

Attendance:

- **Present:** Greg Treich, Phillip Price, Morad Behandish, Tony Patelunas, Michelle San Pedro, Thomas Briggs (minutes), Ross Dardani.

Meeting began 5.37pm

Approval of minutes: The Executive confirmed that they had digitally approved the GSS Executive Minutes for 20th January 2016.

President: Tony Patelunas

- Student Activity and Service Fees Advisory Committee (SASFAC) report. Tony explained that the committee looks into how the student fees get spent and that they interviewed him about the role of GSS and how it spend the graduate fee of \$16 per semester. He informed the Executive that the interview went smoothly and that they were satisfied with the way GSS spends its fee. Tony also stated that there has been a gradual increase in the number of graduate students over the last few years.
- Invited guest speakers. Tony informed the Executive that he has contacted Melanie Chenette, Graduate Student Advocacy Officer, to speak at the next GSS meeting on 17th February but he had not heard back from her.
 - Kay Gruder, Career Consultant at the Graduate School, is due to speak at the GSS meeting on 9th March
 - Tanya Husick (on behalf of William Wendt, the director of Logistics, Transport and Parking Services) is due to speak at the GSS meeting on 30th March. Tony informed the Executive that Tanya would like to know from senators what they would want her to talk about.
 - Scott Jordan, Executive Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, is due to speak on 20th April
- Parking Committee. Tony informed the Executive that Brandon Benevento had to resign as the graduate representative on the Parking Advisory Committee due to personal reasons, and we therefore needed a new representative. Tony said that he has contacted Ehsan Moharreri, who spoke at the last GSS meeting about his campaign to improve campus parking, to see if he would want to sit on that committee. The election for the committee position will be held at the next GSS meeting and Tom can inform senators about the vacant position with his usual announcement on the Monday beforehand.
- Teleconferencing.
 - Tony asked how long the Executive thought the online recording of GSS meetings should be available to view after the meeting. The Executive decided that the video should remain available until the minutes of the meeting have been approved at the next GSS meeting, after which it should be taken down.
 - Tony suggested that at the start of the next GSS meeting Michelle announce that remote users should long-in with their NetID at the top right corner. This will allow us to monitor attendance and verify how many people are watching and

how many are graduate students. Phillip said it will also help with online voting. He said only people who are logged in would be able to submit questions online as although the meetings are public, only graduate students have speaking rights. He said he will check the bylaws to check.

- Michelle said that, having consulted with Phillip, at the next meeting the recognition of senators will not require passing around the microphone as it took too long. They also intend to set up two microphones on mic stands at the front on either side of the senators which senators will get up to speak into. She said it will cut down on confusion caused by roving microphones. Tom suggested that it would also help if the microphones were connected to the speaker system inside the room as well as just recording. He asked if the technicians from UITS could arrive an hour before the meeting to set up the system well before the meeting started.
- Tom also explained that now we have the mini ipad to swipe people's cards for attendance, the attendance sheet was still required only for graduates representing Graduate Student Organisations that don't have senators (or for attendees who have forgotten their ID cards).
- Regional organizations and funding. Tony explained that GSS has been successful in increasing engagement with organisations not based on Storrs campus such as Public Policy or the Graduate Business program based in Hartford who have approximately 300 graduate students. He stated that the Executive need to look into the rules regarding regional campuses more closely, especially in order to give the Finance Committee clear guidance regarding appropriate funding of these organisations who have submitted budgets to GSS. It was decided that the main issue is that regional organisations still need to advertise their events to the entire graduate community and this needs closer monitoring and enforcement.
- Meeting with Eleanor Daugherty. Tony informed the Executive that he had met with Eleanor Daugherty, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, regarding an issue brought up by the Associate of Graduate Advocates regarding the joint jurisdiction of Community Standards and Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) in cases where an individual is both a graduate and an employee (e.g. is a Graduate Assistant). Tony said he is working on obtaining a flow chart which clearly explains the jurisdiction of both entities and the processes an individual could go through when dealing with them.
- Connecticut Young Professionals (CTYP) social event. Tony informed the Executive that the first joint GSS/CTYP Social Event will be held at Dog Lane on 24th March. He stated that CTYP are organizing it and GSS can help promote it. He also explained that he was told Corleone's bar had proposed a good deal for future events, and that they are looking to hold an event at Dave and Buster's restaurant.
- Graduate Student Handbook. Tony reported on his investigation regarding whether the graduate student handbook that applies to graduates is the one that was valid when the graduate entered the program or the one that is currently valid. He has spoken with Dean Holsinger and the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, Victoria Blodgett, about this

issue and they could not provide a certain answer. He explained that they are working on clarifying to whom which graduate catalogue applies.

- Graduate Faculty Council. Tony informed the Executive that the GFC are looking to change the policy whereby the Head of the department determines the outside readers for a graduate's dissertation committee rather than the major advisor.

