

Attendance:

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

Meeting began 5.14pm

Approval of minutes: GSS Executive minutes for 15th April, 18th May, and 23rd July 2015 approved.

Treasurer: Greg Treich

- Short-Term Emergency Loans
 - Extra funds.
 - Currently c.\$60,000-70,000 is loaned to graduates of a pot of \$120,000. Greg has spoken to the Financial Manager at Student Activities Business Office (SABO), Kimberly Miller, regarding the extra \$50,000 pot of funding for loans if the amount loaned to graduates goes over \$120,000. The only way to discover if we have access to the extra loan pot is to actually exceed the limit. He suggested exceeding the balance limit in a “controlled” way circa late-September/mid-October to see if we have access to these extra funds (e.g. to get a number of graduates to take out the loans as a controlled experiment).
 - Advertising loans.
 - The Executive discussed whether GSS should send out an email advertising the loans to graduate students. It was decided that it may be best to send an email toward the end of summer/winter breaks before graduates receive their first pay cheque, when they may be most in need of a short term loan.
 - Funding limits.
 - The Executive discussed the potential risk of exceeding the funding available for the loans if they became too popular. It was decided that it is not currently the problem and such a situation can be addressed if it arises.
 - Late penalties.
 - Ross highlighted the potential problem that the Bursar’s Office could deduct money from a student’s fellowships or charge late fees for outstanding loans. It was decided that there should not be financial punishment for over-due loan repayments, and that holds on the student’s account are sufficient. The Executive can advocate for students who are having difficulties making loan repayments so they are not unduly punished, e.g. approving temporary lifting of holds for registration purposes.
 - Limits of loans available.
 - The Executive discussed potential changes to the current rules stipulating that a graduate can only apply for one loan per semester (Fall, Spring, Summer). The Executive discussed possible changes such as eradicating the limits on the number of loans a student takes out over the course of a year, or limiting the number of loans based on a yearly quota rather than on a per semester basis. Tony said that any changes would probably have to be voted on by GSS and then approved by the Board of Trustees and Phillip will check.
- GSS office computer

- Greg has raised the purchase order for a new computer.
- Outstanding cheque disbursements
 - Ross and Greg are chasing these up.

Parliamentarian: Phillip Price

- Short-Term Emergency Loans
 - Phillip said he shall look through the financial policies to check the processes necessary for changing rules.

Activities Director: Morad Behandish

- GSS Food Truck Festival
 - Morad has received over 1,000 RSVP's.
 - The Executive suggested that in order to assist with future estimates of attendance we should record how many graduates actually show up.
 - Budgetary changes.
 - Greg and Tony explained that Morad did not need to seek approval from either the Executive or Finance Committee to move things between categories within his for budget if they are less than 20% of his total activities budget.
 - Greg confirmed that student bands could not receive payment.
 - Logistics
 - Morad will provide Ross a list of miscellaneous items to purchase. Ross shall look to see if it is possible to purchase cheap table cloths.
 - 200 chairs and 26 tables will be dropped off at noon. Ross will be available from noon to help set-up.
 - Food trucks shall arrive at 3pm
 - GSS Banner to be ordered from 4Imprint. Morad has designed the graphics for it.
 - Games and activities. The Executive agreed that there probably will not be much space for games and activities on Fairfield Way.
 - Tokens for food.
 - The Executive discussed the most effective way to distribute tokens. It was decided that the best option was to give two tokens (a food-&-drink token and dessert token) which the graduates could choose to use at any of the vendors.
 - The Executive discussed the possibility of allowing graduates attending with partners and children to purchase food for them. It was decided that such families could be given an additional token (or wristband) allowing them to purchase food.
- Resource Fair
 - Tony, Phillip and Ross will staff the GSS table at the resource fair.
 - There are c.180 GSS promotional tumblers to give away. The Executive agreed that we should give out c.120 at the resource fair and give out c.50 at GSS meetings.
- Surplus budget.
 - Greg explained that GSS has a surplus budget of \$30,000-35,000 from last year.

