

# GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

## MINUTES OF MEETING

Tuesday, November 15, 2022, Time: 8:00pm | *Meeting called to order* by Vice-President, Ijaz Ul-Haq

### In Attendance

Erica Lamkin	Austin Flueckiger	Atoosa Parsa
Sandra Nnadi	Anna Kim	Patrick Payne
Ijaz Ul Haq	Kevin Pham	Dan Peipert
Parisa Suchdev	Masoumeh Khodaverdi	Theresa Mungazi
Shahmeer Patel	Colin Levaunt	Daniel Munteanu
Justin MH Salisbury	Baxter Worthing	Katherine Lauren Booth
Meghan Owens	Holly Paige Chaos	Kanayo Ikeh
Jenan Husain	Bren Marie Cable	Goodness Nze-Igwe
Cynthia Forehand	Liz Sparks	

### Approval of previous meeting minutes

Motion to approve previous meeting minutes moved by Holly Paige Chaos, seconded by Shahmeer Patel.

### President's report

Justin Salisbury presented the following:

- Discussion and voting on the draft letter of apology to the four state recognized tribes- The letter, which was drafted in summer 2022, was presented to the Senate for discussion and voting. Justin gave a brief on the UVM event that occurred in Spring 2022 and the need to send an apology letter to the tribes.
  - I. Discussion started with Daniel Munteanu requesting for a video recording of the event to hear what was discussed, Justin replied that the recording of the event was posted on Youtube and he shared the link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8t3LxwhBhI>
  - II. Patrick Payne asked if there would be any action from the Senate following the letter of apology and Justin replied that the next steps would be to hear from the tribes how the Senate can best support them.
  - III. Colin Levaunt suggested that the letter of apology be revised to remove speculations of UVM's involvement in topics outside the subject matter. Based on the claims from the tribes in Canada and the USA, Colin was also concerned about how he might be perceived for taking a side.
  - IV. Holly suggested that we could include more information about these groups in an upcoming GSS newsletter to help educate others. Erica also supported Colin and Holly's concerns especially the need to

voice our opinions without drawing negative attention from the UVM administration and ensure that we are providing information that informs the students and administration of our opinion.

- V. Colin stated that the paragraph highlighting “possible connections between UVM and companies involved in energy politics who may not have positive relationships with indigenous communities” seemed like a speculation and went beyond the bounds of apologizing for the event itself. Justin suggested that we could make the amendment in the meeting, delete the paragraph Colin was concerned about and then vote. Sandra insisted that a group within the Senate should be formed to handle the amendments so that we could move on to other items in the agenda.
  - VI. Patrick made the motion to refer the letter of Apology to the Student Affairs Committee for amendment, Jenan seconded the motion. The Senate voted to refer the letter of apology to the student affairs committee for revision.
- Discussion and voting on the joint letter of CHIPS + Science appropriation -The letter was sent from Student Union Government organizations at Carnegie Mellon University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a joint request for us to sign on to it. Basically, the letter is soliciting that the NSF Future Act passed as part of the CHIPS and Science Act 2022 be fully funded.
    - I. Patrick Payne asked if the letter would be submitted to the relevant committee, or the leaders of the Senate and House of Representatives as addressed in the letter. Justin clarified that the letter is being sent to the Senate Majority leader and the Speaker of the House. Also, our support is very important as Senator Leahy is the Chair of Appropriations.
    - II. Colin Levaunt moved the motion to accept the letter and Shahmeer Patel seconded the motion. The Senate voted to sign on to the CHIPS + Science appropriation letter.

Vice-President report

Ijaz UI-Haq presented the list of committees with additional information of new chair of stipends and Executive council liaisons.

Finance	Student Affairs	Housing	Stipends
Yasaman Pedari (chair) Shameer Patel (V.chair) Jenan Husain	Justin MH Salisbury (chair) Julian Armada Kevin Pham	Patrick Payne (Chair) Jenan Husain (V.chair) Daniel Peipert Rubaina Anjum Sandra Nnadi (Liaison)	Bren Marie Cable (Chair) Colin Giles Baxter Worthing Kevin Zuniga Cuellar Sandra Nnadi (Liaison)

Events	Gender Equity	Professional Development	Health & Wellness
Anna Kim (Chair) Rusul Mustafa (V.chair) Shameer Patel Patrick Payne Julian Armada Massi Khodaverdi Ijaz UI Haq (Liaison) Erica Lamkin (Liaison)	Liz Sparks (Chair) Ye-Jee Kim Patrick Payne Erica Lamkin (Liaison)	Omid Sedighi (Chair) Massi Khodaverdi (V.Chair) Austin Flueckiger Anna Kim	Kevin Pham (Chair) Rubaina Anjum (V.Chair) Ye-Jee Kim Paul Sun-Hyun Yoon Yasaman Pedari (Liaison)

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## Treasurer report

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Presentation was done by Shahmeer Patel in the absence of Yasaman Pedari. He stated that budgetary allocations to Senate meetings was moved to support funding requests by GSS recognized clubs since the Senate meetings were held virtually. Clubs sponsored this Fall include ISA (\$800), Women in Stem (\$100), oSTem (\$250) and GSPC (\$100).

Colin Levaunt moved the motion to approve the GSS Budget for Fall 2022. Holly Paige Chaos seconded the motion. The Senate voted to approve the budget for Fall 2022.

