1. **Invited Guest Speaker:** N/A
2. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm
3. **Recognition of Senators:** Quorum was met with 35 senators
4. **Issues Forum:**

*(Lassy/ Holt) Motion to move the issues forum first*.

Senator Usman Ali asked the reason for moving issues forum first. Senator Brian Lassy said that the issues forum should be discussed before the election. Parliamentarian Khaled asked if the issues were related to election requiring the issues forum to be held first. Senator Brian Lassy replied that there were issues with the E-board members that need to be discussed first and then hold the election.

*(Phillips/ Greene) Motion to move from this debate and to vote on whether to move the issues forum before the election. All in favor. Motion carries.*

*(Lassy/ Holt) Motion to move the issues forum first. 4 opposed. Motion carries (# in favor and # of abstention was not counted).*

Activities Director Essam Boraey mentioned that the fire marshal told him that if the room exceeds 50 people, non-senators can be asked to leave the room due to fire hazard.

Nicole Nelson said she was the alternative senator on behalf of senator Gabrielle Corso. She mentioned in her speech that the E-board approved $20,000 in the E-board meeting without the Senate approval. She also mentioned the buying of GSS office equipment mentioned in the E-board meeting minutes. She said that the office assistant was asked to leave the E-board meeting and job performance of office assistant was included in the public meeting minutes. She added that the seating room capacity for the Senate meeting demonstrates neglect towards students’ concern. She mentioned that the Activities Director is supposed to bring students together. The office assistant simply required clarification over email which was met with demeaning reply. Vice President emphasized her superiority being a PhD student and the office assistant being a master’s student. She added that Vice President made biased comment about gender regarding female candidates. She further said that senator Usman Ali emailed office assistant first and then he declined to talk about the office assistant issue. She said that Vice President suggested that women might struggle to lift 50 pounds and undermined the ability of women. Senator Nicole Nelson added that office Assistant Emma has not received a public apology. She added that Senator Bryan Greene advocated for non-gender bias in employment and he has set an example for leadership. E-board meeting minutes show that money has been allocated to buy charger for GSS office. Similar instances happened previously. She mentioned canceling of Husky’s events and added that Husky’s had higher attendance. She asked why E-board would move from Husky’s and mentioned that it was more cost-effective. She said that recent change was made to the Fall Formal only in 3 days’ notice during the exam time. $20,000 was approved in E-board meeting without Senate approval. She mentioned that ticket price has been set to $10 but E-board members would not pay without justifying what roles they would serve. Senator Nicole Nelson said that there is lack of transparency and lack of leadership in the E-board. She suggested three options: recusal of Mohsina Rahman from hiring, formal resignation of the E-board, formal explanation of Fall Formal.

Senator Usman Ali said that senator Nicole Nelson mentioned that everybody likes Husky’s while people complained about food served in Husky’s which lacked vegetarian options. Senator Nicole Nelson replied that she has numbers attending the Husky’s from meeting minutes. Senator Ali said that he would look into the minutes.

*(Greene/ Siegfried) Motion to extend the issues forum by 10 minutes. All in favor. Motion carries.*

Parliamentarian Khaled said that senator Nicole Nelson reached out to him to nominate Senator Bryan Greene. She also reached out to him about issues forum and the Senate room issue. Senator Nicole Nelson said that it has been a month since her last email requesting issues forum first and to address the Senate room issue. Khaled said that he is not responsible for issues forum and the Senate room issue. He cannot reply to something that does not fall in his jurisdiction. Senator Nelson said Khaled could have forwarded the email to the designated E-board member.

Khaled mentioned that there is an ongoing investigation about the office assistant issues and E-board members do not have the liberty to comment on it. Khaled said that since the President resigned, he started allegations against E- board members. After recall initiation, President started allegations about all procedures and E-board members. This has affected the personal lives and research of the E-board members. Even after all these allegations, all E-board members continued to fulfill their roles.

Senator Brian Lassy said that a notification needed to be sent 24 hours before recall initiation. Khaled clarified the rule is to send the notification within 24 hours of the recall initiation. Khaled added that it is not possible to know in advance that recall would be initiated for sending out a notification before the recall initiation.

Senator Bryan Greene said he understands that there is an investigation. He said that there is a 60 pages document about the issue and it is already out there which needs acknowledgement. Khaled said that he is acknowledging by mentioning the ongoing investigation and until the investigation is done, E-board cannot comment on it. Once the investigation is done, if the Senate asks, he will be happy to reply.