- The available Activities budget is \$5,000 less than expected because the Executive expected GAIN to be a joint venture with the Graduate School but this did not happen.
- Tony suggested we propose an allocation of \$9,000 of surplus funds to Activities budget at first GSS meeting.
- The remaining surplus could go toward a Special Allocations budget and/or the short-term emergency loan fund.
- Phillip will look into the rules regarding the allocation of surplus funds.
- Tony recommended increasing the pizza budget for the first GSS meeting as this is one of the more busy meetings of the year.

Communications Director: Thomas Briggs

- Approved GSS Executive meeting minutes.
 - The approved GSS Executive minutes shall be emailed out to the GSS Group email with a reminder of first GSS meeting of Fall semester (and the draft minutes of the last GSS meeting of Spring semester on 22nd April 2015)
- Last year's GSS Executive minutes.
 - Tom explained that last year's GSS Executive meeting minutes are not currently on the GSS website. He has minutes from last year's GSS Executive meetings on 19th November 2014 (Fall semester) and 21st January, 2nd February, and 4th March 2015 (Spring semester) in the transition folder given to him by the previous Communications Director, Danielle Wong. Ross shall upload these onto the website.
 - Tom explained that he does not have the minutes for GSS Executive meetings for September or October 2014 (Fall semester). He will contact Danielle to see if she has these. Tony suggested contacting SABO as they receive all GSS meeting minutes.
- Registration of senators.
 - The Executive discussed the process for registering senators. There needs to be a sufficient number of GSS Senators who have submitted registration forms by the first GSS meeting in order for GSS meet the quorum to vote on motions, e.g. approval of minutes and Writing Centre Special Allocations request. The quorum is based on the average senatorial attendance from the last 2 meetings of the Spring 2015 semester.
 - Phillip will look into whether the Executive can approve the Writing Centre's Special Allocations request without Senate approval.
 - Tom should send out an email at the start of semester reminding senators to complete and return their registration forms as soon as possible.
 - Tom is collecting a comprehensive list of last year's GSS Senators and attendees to create a permanent GSS Group email list.
 - Tony will contact the Joint Elections Committee to find out who are the At-Large GSS Senators elected in Spring 2015.
- Information Sheets.
 - Tom will produce information sheets and a flyer to distribute at the resource fair encouraging graduate to attend GSS meetings, become senators, and sit on committees. He will also produce a sign-up sheet for graduates interested in GSS.
- Committees

- Tom has gathered a draft list of UConn committees based on information from UConn webpages and previous GSS minutes. Tony has suggested the most important committees on which GSS ought to have a graduate representative.
- Tom outlined the university committees on which Executive members are required to sit according to bylaw XI.5.
- The Executive agreed that it is important to encourage graduates to sit on committees. It was decided that committee representatives should submit reports, attend GSS meetings, and make reports in person at GSS meetings, as it increases the flow of information between the university and GSS. The Executive discussed making committee reporting mandatory as a condition of being a committee representative. It was suggested that committee members should present at least once a year, and submit a written report at least once a semester (even if it is simply to state that the committee has been inactive). It was also noted that we wish to encourage graduates to become committee members and therefore not place an undue burden upon them, so we should try to keep the mandatory requirements for committee representatives reasonable.
- The Executive discussed Board of Trustee committees and whether the Graduate Student Trustee, Jeremy Jelliffe, sits on all of them or whether some are open to other graduates. For example, the Distinguished Professor Committee.
- The Executive agreed that Committee positions and representatives should be uploaded onto the website to help promote the role of committees.
- Purchase orders.
 - Tom and Ross have spoken to Kimberly Miller, regarding raising purchase orders to pay for GSS purchases, rather than individual Executive officers having to pay in advance and then get reimbursed. Kimberly says this is a possible way to pay for GSS purchases. Ross and Greg will liaise with her to formalize the process of raising purchase orders.
- Promotional items.
 - The Executive discussed the efficacy of distributing promotional items during orientation week. It was decided that we should concentrate on distributing promotional items during other GSS events. It would also give the Senate an opportunity to discuss how the Public Relations Committee should spend its budget.
 - Tom mentioned the possibility of purchasing a GSS table throw for the meetings and events. As this is a fairly expensive item, it may be worthwhile having the Senate discuss this potential purchase.

