

GSA 10-17-14 meeting minutes for approval.

●GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA)●
MEETING MINUTES
October 17, 2014●Ketchum Hall, Room 219

Welcome: **President Gustafson** called the meeting to order at 5:37p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the 10/03/14 meeting were approved unanimously.

Remarks of the President: **President Gustafson** ceded the space designed for her remarks in order to hold the nominations for the Faculty Advisor. **Secretary Creech** nominated Dr. Karen Sands-O'Connor, and **President Gustafson** nominated Dr. Andrew Nicholls. Dr. Sands-O'Connor spoke briefly about herself, stating that she is currently on the College Senate, she is the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, and she was the Graduate Coordinator for the English M.A. program until last spring. She also spoke to Dr. Nicholls' excellent qualifications, and observed that, even though she wants to help out as much as she can, perhaps Dr. Nicholls is less committed at the moment. Next, **President Gustafson** read a statement about Dr. Nicholls' qualifications, since he could not attend the meeting due to the fact that he is in Maine, working with graduate students. It was affirmed that he has served on the College Senate for six years, as the Chair of the Instruction and Research Committee; he is also the Chair of the Department of History and Social Studies Education; he has been a faculty member of the department since 1996, and has supervised over a dozen theses. It was also stated that Dr. Nicholls is highly involved with student development, and would be glad to serve as the Faculty Advisor for the Graduate Student Association. Dr. Sands-O'Connor stated that if Dr. Nicholls were to be chosen for the position, she would be available as well to come to the meetings and assist the senate whenever it was necessary. **Dean Railey** inquired if the GSA is limited to only one Faculty Advisor, and **President Gustafson** replied that although the Constitution refers to only one advisor, Dr. Sands-O'Connor is still a member of the graduate community, and as such, her assistance would be welcome whether there is a title attached to it or not. The nominations were put up for a vote, via secret ballot, and **Dr. Andrew Nicholls** was officially selected, through a majority vote, as the Faculty Advisor for the Graduate Student Association.

Remarks of the Administrative Liaison: **Dean Kevin Railey** encouraged the senate to sign up for the day of service during the President's Inauguration Week, since the activity stands for all the values Dr. Conway-Turner upholds. He also urged the senators to attend the inauguration ceremony on Tuesday, October 21, in a show of support for the new President.

Treasurer Report: **Treasurer Tomion** gave the following report:

- Current Balance From 10/03/14: US\$48,447.26
- Funding Requests:
 - Solina Krickovich (Speech-Language Pathology)
 - i. Requested: \$977.00
 - ii. Granted: \$977.00
 - iii. American Speech-Language Hearing Association's national convention

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1. Presenter
 - iv. Meets all criteria
 - v. Is slated to present a study and its results at the American Speech-Language Hearing Association's national conference in Orlando. After reading through the request and the documentation (all required documents were included), I checked the ASHA website to confirm that Solina was on their schedule. Solina also included a letter of recommendation from the Speech-Language Pathology Dept., which was relatively lengthy and glowing of Solina. The reason for my recommendation of the full amount of Solina's request to be granted is due to the weight of the request. Not only has Solina been a well-recognized (several awards; dean's list) part of the Buffalo State student body for undergraduate and now graduate school, but Solina spent 2 semesters conducting her research, which she will now be presenting at her academic field's national convention. Solina's endeavors will reflect well on all Buffalo State students.
- **Treasurer Tomion** is currently processing several other requests.

Committee Reports:

- **Student Welfare Committee (Standing Committee). Chair: Senator Danielle Morgera:** Reported that she has been reaching out to constituents to get their opinion on another GSA social event. Some people have suggested we do a fundraiser, and it is **Senator Morgera's** view that we should work on adding something to the Constitution that will allow the Senate to fund more than one event per semester. **President Gustafson** asked if it would be fine to task the Graduate School with sending out a mass email to all graduate students to see if anyone would be interested in being part of an ad-hoc committee dealing with social events and activities. Dr. Sands-O'Connor opined that we should specify how many members we are looking for specifically, as well as the school they belong to. After some pertinent discussion, it was decided that we should aim for four students per committee. **Dean Railey** suggested that the Budget Allocation and Policy Committee be charged with writing the language to observe membership for each committee.
- **Budget Allocation and Policy Committee (Standing Committee). Chair: Senator Sam Yuwar:** Reported that he faced the same challenge in terms of trying to get people to work with him and to join the committee. **Senator Yuwar** proceeded to read his research/suggestions to address the procedure for resignations of an Executive Board member or Senator, which stated that: "An Executive Board member or a Senator may resign at any time by giving written notice to the following members of the GSA Executive Board: the President or the Secretary of the Graduate Student Association. Unless otherwise specified in the notice, the resignation shall take effect upon receipt thereof by the board or such officer, and the acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective."
President Gustafson called for discussion on the matter. Constituents Muhammed Sumbundu and Emmanuel Abreu both expressed their willingness and desire to be part of the committee in order to assist Senator Yuwar with writing the policy on resignations. Next, **Senator Yuwar** passed around a document containing an example of By-Laws, to which **President Gustafson** added her own research on the nature of By-Laws according to Robert's Rules of Order, which specifies the inherent differences between a Constitutional document, and other sets of rules, i.e., By-Laws.

