

Attendance:

- **Present:** Morad Behandish, Greg Treich, Phillip Price, Tony Patelunas, Michelle San Pedro, Ross Dardanelles, Thomas Briggs (minutes), Chriss Sneed, Eric Simming, Donyeil Hoy, Deepthi Varghese.

Meeting began 5.36pm

President: Tony Patelunas

- Connecticut Young Professionals (CTYP) event. Tony informed the Executive that he, Greg, Michelle, Morad, and Eric attended the CTYP-GSS social event on the 31st March which was attended by around 50 people. He stated that it was a successful event and that CTYP were pleased with the turn out. He informed the Executive that the CTYP plan to hold a joint Symposium with GSS at UConn in early October which will be attended by state-legislators and other public officials. He stated that it is currently in its planning stages but Provost Choi has expressed his support for the Symposium and provided a contact person at UConn for Tony. Tony stated that he will spearhead this project and will liaise with GSS.
- Fees. Tony informed the Executive that there are no new fees for next year. He stated that the Executive attended a meeting with Provost Choi and Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President for Administration, Scott Jordan, who had asked GSS about their opinions on a proposed library fee and international undergraduate student fee, however these fees have not been implemented. Tony stated that if anyone has any questions then they can ask Scott Jordan in person when he speaks as a guest-speaker at the next GSS meeting.
- Transitions. Tony explained that the GSS Executive Committee transition meeting shall place on Monday 2nd May, 7.00-9.00pm, followed by a meal. The attendees discussed potential venues for the transition meal, such as Willibrew, Nathan Hale Inn, and Dog Lane Café, and decided on the same venue as the previous year, Chuck's Steak House and Margarita Grill. Tony informed the Executive officers that they need to drop their keys off with the front desk of the Student Union on the day of the transition, and the incoming Executive officers will be sent an email 1-2 days afterwards informing them that they can collect the keys. GSS Administrator Ross Dandani briefly explained his duties to the incoming Executive officers before having to leave. Tony added that the GSS Executive should have a group photograph at the last Senate meeting and try to establish a tradition for a photographic record of GSS Executives.
- Telecasting Bylaw. Tony stated his intention to present a bylaw regarding the telecasting of GSS meetings to institutionalise the progress made in making meetings accessible to a wider graduate audience. Phillip noted that this bylaw has not been presented to the Senate yet and as such cannot be voted on until the first GSS meeting of Fall 2016. Tony stated that he shall present the bylaw at the next GSS meeting. Tony suggested that the incoming Executive continue to telecast meetings to foster engagement with the graduate community, especially the regional campuses now that we have two Tier-II GSO's

(Business Administration and Public Policy) who are not based on Storrs campus. Tony suggested that the incoming Executive investigate the best options for booking a suitable room for GSS meetings that are able to telecast meetings but also provide a suitable space for people who physically attend the meetings. He noted that he has received complaints from attendees regarding the current room in PB 129. He noted the possibility that future renovated space in the library could provide a suitable room for GSS meetings.

- Senator requirements. Tony explained that he and Michelle have discussed making it compulsory for the representatives of Tier-II GSO's receiving a budget from GSS to sit on External or GSS Committees, and intends to present a Bylaw to the Senate at the next GSS meeting formalizing this requirement. He explained that he wants to ensure all graduates have equal access to serve as representatives on committees, however representatives of GSO's should have to serve on at least one committee and engage in some form of active participation. Tom expressed concern that monitoring and enforcing this requirement may generate a lot of work for the Executive. Michelle explained that it will be worth it if it frees up Executive officers from having to sit on multiple committees and enhances the effectiveness of our committees and the level of participation in committees. Tony stated that he will present the Bylaw at the next GSS meeting for discussion.
- Guest speaker. Tony stated that the guest speaker at the next GSS meeting will be Scott Jordan Executive Vice President of Administration and Chief Financial Officer. Michelle informed the incoming Executive that she has a list of recommended guest speakers that she will provide to them to help them invite guest speakers next year.
- Graduate Initiative Fellows (GIFs). Tony stated that Clive from the GIFs wanted Ross Daddani to give a 10 minute presentation about GSS Short Term Loans on Tuesday 26th April, 12.00-1.30pm. However, Ross is unable to attend and he asked for members of the Executive to volunteer to give the presentation in his place. Michelle stated that Ross was working on an information sheet that deals with FAQs regarding GSS Short Term Loans.
- Agenda items
 - Guest Speaker
 - Scott Jordan
 - New Business
 - Telecasting bylaw
 - Mandated committee requirements
 - President's report
 - Connecticut Young Professionals symposium
 - Farewell