President: Tony Patelunas

- Guest speakers for GSS meetings.
 - The Dean of the Graduate School, Kent Holsinger. He could give a brief introductory welcome at the first meeting, and demonstrate the importance of GSS to the university
 - The Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, Victoria Blodgett. She could discuss the Graduate School's vision, goals, and its relationship with GSS in more detail. She regularly attends meetings and is very engaged with GSS. She could possibly speak either at the first or third meeting.
 - University Ombudsman, Jim Wohl. He could explain the role of the Ombuds Office as a valuable resource for graduates. He could come for the second meeting

- Career Consultant for the Graduate School, Kay Gruder. She would be able to discuss her department's services and the Career Ambassador program. She could come to the fourth meeting.
- Director of the Connecticut Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Matthew Dunn. He could speak at the fifth meeting.
- Graduate Student Trustee on the Board of Trustees, Jeremy Jelliffe. He would come to discuss his work representing graduate students on the Board of Trustees. He could speak in the Spring semester
- Executive Director of UConn Recreation, Cyndi Costanzo. She has offered to speak at a GSS meeting. The Executive discussed whether it would lead to a productive discussion or not.
 - It would be unproductive if it unnecessarily resurrects past grievances which cannot be changed, i.e. graduate funding of the new Recreation Centre.
 - It would be productive if she could provide graduates with useful information such as the development of new running trails on campus, extending bike share schemes, and how the new Recreation Centre could be designed to meet graduate needs, e.g. separate changing facilities from undergraduates.
 - Phillip is on the Student Recreation Centre committee and suggested we wait until the committee reports to the senate to judge whether it would be worthwhile to have Cyndi attend as a guest speaker.
- A representative from the UConn Graduate Employee Union. It would be useful to have a guest speaker come and explain the role of the GEU and its relationship with GSS. However, the GEU is currently in the process of establishing its constitution and bylaws, and electing its Executive Committee. Once these are set up they could come to speak in Spring semester.
- Tony discussed his meetings with President of USG, Rachel Conboy.
 - He was very optimistic about fostering a positive relationship with USG, and working together on issues of shared concern. Rachel gave Tony a list of current USG projects, and he has identified a couple of possible areas for collaboration, e.g. off-campus transportation.
 - Rachel was unaware of the specifics of the USG delegates who spoke last semester to GSS about issues with graduate TA's.
 - Rachel explained that USG had successfully petitioned the state legislature to vote to increase the number of student representatives on the UConn Board of Trustees to two undergraduates and two graduates. However, Governor Daniel Malloy vetoed the legislature's decision.
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
 - Tony explained that GSS has to abide by the FOIA. He will invite the university to give a presentation to the GSS Executive during one of our meetings so that we can disperse the information to GSS Senators.
- Career Consultant for the Graduate School, Kay Gruder
 - Tony distributed draft versions of Kay's graduate "Career Ambassadors" program. He suggested that he could present the idea at a GSS meeting first and then when she visits as a guest speaker she can explain the scheme in more detail.
- Communication Resource Team representative
 - Associate Vice President of the Office of Equity and Diversity, and Title IX Coordinator and Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, Elizabeth Conklin, is looking for a

graduate member for the Community Resources Team. GSS should elect a member who is interested in this role.

- National Association of Graduate Professional Students (NAGPS)
 - The Executive discussed how best to engage with this organization. Tony explained that we had paid the membership fee (\$250/500) last year so should take advantage of any potential resources on offer, e.g. conferences or skype conferencing. He suggested we could elect a graduate representative to liaise with NAGPS. This can be discussed at the next GSS meeting.
- Next GSS Executive meeting
 - Scheduled for Wednesday September 9th at 5pm.
 - Rehearse full GSS meeting.

Meeting ended 8.46pm