda items
 - Guest-speaker: Patrick Carr, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Discovery
 - President's Report
 - Graduate Faculty Council report
 - Senate Executive Committee report

Vice President: Michelle San Pedro

- Active-threat training. Michelle told the Executive that The Office of Public Safety at UConn provides active threat training to graduate students to prepare for individuals using firearms.

- Unrepresented Constituencies. Michelle stated that she will email departments who currently are allocated senate seats but do not send representatives to encourage broader and more engaged graduate participation.
- Senator engagement. Michelle discussed ways of attaining more participation from graduates regarding important issues such as housing, library, transport, etc. Phillip suggested an award for senatorial service explaining that incentives are the most effective way to engage people. Michelle also stated that she will provide sheets which briefly explain Robert Rules so that attendees are more aware of how GSS meetings run.
- Library budget cuts. Michelle is working with the Graduate Employee Union (GEU-UAW) on a joint statement about the library budget cuts affecting graduate students.
- Child care subsidies. Michelle stated that GEU-UAW will contact GSS with more information on child care subsidies for all graduate students.
- Housing. Michelle stated that she would like to create a survey to ask graduates about off-campus housing in order to get good information regarding graduate housing needs.
- Agenda items
 - Vice President's report
 - Student Welfare Committee
 - Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) committee representative

Treasurer: Greg Treich

- One card reader. Greg informed the Executive that the mini ipad has arrived and we will be able to use it to record attendance for events and it will provide us automatically with data about attendees. Tom mentioned that we will still need to use an attendance sheet in order to record representatives of Graduate Student Organisations (GSOs) who are not senators.
- Agenda items
 - Treasurer's report
 - GSOs Budget

Communications Director: Thomas Briggs

- GSS Service Award. Tom informed the Executive that he will announce the nominations for the GSS Service Award Committee at the next meeting. He stated that Ross has updated the GSS website so the GSS Service Award is on the home page.
- Transition document. Tom stated that he is working on a transition document which explains the processes for the Communication Director.
- Agenda items
 - Communication Director's report
 - GSS Service Award

Parliamentarian: Phillip Price

- At-Large Senator elections. Phillip explained that the At-Large Senator elections will take place between March 2nd and March 4th.
- Board of Trustees election. Phillip stated that he will announce the elections for the next graduate representative to sit on the Board of Trustees at the next GSS meeting. Jeremy Jelliffe spoke about the requirements to be a Board of Trustees representative.
- Tarang constituency. Phillip stated that he still needs to hear back from one member of the GSS elections committee, but if that person has no dispute with the proposal then they just need the approval of the Senate to become a GSS constituency. He said he should hear back from the other committee member by the next GSS meeting and can put it to the senate for a vote.

- Agenda items
 - Parliamentarian's report
 - At-Large Senator elections
 - Board of Trustees Announcement

Activities Director: Morad Behandish

- Professional development and visa workshops. Morad is looking into a meeting with a legal attorney to address the issue of visas to graduate students.
- Grad Prom. The Graduate Prom is to be held on February 19th. The meal shall be served at 7pm, and the party shall be from 8-11pm.

- **Agenda items**
 - Activities Director's report
 - Professional events
 - Social events

Meeting adjourned 8.40pm