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- **Rules for Replacement Committee (Ad-Hoc Committee). Chair: Senator Jaclyn Phillips:** Reported that research on the matter of creating rules for replacement is still being conducted. She is looking at different examples from other student associations, in order to inform her writing process.
- **Additional/Alternative Meetings Exploration Committee (Ad-Hoc Committee). Chair: Senator Ashley Perez:** Reported that she found various platforms that can be used to hold the additional GSA meeting each month, but that in her opinion, the free of charge ones are not appropriate for the kinds of needs we have as a group. **Senator Perez** recommended we keep meeting in person, twice a month, as it was first stipulated. After some pertinent discussion, where inquiries were made as to the nature of the various online meeting platforms and their capabilities, it was agreed that meeting in person would be more advantageous after all.

Old Business:

- **Establishment of By-Laws (Tabled item from 10/03/14): President Gustafson** opined that perhaps the senators should take some time to read the handout on Robert's Rules By-Laws, before having a discussion on the matter. It was decided that the issue would be tabled, to be discussed under old business, during the next meeting.
- **Establishment of Social Media Committee (Tabled item from 10/03/14): Secretary Creech** made a motion to remove the item from the table, and bring it under discussion. **Vice-President Lanning** seconded the motion. **President Gustafson** put it to a vote, and the motion passed unanimously. **Secretary Creech** said it is an important conversation to have, since we have a new website, complete with a Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter accounts, and that according to campus administration the GSA needs to update all of these at least daily in order to keep them running. **Secretary Creech** inquired after the possibility of following Dean Railey's proposal, made during the previous meeting, to create a calendar with the help of his assistant, Margaret Letzelter, where different members of this committee would rotate to post on the GSA's social media websites. **Dean Railey** asked if anyone would be interested in chairing the Social Media Committee. After some pertinent discussion, in which it was brought to light that chairing this committee is not a particular interest for the senators, **Dean Railey** suggested that his office proceed with the creation of the rotating calendar once an email communication was sent to the graduate population asking interested parties to join the committee. **Treasurer Tomion** made a motion to table this discussion, to be discussed under old business, during the next meeting. **Senator Morgera** seconded the motion. **President Gustafson** called for discussion, and after seeing none, put the motion to a vote. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Graduate Scholarship Advertising: President Gustafson** pointed out that this issue needs to be finalized, and that we need to make decisions as a Senate. She indicated that Treasurer Tomion's opinion would be welcome, in order to reach a conclusion on the appropriate wording of the marketing so that it coincides with the previously stipulated scholarship criteria. **Dean Railey** suggested that a flyer be used for the purpose of advertising the scholarship.
- **Procedure for Funding Denials (Tabled from previous Administration):** After some unofficial discussion, **President Gustafson** asked if anyone wanted to bring the item off the table. After seeing none, the item remained tabled.

