

- I. Call to Order: Meeting began at 7:04pm.**
- II. Recognition of senators:** Quorum was met with 31 senators.
- III. Guest Speaker:**
- a. **Dr. Radenka Maric**, VP for Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
 - i. UConn technologies. Dental material, persulfate and Catharanthus impatiens that were bred by the faculty in the Plant Science Department.
 - ii. Federal dollars are not keeping up with the pace that Research and development programs require which is where Universities come into the equation. Universities empower faculty to
 - iii. Goals and priorities of VP of Research are; Efficiency, integration between Storrs and UConn Health, extramural funding, recognition and incentives for research, innovation and scholarship success, and lastly, engagement with internal and external stakeholders.
 - iv. Research Funding at UConn, this year we achieved the highest sponsored funds yet.
 - v. Maggie Kuu asked what are the goals specifically for the graduate population? VP said they are working closely with The Graduate School and they are providing \$600,000 to TGS. They have also financially supported internships, podcasts and book publishing opportunities for graduate students.
 - vi. Justin Fang asked if UConn received revenues from patents it owns? VP says yes, and last year they saved \$900,000. This money that is received goes back to pay for the legal fees for the patents.
 - vii. Nafis Fuad said that graduate students have expressed dissatisfaction from their advisors and their advisors urged them to take a masters instead of continuing on their PhD track. Is there a safety net for graduate students in this predicament? VP said there is a bridge fund that faculty can pull from when they are short of money to pay their graduate students. This fund is provided for 1 year and the cost is shared 1:1:1 advisor, department, bridge fund.
- IV. Approval of consent agenda:**
- a. GSS E-board meeting minutes - 12/8/2020 meeting
 - b. GSS E-board meeting minutes – 1/12/2020 meeting
 - c. GSS senate meeting minutes – 10/14/2020 meeting
 - d. GSS senate meeting minutes – 11/11/2020 meeting
 - e. GSS senate meeting minutes – 12/16/2020 meeting

Senator Scala made a motion to approve the above consent agenda, seconded by Senator Daniel Pfeiffer. The consent agenda was approved unanimously.

- V. Unfinished Business:**
- a. Addition to GSS Finance Policies and Procedures due to Covid-19- Every year Tier II Orgs submit an annual budget which is then voted on and passed. This year we did not do a budget and have enough reserve money to support Tier II Orgs next year. Any Tier II Orgs that want to amend their budget had until December 31, 2020 to submit their requests to the GSS treasurer but this date was changed to January 31, 2021.
 - b. Special allocation for Swing Tree – **Nafis Fuad**- Swing tree near Mirror Lake was recently removed because the tree was diseased. The University stated they do not want to build another swing on a tree so



**GRADUATE STUDENT
SENATE**
GSS

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
University of Connecticut

Senate Meeting Minutes
January 20th, 2021
7:00PM – 9:00PM
Cisco WebEx

Nafis proposed a self-supporting swing to replace the one that had been there previously. Several senators stated that the SA was too expensive and that many graduate students are not on campus right now to enjoy the swing. Nafis stated that a swing could be positive experience to uplift graduate students during this time of hardship.

Senator Molly James made a motion to approve the Addition to GSS Finance Policies and Procedures, seconded by Senator Chase Lonas. The Addition to GSS Finance Policies and Procedures was approved unanimously.

Nafis Fuad made a motion to approve the special allocation for the Swing Tree, seconded by Senator Utsav Awasthi. The special allocation was voted on by the senate- 5 yeas and 22 nays. The motion failed to pass.

VI. New Business:

VII. Issues Forum:

- a. GEU representatives- Amy Fehr and Sarah Ailshire . GEU is currently in the midst of a new bargaining process and therefore is in need of strong union commitment. Sign a membership card if you have not already or talk to your friends. Several E-board positions will also be available in the Spring. President is a 20 hour GA and VP is a 10 hour GA. Any questions can be sent to uconngradunion@gmail.com.
- b. Participation in GSS operations- Nafis Fuad stated that it is very important to understand how things work in GSS. We lost our treasurer last month and a new treasurer could not be voted at the December meeting because we did not meet quorum. When Nafis tried to set up an online polling system, he had to reach out again to senators to vote so that the new officer could take over. Without E-board positions filled, GSS business cannot be conducted.

VIII. Executive Board Reports:

- a. President –Nafis Fuad
 - i. Spring Semester- Any students interested in Covid-19 vaccine should log onto the mychart portal to sign up. If anyone needs more information, please reach out to Nafis. For testing at regional campuses, an at home testing kit will be provided. Rebecca Oramas mentioned that The Armory is offering testing as well.
- b. Vice President – Maggie Khuu
 - i. Student Life Committee- If anyone is interested in brainstorming ways to help our graduate students, send her an email (maggie.khUU@uconn.edu and/or GSSVicePresident@uconn.edu).
 - ii. New Admin Assistant - Kailey Bousquet
- c. Treasurer – Deepa Shukla
 - i. Tier II treasurer training- All senators should partake in this training and send Deepa an email to arrange a time to complete the training.
 - ii. Tier II payment system- We are going back to the previous system because it is easier to navigate. For anyone who has not been appropriately reimbursed, send Deepa an email to initiate reimbursement.
 - iii. Tier II budgets- If you would like to make any amendment to your budget, let Deepa know by Jan. 25.
 - iv. Gift cards- If you attended the GSS meeting and signed in, you also need to open the email in which the gift card was sent out in order to activate the gift card.
- d. Communications Director – Gabrielle Corso
 - i. GSS awards
 1. Community service award– call for nominees and students to sit on the committee.

- e. Activities Director – Rebecca Oramas
 - i. Events for this semester- Would like to hold online activities for the Spring semester. If anyone has suggestions please contact Rebecca.
- f. Parliamentarian – Irio Schiano
 - i. Apportionments- Most of the departments that are represented could have an additional representative.
 - ii. Eligible Tier IIs for next year funding- Senators must attend all meetings with the exception of 1 meeting. If a senator is to miss a meeting, they must send a representative on their behalf and send an email to the Parliamentarian and Communications Director. If a senator misses more than 1 meeting per semester, the Tier II Org is ineligible for funding for the upcoming year.
 - iii. Gianna Raimoni asked what she can do if her department is on the ineligible list and she is the new senator. Do the consequences of the missed attendance roll over to her new role? Irio said PNB was in a strange situation because typically someone in the department doesn't become an E-board member mid semester and they lost a senator due to her becoming an E-board member.
 - iv. Questions may be directed to irio.schiano@uconn.edu

IX. Committee Reports:

- a. **Gabrielle Corso** — Marth Mentorship Award Committee- The award honors UConn Graduate Faculty members for their outstanding commitment to mentoring graduate students over the course of their careers. It is typically awarded to a faculty member who has been at UConn for a long time. This year, there were three nominations and Dr. Crystal Park from the Department of Psychological Sciences was chosen. She has been at UConn since 1999 and has mentored dozens of students during her time here.

X. Adjournment:

Senator Pejman Ghelich made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Nicole Tillquist. The meeting was adjourned at 8:31pm.