

- I. Call to Order: Meeting began at 7:00pm.**
- II. Recognition of senators:** Quorum was met with 33 senators.
- III. Guest Speaker(s):**
 - a. **Carol Atkinson-Palombo**, Chair of the Senate Executive Committee
 - i. The main purpose Senate Executive Committee is to coordinate the business of the senate. Each senate committee has a chair and monthly meetings are held to communicate updates for each committee. Each committee is comprised of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. Meetings with the Provost and President also meet once a month to learn about updates from the administrative level.
 - ii. Beginning this year, the Senate Executive Committee is going to have representation on the Provost's Strategic Planning initiative.
 - iii. Nafis Fuad asked if she could elaborate on what the SCC can do for graduate students and what she expects from graduate students to do if they need support from SCC. The Chair responded that the Executive Committee strives to have very broad and diverse representation so all graduate students are accounted for. Chair Atkinson-Palombo expressed that graduate students are an essential component to the research conducted at a University and do need to be heard.
 - iv. Chair Atkinson-Palombo mentions to GSS that if there is anything they would like to reach out about she is in the Geography building and is happy to chat.
 - b. **Kent Holsinger**, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
 - i. The Graduate Faculty Council will be considering a new grade for graduate students at their meeting next week. The motion is to instate a no record Covid grade that students can elect to have on their transcript instead of a withdrawal.
 - ii. Proposed Motion C: This is a motion that is related to students who are perusing their PhD and are eligible to earn a master's degree in a different concentration. Since the language in the GFC by-laws are unclear, there is a proposal to rewrite this section so it more well-defined as to what the parameters are for PhD students to earn a Master's degree in a different concentration (what defines course content, passing of a general exam, etc.)
 - iii. The 30 hours of course content requirement will include any course that shows up on the student's transcript other than GRAD6950, GRAD6960, or research credits.
 - iv. Nafis asked how many credits would need to be completed in order to earn the PhD degree once the Master's degree has been awarded? VP Holsinger stated that credits earned during the Master's degree will be applied to the PhD program.
 - v. Ashley Robinson asked about the students who are coming into the education program but do not have a Master's degree. The Vice Provost responded that this modification would include all PhD fields.
 - vi. Senator Gianna Raimondi asked if departmental approval would be required, assuming the general exam had already been passed, or if this was just through the Grad School? VP Holsinger said the procedure will include an electronic form submitted by the students and then the major advisor would sign off on the form but not the department head.
 - vii. Nafis asked about the current PhD students and if this would apply to them? The VP said that it most certainly would.
- IV. Approval of consent agenda:**
 - a. GSS E-board meeting minutes - 2/9/2021 meeting
 - b. GSS Senate meeting minutes – 1/20/2021 meeting

Senator Pejman Ghelich made a motion to approve the above consent agenda, seconded by Senator Nicole Tillquist. The consent agenda was approved unanimously.

V. Issues Forum:

- a. GEU representatives- Ashley Robinson announced that the GEU is currently seeking graduate students to work for the GEU as executive board members or to take part in the bargaining process. Our current GA contract will be ending next summer and bargaining will begin in Fall of 2021 so it is pertinent that the GEU has diverse representation. Any interested students should fill out this form- <https://forms.gle/sNT9BvySfeFLVEVbA>. The next meeting is March 10th from 6-8pm and the link is on the GEU website. Any questions can also be addressed to uconngradunion@gmail.com.
- b. Scholastic Standards Committee- Senator Spencer Sonnenberg asks all GSS parties to take part in a quick survey which will help with the University to prepare for the SET surveys that will be conducted in Fall.
 - i. Senator Molly James asked what the response rate was before the pandemic compared to post-pandemic and Senator Sonnenberg said it was 60% compared to 25%.
 - ii. Rebecca Oramas suggested that a halfway survey is required for the course.
 - iii. Senator Rafael Concepcion mentioned that several of the SET survey questions are very general and could be more tailored to the specific course.
 - iv. Nafis Fuad said that many students do not fill out the SET survey because once they complete the course, the course/professor is no longer their problem so including a survey halfway through the semester could be a great way to increase participation.
 - v. Ashley Robinson states that adding specific question can be beneficial for the instructor as a method to improve their teaching.

VI. Executive Board Reports:

- a. President –Nafis Fuad
 - i. Updates from the UConn Police Chief position- The interviews will be this Thursday, Feb. 18 14:30-14:55 and Monday, Feb. 22 15:30-15:55. Any graduate student input for this position should be addressed to Nafis @ nafis.fuad@uconn.edu.
- b. Vice President – Maggie Khuu
 - i. Updates from Asian American Faculty & Staff Association- Maggie has relayed to the Association what graduate students want; such as supporting more mental health issues, improving the food insecurities and continued support for Asian students.
- c. Treasurer – Deepa Shukla
 - i. Committees- Growth and Development Committee (1 per month) &
 - ii. Tier II treasurer training- Two weeks ago this was held and for the few who showed up it went very well. For the treasurers who were unable to attend, a PowerPoint was sent to all treasurers to instruct them on the procedures.
 - iii. SASFAC budget- Budget was presented for the upcoming years. Senator Molly James asked what the budget was for? Deepa explained that this is the GSS budget which GSS operations and Tier II organizations are funded from. Before this budget can be passed in the committee, it must be passed by the senate. Senator Scala asked how the budget is designed? Nafis Fuad said that the values are based upon previous year expenditures.

Senator Molly James made a motion to approve the SASFAC budget, seconded by Senator Derrick Kamp. The SASFAC budget was approved unanimously.

- d. Communications Director – Gabrielle Corso

- i. GSS Awards - Community service award– call for committee members and nominees. Interested students should contact Gabrielle.
- ii. GSS Promotional items – Now accepting ideas for Spring 2021!
- e. Activities Director – Rebecca Oramas
 - i. Events for this semester – Please fill out the survey that was sent out so Spring 2021 events can be planned. Considering we are in yellow phase right now, Rebecca suggests mostly virtual events or a grab and go type of event.
- f. Parliamentarian – Irio Schiano
 - i. Eligible Tier IIs for next year funding – At the last meeting it was discussed which Tier II’s would be ineligible for an annual budget but Irio has been working to sort this issue out. Even if 2/3 senators has perfect attendance, if 1 senator missed more than 1 meeting, the Tier II is ineligible for funding.

Maggie asked for a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Senator Gianna Raimondi made a motion and was seconded by Senator Derrick Kamp. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. Committee Reports:

- a. **Nafis Fuad** – Fee structure and Federal Stimulus fund- More funds will be distributed to acquire more mental health professionals and for the UPass. Also, in regards to the stimulus fund for 2021, UConn is expected to receive a similar amount.
- b. **Maggie Khuu** – Scholastic Standards- Academic integrity and how exactly classes will be offered post-Covid are two of the big topics being discussed.
- c. **Irio Schiano** –
 - i. University Senate- Incorporation of a new grade that will be due to Covid (not academic dishonesty), requirements to make revisions to syllabi for classes that are now offered online now instead of in person. Covid vaccines are being distributed and we are currently are in phase 1a.
 - ii. GFC- The same topics discussed at the University Senate were discussed in the GFC.

VIII. Adjournment:

Senator John Dabrowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Senator Derrick Kamp. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52pm.