

**Graduate Student Organization
Senate Minutes
February 7th, 2017
Wang Center Chapel, 5:30 pm-7:00 pm**

Luigi Pesce, GSO Senate Speaker, chaired the Senate Meeting

I. Approval of agenda: approved.

Luigi: There are a couple of changes, a couple of cancellations. The agenda with modification was approved.

II. Approval of minutes of December 13th, 2016: approved.

III. President's Report (Vahideh Rasekhi)

Hello everyone, welcome to the first senate meeting of the spring semester. I am happy to be back at Stony Brook. As you know, a lot of people including me was affected by the president's executive order on January 28th. I would like to express my appreciation to all those who supported me. I received many supportive emails from students, faculty, staff, administration, and total strangers. Please send my best regards to people in your department; I am grateful for all the support I have received.

Now the questions is how GSO can help our students who are affected by this executive order? we only have the visa and immigration service office on campus that deals with visa related paperwork. However, they do not really provide any services to international students.

Abraham: Can we legally not have an international student office on campus?I was international advisor during my undergrad, we provided counseling, the university had to provide in person counseling, this kind of service is required by the law, based on my understanding.

Vahideh: That's a good question but I don't know the answer. I have heard that we used to have an international student office and they provided services to students.

We have been talking with the university leadership about this issue. If we had an international student office on campus, they would have emailed all students in time to warn people about their trips. . The Graduate School wants to have Graduate Student Ambassadors. The responsibilities of the ambassadors will be similar to the graduate student advocates (GSA). Since GSAa are not full time; therefore, they are always available on campus. The ambassadors will work with the GSO and the Graduate School to help and support our graduate students when they face a problem.

Lyl Tomlinson: Under the emergency situations, what would be the special capabilities the students ambassadors have, a direct line?

Vahideh: We are in the process of figuring out how we can help in emergency situations. I don't know if we can have our graduate student ambassadors or someone to be available 24/7 through a direct line. We will follow up on this suggestion. If any of you has any other suggestions, please let us know.

Joseph: It is not possible to have a 24 hour hotline because if you are detained you don't have access to your email.

Katy (Sociology): Expresses her concerns about establishing a service for international students and asks about the procedure.

Vahideh: I don't know the procedure for establishing an office. I think creating an office will take time. We can start with graduate student ambassadors and hopefully in near future we can have an office that deals with these kinds of issues.

Steven Jaret (geosciences) Many of our graduate students are employees, TAs or RAs and probably there are some office that can offer some resources?

Vahideh: The HR is the office that deals with employment paperwork but I don't think they provide any advocacy services.

Vahideh: Anyone interested in being a graduate student ambassador?

Honaidah (Linguistics): I want to be. Is it possible to send an email about this so that we can send it to students in our department?

Vahideh: Thank you Honaidah for volunteering to be a graduate student ambassador. Sure, I will send an email to all of you with all the information including the ambassador's responsibilities. Please forward it to students in your department.

Dorien: There will be some kind of training?

Vahideh: Yes, there will be.

Katy (Sociology): I am trying to organize in my own department and we received an email from Dean of our school asking us to have a neutral political activity, do you know if there is something we have to be concerned about?

Joseph: Joseph explained the university policy about this topic, the university has a policy to be politically neutral. GSO is not being political in this case but rather is trying to find ways to help our international student population. We cannot send any emails telling people what to say to congress people when they call them but we can provide their contact information.

Vahideh: Based on SUNY regulations, GSO has to be politically neutral and we can't take sides. For example, last semester, we had students who wanted us to book them a room so that they could host an event promoting their presidential candidate. We declined to help them in making a room reservation or promoting their event.

Steven: We cannot use our Stony Brook account to email congressmen. Those who want to email congressmen and senators must use their personal email accounts and personal cell phones.

Vahideh: Any other ideas or suggestions about the graduate student ambassadors?

David (History): Asked about the duties of the ambassadors.

Vahideh: The description of the duties will be in the email that I will send you in a couple of days. Please keep in mind that the duties might change base as we move on.

Katy (sociology): How are the schedule of the Immigration Legal Clinic?

Luigi: It is a Legal clinic, not an immigration Legal Clinic.

Vahideh: Our Vice President, Tiffany Victor stepped down. [Vahideh explained what the constitution says when an officer position is vacant]] My recommendation for the position of VP is Vasiliy Safin. Vasiliy is a PhD student in Psychology and he was the GSO VP in 2011-2012. Now, I would like to ask Vasiliy to come to the podium and introduce himself.

IV. (Vasiliy Safin)

Vasiliy: I am Vasiliy, 4th year Phd student from Psychology. Vasiliy explained that he knows about the role of Vice President.

Vasiliy left the room so that the senators could freely discuss their concerns or opinions.

After a few minutes, Vasiliy was confirmed as Vice President.

Vahideh: The tax clinic will start next week. Please do not wait until April to come to the tax clinic. Please email Luigi if you have any questions about tax clinic.

Vahideh: GSO elections will be in the last week of April. Please encourage people in your department to run for a position. Later today, Ramiro is going to talk about the election dates and rules.

Mariola: In December, the representative of the administration was supposed to come to talk about the fees but they didn't come. Today, they were also supposed to come but they canceled it. The fees have increased and they cannot do anything retroactively, even if we are against the fee increase, nothing will change.

Joseph explained that GSO was proactive to look for these meeting. The GSO with the VP of Finance and Administration in October.