Senator Kyle Labe said that the impact of the ongoing issues can be seen on the E-board members.

*(Lassy) Motion to extend the issues forum by 10 minutes (Motion was not seconded and voted on).*

Luisana Duarte Armendariz from procedures committee said that the election needs to be held and several topics need to be voted on that have not been voted over the past meetings. She mentioned that constitution says that issues forum can be extended by 10 minutes once and suggested to move on. Senator Brian Lassy said that he had no confidence in the E-board.

Senator Cindy Barreto said that issues forum has been extended before and added that the issue that has been brought up needs more discussion. Vice President Mohsina Rahman suggested to move the discussion to a special senate meeting after the new President gets elected. Luisana Duarte Armendariz suggested to move this to a special meeting.

Senator Emma Siegfried said that instead of moving to a special meeting, we should get back to the issues forum after election since not all students are from Storrs.

*(Barreto/ Siegfried) Motion to get back to the issues forum when everything is voted on. 11 in favor/ 9 opposed/ 1 abstention. Motion carries.*

1. **GSS Procedures Committee:** Presidential Election for Graduate Student Senate

Parliamentarian Khaled said that Koushan Mohammadi has withdrawn his candidacy from election a few moments ago. There were three other nominations for the position who declined their nominations. Senator Bryan Greene got elected as the new GSS President. He said that he would hold a townhall with hybrid capacity to get input from all students.

1. **Approval of Agenda:**
   1. GSS E-board Meeting Minutes – 11/09/2023 meeting
   2. GSS Senate Meeting Minutes – 11/15/2023 meeting
   3. GSS E-board Meeting Minutes – 11/29/2023 meeting

Communications Director Israt showed the change in E-board meeting minutes from November 9, 2023. She clarified that the job performance of the office assistant was initially included in the minutes as it was not discussed in the executive session. It was not the communications director’s authority to move to the executive session and as part of her responsibility, she recorded the discussion that happened in the meeting. Krista O’Brien (Associate Director of Student Activities/Director for Trustee Student Organization Support) reached out to the Director of Public Records and as per the suggestion from Krista O’Brien and the Director of Public Records, the section was taken out with a note that job performance was discussed which should have been done in executive session.

*(Phillips/Ali) Motion to approve the meeting minutes. 1 abstention. Motion carries (# in favor and # opposed was not counted).*

1. **Executive Board Reports:**
   1. President –
   2. Vice President – Mohsina Rahman
      1. Invited Speakers for Spring, 2024
      2. Student Life Committee
   3. Treasurer– Gopi Yalavarthi
   4. Activities Director– Essam Boraey
      1. Event Updates (Fall and Spring)
   5. Communications Director – Israt Jahan
   6. Parliamentarian – Khaled “Axel” Djebbari
      1. Constitution Revision
2. **Old Business**
3. **New Business:**
   * 1. Approval of Past E. Board Compensation – Nafis Fuad- Nafis was GSS Treasurer in 2019-2020 and GSS President in 2020-2021. Nafis went to a conference at Helsinki that was related to his field in environmental toxicity. He represented UConn at the conference. This travel took place in the month of May and at that time GSS was using paper based form for reimbursement. Nafis proposed online forms to reduce paper usage. It took more than a year to move from paper based form to online form and after that Covid-19 happened. Next year he became GSS President and forgot about it. Senator Brian Lassy asked if the conference was GSS related. Nafis replied that GSS E-board members were reimbursed for travel related to professional development such as attending conference and national labs. Senator Lindsay Barnum asked if the requested amount was part of E-board compensation and if the money has been kept aside or it will be drawn from GSS budget. Nafis said that requested amount was part of GSS E-board compensation. He added that money can be kept aside and it will come from GSS budget. Senator Brian Lassy asked why the money should come from GSS budget due to lack of management on Nafis’s part. Nafis agreed that there was lack of management and he mentioned that it took a long time to get to the online based form from university’s side.

*(Phillips/ Barreto) Motion to approve Nafis Fuad’s reimbursement package. 25 in favor/2 opposed/ 8 abstention. Motion carries.*

* + 1. Approval of Thanksgiving Expenditure – Essam Boraey-
    2. Approval of GSS Fall Formal Expenditure – Essam Boraey- GSS Grad Formal has been scheduled for next Saturday. When PR is submitted, it is required that the requested amount written in the minutes be higher than the actual cost to ensure that the PR does not come back. The event will cost around $7,000 after selling tickets and Essam asked for $20,000 for approval.

