

**Attendance:**

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

**Meeting began 5.31pm**

**President: Tony Patelunas**

- **Loan Bylaws.** Tony informed the Executive that, having analysed data regarding the loans, he is implementing changes to the GSS Short Term Loan processes, namely increasing the loan period from the current 90 days with a possible 30 days extension to 180 days and to not issue loans to new students until they have officially matriculated (two weeks after enrollment). However, he is waiting to hear from the Bursar's Office regarding their ability to implement the process as they are a key office in GSS's ability to provide these loans. When he has heard back from the Bursar's Office he shall then create the necessary Bylaw amendments.
- **Smoking Policy Task Force.** Tony informed the Executive of the reconvening of the Task Force and that he had sent out a call to graduates for representatives as it is meeting before the next GSS meeting. Graduate Student Timothy Bussey was the first person to reply asking to be the graduate representative on this committee, and as such is the new representative pending approval by the Senate at its next meeting.
- **Chief Diversity Officer search.** Tony informed the Executive of the progress of the search for the CDO. He said that the graduates involved in the search will be meeting to report back to the graduate representative on the search committee, Katheryn Maldonado.
- **Guest speakers.** Tony informed the Executive that the next guest speaker is Kay Gruder, Career Consultant at the Graduate School, who will be speaking on the 9<sup>th</sup> March. She asked for any requests regarding specific issues she wishes to talk on.
- **Public speaking workshops.** Tony informed the Executive that there will be professional workshops on public speaking. The first will be held on March 30<sup>th</sup> by an improvisational group and the second on April 4<sup>th</sup> by Professor Kenneth Noll from the Molecular and Cellular Biology Department. He said that these event will require a room to be booked for around 40 people in the Student Union building, and that GSS should advertise and set up an RSVP for the event.
- **Teleconferencing Bylaw change.** Tony informed the Senate that he and Michelle had discussed the need to pass a bylaw change before the end of the semester in order to help next year's Executive continue to engage with regional campuses. Tony explained that we had started to develop telecasting capabilities but these need to be institutionalised in the GSS Bylaws to provide guidance for subsequent GSS Executives to build on our progress in increasing the openness and inclusivity of GSS meetings. Phillip expressed concerns that there were some technological issues regarding telecasting such as time-lags in the live telecast that makes participation by online graduate students difficult to institute. Tony replied that such technological problems should not be unfeasible to rectify.

- Connecticut Young Professionals Event. Tony informed the Executive that the first CTYP event will be at Dave and Buster's in Manchester on 31<sup>st</sup> March. Tom and Morad agreed that they both can help promote this event. Morad asked whether he should try to swipe the graduates in attendance to gain informational statistics about the event. The Executive agreed that it may be helpful but was not necessary as they event was not being funded by GSS.
- Agenda items
  - New Business
    - GSS Executive Committee nominations
  - President's report
    - Connecticut Young Professionals event
    - Senate Executive Committee report
    - Smoking Policy Task Force
    - Graduate Trainings

**Vice President: Michelle San Pedro**

- Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) (*pre-submitted report read out by Tom Briggs due to Michelle's late arrival at the meeting*).  
Michelle explained the progress in the SHIP and her continual advocacy to get a better deal for students on this plan. She explained that the partnership between CHP/Bailey Agencies will continue with all universities in the state of Connecticut.
  - Michelle has asked the undergraduate representative on the SHIP committee, Humza Mirza, to help her initiate an inquiry as to 1) when this partnership would end and 2) per Gayatri Phadke's suggestion at the previous GSS meeting, enter a consortium with other universities in Connecticut to widen our pool of students enrolled in SHIP. Humza's 20-member undergraduate student life committee admits to knowing nothing about medical insurance because they are all enrolled on their parents' plans. Michelle made additional suggestions for him to start an education campaign, because of the ~2000 students enrolled in the plan, approximately 2/3 are undergraduates. She explained that students need to be aware that
    - Young adults may remain on their parents' or guardians' health plan until age 26
    - SHIP only has a Cigna based pharmacy manager; it is not a Cigna plan. It has only a restricted network of providers. Graduate students (and likely in-state undergraduate students) also prefer to switch to a larger provider such as Anthem rather than continue working with Bailey Agencies or CHP.
    - The vast majority of graduate (and some undergraduate) students live off-campus and prefer in-network healthcare near their residence, rather than based out of Student Health Services.

