



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

Graduate Student Senate

Meeting of the Whole

February 22nd, 2021

37 Senators in attendance

Executive Council Attendees: Avery Rasmussen, Aayudh Das, Jaspreet Nagi, Michael Hoaglund and Rosie Chapina

Attendance was taken via online participation.

Senator attendees and clubs that had a representative present can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

Minutes were recorded by Michael Hoaglund.

Meeting was called to order by Vice President Aayudh Das at 4:30pm.

Minutes from the last Senate Meeting on December 3rd, 2020, were approved unanimously and will be released on GSS website.

Executive Board Updates:

Vice President Updates: Aayudh Das

- **Next week speaker:** Erica Caloiero, Vice Provost for Student Affairs (Interim)
- Reach out at aadas@uvm.edu

President Updates: Avery Rasmussen

- Reorganization working group
- Next steps re: stipends and fees report
- Spring 2021 programming/events
- Food insecurity initiative

Communications Director: Rosie Chapina

- Harry Potter trivia was a success!

Committee Updates:

Housing Committee (Mohamed Khalife)

- Housing Survey Review and Feedback
- Q1: Are you an International student or out-of-state student?
Q2: How much do you pay for housing?
Q3: Does your rent include utilities? If not, how much do the utilities cost?
Q4: Does your rent sum up to 30% of your stipend?
Q5: Do you prefer to get accepted to a University with secured graduate housing?
Q6: Did your department play a role in your search for housing?
Q7: What is your experience with your Landlord?
Q8: Kindly share your 'search for housing' experience in a few sentences.

Club Bylaw Revision:

Section A: Eligibility

Clause 1

The graduate student club must be an official student organization recognized by the University of Vermont.

[The graduate student club must be an official student organization, established by UVM graduate students.](#)

Clause 2

The graduate student club membership must be comprised of at least seventy-five percent (75%) graduate students.

[The graduate student club membership must be comprised of at least seventy-five percent \(75%\) graduate students with a minimum of seven active graduate students. Exceptions to the requirement of seven active members can be granted during the recognition or renewal process if a club demonstrates that it can successfully operate with fewer active members](#) The club executive board must include at least three officers: (1) President, (2) Vice-President and (3) Treasurer. These positions can only be held by full time graduate students.

Clause 3

The graduate student club must provide a mission statement and/or constitution to be presented to the Senate.

[The graduate student club must provide a club roster and a constitution including a mission statement to be reviewed by GSS executives and presented to the Senate.](#)

Clause 4

A [new](#) group may apply for recognition in the Fall semester from the first day of the Fall semester to September 30th, and in the Spring semester from February 1st to February 28th. [Annual](#) club renewal occurs at the start of the academic year regardless of the semester in which the club is founded.

Section B: Recognition and Representation Requirements

Clause 1

If the graduate student club only has members from one graduate program, the Senator of that program may represent the club at Senate meetings. If the program does not have a Senator, the club must nominate a graduate student to represent the program and club.

Clause 2

If the graduate student club spans multiple programs, a representative may attend Senate meetings to represent the club.

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Clause 3

Recognition and approval of a graduate student club requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Recognition and approval of a graduate student club requires a unanimous agreement by the executive board followed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Clause 4

Recognition of graduate student clubs expires at the end of the academic year in which it was granted. Graduate student clubs may re-apply for recognition in the following year by providing an updated list of current members. Renewal of recognition requires unanimous approval of the Executive Council. Renewal may also be granted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Recognition of graduate student clubs expires at the end of the academic year in which it was granted. Graduate student clubs may re-apply for recognition in the following academic year by providing an updated roster of current officers and members. Renewal of recognition requires either a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate or unanimous approval of the Executive Council.

Clause 5

The graduate student club must sign the GSS Club recognition contract annually to operate chartstring and financial resources.

Annually, after the graduate student club has been renewed, a club representative must sign the GSS Club Recognition Contract to operate chartstring and financial resources.

Section C: Benefits of Recognition

Clause 1

Recognized graduate student clubs may request funding from the Graduate Student Senate. Approval of requests up to \$500 is at the discretion of the Executive Council. Approval of requests exceeding \$500 requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate.

Recognized graduate student clubs may request funding from the Graduate Student Senate. Approval of requests up to \$500 is at the discretion of the Executive Council with two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

Requests exceeding \$500 require a brief presentation to the Senate and can be approved with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senate. The funded club must provide a list of graduate students that benefited from the funding within seven days of the event.

Clause 2

Recognized graduate student clubs may request the Graduate Student Senate book rooms or other venues on campus for club events. If the graduate student club has a separate chartstring from the Graduate Student Senate, the club must provide the chartstring for the booking request.

Motion to revise club bylaws was approved unanimously.