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## Communications Director Report

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Erica Lamkin stated that committees interested in hosting events should coordinate with the Chair of the events committee, Anna Kim and provide information about the date, location, event outline and budget. All advertisement information should be sent to the GSS Comm. Director at least 7-10 days before the event so that it can be posted on social media and GSS newsletter. She also encouraged Committees to send updates that could be included in the weekly newsletter.

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## Committee reports

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### **Stipends Committee presentation by Chair, Bren Marie Cable**

- Continue discussions and awareness on the inadequacies of stipends between Masters, and Doctoral students
- Figure out what paperwork needs to be done to implement the 2023 liveable wage for graduate students
- Bren highlighted some of the disproportions in wages between CAS and RSEN students and showed a graph of the gap in stipends that continues to spread between Masters, and Doctoral students. The graph was made by the previous Chair, Baxter Worthing.
- Discussions started with Daniel Munteanu asking if we could acquire the information about the 2022-2023 stipends level and circulate to all senators so that we can further understand the disparity. Baxter Worthing stated that the stipends level for 2022-2023 has been shared by the Graduate College.
- Dean Forehand stated that the information for the stipends level is available on the Sponsored Project Administration (SPA) website [Develop Budget | Sponsored Project Administration | The University of Vermont \(uvm.edu\)](#) and is determined by the college and schools which uses the same value for all their programs.
- Dean Forehand also stated that the Vermont Legislature will publish the values of the liveable wage on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Graduate college is committed to setting the wages to reflect the number once the information is published. There are other conversations going on about dental insurance and ways to pay comprehensive fees.

### **Housing committee presentation by Chair, Patrick Payne**

- Patrick presented the conclusions from the 2021-2022 housing survey stating that 75% of graduate students spent more than 30% of their income on housing and had negative experience with finding housing and dealing with landlords.
- Key recommendations from the survey
  - I. Ensure that UVM graduate housing is less than 30% of the minimum stipend
  - II. Ensure that UVM provided housing has single occupancy and life partner options

- III. Improve support for incoming students to find and secure housing
- Goals of the Housing committee include the following
  - I. Provide all departments with a “How-to” housing document for graduate students
  - II. Include UVM-specific housing recommendations on the GSS website
  - III. Outline and propose formal recommendations for graduate student housing to UVM administration e.g., provision of housing subsidies for students who cannot live on campus
  - IV. Build a coalition with SGA to address common living concerns for grads and undergrads
  - V. Identify improvements to parking and transportation that could help off campus housing more accessible

#### **Health and Wellness Committee presentation by Chair, Kevin Pham**

- Raise awareness on services available to graduate students using posters and talks
  - I. Food assistance in Winooski
  - II. Graduate student lounge
  - III. Free ambulance services
  - IV. Counselling and psychiatric services (CAPS)
- Meet and Greet with Counsellors at CAPS
- Free community events
  - I. Highlight events that are free in Burlington and its environs to promote grad student engagement with the community.
- Conduct a survey to get information on what graduate students need and how the GSS can help

#### **Events Committee presentation by Chair, Anna Kim**

Anna Kim stated that a lot of the events line up for fall are space limited so interested students should RSVP to participate. She highlighted the upcoming events for the remaining part of the semester and encouraged everyone to look out for GSS flyers and RSVP information.

For Spring 2023, an initial events calendar has been made and will be finalized at the end of the semester. She encouraged more ideas for events and possible collaborations with the GSS committees.

- Jan 23-27 Grad student Professional Development week
- Early April Research workshop
- Late April Professional development showcase
- Event at the Spirit of Ethan Allen will not be possible because the cost to rent a boat for 3 hours is \$22,000

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#### **New business**

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Theresa Mungazi expressed concerns about inclusion, language barriers and hassles faced by international students during the first semester of joining UVM. She suggested a standing committee for international student affairs or a subcommittee within the student affairs committee. She also spoke to the President of the International Graduate Student Association Program who supported the idea of a standing committee for international student affairs. The Senate would need to decide whether a standing committee or Ad-hoc committee is appropriate to handle these concerns.

Patrick Payne gave an update on the Sexual Violence Prevention Council. The group intends to organize a retreat that will discuss the structural factors that promote sexual violence on campus. He encouraged senators to join the discussion if interested or nominate students that can be a part of the conversation.

Daniel Munteanu asked if the minutes of the meeting held between the GSS Executive council and the UVM administration can be shared among senators prior to the Senate meeting, this will create an awareness of what the UVM administration is prioritizing and give room for more discussions during the Senate meeting. Justin replied that

minutes are not necessarily taken at the meetings with the UVM administration, and a document of the administration's priorities is not available. The executive council attends the meeting with an agenda of priorities and Justin has briefed the Senate about the outcome of these meetings.

Holly Paige Chaos moved the motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, it was seconded by Patrick Payne and voting to extend the meeting was approved. Holly asked if the nomination for discussion on Sexual Violence Prevention can include undergraduate students who are excellent advocates. Patrick replied that undergraduates are welcome to join in the conversation.

Shahmeer Patel raised the issues of senators not participating in committee efforts nor attending committee meetings. Ijaz encouraged committee members to synergize and assist each other to meet the committee goals.

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Adjournment 9:05pm

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