

GSS GENERAL BODY MINUTES



The University of Vermont

Date: 03/22/2022

Time: 1804 - 1900

Facilitator: Graduate Student Senate

Approval of Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 1804 on March 22, 2022

Motion to Approve Minute by: Daniel Munteanu

Seconded: Sandra Nnadi

No dissent, minutes were approved

President Report

- Updates on the upcoming events
 1. Graduate Student Appreciate Week (April 4th – 8th)
 - Feedback forum and other events
 2. Graduate Student Mixer
 - Friday March 25th ->1900 – 2100
 - Orlando's Bar in Burlington
 3. Graduate Student Coffee Break
 - 0800 – 1000 on Friday March 25th
 - GSS Office – 311T in Davis Center
 4. President's Appreciation Event
 - Tuesday, April 19th 1700 – 1800
 - Invitations will be sent out to GSS Senators
 5. GSS Award Banquet
 - Thursday April 21st at 1730

Vice President Report

- GSS/Graduate College TA/RA Survey will be sent out in early April
- Graduate Student Graduation
 1. Diploma Ceremony – May 21 @ 1230

- 2. Degree conferral – May 22 @ 0820
- Introduction of executive council elections
 1. Discussion of executive board roles and responsibilities
 2. Email call for candidates will be sent out to graduate students and responses will be required as of April 1st
- Call for senator volunteers on the Election Committee

Communication Director Update

- Call for senators and graduate students to send pictures for Instagram posts during Graduate Student Appreciation week

Old Business

- Discussion about faculty advisors framing GSS as a ‘distraction’ from primary roles
 1. Information presented by Vice President regarding discussion with Dean Forehand
 2. Dean Forehand will emphasize the senator roles as leadership opportunities for graduate students
 3. Information provided on contacting ombudsperson via Dan Harvey (dan.harvey@uvm.edu) if any conflict arises

New Business

- Housing Committee Update
 1. Housing committee met with VP Cate to discuss future of graduate student housing at UVM
 2. Workshop for Housing and Tenant Rights to be hosted by Housing Committee on Wednesday March 30th at 1600
 3. Next housing committee meeting on Thursday March 24th at 1730
- Graduate Student Advocacy & Experience Committee Update
 1. Updates to the Pawbook have been made
 - The document has been passed to Exec Board and other committees will have opportunity to suggest edits
 2. Proposed idea to utilize food sharing budget to host additional graduate student mixers
 3. Public committee meeting to be hosted during first week of April
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Committee Letter
 1. Committee drafted a letter to the administration to express GSS position on supporting survivors of sexual violence in having freedom to express their stories
 2. Input that the first paragraph of the letter contain context regarding the purpose of the letter and environment that generated its content
 3. The statement was read to the senate by Vice President Miki Beach
 4. Motion to approve the statement for public distribution of the statement following changes recommended by Baxter Worthing: Lucy George
 - Seconded by Michelle Saunders
 - Approved by general consent
 - Motion passed without dissent
- Grads Give Back (GGB) Potential Events

1. Daniel Munteanu (GGB coordinator) presented several GGB event ideas
 - Collaboration with mutual aid organizations in Burlington
 - Graduate students to assist with serving food
 - Collaboration with Food Not Cops, involvement of GSS with the preparation of a meal for these events
 - Co-sponsorship of Volleyball Tournament to raise money for charitable donation
 - Collaboration with Rubenstein Graduate Student Association to plant trees in the community

Next Meeting

April 8th, 2022 | 0800

Motion to adjourn was made at 1900 and passed without dissent.

Additional Details

- Grads Give Back event particulars
 1. Bradley Cech (Chemistry) is organizing a food drive for a Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation summer project. They will be building little free pantries to address food insecurity in places all throughout Eastern New York. Drop off non-perishable food at the box on the second floor of Discovery Hall.
 2. There are many amazing community events going on around Burlington every day; these aren't "community service" opportunities so to speak, it's about neighbors helping neighbors cooperating with one another to thrive.
 - People's Kitchen. Share meals and essentials in community at South Meadows Apartments (Raymond Pl, in the South End). Monday and Friday evenings in April.
 - Community cooking at Pathways Community Center. Cook a meal together at Pathways Vermont Community Center (279 N Winooski Av) on Wednesday evenings (6:00-8:00 PM). Food will also be distributed for lunch the next day.
 - Food Not Cops. Share food and gear every day from 1:00-2:00 PM at the Marketplace Garage (Cherry St) downtown.
 3. We also hope to organize events for the graduate student community to give back together. Some other ideas that GSS has done before the pandemic include:
 - Tree planting for Earth Day. We would partner with the Rubenstein Graduate Student Association and community organizations and plant together as a group.
 - GSS Volleyball Tournament. On-campus event open to everyone to raise money in support of various non-profit organizations.
 4. GSS communications will keep in touch about the events we are planning. Also, contact Dan (Daniel.Munteanu@uvm.edu) with questions.

- Draft communication from the Sexual Violence Prevention and Education committee



The Graduate Student Senate
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University of Vermont
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TO: University of Vermont Graduate Students

FROM: The Graduate Student Senate

DATE: March X, 2022

SUBJECT: X

At the University of Vermont, there have been recent discussions about moving the University forward while promoting a campus climate that is safe and healthy for all students, staff, and faculty. The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) strives to be a part of building this better future.

Some survivors of sexual violence have come forward with their stories on social media, in newspapers, and in other major outlets. GSS appreciates and respects that survivors make the best choices that they can make given their trauma and their needs on their individual healing journeys. GSS respects the humanity of survivors and does not critique their choices as they deal with their trauma. For this reason, GSS stands with survivors and their freedom of expression in any forum.

As the University of Vermont enhances its programming to support survivors on their healing journeys while promoting cultural transformation, we are now discussing the creation of survivor spaces, which can be both safe spaces and courageous spaces, to enable survivors to share their stories.

Previously, survivors who chose to come forward through mass communications outlets did not have the option to share their stories in these survivor spaces. As quality survivor space programming is established, it is entirely feasible that many survivors will choose survivor spaces to share their stories and seek the help and support that they may desire on their healing journeys. This will likely result in a voluntary migration away from mass communications outlets.

GSS recommends that any University communications about these survivor spaces focus entirely on the positive virtues of these survivor spaces and avoid any mention of social media or mass communications outlets. Given the history of criticism of students coming forward on social media and the consistent backlash to that criticism, GSS recommends that the promotion of survivor spaces, which create an excellent step forward, not be confused or mixed with any mention of those other outlets.

Focusing entirely on the positive benefits of the survivor spaces will help unite the UVM community, support the healing journeys of survivors, and bring UVM Forward.