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- **Procedure for Faculty Evaluations (Tabled from previous Administration):** **President Gustafson** asked if anyone wanted to bring the item off the table. After seeing none, the item remained tabled.
- **Funding Criteria Revision Committee (Created as an Ad-Hoc):** **President Gustafson** reminded the senate that this committee still does not have a Chair. **Senator Morgera** made a motion to remove the item from the table, and bring it under discussion. **Secretary Creech** seconded the motion. **President Gustafson** put it to a vote, and the motion passed unanimously. After some pertinent discussion on the nature of the committee, **Senator Morgera** nominated herself to be the Chair of the Funding Criteria Revision Committee, in order to revise the current funding criteria. **Treasurer Tomion** seconded the nomination. **President Gustafson** called for discussion, and after seeing none, put the nomination to a vote. The nomination passed unanimously.
- **Concerns Over Parking:** **President Gustafson** observed that during the previous meeting, the entire senate was tasked with getting constituent opinions on the issue of parking. **Secretary Creech** said she talked to some of her constituents, and everyone seemed to think that 4:00p.m. is late for graduate student parking to be available. Her constituents inquired after the possibility of graduate students getting a different color sticker, so that graduate parking would be available earlier in the day. **Vice-President Lanning** opined that perhaps, by getting a different sticker, graduate students would be allowed to get parking an hour earlier. Muhammed Sumbundu, who sits on the Parking and Transportation Committee, pointed out that a tangible document containing the graduate students' needs would go a long way when addressing the issue during the aforementioned committee's meetings. The issue of safety was discussed, since a lot of graduate classes end after 10:00p.m. and most graduate students have to park far away from their classroom buildings. **Dean Railey** offered his opinion that we need to come up with a solution that would address the situation in its entirety, including undergraduate students, since safety is not only an issue for graduate students. Emmanuel Abreu replied that this senate's constituents are graduate students, exclusively, and that we could not speak to whatever issues come up for undergraduates. **Treasurer Tomion** agreed that the bigger issue here is safety, and that if we were to propose something concrete to the Parking and Transportation Committee, it should be that they change the security measures around the campus at night. **Dean Railey** pointed out that perhaps we could ask that all evening graduate classes be held in the same building(s), so that more people can walk to their automobiles together. This policy addresses safety, not just convenience. Muhammed Sumbundu advised the senate to draft a resolution to bring to the Parking and Transportation Committee, stating our need for safety and the possibility of having evening graduate courses in the same building(s). This resolution could be brought to President Conway-Turner's attention by President Gustafson, and Vice-President Lanning could bring it to the College Senate Student Welfare Committee. **Senator Yuwar** suggested that we concentrate on changing security measures, via the University Police, as well as inquiring after the possibility of all evening classes being held in one building. After more pertinent discussion, **Senator Morgera** made a motion to table the issue, to be discussed during the next meeting. **President Gustafson** seconded the motion, and called for discussion. After seeing none, the motion was put to a vote. The motion passed: five yeas, three nays, no abstentions.

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- **President Conway-Turner's Request: President Gustafson** referred to the President's request that the GSA Senate speak to our constituents to find out which other graduate programs, if any, they would like to see being offered at SUNY Buffalo State. This is a standing request, since the new administration is looking for ways to make the college experience better for everybody. **Dean Railey** asked if we would like to see the graduate student survey where people actually wrote their reason for having chosen Buffalo State to pursue their graduate studies. **President Gustafson** responded that that would be helpful indeed, and encouraged all Senators to speak to their constituents about this.
- **Open Senate Seats: Vice-President Lanning** reminded the senate of the motion that was passed during the previous meeting (10/03/14), in terms of the procedure to be followed in order to fill the open Senate positions. The motion that passed during that meeting states that the current Graduate Student Association Senate be allowed to bring possible nominees to run for the open Senate positions by the November 7th meeting of the current academic year (2014-2015). Possible representatives from the Schools of Arts and Humanities and the School of the Professions would be expected to give a short platform, not to exceed two minutes. After all nominations were put forward and spoken about, a vote would be held via secret ballot, and the people with the most votes would be chosen. As a representative for the School of Arts and Humanities, **Secretary Creech** brought two interested graduate students to the meeting. **President Gustafson** urged the senators to jot down notes when the two nominees gave their platform, just in case we receive more students who are interested, at the November 7th meeting. Next, she asked each of the two students to speak briefly.
 - **Christina Housler:** She is currently coursing her first semester of the English M.A. program. She spoke about the importance of being involved with the student community, and said representatives should be familiar with different career paths, and that some people don't necessarily opt to pursue the so-called practical professions. She has been on the job market for four years, and is aware of the hardships recently graduated students face in the world. She thinks it is important that graduate students have representatives they can actually relate to.
 - **Oscar Budde:** He completed his undergraduate degree at SUNY Buffalo State, and is currently a freshman graduate student. He expressed his desire to help people in the field of Arts and Humanities, since it is something he is passionate about. He believes he has the appropriate level of experience, as well as the willingness to be part of the Graduate Student Association, since it would allow him to represent his school.