- They can search for in-state health insurance through the CT Open Access Marketplace from November 1-January 31 on an annual basis.  
Humza told Michelle that his committee will distribute a survey to determine undergraduate knowledge about health plans before embarking on an educational campaign. Michelle stated that she thought this is a delay tactic; when 20 undergraduates do not know about health insurance, then that is already a sufficient sample showing that the average undergrad needs further education.
- Michelle stated that the SHIP committee itself deliberately chose to meet when she was not available, even though majority of members selected other days. She summarised the meeting:
  - “We [SHIP Committee] have decided on a plan for next academic year. We are going with the Gold Plan Alternative 2 on the attachment (I showed this plan on the projector at the GSS meeting). The annual premium will go from \$2,947 to \$3,340 which represents an increase of \$393.00 for 12 months. We were successful in lowering the copay from \$40.00 to 20.00 for Primary Care visits. Mental Health visits copay are \$20.00 down from \$40.00. We lowered the deductible from \$500.00 to \$300.00. The deductible will not apply to outpatient visits only the copay. There is a \$500.00 copay for admission to the hospital. Pharmacy copays are \$5.00 for generic, \$40.00 for Preferred Brand Name and \$60.00 for Non Preferred Brand Name. We are switching pharmacy benefit from Catarmaran to Cigna which has a more robust selection of Preferred Name Brand than does Catarmaran. Not changing is no copay if seen at Student Health Services and Counselling and Mental Health and Transgender benefits.”
  - The next SHIP committee teleconference meeting will involve selecting a dental plan. Michelle informed the Executive that she does not think passing resolutions will necessarily help this particular medical insurance renewal session, but suggested GSS could consider taking some action in light of this problem of suboptimal healthcare plan for graduate students.
- On-campus housing (*presented by Tom Briggs*). Tom informed the Executive that the GSS Student Life Committee had started discussing on-campus housing for graduate students and would like to create a resolution to put to the Senate. Currently, the preference is to advocate for the 188 beds in Northwood Apartments to be returned to all-graduate accommodation. However, they also want to consider alternative on-campus housing options such as designating an all-graduate Halls of Residence on-campus. He explained that he wanted the request to be feasible and something to which the university can work towards if pressured by GSS. He explained that the graduate on-campus housing resolution could be part of a wider “graduate manifesto” presenting the demands of GSS on various important graduate issues (transport, health, security, etc.).

- Constitution changes (presented in-person after Michelle arrived). Michelle stated that they can present the constitutional amendment to remove the Issues Forum Clock at the next Senate meeting. If it is approved it will then be submitted to the Board of Trustees for their approval.
- Agenda items
  - New Business
    - Issues Forum Clock, proposed GSS Constitution change
  - Vice President's report
    - Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)

**Treasurer: Greg Treich**

- Outstanding Loans. Greg reported that there is currently around \$33,000 of loans outstanding. This is typical as loans spike around break sessions.
- Finance Committee update. Greg informed the Executive that there is around \$53,000 outstanding that will be allocated to Tier-II Graduate Student Organizations for their budgets.
- Special Allocations Request. Greg presented a request from the Graduate Students of Colour Association. Tony recommended they remove printing from their budget request as the Student Union offers this service for free to Registered Student Organisations. Morad asked whether they could reduce the honorarium for speakers. He also stated that as the event is being co-sponsored it is important for it to be clear that GSCA is “owning” the event and not providing funding for other departments’ events.
  - Greg explained that the GSCA had sent this request with sufficient time in advance and he can communicate the Executive’s recommendations to Chriss Sneed, President of GSCA, who can make alterations to the budget before presenting it at the next GSS meeting.
  - The Executive approved to put the request before the Senate at the next GSS meeting.
- Agenda items
  - New Business
    - Graduate Students of Colour Association – Special Allocations Request
  - Treasurer’s report
    - Finance Committee update

**Communications Director: Thomas Briggs**

- GSS Promotional Email. Tom explained to the Executive that he is going to send out an email to the Grads\_Announce Listserv highlighting the important work that GSS does in order to raise awareness about GSS. He said that he may contact members of the

Executive for information regarding the important work that they had done over the past few months.