Vice President: Michelle San Pedro

- Graduate Student Appreciation Week and Public Speaking Series. Michelle stated that the Graduate School had expressed some concerns regarding limited attendance at events they had put on for graduate students. Morad explained that he has had only limited

involvement in these Graduate School events beyond an agreement to provide some joint funding, but the Graduate School has taken the lead on these events. Tony stated that to improve communication between GSS and the Graduate School, it may help to set up a GSS-Graduate School committee similar to the successful committee Morad sat on for orientation week. He also stated that many events were relatively well attended and it is good that the Graduate School has ambitious targets but that current participation is not particularly problematic from a graduate perspective. Michelle stated that the Graduate School could spread out events to avoid the risk of over-programming, as part of the problem is that graduates only have limited time to attend events.

- Board of Trustees meeting and Constitutional Changes. Michelle stated that she is due to present the GSS Constitution change regarding the Issues Forum clock to the Board of Trustees. She explained that she has a meeting with Christine Wilson from Student Affairs on 27th April where she has a total of 6 documents to present to her.
- Institute for Teaching and Learning. Michelle explained that due to potential cuts in the Institute's funding they want to hold joint events with GSS and asks for representative to meet with them some time around mid-May. Chriss and Eric agreed to join Michelle to meet with staff from ITL.
- Student Health Insurance Plan. Michelle stated that she will present her resolution on SHIP to the Senate at the next meeting.
- Housing Survey. Michelle stated that the graduate housing survey should be ready to send out to graduates around mid-May.
- Diversity Council graduate representative. Michelle explained that Charmaine Thurmand from the Graduate School has started the process for selecting one of the graduate representative for the Diversity Council, and that Chriss, as next year's GSS President, is responsible for selecting the other graduate representative.

- Agenda items
 - New Business
 - Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) resolution vote
 - Vice President's report
 - Student Welfare Committee report
 - Institute for Teaching and Learning
 - Diversity Council graduate representative
 - Farewell

Treasurer: Greg Treich

- Budget. Greg explained that the Tier-II Graduate Student Organisations had not been spending their budgets this year as much as in previous years. He stated that last year the balance was \$57,000 whereas this year it is \$113,000. In order to compensate for the degree of underspending next year the GSS Finance Committee has over budgeted by 15%. He explained that he has increased funding for GSO's from \$50,000 last year to \$65,000 this year, and if GSO's next year use their full budgets there is enough in the

surplus budget to compensate for this over-budgeting. He explained that we want to keep our surplus down and demonstrate that money is being spent to meet graduate needs. He suggested that there are 4-5 new GSO's wanting money, and that GSS can always transfer additional money to the Short Term Loan fund. He explained that the Activities Budget remains at the same amount as last year, which was a significant increase from the year before. He explained that he has put \$12,000 to the Special Allocations budget as groups who request Special Allocations are more likely to use the money they receive. He has given extra money to the Writing Centre to hold more of their successful and popular Graduate Writing Retreats.

- American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS). Greg explained that the AAPS are due to host one of the largest and best attended symposiums soon. However, technically they did not meet their attendance requirements in either semester, even though they did send a representative twice last semester, and once so far this semester. He said that according to the Financial Policies and Procedures, normally a GSO that has not met its attendance requirements one semester are not eligible to be reimbursed for activities held the following semester. However, the Executive usually inform the GSO at the end of the semester about their failure to meet attendance requirements so that they do not host an event. Due to the Executive's oversight last semester, the AAPS were not informed and in Greg's opinion should still be eligible to host this event and be reimbursed. The Executive agreed that it should have been more effective in implementing the policies, and that they should not as a result prevent this worthwhile symposium going ahead. The Executive stated that they will inform the AAPS of the situation and that they need to ensure they meet their attendance requirements in the future. The Executive informed the members of next year's Executive who were present that it is important to monitor attendance and inform GSO's who have failed to meet their attendance requirements.