- Agenda items
 - President's report
 - Connecticut Young Professionals event
 - Senate Executive Committee report
 - Graduate Student Handbook

Vice President: Michelle San Pedro

- Public speaking workshop. Michelle informed the Executive that she had spoken to Professor Kenneth Noll, from the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology about a public speaking event. A second event would be run by an improvisational group and cost around \$500. She said Kay Gruder from the Graduate School offered to provide half the funding if GSS could provide the other \$250. The funding for this could come from the GSS Activities Budget. A third event about the best use of Powerpoint in presentations would be run by the Institute of Teaching and Learning. Michelle will liaise with Morad regarding the best dates for these events.
- Library support rally. Michelle gave the Executive a draft of the letter that she will present it at the next GSS meeting for approval. She asked how best to present the letter to the university if it is approved by the senate. She also informed the Executive that the Graduate Employee Union (GEU) had asked for additional action regarding library cuts. The Executive agreed that they will help promote any action that is being taken to support the library against cuts. Regarding State funding cuts to the university budget in general, Tony informed the Executive that the GEU has political influence at the state level through its financial contributions to UAW, and the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) has a large enough budget to employ two lobbyists in Hartford. He explained that GSS does not have similar resources and can act best to support appropriate actions that those groups propose.
- Off-campus housing survey. Michelle stated that she will ask senators to submit suggestions to include on the housing survey to GSS which will be discussed by the GSS Student Life Committee who shall formulate the survey. The aim is to create a resolution for graduate housing needs. She stated that she will be attending the Senate Student Welfare Committee on 9th March and will have the opportunity to discuss matters with the University Architect.
- Student Health Insurance Plan. Michelle informed the Executive that she attended the SHIP committee and can confirm that the plan meets the visa requirements for international students. Tony stated that around 2,000 students are on this plan, of whom around 500 are graduates. Michelle said this was an ongoing issue about which the next

GSS Executive Committee need to be aware. Tony stated that all Executive Committee members prepare Transition plans for our successors and that Michelle can include the relevant information about ongoing issues with SHIP in her transition plan.

- Online degree constituencies. Michelle stated that she had contacted program administrators about sending graduate representatives to GSS and they had responded saying that online students are not able to participate and so will not send out information recruiting graduate representatives to GSS. Tony said this is an issue because if online students pay the graduate fee then GSS still has responsibilities to them. Greg added that GSS still needs to be able to advocate for those students' interests even if we acknowledge that they are less able to attend GSS events.
- Senator committee service. Michelle suggested making senators receiving a budget attend a committee which was discussed by the Executive. She explained that she is having to attend a lot of committees and it would be beneficial if other senators contributed more to committee service. Ross said he is willing to speak about the advantages of sitting on a committee. Tony said that GSS has benefitted greatly this year from our committee representatives, especially from Michael Ambroselli sitting on the Provost's Library Advisory Committee. Tom said that we have greatly increased committee representation this year and have had many people making engaging reports at GSS meetings. Philip said he was uncomfortable with the idea of mandating service for something that is inherently worthwhile and preferred to use positive incentives rather than coercion in order to maintain a participatory atmosphere. Tony said that it is not unreasonable to suggest senators receiving a budget should have to actively engage in committee work, and explained that GSS could enact a bylaw change to mandate committee service. Michelle said she will present this proposal to the senate at the next meeting.
- Meeting Clocks. Michelle suggested changing the GSS Constitution to change the meeting clocks to allow for the smoother running of meetings. She explained that there are currently two meeting clocks. One is the meeting clock which expires after two hours after which it needs to be renewed by a vote of the senate. The other is the Issues Forum clock which needs to be renewed after the Issues Forum has run for 20 minutes. She explained that the current arrangement with the Issues Forum clock often disrupts conversation and curtails the ability of senators to contribute to GSS meetings. She thus proposed removing the Issues Forum clock. She explained that she will present this at the next GSS meeting but as this requires a Constitution change if her proposal is successful it will not take effect probably until the next academic year.
- Agenda items
 - New Business
 - Library letter resolution
 - Vice President's report
 - Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)
 - Public speaking workshops
 - Mandated Committee Service
 - Issues Forum Clock, proposed GSS Constitution change

Treasurer: Greg Treich

- Special Allocations Requests. Greg presented two special allocation requests. One was from the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) for \$75 for refreshments for a Roundtable on Academic Conferences, and the other was from the Turkish Student Association (TSA) for \$2,138 for Cultural Events and a Film Series. The Executive agreed to present these Special Allocations Requests to the senate at the next GSS meeting. Tony stated that the Turkish Student Association need to make sure their Film Series is clearly promoted as an educational event.
- Finance Committee updates. Greg informed the Executive that Phillip is a member of the Finance Committee. Greg stated that they have a \$115,000 budget, half of which they aim to allocate to Tier-II Graduate Student Organisations. He explained that as not all GSO's granted a budget use their full amount that they have planned to give out 115% of what is actually available in order to increase the likelihood of GSO's using all the money. He explained that even if the GSO's use 115% of the money that there is enough in the surplus budget to cover any over-spend. He explained that this is permitted by SASFAC. He also explained that he is modifying the budget request form for next year, which will include a request for information regarding how many days/nights a visitor is staying for if they are claiming for travel or money for a hotel.
- Agenda items
 - New Business
 - English Graduate Student Association – Special Allocations Request
 - Turkish Graduate Student Association – Special Allocations Request
 - Treasurer's report
 - Finance Committee update

