

UVM Graduate Student Senate Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 2023, Time: 7:00 pm

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

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

In attendance

Senators: Alison Hall, Anthony Barrows, Carlos Amissah, Dan Peipert, Diego Javier-Jimenez, Emma Myrick, Gift Omoruyi, Jenna Ann McDonald, Johnbosco Osuagwu, Joy Emmanuel, Justin Dempsey, Mona Davoudimeh, Niara Hicks, Parisa Suchdev, Ritwik Bandyopadhyay, Shashank Poudel, Stephen Alrich Marshall, Taylor Ann Jeannette Kocian, Temitope Boriwaye, Vanessa Ballard.

Guest: Gina Russin

Executive Council Attendees: Cara Simone, Omid Sedighi, Masoumeh Khodaverdi

21 total number attended.

Agenda Item: Approval of previous meeting minutes

Dan Peipert moved the motion to approve the previous minutes, it was seconded by Taylor Ann Jeannette Kocian.

Agenda Item: Event Committee Report

Niara Hicks, the co-chair of the event committee, highlighted upcoming events. They are gearing up for our next scheduled GSS event – the trampoline event on Friday (11/17) at 4:00 PM, limited to 25 participants. They plan to boost advertising efforts to improve visibility. On a related note, the subsequent event on the horizon is the Three Needs event scheduled for December 1st.

Agenda Item: Health and Wellness Committee Report

Emma Myrick and the Health and Wellness Committee delivered updates to the Senate. They successfully shared daylight savings tips on Instagram and in a GSS newsletter. The committee is actively working on creating a list of locations offering affordable winter gear. They also highlighted the availability of flu shots and a COVID vaccine clinic in the Davis Center. The ongoing agenda involves reaching out to various individuals to gather resources that will benefit the physical and mental health of graduate students.

Taylor Ann Jeannette Kocian moved to approve the report, it was seconded by Diego Javier-Jimenez.

Agenda Item: Housing Committee Report

Ritwik Bandyopadhyay, chair of the housing committee, addressed some challenging issues to the Senate. One challenge is the difficulty international graduate students face in finding housing due to a lack of credit or rental history, placing a significant burden on them. Conversations with the Office of International Education revealed that despite receiving emails seeking assistance, providing references doesn't always secure landlord acceptance. To tackle this, the committee suggests having members attend the orientation to share insights on housing resources or use a more effective platform than GRADNET for sharing housing abilities.

Ritwik also mentioned Catamount Run, an upcoming project for grad students and faculty. However, there are concerns about the considerably high rent, around \$2200, justified by the expectation that graduate students share rooms. This seems unreasonable, especially for students with families. Additionally, if rooms can't be filled by grad students or faculty, they plan to open them to other students or the general public, deviating from the project's intended purpose. It's an issue we'll discuss in our next meeting.

Ritwik emphasized that these issues require thorough discussion in our next meeting, and he welcomes input on potential solutions.

Anthony Barrows moved the motion to approve the report, it was seconded by Taylor Ann Jeannette Kocian.

Agenda Item: Stipend Committee Report

Ritwik Bandyopadhyay, Chair of the Stipend Committee, shared important findings and considerations. They've discovered that various departments have distinct policies or clauses in the contracts for TAs and RAs. These clauses mandate obtaining permission before taking on work outside their designated roles as TA or RA.

They also mentioned that there are differences in the minimum stipends across various departments and schools. To address these variations, Ritwik suggested exploring the possibility of accessing contracts from other departments. Their initial strategy involves emailing administrators to request access to the contracts.

This report aims to keep the Senate informed about the Stipend Committee's ongoing efforts to understand and address the diverse policies and stipend structures across different departments/schools.

Stephen Alrich Marshall moved the motion to approve the report, it was seconded by Emma Myrick.

Agenda Item: Professional Development Committee Report

Joy Emmanuel from the committee emphasized their focus on creating a survey to evaluate the career development needs of graduate students. Parisa Suchdev has engaged in discussions re

garding collaboration with the Dean of the Graduate College. Anthony Barrows brought attention to the shared goals with the Career Mobility Committee. Discussions with the graduate Dean revealed that the Graduate Dean's Office is also interested in these initiatives. Anthony expressed concerns about the complexity of involving multiple parties and shared ongoing efforts to navigate through these complexities.

Diego Javier-Jimenez moved the motion to approve the report, it was seconded by Taylor Ann J eannette Kocian.

Agenda Item: Vice President Report

Cara highlighted that the Dean hosts a monthly lunch, urging graduate students to participate and voice their thoughts. She mentioned plans to invite more individuals to join these monthly sessions, providing an avenue for addressing specific concerns, such as the overlap issue raised by Anthony.

Additionally, Cara expressed the intention to schedule the Spring retreat at the start of the next semester, preferably in mid-January, before the workload intensifies. She also pointed out the need for volunteers for upcoming events.

Diego Javier-Jimenez moved the motion to approve the report, it was seconded by Stephen Alrich Marshall.

Agenda Item: Student Occupational Therapy Association Funding Request

Gina Russin presented a funding request, initially seeking \$2000 but later revising it to \$500. The Occupational Therapy Club, recognized in March, sent delegates to the AOTA conference (American Occupational Therapy Association) to enrich their knowledge. Future plans involve collaboration with GSS, engagement in community-based initiatives, and hosting events such as interdisciplinary nights, craft nights, and coffee nights. The funds will support future AOTA conference participation and provide flexibility for various club activities, including offsetting costs for members in the upcoming year.

However, the funding request was not supported by the Senate.

New Business:

Cara shared information about the December graduation ceremony, explaining that the university initially had no plans for a December graduation. However, due to the request of graduate students who were moving away and no longer had to be at UVM, GSS lobbied for and organized the ceremony. She mentioned questioning the expenses covered by comprehensive fees, such as photography and flowers, and invited attendees to the hooding ceremony in IRA Allen Chapel at 3:00 PM. Omid is set to represent GSS as the speaker, and Massi will be reading names.

Next Meeting

Nov 28, 2023, Microsoft Teams 7:00 pm

Stephen Alrich Marshall moved the Motion to adjourn, it was followed by Taylor Ann Jeannette Kocian.

Adjournment 7:53 pm