Senator Lindsay Barnum asked about the approval process. She said that there were certain number of events suggested in the September Senate meeting and where the change was coming from. Essam said that the professional development event could not be held because the speaker canceled. For events, PRs are submitted to TSOS along with the minutes showing the amount that has been voted on. Senator Lindsay Barnum said that there was no breakdown on how $28,000 will be spent. She added that if there was a document showing breakdown, it would be helpful. Essam mentioned that when the budget was approved, he was not in the E- board. Activities Director has to work with the approved budget and he tried to look for alternative sources. Senator Lindsay Barnum said that we should know how the money will be spent on 6 events that were voted on. Senator Emma Siegfried said that it would be nice to know expected cost of an event before it takes place. Essam said that it is difficult to put exact amount for an event due to vendor policy. Senator Nicole Nelson asked how many people were expected and added that the maximum capacity for the venue is 150. Essam said that the capacity is around 300 for the room reserved. Essam mentioned that there will be cash bar, tables, dance floor in the room. He has met with SU officials regarding the event. The full ballroom has been reserved and approval from the fire marshal has been received. Essam said that he can foreword the approval from fire marshal if needed. Senator Cindy Barreto asked when the planning for the event was done. Essam said that he planned it one month ago. When he tried to reserve the room, he was told that the room was not available. He was able to reserve the room later.

Senator Brian Lassy said that the difference between the expected cost for the event and the amount $20,000 that Essam is asking for was huge. Tier 2 organizations have to submit exact number for their events. With proper planning, Activities Director should have a good estimate as the event is after 3 days. Essam said that he does not have an accurate estimation. If amount approved in the minutes is even less than 1 dollar than the invoice submitted, then it will be rejected by TSOS. That is why the requested amount is an arbitrary number.

*(Ellish/ Phillips) Motion to approve up to $20,000 for GSS Fall formal. 13 in favor/ 5 opposed/ 5 abstention. Motion carries.*

*(Lassy/Barreto) Motion to cancel the GSS Fall formal. 8 in favor/ 9 opposed/ 6 abstention. Motion did not go through.*

*(Ali/ Ellish) Motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. 1 abstention. Motion carries. (# in favor and # opposed was not counted)*

* + 1. Approval of Special Allocation for EGSA –Ruba Bouzan- Senator Rouba Bouzan said the EGSA requested for $75 for their Spring Welcome Back event. The event will be open to all graduate students. Advertisement will be done through grad listserv and fliers.

*(Phillips/Barreto) Motion to approve the special allocation for EGSA. All in favor. Motion carries.*

* + 1. Approval of Current E. Board Stipend– Khaled “Axel” Djebbari- E board gets compensated according to the bylaws. International students cannot get paid over the semester due to visa regulations. E-board members who are international students need to be paid over the winter break as they are allowed to work up to 40 hours during that time. The rate of compensation is $32.7. Senator Brian Lassy asked if any other amount will be given to the E-board members after reporting hours during the winter break. Khaled replied that the remaining allocated amount after winter break will be given to the E-board members as fellowship.

*(Barnum/Ali) Motion to approve E-board hours during winter break (10 hours for Vice President, 20 hours for Treasurer, 20 hours for Activities Director, 20 hours for Communications Director, 10 hours for Parliamentarian). 23 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 0 abstention. Motion carries.*

*(Barreto/Ali) Motion to approve remaining allocated amount as fellowship at the end of the E-board term. 23 in favor/ 0 opposed/ 1 abstention. Motion carries.*

* + 1. Approval of Bylaw Revisions – Khaled “Axel” Djebbari- Khaled showed the changes in the bylaws. The section in bylaws regarding Covid was removed. Emma Dashnaw asked who would be eligible for emergency loan. Khaled replied that any graduate student who pays the grad activity fee would be eligible for the loan. Senator Kamal Gautam asked if any provision could be added to the bylaws for future crisis such as Covid. Khaled said that suggestions regarding bylaw changes could be conveyed to the procedures committee. Summer allocation was removed from the bylaws. The yearly allocation for the E-board will cover summer, fall and spring. Senator Anietie Williams asked what would happen if someone resigned. Khaled mentioned that the amount allocated for that position will be distributed between the person who resigned and the oncoming person. Luisana Duarte Armendariz mentioned that the procedures committee did not go through the numbers because the committee did not know if anyone will be elected this year. It will be discussed in next procedures committee meeting. Senator Lindsay Barnum asked if there was a fixed amount for reimbursement for professional development. Khaled replied that it is included in the total allocated amount and cannot exceed that.

