1. **Invited Guest Speaker:** N/A
2. **Call to Order:** Meeting started at 6:05 pm
3. **Recognition of Senators:** Quorum was met with 35 senators
4. **Approval of Agenda:**
   1. GSS Senate Meeting Minutes – 10/11/2023 meeting

*(Ali/Wang) Motion to approve the agenda. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

1. **Issues Forum:**

Sandip Roy – 10 minutes.

Sandip Roy resigned from the GSS President this morning. Sandip said his mental health and physical health have been affected. GSS office assistant decided to resign after the last E-board meeting. Sandip said that he did not agree with the required vote count for recall. Sandip sent some documents earlier for the senators to review. Sandip said that GSS is supposed to represent graduate students, not only to organize events and provide free food. He said that one survey from last year showed that graduate students have concerns related to stipends, fees, housing, parking and transportation. 80% budget was spent on GSS internal and external events from 2020. As per financial policy, department centric events like brown bags were not funded. Events hosted by Tier II organizations should be funded based on attendance.

Sandip said that GSS serves less than 20% of the graduate students through events. Sandip posed the question if GSS serves 20% students equally. Sandip showed the percent budget request vs. students represented in his presentation. He mentioned that one cultural Tier II got 50% of the budget. Sandip said that Senator Usman Ali was a treasurer for that organization. Usman said that 400 graduate students attended the last Tarang event. Sandip said that there should be greater scrutiny on Tier II funding. Senators should pay more attention towards budget and the Senate should be open to the entire school.

Sandip said that one committee decided the rule regarding recall and he or the senate did not have any say. Sandip said that he did not agree with the threshold that the 2/3rd of the active senators need to vote in favor of recall. Khaled said that GSS conducts business by active senators which he discussed with Krista.

Sandip said that one E-board member asked for free drinks at the happy hour event. Usman mentioned that Husky’s used to give free drinks to all the E-board members. Sandip said that it was not true.

*(Lassy/Barreto) Motion to move from this topic. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

*(Ali/ Corso) Motion to extend the issues forum by 10 minutes. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

Senator Syed Islam said that SAGE events were open not only to the engineering students, but to all graduate students. GSS suggested SAGE to arrange programs for all graduate students and SAGE did so. The graph shown by Sandip was a misrepresentation as he divided the budget by the number of engineering students whereas the events were open for all graduate students. Other organizations also open their events to all graduate students. Senator Shah Saki said that numbers shown in the graph were misleading. He said that if a department did not ask allocation, it was misleading to show the per head allocation for that department and was not apple to apple comparison.

Gaurav Gupta, President of Tarang, added that Tarang represents a large number of students coming from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh. Tarang advertised their event at least 20 days before. Sandip asked why GSS did not receive the money from the tickets that Tarang sold. Senator Prakash Ranjan mentioned that Tarang’s events have more attendees than other organization’s events. Tarnag events are attended by not only South Asian students, but also students from other countries. Sandip asked to show the accounting and how much Tarang paid for beyond what GSS paid for.

*(Corso/ Williams) Motion to extend issues forum by 5 minutes. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

Senator Cindy Barreto said that events are sometimes not clear to all organizations and they do not check all the organization’s websites. She asked if events can be circulated more and events should not be food centric only. Senator Prakash Ranjan said that they advertise their events through fliers.

Senator-at -large Chao Wang said that there are 7 members in the Procedures Committee. Senator Bryan Greene, Senator-at -large Chao Wang and Luisana Duarte Armendariz were part of the discussion within the committee.

Khaled said that he and Mohsina are in the Procedures Committee as per the Constitution. He explained the interpretations of the bylaws.

*(Corso/Lassy) Motion to extend the issues forum till 7:00 pm. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

Senator Gabrielle Corso said that she has been involved with GSS for 6 years. She submitted her senator application 1 week late and her senators-at-large application was denied.

*(Corso/ Ali) Motion to approve Gabrielle Corso’s senator application. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

Senator Gabrielle Corso said that GSS office assistant Emma has resigned and she asked Emma to speak.

Emma said that she has sent an email to all senators. Emma submitted her resignation Sunday. Emma mentioned that duties were assigned to her outside of her offer letter. She was uninvited form the September E-board meeting and complained that she was met with hostility. She went to her direct supervisor Sandip Roy. Emma received a derogatory comment form Mohsina and a hostile email from Khaled. She also received hostile email from Essam. Emma sent some documents with screenshot. Emma mentioned that her performance evaluation was downgraded in a short period of time. GSS was taking a lot of her time and she feels like she was forced out. Emma said that people can email her about this issue. Mohsina said that she sent an email mentioning her doubts about female office assistant as a lot of physical strength is needed to lift weights as part of the job. Senator Bryan Greene said that it was not okay to require physical strength for hiring an office assistant assuming female candidates would be unable to lift weights. The things that Emma brought up need to be assessed in a separate meeting. Senator Usman Ali said that Emma can file a complaint at the University Compliance office. Senator Cindy Barreto proposed to read the documents that have been sent and discuss it in the next Senate meeting.