Discussion with Speakers:

Cynthia Forehand, Dean of Graduate College

Opening Remarks

- Opened with discussion about student stipends
- Said that UVM pays above the minimum when compared to other universities
- Also said UVM pays above 50th percentile when compared to other universities
 - Says UVM covering health insurance (\$2690 value), not having to pay FICA taxes on stipends (7.65%) and do having to pay registration fee after 3rd year in program contributes to this
- Admitted that when UVM falls below 50th percentile when adjustment of cost of living in Burlington is included
 - Said this is something the administration is working on
- Discussed how UVM receives little state support compared to similar universities
 - Was said to be 47th in the nation
- Discussion about how much comprehensive student fees have changed in the past happened in the chat and there were conflicting numbers

For Presentation slides please see Appendix 2

Richard H. Cate, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Opening Remarks

- Opening remarks were focused on Graduate Student Housing
- UVM doesn't have the capacity to build Graduate Student Housing and manage its use
- This means UVM would have to work with a developer
- Elaborated that no developers are interested due to the pandemic

Q & A with Students

- Students mentioned who UVM sold both Centennial Wood Apartments and Ethan Allen apartment in recent years
- Response was that they were "old" and needed updates UVM could not afford
- Students pointed out that UVM is spending \$93 million (estimated) on the Tarrant Center (update to the Gutterson Field House) instead of making Graduate Student Housing a priority
- Response was that the money for that is from the Endowment which UVM administration does not have control over

Meeting was adjourned at 5:38pm.

Appendix 1 – Senator Attendees

#	Full Name	Programs
1	Andrew Nadeau	Physical Therapy
2	Marcus Weinman	CMB
3	Ashma Chakrawarti	Animal Biosciences
4	Atoosa Parsa	Complex Systems and Data Science
6	Irfan Tahir	Mechanical Engineering
7	Kamruzzaman Khan	Civil and Environmental Engineering
8	Aya Cheaito	Clinical Psychology
9	Suraj Bhattarai	Animal Biosciences
10	Mohamad Rabieh Khalifeh Khalife	Neuroscience
11	Baxter Worthing	Plant Biology
12	Mari Tomanelli	Medical Laboratory Sciences
13	Christopher Halsted	Natural Resources
14	Crystal Hutchinson	Counseling
15	Berke Tinaz	Plant Biology
16	Christopher Kruglik	Medical Sciences
17	Collin Mitchell	Accountancy
18	Alison Hall	Biology
19	Abigail Rec	Natural Resources
20	Liana Redmond	Counseling
21	Colin Giles	Mathematics
22	Holly Paige Chaos	Mathematics
23	Patrick Payne	Public Health
24	Jenan Husain	Neuroscience
25	Maria Rania Liu Goncalves	Master's in Leadership for Sustainability
26	Maaz Sattar	Biomedical Engineering
27	Maggie Phillips	Medical Sciences
28	Max Cordes Galbraith	Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration
29	Melina Harris	Sustainable Innovation MBA
30	Nawar Kareem	Public Health
31	Ryan Raichelson	Sustainable Innovation MBA
32	Sandra Nnadi	Plant Biology

Clubs with a representative present: ISA, CMC, NSA, Women in STEM, RGSA, DPT Club

Appendix 2:

2-22-21 GSS meeting
Dean Forehand

Activities related to a graduate assistantship are expected to take about 20 hours/week.

Your registration as a full-time student for 9 credit hours has an expectation of an additional 27 hours per week per the definition of a credit hour. The registration expectation is the same for course, research, internship, practicum or continuous registration credits.

Graduate assistantships are subject to income tax but because of your student status, they do not incur FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes, saving you 7.65% of the stipend in taxes.

The assistantship also includes payment of the UVM single Student Health Insurance premium (SHIP – currently \$2694) and a

full tuition scholarship for 9 credits fall and spring and 5 in summer for 12-month assistantships (\$14,685 for in state students and \$36,980 for out of state students).

In addition, the comprehensive fee is waived for students in continuous registration.

Timeline of Graduate College Enhancements to Funded Student Support

FY 14: Comprehensive fees eliminated for those in continuous registration (saving \$1173/term), with the exception of those in SHIP or those not in SHIP but needing to use the Student health Center, requiring payment of the Student Health Center fee (\$371.50/term) before use.

FY 15: Increased tuition scholarship on GRA positions to match that of GTAs. Prior to FY 15, GRA positions included full tuition scholarship only for research credits, not course credits. Prior to FY 15 only the out-of-state component of tuition for course credits was provided in scholarship for GRA supported students.

FY 16: Implemented payroll deduction system so that fees are paid up front for funded students and the student reimburses UVM via payroll deduction. Prior to that the fee needed to be paid by the bill due date so most of it came from only a couple of paychecks.

FY 16: began use of OSU survey to benchmark UVM stipends across disciplines. Based on this data, several UVM colleges/schools made significant adjustments to their stipends above the minimum stipend level set by the Graduate College.

Timeline of Graduate College Enhancements to Funded Student Support

FY 17: Payment for UVM SHIP increased from 75% to 100 % of the single student SHIP (saving \$673.5)

FY 17: Mandated 5 credit summer tuition scholarship for 12-month assistantships so students could register for research credits and maintain FICA exemption for summer stipend

FY 20: College of Arts and Sciences doctoral stipends lengthened from 9 to 12 months for entering students (additional \$6878 per year for new students)

FY 21: College of Arts and Sciences doctoral stipends lengthened from 9 to 12 months for all current and incoming students (additional \$6878 for existing students)

FY 21: Implemented 7-week parental leave policy

The table below provides the stipend increases (12-month) plus additional income due to other changes during FY 14-21. Note that values for stipends indicate the minimum for each school/college; students may be paid more, but not less. Inflation over this period was 12.52%.

