MEMORANDUM

TO: President Tromp, Provost Schadler, and Dean Berger
FROM: Collin A. Coil, President, Graduate Student Senate
DATE: October 21, 2026
RE: Activities of the Graduate Student Senate for October 2026

Executive Summary

October was a productive month for the Graduate Student Senate. At its October 15 meeting, the Senate passed four resolutions, including adoption of a revised Constitution and a resolution in support of graduate student workers and a contract with the Graduate Student Union. With these, the current Senate has passed as many resolutions in two months as in the previous two academic years combined. The GSS hosted or supported three events attended by approximately 70 students, bringing attendance for the academic year to 370. The Senate also authorized nine graduate student clubs, simplified room booking for clubs, and received a record 77 applications from 32 programs for the fall cycle of the Elevate Grant. In the coming weeks, the GSS will consider two additional resolutions at its October 26 meeting and continue building relationships with legislative trustees and elected officials.

Legislation and Advocacy

Four pieces of legislation were passed during our October 15 meeting:

- Resolution 9.10.2026.1 - Adoption of the Revised Constitution of the Graduate Student Senate;
- Resolution 9.10.2026.2 - In Support of Graduate Student Workers and a Contract with the Graduate Student Union;
- Resolution 9.10.2026.3 - Reaffirming a Call for an Open Access Publication Fund; and
- Resolution 9.10.2026.4 - Reaffirming a Call for a Report on Fossil Fuel Divestment.

As a result of passing these four pieces of legislation, the GSS is the most legislatively productive Senate in the past several years, passing as many resolutions in two months as the past two academic years combined. The GSS intends to keep up this legislative pace and has two additional pieces of legislation up for consideration at its October 26 meeting. Our Student Affairs Committee is working to meet with graduate students to hear their needs and concerns to bring them to the attention of University leadership.

The GSS is working to disseminate these resolutions to critical stakeholders. Specifically, we are working to get the Board of Trustees to approve the changes to our Constitution at their next meeting, in line with the requirements described in the University Manual.

Following the Board of Trustees Meeting on October 16th, the GSS has worked with University Relations to start building relationships with the legislative trustees. We are excited for these partnerships. Additionally, our External Affairs Committee, led by Carrie San Angelo, has started identifying ways to connect with our local and federal lawmakers.

Finally, we are waiting to hear the results of the MIT Graduate Student Council survey on federal immigration and funding policies. This survey closed in the past month, and we will share the results of the survey once we receive them.

Events

This month, the GSS hosted three event:

1. **Coffee Hour.** On October 19, the GSS hosted its first coffee hour of the academic year. During this event, we provided breakfast and beverages for around 35 graduate students.

2. **Fall-ing in Love with Vermont.** On October 15, the GSS partnered with the Graduate College to provide apple cider and cider doughnuts. Additionally, we provided several fall-themed bucket lists to encourage students to explore Burlington and the surrounding area. This event was led by Christina Cardona, a student success coordinator in the Graduate College. Approximately 30 students attended.

3. **Stand with Survivors.** On October 12, the GSS supported the SGA for the Stand with Survivors event. This event provided support for survivors of sexual and relationship violence and reminded students of UVM's support resources. SGA President Kennedy Connors led this event, and this event was well attended by undergraduate students and had a handful of graduate students.

Altogether, approximately 70 students attended GSS events in October, bringing our total for the academic year to 370 attendees. The GSS also promoted events hosted by the University and graduate student clubs. Approximately 17 students registered for these partner events during October through our subscribable calendar and newsletter, helping our partners across the University reach graduate students.

The GSS is looking to increase the frequency of events. We have earmarked the largest amount ever for events, and our events committee, led by Krittika Dey, is currently organizing several large events.

Grad Student Services

The GSS authorized 9 graduate student clubs at its October 15 meeting:

- Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA)
- Indian Subcontinent Student Association (ISSA)
- Larner College of Medicine Graduate Student Council (LCOM)
- Nepali Student Association (NSA)
- Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)

- UVM Doctorate of Physical Therapy Club (DPT)
- The Alternative Protein Club
- The Rubenstein Graduate Student Association (RGSA)
- YUVA @ UVM

The GSS is also working to improve club management. Our Secretary, Eliza Beebe, led the club renewal effort, reaching out and collecting club renewal forms from active clubs. We will be working to get set up with Rally Point to further improve our oversight and documentation related to graduate student clubs.

The GSS continued to deliver essential services to graduate students this month. The GSS provided room booking support for graduate student clubs. We recently developed a room booking form to collect all the information needed for the GSS to book rooms for clubs, greatly simplifying the room booking process.

We collected applications for the fall cycle of the Elevate Grant, which provides reimbursements for research and conference travel. The program has fewer eligibility requirements than other conference funding programs, which broadens graduate student access to travel support. The program is administered primarily by our Treasurer, Chhayank Srivastava, who also developed the application form. This cycle received the largest number of applicants, with 77 applications from 32 distinct programs. About one-third of applicants are non-presenters seeking funding for professional development opportunities.

We have started meeting regularly with the Center for Health and Wellbeing (CHWB) and the Student Government Association to discuss initiatives to address basic needs support for students at UVM. CHWB Executive Director Blake Riley has been instrumental in planning initiatives and identifying new approaches to address graduate student needs.

Conclusion

The GSS has continued to build momentum this fall through sustained legislative activity, growing event participation, and expanded services for graduate students and their clubs. We are grateful for our partnerships with University Relations, the Graduate College, and the Student Government Association. We look forward to working with University leadership on the priorities outlined in this month's resolutions, particularly the Board of Trustees' consideration of our revised Constitution. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further at your convenience.

The GSS respectfully requests University leadership's support in addressing each resolution, and we would welcome a response on how the University intends to proceed.