**Wednesday, January 24th, 2018**

**I. Call to Order –** 7:09 pm

**II. Recognition of Senators –** Quorum was achieved with 22 senators (or representatives) present at the time of recognition.

**III. Guest Speakers:** Provost Jeremy Teitelbaum

1. Provost Teitelbaum introduced himself and opened the floor for questioning.
2. Question from Kevin Boyd: Could you please explain to us the role of the Provost at UConn? In short the role is akin to what some would consider a “dean of deans”. The Provost is officially the Executive Director of Academics.
3. Question from Chau Vy: Could you please provide us with an update on the current status of the Gant building renovations and construction of Science 1 building? These plans have been re-initiated and moving forward.
4. Question from \_\_\_: If biology and physics will be placed in Gant in the future, what will happen to TLS?
5. Question from Justin Fang: Could you please comment on the current take on hiring new staff and faculty? We are more conservative on new roles but anyone critical to operations that need to be replaced would be hired.
6. Question from Amy Fehr: Scott Jordan talked briefly to us about the recision plan which is negatively affecting many departments. Could you also give us your take on this? We thought the cuts we asked for based on last year’s situation would be sufficient but due to the significant cut that happened this past fall, we will have to ask for another cut to departmental budgets.
7. Question from Bahareh: Is there a plan for parking? Yes, we have plans for new parking structures on campus.
8. Question from Justin: Is there a plan to increase undergraduate admission? No. The plan is to shoot for a level comparable to that of last year.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

1. Senate meeting minutes from December 6th, 2017
2. Executive meeting minutes from January 18th, 2017

Jennifer Caffyn motioned to approve the minutes as shown. Motion was seconded by Sbena. The Senate approved the minutes unanimously.

**V. Unfinished Business – None mentioned.**

**VI. Executive Committee Reports**

1. President – Deepthi Varghese
   1. Campus wide graduate symposium- CONVERGE
      1. Due to the underwhelming number of submissions, the conference will be officially canceled.
      2. Would it be possible to reduce the number of sessions to keep it alive?
      3. Would it be possible to keep it open instead of themed?
      4. It was also suggested to ask advisors to encourage their students to apply.
      5. The timing was hard for some departments.
      6. Advertisement for the event was also very limited.
   2. Short term loans update
      1. Instead of one per semester, the new policy will be 3 per calendar year.
      2. All forms and applications will be moved online. The official move to online forms will be announced when they become available.
   3. Metanoia spring semester – The topic this semester is “The Environment”. We are seeking volunteers for the planning committee. Jennifer Caffyn mentioned that she may be interested in joining as her advisor also sits on the planning committee.
   4. Dean Holsinger review committee – It’s time for Dean Holsinger’s 5-year review. Deepthi is part of the committee. No updates yet as all meetings have been canceled due to snow. More info to come later.
   5. President coffee hour – will only take place on the Wednesday of GSS meetings.
   6. The admin assistant search is currently ongoing and we will be scheduling interviews ASAP.
   7. Student fee committee – Scott Jordan called for the meeting yesterday and we anticipated the worst. Fortunately, there will not be any fee increases for Storrs grad students. Additionally, the fee will be split into two categories: general university fee and health center fee.
   8. Proposal for GSS travel awards
      1. There was a general consensus that this may be a good idea to promote the career development of grad students; however disagreements ensued on how the process to determine who to make the awards to.
      2. There was a suggestion made to have student organizations apply and determine amongst themselves;
      3. Rebuttal is that some departments don’t have student organizations.
   9. Graduate Spring Orientation
   10. Senator at Large positions and Board of Trustees rep
       1. Sam mentioned that to run, you need to obtain signatures equal to 1% of your campus population + 50 people.
2. Vice President – Vignesh Vasu
   1. Speakers for CT State Appropriations meeting – Graham volunteered.
   2. Student welfare committee – Carmen was somewhat interested.
   3. Honors and awards committee – Spring 2018/19
   4. We are now taking nominations for new GSS Executive Officers. The candidates for President must have been a Senator or GSS Executive Officer for 1 academic year. No more than two of the same constituencies can be members of the E-Board. The President and VP cannot be from the same constituency. Please send us your nominations by email or make them at the Senate meetings.
3. Treasurer – Justin Fang
   1. Tier II budget requests for FY 2018-2019 are due on January 31st.
   2. Reminder about January 31st deadline for submission of past due paperwork.
   3. SASFAC committee – Presentation will be on Feb 12th, 2:30-3 pm in SU 104. Please come give us your support.
   4. SUBC committee – Biggest issue is that many departments are in the red; it’s pretty serious actually; creatively, the committee imposed some new taxes such as surplus taxes and vacancy/hiring tax on departments that had those; it was also proposed to increase parking fees; we strongly opposed this due to the existing limitation but it may be revisited later.
   5. Would it be possible to invest the surplus funds? The answer is no because we cannot make a profit off student fees.
   6. Short term loan update – We are moving the application to an on-line form to facilitate and expedite the process and disbursement of the funds.
4. Communications Director – Ngoc Chau Vy
   1. Graduate Faculty Council report – I could not attend this past meeting due to an impromptu research meeting move. I will review the minutes after receiving them and report out next time.
   2. Graduate Service Award committee – I am seeking 5 volunteers who need to all be from different constituencies. The volunteers do not need to be Senators and cannot be current E-Board members.
   3. GSS promotional items – If you have any suggestions for promotional items, please send them to me via email.
   4. Update MS and Physics Senators on GSS website – Will do!
5. Activities Director – Alexis Ernst
   1. GSS Spring Orientation Happy Hour
   2. Grad Formal
      1. Update on finalized date & time – April 6th, 7-11 pm.
      2. We are going with an international theme!
   3. Upcoming GSS Happy Hours – Feb 15, April 12, 5-7pm at Huskies
6. Parliamentarian – Graham O’Toole
   1. Policies and Procedures committee will take place on Monday.
   2. We will be going over the Constitution this time.

**VII. New Business**

1. GBA special allocation request – Motion to approve started by Jennifer Caffyn and seconded by Tithi. The request was approved unanimously by the Senate.
2. Proposal to increase travel stipend of Communications Director to the same level as the Activities Director, applicable the next academic year. – Motion to approve started by Sam Surowitz and seconded by Amy Fehr. Approval was passed unanimously by the Senate.

**VIII. Committee Reports**

**IX. Issues Forum**

1. Visa compliance fee – no updates currently but we will bring it up at the next chance.
2. Budget guidelines will help base our decisions during the budget review. For help, please contact Justin.
3. C. Kitty announced the inter-disciplinary nature of the research presentation colloquium to contact her.

**X. Adjournment – 9:23 pm**