Communications Director: Thomas Briggs

- GSS Service Award. Tom informed the Executive that the elections for the GSS Service Award Committee will be held at the next GSS meeting. He stated that they need 4 committee members. He announced nominations at the last meeting but has received no nominations via email yet.
- GSS Logo. Tom explained that he received an email from UConn Branding stating that GSS could not create a secondary logo which used the name GSS or Graduate Student Senate. He stated that USG has a secondary logo which uses its own name and the name University of Connecticut, that the Rainbow Centre, the African American Cultural Centre, the Puerto Rican / Latin American Cultural Centre, the Asian American Cultural Centre have secondary logos that use their own name, and numerous Tier II Graduate Student Organisations have secondary logos that use their own name. He explained that the UConn branding does not permit secondary logos here:
<http://brand.uconn.edu/standards/wordmark-and-logos/custom-wordmarks-2/secondary->

[logos/](#) but its advice to student organisations just does not permit the unauthorized use of branded UConn logos: <http://brand.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1060/2015/01/Student-Organization-Use-of-University-Wordmarks-and-Logos.pdf>. He therefore asked the Executive how best to proceed given the lack of clarity and apparent inconsistency of UConn Branding's policy and enforcement. Michelle stated that there is no written policy stating an enforcement mechanism of UConn branding's policy on secondary logos. Tony stated that GSS should move forward and design its own secondary logo to use on its banner and that he shall bring this issue to the Graduate School's attention.

- Public Relations Committee. Tom said he has received positive feedback about promotional items and that it was his committee who suggested the items and they should be thanked for their input. Phillip recommended that the budget for promotional items be increased from \$500 to \$1,000. Greg agreed that there was money to make this increase for next year's promotional items budget. Ross explained that they had to go over budget this year because \$500 is an excessively constricting budget.
 - The Executive unanimously voted to increase the promotional items budget from \$500 to \$1000
- Committees. Tom explained that he had contacted committee representatives encouraging them to submit reports this semester. He said that Parker Sorenson of the University Recreation Centre Student Advisory Committee had contacted him to make a report, and Niko Traksdorf of the Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Advisory Committee contacted him saying that once his committee has met this semester he will make a report to the senate.
- Agenda items
 - New Business
 - GSS Community Service Award Committee elections
 - Communications Director's report
 - Attendance
 - GSS Logo
 - University Senate report

Parliamentarian: Phillip Price

- Graduate Faculty Council. Phillip informed the senate that he cannot sit on the GFC this semester because of a conflicting schedule. Tony also sits on this committee. Michelle volunteered to take Phillip's place.
- Agenda items
 - Parliamentarian's report
 - Procedures Committee review of voting processes

Activities Director: Morad Behandish

- Activities Budget. Morad explained that he currently has budgeted to leave \$4,000 for next year. This would allow the Activities Budget next year to be a similar level to this year. He also explained that he is working to clarify the budgetary categories for the graduate prom which he said is currently ambiguous.
- Grad prom. Morad said that he had ran a Facebook poll to suggest themes for the grad prom to help generate interest in the event and suggest possible themes. He said he will take the top 3 suggestions and discuss them with the Activities Committee to decide upon a theme. He reported that all other preparations are going to plan.
- Visa workshops. Morad reported on the workshops he has been arranging with a visa attorney. He explained that it is fine if there is some overlap between the two workshops regarding visa issues covered.
- Agenda items
 - Activities Director's report
 - Activities budget
 - Grad prom
 - Visa workshops

Administrative Assistant: Ross Danduni

- Commencement ticket allocation. Ross informed the Executive that graduates are allocated 6 tickets for the commencement ceremony which will take place in the Jorgenson Theatre. He stated that some graduate students would like more tickets. The Executive discussed the possibility of trading/exchanging ticket allocations between graduates who do not wish to use their full allocation and those who require additional tickets. The Executive unanimously agreed that Jorgenson is the preferable venue for graduate commencement and all efforts should be maintained to keep it as such.
- Grad prom. Ross explained that if graduate students RSVP for grad prom it does not automatically guarantee them a plus one, and that tickets will be given out on a first-come, first served basis.
- Agenda items
 - External Committee reports
 - Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG) Policy Council report

Meeting adjourned 7.42pm