

# UVM Graduate Student Senate Minutes of Meeting

**Monday, October 30, 2023, Time: 8:00 pm**

**The meeting called to order by Vice-President, Cara Simone**

**Recording Link: [Graduate Student Senate Meeting Recording](#)**

## **In attendance**

**Senators:** Alison Hall, Anthony Barrows, Bren Cable, Carlos Amissah, Dan Peipert, Diego Javier-Jimenez, Emma Myrick, Gift Omoruyi, Jenna Ann McDonald, Joy Emmanuel, Matthew Breunig, Mona Davoudimeh, Muhammad Adeel Arif, Niara Hicks, Parisa Suchdev, Pawan Babu Bastola, Ritwik Bandyopadhyay, Stephen Alrich Marshall, Taylor Ann Jeannette Kocian, Vanessa Ballard.

**Guest:** Alicia M Ebert, Baxter Worthing, Gina Russin, Mandy Nix, Mazen Elsaadany, Meaghan Bannister, Paola Pena, Protiva Sen, Sandra Nnadi, Shakira Iyanda, Temitope Boriwaye, Toyib Aremu.

**Executive Council Attendees:** Ijaz ul Haq, Cara Simone, Yasaman Pedari, Omid Sedighi

36 total number attended.

## **Agenda Item: Approval of previous meeting minutes**

Stephen Alrich Marshall moved the motion to approve the previous minutes, it was seconded by Matthew Breunig.

## **Agenda Item: Recognition of Clubs**

Anthony Barrows moved to motion to recognize clubs before the reports, it was seconded by Stephen Alrich Marshall.

### **Student Parent Club**

Representative - President/GSS Liaison, Sandra Nnadi.

No objections from Senate → Approved.

Emma Myrick moved to recognize the club, it was seconded by Dan Peipert & Toyib Aremu.

### **Occupational Therapy Club**

Representative- Co-President/ GSS Liaison, Gina Russin.

No objections from Senate → Approved.

Parisa Suchdev moved motion to recognize the club.

### **Material Research Club**

Representative – GSS Liaison, Temitope Boriwaye.

No objections from Senate → Approved.

Diego Javier-Jimenez moved to recognize the club.

### **Graduate Students of Color Club**

Representative – GSS Liaison, Shakira Iyanda.

No objections from Senate → Approved.

Diego Javier-Jimenez moved to recognize the club.

### **Agenda Item: Finance Report**

Yasaman Pedari, the GSS Treasurer, discussed the GSS's budget and spending in Fall 2023. She mentioned approving \$100 for the Muslim Student Association's interfaith event and hinted at an upcoming event. Overall, our GSS budget hasn't changed from our last meeting except for this allocation. She also encouraged new clubs to contact GSS to apply for their own purcard if they plan to have multiple events. Without the card, clubs must contact GSS for each purchase. Additionally, she mentioned that clubs recognized by GSS can request funding; if the amount is less than \$500, it's decided by the GSS Eboard members, and if it's above \$500, the Senate votes. She also mentioned a pending vote on funding for the Diwali event hosted by the Indian Student Association scheduled on Nov 11th.

Emma Myrick moved to approve the report.

### **Agenda Item: Student Affairs Committee**

Ijaz ul Haq, chair of the student affairs committee mentioned that they along with his group members including Jenna Cohen and Emily McDonnell are working on different items, including Mentorship Enhancement: they are working on creating a mentorship program tailored to the needs of graduate students, aiming for positive relationships and fruitful outcomes. Crisis Support Framework: they are developing a holistic support system for students facing personal crises, ensuring access to vital resources, counseling, and potential financial aid. Collaboration with Clubs: they are considering collaborating with other clubs that are working on similar initiatives to address student's needs, especially those related to mental health and resources on campus. Constitution Update: Ijaz highlighted the importance of updating the organization's constitution, which currently contains unclear sections and clauses. The committee is working with the Dean of Graduate College to synchronize this update and hopes to complete it by the next semester. Online Platform with the Graduate College: in addition, they plan to partner with the Graduate College to launch an online platform where students can share feedback, experiences, and voice their concerns. This committee aims to ensure that students' narratives receive the attention they deserve.