1. **Executive Board Reports:**
   1. President –
   2. Vice President – Mohsina Rahman
      1. Call for nominations for GSS President -Nominations for GSS President are open. The requirement is that that candidates for President shall have been a Senator or member of the Executive Committee for at least one academic year. Nominations can be emailed until the next senate meeting
      2. Student Life Committee- It is an internal committee. The committee will discuss problems related to housing, parking, food issues etc. VP will bring these issues to Student Welfare Committee. Communications Director Israt will send an email asking for committee members.
      3. Senate Meeting food for Spring, 2024- Food for E-board meetings has been cancelled. From next Senate meeting, buffet will not be served.
   3. Treasurer– Gopi Yalavarthi
      1. Finance committee- Finance committee is the primary decision making body regarding the budget. Gopi asked for finance committee members. Senator Gabrielle Corso, Senator Usman Ali, Senator Veera Venkata Praveen Raja Kosuri, Senator Chao Wang and Leya Vijju raised their hands to join the committee. The committee will meet two or three times.
      2. SASFAC- Gopi and Senator-at-large Chao Wang serve at the SASFAC. The proposed grad activity fee did not get approved. Gopi will file for grad activity fee increase for fiscal year 2025.
   4. Activities Director– Essam said that a Thanksgiving Luncheon will be held on November 27. RSVP is mandatory. An email will be sent soon. Only 150 people can be accommodated since GSS does not have enough budget. There will be a formal in SU ball room on December.

Senator Usman Ali suggested to borrow money from the Spring events to increase the number of attendees for the Thanksgiving. Essam said that GSS will only have 2/3 big events in Spring. Senator Martina Villa said that the only vegetarian option in the last happy hour was salad. Some students left and did not attend the events any more. Essam said that more diverse options will be added to menu. Senator Mehedi Hasan Dipu mentioned that DJ was only playing south Asian such as Indian music in the past GSS event. He suggested other type of music should be played. Senator Prakash Ranjan said that if an announcement could be made regarding the type of music that will be played.

* 1. Communications Director – Israt Jahan
     1. Public Relations Committee- Public Relations Committee members will discuss advertising of GSS sponsored events. Israt will send an email asking people to join the committee.

* 1. Parliamentarian – Khaled “Axel” Djebbari
     1. University Graduate Faculty Council- Khaled will share a survey on behalf of the University Graduate Faculty council.

1. **Old Business**
   1. PR Clarifications and deadline –Gopi said that PRs need to be submitted before the first the week of December. The PR system will close on 1st week of December and will open on January 16. If any organization from the satellite campus wants to file for reimbursement, they need to do that before the system closes. If an organization does not submit post purchase document (PPD) within 15 days of an event, the next event of that organization will not be funded. Senator Mehedi Hasan Dipu asked what the process was for submitting PPD when an order has been placed through Amazon. Gopi said that PPD is not asked for amazon buys most of the time. If PPD is asked for Amazon buys, email Gopi and he will share the invoice.
   2. Fall and Spring Events Update
   3. OCAA update – Essam had a meeting with the Career Development Center. The center is willing to work with GSS to organize some workshops for graduate students. There was a discussion on financial literacy workshop.
2. **New Business:**
   1. Approval of the monthly bills, senate meeting food bills, WRTD bill – Gopi showed the GSS monthly bills for July ($12,476), August ($178.87), September ($7646.21), October ($3325.89). Senator Gabrielle Corso asked to explain the monthly bills and what the bulk amount of September included. Senator Prakash Ranjan asked how much was spent on each event. Gopi said that he would prepare an excel sheet for the breakdowns of bills from now on.

*(Ali/Badhan) Motion to approve the GSS monthly bills. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

September Senate meeting food cost was $1840. More people were expected to attend the September Senate meeting. So the number of people was increased from 50 to 100. October Senate meeting Food cost was $1345.50.

*(Ali/ Saki) Motion to approve the September and October Senate meeting food bills. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

Bus from WRTD was arranged for the last year’s GSS formal. The cost was $292.50. Their bus service was not used and GSS tried to convince WRTD to cancel the bill. WRTD did not agree. Senator Gabrielle Corso asked if further negotiation for 50% reduction of the bill was possible. Gopi said that he will contact WRTD to negotiate.

* 1. Approval of additional amount for SAGE special allocation- Senator Syed Islam said that $240.88 was approved for the SAGE special allocation request in the last Senate meeting. Due to some miscalculations and change in cost, the total amount required for the event is now $299.99.

*(Ali/Dipu) Motion to approve the additional amount ($299.99-$240.88=$59.11) for the SAGE special allocation. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

* 1. Senate meeting location-Senator Martina Villa asked if GSS meetings could be held at other buildings such as Psychology building. Mohsina said that people might not be aware of the location of other buildings on campus. Martina suggested to share the location of the building via google. SenatorGabrielle Corso said that during her first years of Senate, GSS used to have Senate meetings in Chemistry building. It will save money by having food from other places instead of having food from UConn Catering.

