1. **Call to Order: Meeting began at 7:02pm.**
2. **Recognition of senators:** Quorum was met with 27 senators**.**
3. **Guest Speaker:**
4. **Thomas C. Katsouleas,** President, University of Connecticut
5. Many thanks to Nafis for working so diligently to represent the graduate community during these unprecedented times and with his help to shape the design of the Spring semester.
6. The University is doing remarkable well. Many students are adjusting and a recent survey was just taken that showed undergraduate students are finding their academic program to be more engaging than at this time last year, before Covid.
7. Update on priorities for this year; Safely steward the University through the pandemic, lobby for budget relief for the revenue losses (revenue, state and philanthropic resources) and to launch a 5 year plan that will support students in the coming years. Diversity, equity and inclusion course was just launched and 1,000 students have enrolled.
8. The president task force on mental health was also just completed and the information will be released in the coming weeks. This is extremely important because mental health and place of well-being are the two most highly ranked factors in a University setting.
9. The day after tomorrow will be the first day for the launch activity which should be an extremely uplifting program for the University and State.
10. Doubling research and scholarship, life transformative experiences to every student and how can we be an even better engine for the state of CT. Graduate students play a critical role in all three of these. In 2020, 285mil was brought in for research and President Katsouleas believes this will impact the number of PhD students the faculty can support.
11. Senator Spencer Sonnerberg asked about mental health and bringing policy change to the University and how the clouding can be eliminated and how we can move forward to promote the combination of thought and dialogue. President Katsouleas said that there are too few therapist because they are so limited right now and the task force wants to form a hub that integrates SHaW health and other units. It would be ideal to incorporate mental health and well-being into the curriculum. There is a strong correlation between having a strong mentor or connection to the curriculum to solving real world problems to well-being.
12. Senator Taylor Tate said she is very happy transformative education and a sense of belonging is being prioritized at UConn, however, she worries that these new goals will impede the list of old demands that still need to be addressed. President Katsouleas said each school is developing its own diversity, equity and inclusion plan in addition to athletics. President Katsouleas says there is a strong overlap between the old and new strategic demands and that many of the old demands are still being meet. For instance, just this week there was a senior leadership retreat for the 44 top leaders of the University with the goal of sharpening their own cultural literacy. Additionally, only 2 Universities, UConn and University of Pittsburgh, made a plan to address ethnic diversity in the workplace by implementing a strategy to hire a more diverse faculty.
13. Communications Director Gabrielle Corso asked, in regards to the role graduate students can play in life transformative experiences for undergraduates what about a mentor program that undergrads could join during their time at UConn? President Katsouleas says that mentoring does not have to be from faculty and this could be a valuable idea that should be suggested in the task force committee.
14. Office hours most Fridays ~ 9:45am and all are welcome to stop by sometime.
15. **Approval of consent agenda:**
    1. GSS E-board meeting minutes - 11/4/2020 meeting

*Senator Ryan Scala made a motion to approve the above consent agenda, seconded by Senator Daria Larson. The consent agenda was approved unanimously.*

1. **Unfinished Business:**
   1. N/A
2. **New Business:**
   * + 1. Mental Health Task Force Committee- Nafis Fuad, Justin Fang, and Becca Colby will have a meeting with the Provost on graduate student mental health and any recommendations can be passed along to Nafis so that he can bring these issues up with the committee.
       2. Change in financial policy due to Covid- Tier II organizations asking to move money around since they can’t do in person events and currently the financial policy limits that amount of finance moving to ~20% so the change will allow Tier II to reallocate their budgets for this year, or during the time that Covid will effect this year.

* Senator Tanner Matson asked how a group will reallocate funds and Robert Daniels said gift cards could be used for refreshments during a virtual event. Ultimately it will be up to Tier II organizations to be creative. The excess funds not spent by the Tier II organization will roll back into the GSS account. Any ideas that senators would like to implement can be emailed to Robert so he look into them further.

*Senator Nissi Varghese made a motion to approve the above the financial policy change, seconded by Senator Josh Gil. The bylaw change was approved unanimously.*

* + - 1. Change in By-law in regards to Executive Travel Fund- GSS compensates E-board members in the form of a travel fund so students can attend a conference and bring back the knowledge that was obtained at the conference. However, the state of CT has placed strict restrictions on travel therefore conferences can no longer be attended. The funds will be paid out as an allowance instead of a travel fund.

*Senator Ryan Scala made a motion to approve the executive travel fund change, seconded by Senator Elena Robakiewicz. The bylaw change was approved unanimously.*

1. **Issues Forum:**
   * + 1. **Daniel Pfieffer announced** Social Justice Write-In (Friday, November 20, 1–2:30p): <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/uconn-social-justice-write-in-tickets-128551610327>
2. **Executive Board Reports:**
   1. President –Nafis Fuad
      1. Guest speaker for next meeting - **Nathan Fuerst**, Vice President for Enrollment Planning & Management. His office also manages financial aid.
      2. Rise in Covid cases- The University has begun surveillance testing for everyone, even students without symptoms. This will be for Storrs campus students only and will take place at the Field House. Link to sign up-- <https://reopen.uconn.edu/testing/>. Justin Fang asked if UConn wil be offering antibody testing and Nafis said he is unsure but will follow up with this question. Nafis will send the outline of the Spring proposal to senators shortly.
   2. Treasurer –Robert Daniels
   3. Communications Director – Gabrielle Corso
   4. Activities Director – Deepa Shukla
      1. Thanksgiving luncheon (**only for grad students**), Thursday, Nov 19, 12:00-2:30 pm. Event will take place in SU-304. A form will be sent out tomorrow and it is required that you sign up. The room will be capped at 25 students so time slots will be chosen. Deepa stressed that if you don’t plan on coming, do not sign up because space is very limited! Food will be available for vegetarians and vegan diets.
   5. Parliamentarian – Irio Schiano
      1. Senator status – 2020-2021 apportionment has been completed and there are open senators spots for several departments. The list will be available on the GSS website in the coming week.
3. **Committee Reports:**
   1. **Maggie Khuu – Scholastic Standards Committee-** This committee deals with the undergraduate population. Student authentication was discussed- is the student that is on the screen, the same student that is in PeopleSoft? Big questions- Do authentication procedures need to be stated in the syllabus? Lastly, will the SSC support the USG on their motion to relax the P/F option for the Spring semester.
   2. **Irio Schiano – Graduate Faculty Council-** This council focuses on changing graduate student Bylaws. Elimination of foreign language requirement- Secondly, the school of education, terminology of changing the 6 year diploma to 6 year certificate. This change was made due to job hiring for the work force and also for financial aid. There is motion to restrict the ability of the advisory committee for graduate student dissertations. Any graduate student that would like to serve on this committee, particularly a non-STEM student, they should reach out to Irio and he will include you on the emails.
4. **Adjournment:** *Senator**Daniel Pfieffer motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Senator Spencer Sonnenberg. The Senate voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:34pm.*