### **Agenda Item: Health and Wellness Committee**

Gift Omoruyi, chair of the health and wellness committee updated the Senate on providing an infographic about daylight savings time to inform students about the upcoming change on November 5th. Offering tips to help students adjust to daylight savings time, addressing its impact on sleep patterns and potential mental health issues. Creating awareness about extreme winter conditions in Vermont, especially for students who may be unfamiliar with the region. They plan to suggest affordable places to obtain winter gear. Addressing concerns about fitness center access during the winter, as some may be closed, and exploring options to ensure grad students have access. Encouraging grad students to get flu shots and supporting lady health campaigns. Collaborating with health-related organizations on campus and optimizing resources available to grad students, such as insurance. Seeking to consolidate survey efforts to reduce the number of individual committee surveys sent to grad students. Requesting access to the GSS Instagram page to share information and simplify communication, as many people prefer visual content. Requesting a group email for committee communication. Exploring support from GSS for securing speakers or facilitating events under the GSS banner.

Stephen Alrich Marshall moved to approve the report, it was seconded by Dan Peipert.

### **Agenda Item: Stipend Committee**

Ritwik Bandyopadhyay, chair of the Stipend committee, updated the senate with his plans to analyze Vermont Basic Needs and Budgets Report: He plans to analyze the 14th edition of this report, which estimates monthly living expenses in Vermont, considering different scenarios for single individuals and those with dependents. The goal is to make recommendations based on these findings. Documentation of Committee's Past Work: Ritwik aims to create documentation that tracks the committee's past activities, strategies, and goals. This record will help future committee members understand the committee's work. Market Analysis and Inflation: Ritwik stresses the importance of understanding the markets in and around UVM, especially concerning inflation analysis, given the recent high inflation rates.

### **Agenda Item: Event Committee**

Bren Cable, and Niara Hicks, co-chair of the event committee updated the senate on the next coming events including Get Air: they plan to organize an event at Get Air, a trampoline park. On-Campus Paint Nights: they plan to have canvas supplies available at coffee breaks, offering attendees a creative outlet. End of the Year Party at Three Needs: the party will be held at Three Needs, where they'll rent the backroom for two hours. GSS will provide pizza.

### **Agenda Item: ISA Funding Request on Diwali Celebration**

Protiva Sen, the president of the Indian Subcontinent Student Association, discussed the funding request for the upcoming event, Diwali Celebration. The total budget for this year's Diwali is \$14,900, and it is expected to accommodate 400 guests. The largest expense is for food, totaling \$9,000, followed by event services at \$2,500, along with other related expenses. The funding sources include \$5,000 from the Office of the Provost, \$700 from DEI, \$300 from OIE, \$2000 from Student Life, \$500 Vice President for Research, and \$500 from Larner College of Medicine office of Diversity and Inclusion. The expected income from ticket sales is \$2,000. Despite these

funding sources, the budget falls short of the total expenses, and the speaker has requested additional funds-\$1000 from GSS to cover the shortfall.

Anthony Barrows moved to approve the report, it was seconded by Diego Javier-Jimenez. It was also approved by the Senate.

The meeting was requested to be extended for 10 minutes by Anthony Barrows.

## **Agenda Item: Graduate Student Union (GSU)**

Baxter Worthing, Ph.D. candidate at the Plant Biology Department, provided an update on the status of UVM GSU's unionization efforts, highlighted the need for cooperation between GSU and GSS, and encouraged international students to seek information and support regarding the unionization process.

### **Next Meeting**

Nov 14, 2023, Microsoft Teams 8:00 pm

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm

Adjournment 9:09 pm