- GSS Logo. Tom informed the Executive that Tony had received an email from John Morawiec, Director of Strategic Marketing, who explained that we can use the name Graduate Student Senate in our banner but we must not incorporate the UConn Wordmark in the graphic. Tom stated that this was exactly what GSS wanted and as such we can commence work on the GSS Logo for the banner.
- GSS Service Award. Tom informed the Executive that the nominations for the GSS Service Award are open throughout March and that he has sent an email to the Grads\_Announce Listserv and to the GSS Email Group reminding graduates to submit nominations.
- Transition Folder. Tom informed the Executive that he is creating a list of tasks and processes for the Communications Director. He will contact members of the Executive Committee regarding areas of responsibility where it is not clear whether it falls under the remit of the Communications Director or another Executive officer.
- Training. Tom recommended that Tony speaks at the next GSS meeting about the recent mandatory trainings issued by the Graduate School in order to show that the GSS Executive is aware of these new trainings.
  
- Agenda items
  - Communications Director's report
    - Attendance
    - GSS Logo update
    - University Senate report

**Parliamentarian: Phillip Price**

- GSS Executive Officer nominations. Phillip informed the Executive that Executive Officer nominations will be taken at the next GSS meeting. He recommended waiting until there have been nominations for all officer positions made in the meeting rather than relying on receiving subsequent nominations via email.
- GSS Executive Officer elections. Phillip explained to the Executive that the Executive Officer elections will take place at the meeting after next (on the 30<sup>th</sup> March). He explained that there is no formal procedure about how elections should be run in meetings. He stated that the GSS Procedures Committee is currently creating a process but that it will not come into effect until next academic year. He recommended that as we do not have a formal process, we use the process as decided by the GSS Procedures Committee for this year's elections unless the Senate objects. The Executive agreed.
  
- Agenda items
  - Parliamentarian's report
    - Presidential and Treasurer pay

**Activities Director: Morad Behandish**

- Grad Prom. Morad explained that he will give his presentation on Grad Prom at the next GSS meeting.
  - He also explained that he had to make a last-minute change the catering order which increased the budget but UConn catering is not being clear whether GSS is still eligible to receive a 10% discount. He argued that it should be entitled to this discount, especially as he increased the amount of custom he provided to UConn Catering. He explained that he is currently working to secure this discount.
- Orientation week. Morad reported that good progress has been made on coordinating and communicating the orientation week for next year's graduate students. He explained that he will work with the next activity director to ensure that they are au fait with the new plans for orientation week.
- GSS Photos. Morad informed the Executive that Student Activities would like some photos of GSS conducting formal business such as its deliberative forums, Executive decision-making, or administrative work. Currently all photos are from social events and he would like to submit some photos of the less glamorous tasks graduate students do in GSS.
- Visa workshops. Morad reported on that his contacting the speakers conducting the vis seminars tonight to ensure that they will go ahead as planned around early-mid March.
- Agenda items
  - Activities Director's report
    - Grad Prom presentation

**Administrative Assistant: Ross Dahldani**

- GSS Storage. Ross informed the Executive that they can store items currently occupying the GSS Office at the building by Parking Services. The storage space would cost \$150 per year. The Executive decided that for the time being they shall keep items in the GSS Office but shall consider the option of renting storage space should it become necessary.
- SUBOG Policy Council. Ross informed the Executive that the policy council were discussing best use of vacant space in the SU and that he would relay any suggestions by graduate students about how best to use that space.
- Agenda items
  - External Committee reports
    - Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG) Policy Council report

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GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

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*University of Connecticut*

**Executive Board Minutes**

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

**Meeting adjourned 6.22pm**