*(Villa/ Ali) Motion to move the GSS Senate meetings to a different building. 35 in favor/0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

1. Approval of past E-board member compensations – Nafis Fuad was GSSS President and Treasurer. Julianna Herman was GSS Parliamentarian. They are eligible to get GSS stipend in terms of travel reimbursement for conference before they graduate. Khaled asked if Nafis was in GSS when he attended the conference. Senator Gabrielle Corso said he was with GSS in 2019-2020. Mohsina asked Gopi to contact Nafis to attend the next senate meeting and explain his request for reimbursement. Gopi will also ask Julianna to attend the Senate meeting.
2. Revised Budget –Special allocation budget was $5000 last year. Now it has been increased to $20,000, $10000 for Fall and $10000 for Spring. Senator Usman Ali asked Gopi to show where the additional money would come from. Gopi explained briefly that $3000 was saved from refreshment category, and some amount was saved from travel reimbursement (travelling for GSS purposes) category. E-board food was cancelled and was transferred to special allocation. Senator Martina Villa asked what Wages meants in the budget. Gopi replied that wages are for the GSS office assistant and do not include the E-board pay.
3. Approval of Thanksgiving Event- *(Badhan/ Gautam) Motion to approve $4000 for GSS Thanksgiving event. 34 in favor/0 opposed/ 1 abstention. Motion Carries.*
4. Approval of Bylaw Revisions – Khaled showed the bylaw changes in October Senate meeting.

* Summer allocation has been removed for President and Treasurer.
* E board members can receive stipend in the form of fellowship and they will have to provide an work log where they will report what they have done. Dean Holsinger clarified that we cannot have work log for fellowship and fellowship is service free. Khaled removed the work log part from the bylaws revisions.
* E-board members need to meet 75% attendance for both E-board and Senate meetings to receive their stipend and parking reimbursement.
* Senator Cindy Barreto suggested to include the pronoun ‘them’ in the bylaws

Senator Lindsay Barnum asked if the quorum was still maintained. She asked if people would work in summer as summer wages have been removed. Khaled said that the current compensation would cover the academic year and summer. Mohsina added that all E-board officers worked in summer.

*(Corso/Villa) Motion to table the voting on bylaws. 35 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion Carries*

1. **Committee Reports**
   1. University Senate and SEC Update – Esam Boraey
   2. Strategic Planning Committee and Activities Committee – Essam is working with the Strategic Planning Committee. Some students have received hate emails and voicemails. Essam talked with Provost to increase awareness in the campus and to initiate conversations between Muslim and Jewish students.

Activities committee met to discuss GSS events. Halal food and vegetarian options will be added to the next GSS event. Essam said more events other than happy hours will be arranged. More yoga sessions and career related events will be arranged in Spring.

*(Ali/Dipu) Motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. 35 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

1. **Good News**
2. **Adjournment**

*(Barnum/Saki) Motion to adjourn the meeting. 35 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion Carries.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

**Attendees:**

Ruba Bouzan

Davis Manshardt

Kyle Labe

Lindsay Barnum

Clara Ramirez

Veera Venkata Praveen Raja Kosuri

Theresa Parker

Martina Villa

Usman Ali

Chao Wang

Riley Pena

Brian Lassy

Kamal Gautam

Rahul Koonathara

Mehedi Hassan Dipu

Shah Saki

Brenden Ferland

Gabrielle Corso

Laura Lapham

Cindy Barreto

Saranya Gautam

Alaa Selim

Aarón Sánchez

Luis Ortiz

Prakash Ranjan

Makduma Zahan Badhan

Syed Islam

Sara Flash

Anietie Williams

Sulthana Humayoon Muttathukonam

Hannah Cooke

Saurabh Goswami

Satadru Bhattacharyya

Bryan Greene

Adaeze Maduako

Sandhya Sanapala

**Resignation of GSS President Sandip Roy** *(Entered into the meeting minutes as per the GSS Constitution, Article VI, Section 6)*

Hello Mohsina,

Since you are the VP of GSS, I am letting you know that I am resigning as the President of the Graduate Student Senate, effective immediately, i.e., as of this moment. Per my understanding, nominations can open at tonight's meeting for the election of a new President at the December Senate meeting.

While I enjoyed serving the graduate student community, faithfully doing my job as their lead representative, my decision to resign has been solidified by the harassment received at the hands of some members of the E. Committee, and the due process violations that were handed down to me by some members of the E. Committee and the procedures committee.

I will not be checking the gsspresident@uconn.edu email, after this moment. I will return my keys to Krista O'Brien (CCed here), at tonight's meeting.

Note: as a graduate student, I will be at tonight's Senate meeting, and will be discussing a few issues at the issues forum (per the constitution, open to all graduate students), as reserved earlier this week and noted on the Senate meeting agenda, and will be answering additional questions.

Sandip Roy

President

Graduate Student Senate