- Agenda items
 - Treasurer's report
 - Budget
 - Farewell

Communications Director: Thomas Briggs

- GSS Logo/Banner. Tom explained that he has a timeline with Brandon Nickle, an MFA Candidate in UConn's Digital Media and Design department, regarding developing the secondary GSS logo to use on the GSS Pop-up stands and table throw. He informed them that the Public Relations Committee will select a short-list of potential logos and a survey could be taken among the graduates to decide which logo they would prefer. Tom apologized that this process will not be completed by the final GSS meeting and that he will liaise with his successor, Jordan Rees, so that a new logo, pop-up stands and table throw should be ready by Fall 2016.

- GSS Service Award update. Tom informed the Executive that Monique Golden was selected as the winner of the GSS Graduate Community Service Award for her various contributions to graduate life at UConn. He stated that, as stipulated by the GSS Bylaws, the GSS Vice President, Michelle San Pedro, had informed Monique that she had won the award, and that the GSS Communications Director shall award it to her at the next GSS meeting.
- Communications Director duties. Tom asked the Executive for some clarifications regarding the Communication Director's duties in order to create a clear list of duties in his transition document. He explained that as none of the current Executive will be on the Executive next year we can have an honest discussion regarding the roles that each member is responsible for. In particular, Tom asked who is responsible for monitoring attendance. Phillip explained that the Communications Director is responsible for taking and collecting the attendance for each GSS meeting, and the Parliamentarian is responsible for collating and monitoring the attendance. Tom stated that he presumed the same system would apply regarding monitoring attendance at committees if the mandated committee bylaw would be introduced.
- Agenda items
 - Communications Director's report
 - Attendance
 - GSS Logo
 - GSS Graduate Community Service Award
 - Farewell

Parliamentarian: Phillip Price

- GSS Awards. Phillip informed the Executive that he intends to look through the data regarding graduates' contributions and give awards to deserving Senators to thank them for their service to GSS. He explained that he has created a Certificate template to give to deserving recipients. Tom asked if we could give an award to Steve Mollmann who is graduating this year for his long service to GSS. Tony explained that it could be worded as an *ex officio* "senator for life." Morad stated that this current practice seems too arbitrary and there should be a more formal system for selecting graduates for awards. Tom explained that as Communications Director he has looked through the GSS minutes from previous years which provide sufficient evidence that Steve Mollmann's contribution deserves recognition. Tom stated that he will produce a list of Steve's GSS contributions and that any other Executive officer should feel free to do the same for any other candidate who they believe has similarly contributed significantly to GSS. Tom conceded however that Steve Mollmann would definitely agree with Morad that this practice should be done according to legitimate rules of order. Tony explained that as GSS President he should be the one presenting the certificates.

- Agenda items
 - Parliamentarian's report
 - Presidential and Treasurer pay
 - Activities Director, Vice President. Parliamentarian and Communications Director pay.
 - GSS Awards
 - Farewell

Activities Director: Morad Behandish

- Visa seminar. Morad stated that there will be a visa seminar on 27th April at noon in Oak Hall which he will advertise heavily closer to the event. He stated that this will be a really helpful event for international graduates and the speaker will address a lot of the issues that were not addressed by the visa seminar held recently by the Graduate Employee Union (GEU-UAW).
- Social events. Morad explained that there are two more Happy Hours to be held, and after that there will be \$3,500 left in the Activities Budget. He asked the Executive for suggestions for a nice end of semester event. The Executive suggested putting on a co-sponsored event with another GSO that are known for holding good events, such as the Graduate Students of Colour Association or holding a BBQ with the Students Association of Graduate Engineers.
- Agenda items
 - Activities Director's report
 - Event updates
 - Farewell

Meeting adjourned - 7.11pm