New Business:

- **Constitutional Amendments: Senator Morgera** made a motion to change the language in the Constitution, which states that GSA meetings shall be held three times per semester. Her proposed change includes the words "at least" before the number of meetings. **Vice-President Lanning** seconded the motion. **President Gustafson** called for discussion, and Emmanuel Abreu asked if we should also change the number three, since we don't want it to be too far from the number that is stated in the Constitution. **Vice-President Lanning** replied that the number is not

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that far off, since we have only scheduled five or six meetings per semester. **Dean Railey** asked Senator Morgera is she would be willing to accept a friendly amendment to her motion, in order to observe that the GSA should make the number of intended meetings available to the student population, prior to elections. This way, therefore, every student nominating themselves would be aware of the number of meetings they will be required to attend during their tenure. **Vice-President Lanning** moved to amend the current motion on the floor to include the requirement that the Graduate Student Association Executive Board choose meeting dates for the academic year, and include those dates in the advertisements for Senate positions for the academic year, at the beginning of the Fall Semester. After some pertinent discussion, **Senator Morgera** did not accept the amendment to her motion, since she believes it does not pertain the discussion, and does not fall under the same category. **President Gustafson** opined that we could take up that portion of the conversation at a later date, and asked for the original motion to be restated.

- **First Motion: Senator Morgera** motioned that the language in the Constitution change from "GSA meetings shall be held three times a semester" to include the words "At least..." before the number. **Vice-President Lanning** seconded the motion. **President Gustafson** called for more discussion, and after seeing none, put it to a vote. The motion passed: seven yeas, one nay, no abstentions.
- **Second Motion: Senator Morgera** motioned to amend the language in the Constitution addressing elections, under Article VII, Section 2, to include that the Executive Board members should be responsible for providing meeting dates for the academic year, and to include those dates in the advertisements for Senate positions, prior to the elections, at the beginning of the Fall Semester. **Dean Railey** seconded the motion. **President Gustafson** called for discussion, and after seeing none, put it to a vote. The motion passed: seven yeas, no nays, one abstention.
- **Graduate Housing: President Gustafson** spoke about the current standing of graduate housing on campus, and indicated that she brought the senate's concerns on the matter to Associate Vice-President Daniel Velez, who in turn posed the concerns directly to the Residence Life Office. They replied that there are currently no data and no focus groups to reach a conclusion on the matter, and as a result, President Gustafson's HEA 650 graduate class has been tasked with gathering the data, and accumulating the appropriate information so that the Residence Life Office can make a decision. **President Gustafson** charged the entire senate with speaking to their residential constituents, and to any students who may have wanted to live on campus, to obtain their opinion on the matter, and to bring any suggestions they have. All information we can gather is valid.

Constituent Comments/Questions:

- Emmanuel Abreu made reference to the email communication sent to the graduate student population on the proposed amendments to the Graduate Student Association Constitution. He expressed his view that a couple of days are not sufficient time in order to reach the entire population, and to have them raise any questions/concerns. **President Gustafson** concurred, and said that at least a week in advance would be

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more appropriate, which is why the said proposed amendments had not been discussed during this meeting. Next, Mr. Abreu talked about funding requests, and explained that the Chair of the English Department, Dr. Lorna Perez, had recently made it mandatory for all students to request funding from the Graduate Student Association first, before requesting funds from the English Department. This is due to the fact that a lot of English students go to their department first. Mr. Abreu opined that it would be interesting if all other departments followed suit, so that the GSA would have the opportunity to help more people. **Treasurer Tomion** concurred, and said that that would mean that the Funding Criteria Revision Committee should start examining the criteria as soon as possible. Mr. Abreu also alluded to the fact that Dr. Perez raised some concerns about the Travel Authorization Funding Sheet, since it requires a supervisor signature. **President Gustafson** replied that the GSA as a body has no control over that sheet, since the school requires it. Mr. Abreu suggested that, since that is the sheet being used by the GSA, we come up with a way to address that gap, and to figure out whose signature, if anyone's, is required. **President Gustafson** responded that this is not a GSA body issue, but that perhaps it is the Treasurer's responsibility to see this addressed.

Adjournment: at 7:19p.m.

Attendance:

Present:

Andrea Gustafson – President
Ashley Lanning – Vice-President
Trevor Tomion – Treasurer
Stacy Creech – Secretary
Sheneika Latty - Senator
Danielle Morgera – Senator-at-Large
Ashley Perez – Senator
Jaclyn Phillips – Senator
Sam Yuwar – Senator
Dean Kevin Railey – Administrative Liaison
Manny Abreu – Constituent
Oscar Budde – Constituent
Christina Housler – Constituent
Muhammed Sumbundu – Constituent
Dr. Karen Sands-O'Connor – Graduate Faculty

Absent:

None

Excused:

Sean McCormick - Senator

Next Meeting: 7 November 2014.