Vahideh: Last year, there were only five students at the Town Hall meeting about the fees. We advertised the meeting in our website, facebook, announced it at our senate meeting, and sent out emails. However, only five students, including me and Joe, came to the meeting. This year, we asked them to come to our senate so that they can talk to you directly. We know that Bob

Megna works both at Stony Brook and Albany so the cancellation of the meeting might be due to an important meeting.

Mariola: Their cancellation means that they don't respect us.

Many people talking at the same time.

Ramiro: Please speak one by one.

Bertus: They do not show that they are interested in talking with us.

Vahideh: I don't think they canceled the meeting because they want to avoid us or that they are interested in talking with us.

Mariola: I think is an act of hostility, they cancelled more than three times. We need to pass a resolution and condemn their actions.

Vahideh: I am going to email them after tonight's meeting and ask them when they are available. They don't have to come to our senate meeting. We will organize a meeting based on their availability. But you should come to the meeting and ask your questions.

Steven: I think the senate can have a resolution about this.

Vahideh: I suggest that we first ask them to meet with us.

Steven Can we do this (scheduling a meeting and writing a resolution) in parallel?

Abraham: If we don't need the resolution, then we won't use it.

Vahideh: Those who are in favor of writing a resolution, please raise your hand. [Majority raise their hand]

Mariola: Yes!

Vahideh: We need volunteers to write the resolution?

- Mariola from Biomedical Eng.
- Bertus from Physics
- Karen for Art History

Bertus: Is there a template?

Vahideh: Yes. There is a template.

Roger: We are asking for more services but at the same time we do not want to pay more fees.

Erik (Pharmacology): We want more definition about some fees, there is a \$50 increase in the college fee, it is used to supplement campus operations. What does it mean?

Mariola: The academic excellence fee is paying for undergraduate facilities that we do not use.

Abrahm: It is also paying for graduate stipend.

Vahideh: Since majority agrees to pass a resolution if they don't meet with us, then you three can work on it. However, you have to make sure that this resolution will not be sent to anyone unless it is approved at this meeting next month.

Vasiliy: has a copy of a similar resolution that was passed in 2011. He shares it with the three students and EC.

Vahideh: Can you please send us the resolution by the end of this week?

Mariola: Yes, we can.

Vahideh: Okay, thank you. As I said earlier, I will schedule a meeting to discuss fees. After we know the meeting date and location, Ramiro will send you all the information.

V. Treasurer report (Joseph Verardo)

J.V. The following activities were approved on the last Budget Committee:

1. Linguistics Presents Robert C Berwick, total \$1,185, Speaker Series
2. Political Science Presents Brendan Nayhan, total \$1,000, Speaker Series
3. Department of English Presents the 28th Graduate English Conference, total \$1,200, Speaker Series
4. NeuroScience Presents: Science Policy Speaker Symposium, total \$508, Speaker Series
5. Philosophy Conference, total \$1,200, Speaker Series
6. Health and Rehabilitation Presents Healing Voices, total \$550, Social and Cultural
7. Hispanic Language and Language and Literature Film Series, total \$700, Speaker Series
8. Art History Lecture Series, total \$900, Speaker Series
9. Pharmacology Science Policy Event, total \$550, Social and Cultural
10. Molecular Genetics and Micro Bio Speaker Series, total \$1,200, Speaker Series
11. Art Department Speaker Series, total \$1,200, Speaker Series
12. Sociology Graduate Student Conference, total \$1,075, Speaker series
13. Neurobiology Life Science Breakfast Hour, total \$400, Social and Cultural
14. BME Lab Rats 2.0, total \$528, Social Cultural

Total Allocated Funds

Speaker Series: \$20,524.65 of \$22,000

Social and Cultural: \$8,243 of \$10,000

VI. Speaker Report (Luigi Pesce)

The DTA winners are:

Erin Kang, Psychology

Gonzalo Romero, History

Justin Pargeter, Archaeology

Lyl Tomilson, Neurobiology

David Rodriguez, English

Tyler Penny, Creative writing
Patrick Kraft, political science
Jennifer Niccoloro Santa Barbara, Psychology

The Legal Clinic Dates are:

- 1) February 8, 2017;
- 2) March 1, 2017,
- 3) March 22, 2017,
- 4) April 12, 2017,
- 5) May 3, 2017,
- 6) May 24, 2017

The Tax Clinic Dates are:

- 1) February 15, 2017; 10am to 12pm
- 2) February 22, 2017 2pm to 4pm
- 3) March 1, 2017, 10am to 12pm
- 4) March 8, 2017 10am to 12pm
- 5) March 8, 2017 (Indian tax treaty workshop) 1230pm to 2pm
- 6) March 22, 2017 10am to 12pm
- 7) March 22, 2017, (Chinese Tax treaty workshop) 1230pm to 2pm
- 8) March 29, 2017, 2pm to 4pm
- 9) April 5, 2017, 10am to 12pm
- 10) April 12, 2017, 2pm to 4pm.

VII. Secretary Report (Ramiro Malaga)

R.M. The election calendar is as follows:

- March 1st: Blast email
- March 7th: Informative Session
- March 31st: Deadline to run for EC board
- April 4th: Candidates speech.
- April 24th-28th Elections in Solar

Please, we need your participation in the Election Committee.

VIII. Old Business: no old business.

IX. New Business: no new business.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:
Ramiro Malaga Ortega
Secretary