School/College	FY 14-21 Doctoral Stipend Increase	Master's Stipend Increase	Additional contribution for UVM SHIP	Savings of fees in continuous registration
Minimum – applies to CAS +MATS, CESS, CNHS, GSB, LCOM	19%	7.6%	\$673.5	\$1603-\$2346
BIOE/CMB/NGP doctoral programs	26.1%	NA	\$673.5	\$1603-\$2346
CALS +FS	31.6%	16.7%	\$673.5	\$1603-\$2346
CEMS	20.3%	17.9%	\$673.5	\$1603-\$2346
RSENR	22.9%	27.1%	\$673.5	\$1603-\$2346

Compensation and Benefits Report Data

Degree	Timeframe	Minimum Stipend	Living Wage Ratio	Stipend (after fee)	Living Wage Ratio (after fee)
PhD	9-month	20525	0.710	18179	0.629
PhD	12-month	27377	0.947	25031	0.866
Master's	9-month	16675	0.577	14329	0.496
Master's	12-month	22233	0.769	19887	0.688

Living wage for the Burlington area = \$28,899 (source: livingwage.mit.edu)

But this is not the whole picture. Living wage is a community measure, not a comparison with other schools.

It represents the after tax income required to meet minimum needs. Stipends are FICA tax exempt, so Grad Students take home 7.65 % more than a wage earner in the community at the same pay.

And the SHIP is a minimum need met by additional pay to you of \$2690.

Table 1. Minimum graduate stipends at UVM. Living wage ratio = BTV living wage / stipend (Actually stipend/living wage)

Relationship to Living Wage when additional compensation is figured in

	Stipend after FICA Savings (7.65%)	Stipend after FICA & Health Insurance added and fees deducted	Living wage ratio after all additions and subtractions	Stipend after FICA and Health Insurance added and only CHWB fee added	Living Wage Ratio in Continuous Registration
PhD 12 month	\$29,471	\$29,815	1.032	\$31,418	1.087
Master's 12 month	\$23,934	\$24,278	0.840	\$25,881	0.896

UVM Stipend Levels relative to the OSU Survey schools

CIP Broad Category	UVM Estimated Percentile Rank (higher is better pay)	UVM Estimated Percentile Rank (higher is better pay), adjusted to local purchasing power
AGRICULTURE, AGRICULTURE OPERATIONS, AND RELATED SCIENCES.	79%	42%
NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION.	77%	46%
COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES.	71%	48%
EDUCATION.	73%	51%
ENGINEERING.	69%	36%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND LINGUISTICS.	50%	29%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE/LETTERS.	59%	37%
BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES.	60%	40%
MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS.	57%	39%
MULTI/INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES.**	63%	54%
PHYSICAL SCIENCES.	54%	35%
PSYCHOLOGY.	74%	54%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS.	56%	32%
SOCIAL SCIENCES.	64%	40%
HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS.	62%	44%
HISTORY.	50%	36%
ALL DISCIPLINES	69%	45%

At absolute value we are currently at our goal of being above 50th percentile in all disciplines. Note that the differences in percentile rank represent relatively small changes in absolute values.

We used the cost of living correction to argue successfully for increases to stipend levels for next year that we expect will get us above the 50th percentile after correction for cost of living.

Minimum stipends for GTA/GRA/GA in different schools/colleges/programs

GRA SALARY TABLE – UPDATED FOR FY 22 (NOT POSTED YET)

Pay Rates are based on a full-time GRA. (0.5 FTE = works 20 hours/week)

Academic Year 2021-2022 (9/1/21 - 8/31/22)	Masters		Doctoral	
	9-month	12-month	9-month	12-month
School/College/Program				
UVM Minimum	\$16,841	\$22,455	\$20,636	\$27,514
CAS including Graduate Program in Material Sciences	\$16,841	\$22,455	\$20,636	\$27,514
CALS including Graduate Program in Food Systems	\$18,096	\$24,128	\$22,706	\$30,275
CEMS	\$18,458	\$24,611	\$20,958	\$27,944
CESS	\$16,841	\$22,455	\$20,636	\$27,514
CNHS	\$16,841	\$22,455	\$20,636	\$27,514
Grossman School of Business	\$16,841	\$22,455	\$20,636	\$27,514
Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources	\$19,695	\$26,260	\$21,660	\$28,880
Ph.D. Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs				
• Bioengineering	NA	NA	NA	\$30,275
• Cellular, Molecular and Biomedical Sciences				
• Neuroscience				

What about self-supported students?

Tuition held constant 3rd year in a row.

Fees decreasing \$60 this year.

19 programs have variable tuition rate that decreases out of state tuition

36 Accelerated entry into Master's Programs (AMPs) decrease cost of master's degree