*(Barreto/Ali) Motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. All in favor. Motion carries.*

Krista O’Brien added that the payment process is unclear and challenging. There is stipend, travel reimbursement, and summer allocation. To make it clear, the cap will be the maximum allocated amount. Senator Lindsay Barnum asked why it is not given as a check to the E-board members. Senator Cindy Barreto replied that international students cannot be paid during the semester. Khaled further added that there can be both US citizens and international students in the E-board. There are restrictions related to payment for F1 and J1 students. Luisana Duarte Armendariz said that international students cannot get paid during semester beyond graduate assistantship. During winter break, international students can work over 20 hours per week. The process is there to make sure that the E-board members can get paid from their allotted amount during winter break. The remaining allocated amount after winter break will be provided as fellowship which does not break any laws for the international students.

Khaled mentioned that the E-board members will need to meet the attendance criteria to receive both fellowship and parking pass reimbursement. Khaled showed the flowchart regarding bylaws approval and mentioned that the changes will be effective from next AY.

*(Ali/ Ecevitoglu) Motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes. 1 opposed/ 1 abstention. Motion carries. (# in favor was not counted).*

Senator Martina Villa asked if the parking reimbursement was in addition to the E-board stiped and if the parking pass reimbursement was for garage parking or area 2 parking. Khaled replied that that it was in addition the E-board stipend and for garage parking.

*(Phillips/Ali) Motion to approve the bylaws revision. All in favor. Motion carries.*

Khaled further added that it is not the last bylaws revision. Procedures committee is still working on the revisions and will present the proposed changes to bylaws and constitution to the Senate.

Senator Cindy Barreto said that the office assistant issue should be discussed in the next Senate meeting. She added that she would discuss issues related to the recreation center in the next Senate meeting.

*(Lassy/ Siegfried ) Motion to extend the meeting by 3 minutes. 4 opposed/ 1 abstention. Motion carries (# in favor was not counted).*

Senator Brain Lassy asked Mohsina Rahman if she will resign from her position as the Vice President for her sexist comment. Mohsina replied that she had no such intention since the matter is under investigation by the university.

*(Lassy)- Motion to initial recall against Mohsina Rahman as Vice President (Motion was not seconded and voted on).*

Khaled mneioned that it was still an allegation and has not been proven. Khaled replied that Mohsina is a hijabi women of color representing diversity. Luisana Duarte Armendariz mentioned that it came up in the last procedures committee meeting. The procedures committee decided that the person who has been accused has the chance to defend. The procedures committee highly recommends that if there is an ongoing investigation under university, it should not be under the provision of recall. She added that it is not in the bylaws, but procedure committee discussed this. Senator Cindy Barreto mentioned that she has already proposed to keep further discussion for the next Senate meeting and people should be allowed to leave the meeting now.

1. **Committee Reports**
   * 1. Student Welfare Committee – Mohsina Rahman
     2. University Senate and Senate Executive Committee – Essam Boraey
2. **Good News**
3. **Adjournment**

*(Barreto/Ali) Motion to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.*

**Attendees:**

Lindsay Barnum

Madeline Kollegger

Brian Lassy

Ruba Bouzan

Emma Siegfried

Kyle Labe

Emma Dashnaw

Alev Ecevitoglu

Bryan Greene

Ali Bergmaek

Martina Villa

Natalie Charamut

Zachary Ellish

Laura Holt

Spencer Hayes

Nicole E Nelson

Kamal Gautam

Cindy Barreto

Rahul Koonathara

Usman Ali

Nafis Fuad

Saranya Gautam

Dan Phillips

Brenden Ferland

M Nabil Bhuiyan

Luis Ortiz

Aaron Sanchez

Divya Divya

Laura Lapham

Chao Wang

Jairo Orea

Saurabh Goswami

Hannah Cooke

Makduma Zahan Badhan

Ogochukwu Okeke

Anietie Williams

Nadib Akram

Adaeze Maduako