

**Graduate Student Organization
Senate Minutes
May 2nd, 2017
Wang 201, 5:38 pm-7:30 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 the changes, was approved.

II. Approval of minutes of March 7th, 2017: approved.

Luigi made the motion to approved the minutes, a senator second the motion, the motion was approved.

III. FSA: Nadeem Sadiqui and Maryann Reinhart

Nadeem Siddiqui (Executive Director) and Maryann Reinhart (Finance Director)

Maryann Reinhart. I work with Oscar, Joe and Vahideh, we support the GSO.

Fiscal Agent Responsibilities:

1. Maintain Budget ProForma for GSO based on your activity fee.
2. Ensure Cash Receipt of monies from University.
3. Pay Vouchers will be paid.
4. Maintain Actuals vs Budget for GSO, maintain closed eye on it.
5. Ensure Cash flow is adequate for commitments.
6. Comply with GAAP and IRS regulations for Audit and financial statement purposes, GSO is audited every year.

Need to improve the following:

1. W9's are best practice requirements for Voucher payments & processing.
2. Address and Tax ID information needed to comply and better help identify students should there be outstanding checks (checks not cashed).
3. NYS requires escheatment of abandoned properties after 3 years, checks not cashed will go there.
4. GSO required to comply with NYS regulations.
5. Commencing July 1st GSO best practice should include W9's.
6. Voucher processing best practice includes deadlines for submittals June 1st.
7. Financial Reporting and Audit Requirements better facilitated by complying with best practice.
8. Working diligently with GSO Exec Members to work towards standard practice.

Bertus Jordan. And for international students?

Reinhart. Student can handle fill with their social.

Ramiro Malaga. What will happen if the student has no Social Security Number?

Reinhart. These are best practices. If we have 75%-80% compliance, that will be enough.

Roger: In the case of RAP, we are employees, for the per diem, what is the best practice?

Reinhart: The travel is a grey area because you are not employees.

David Purificato: Where we can find a language about we are employees.

Reinhart: The only employee is Oscar.

IV. President Report (Vahideh Rasekhi)

Our Third Annual Speaker Series Event was held on April 21st and our invited speaker was Dr. Sanjay Gupta. We had about 450 people who attended the event at the LDS Center. As you know, the speaker event is a collaboration between GSO and USG. Unfortunately, there were some issues with regard to the USG's contribution this year. We have never had a written agreement with the USG, and we have always worked together based on mutual trust. However, we suggest that the incoming eboard should have a Memorandum of Understanding, in which all the expectations and contributions are clearly written. This year, the USG paid less than what we were expecting. Dr. Peter Baigent, the VP of Student Affairs gave us the money we needed to pay the speaker. We appreciate his support and contribution to our speaker series event. Fortunately, next year's EC will have more money since the \$10 student activity fee was passed.

I would like to thank the Election Committee for their hard work in overseeing this year's election. We have been asked about the validity of write-in options and if they need to follow the same guidelines as the candidates to be qualified to hold an officer's position. I would like to request the election committee member to discuss this and make connections necessary in fall.

We have three employees: i) the office manager (Oscar), ii) the media relation specialist (Serena), and iii) the productions director (Rose). The EC is satisfied with their performance; therefore, we have decided to renew their contract.

We are going to have new Graduate Student Advocates. The announcement will be sent out soon. Please encourage your friends who are eligible for the advocate positions to apply. GSO will select the top 3 candidates and then the graduate school will select one of them.

Senator: Is there is an issue with international students?

Vahideh: The advocate position is like a TA position, which requires you to work 15-20 hours per week. If you have this position, you cannot have a second job.

Senator: Is there any conflict with DTA?

Vahideh: No, there is no conflict.

Awards: The Student Life Award ceremony was held yesterday in SAC. During the ceremony, the GSO presented some of our students and staff with awards. The award winners were selected

based on their commitment and contribution to the GSO. The award categories and winners are as follows:

Distinguished Service

Serena Zacharia
GSO Media Relations Specialist

Most Dedicated Service Award

Qiming Xie (Dylan)
GSO Photographer

Emerging Leader Award

David Purificato
Senator & Chair of the Election Committee

Outstanding Leadership Award

Lyl Tomlinson
Inspirational and Innovative Leader

Outstanding Advocate Award

Dr. Peter Baigent
Vice President of Student Affairs

Outstanding Administrator Award

Lauren Brookmeyer
Director of Government Relations

Exceptional Service Award

Mark Michalewicz
Director of Campus Catering

Senator: I have a question about the Speaker event, how it compares to other years in turnout?

Vahideh: At the Neil Tyson event, we had about 2800 people, at the Trevor Noah event, we had about 3000 people, and at Sanjay Gupta event, we had about 450 people. This is the third year that the GSO is hosting a speaker series event and we are learning what type of people our students are interested in. Based on what we have been told, it seems that people prefer to have someone who can entertain them; the ideal person is an intellectual who can at the same time entertain the audience. Unfortunately, we have a limited budget and cannot afford speakers like Oprah, DiCaprio, etc. who can draw a big crowd. Next year, GSO will have more money in the speaker series line and hope they can afford to bring a speaker who is interesting for our graduate student population. Also, we suggest that the EC should do a poll in Fall to find out who our students want the GSO to invite.

Bertus: If there is 3000 people, is spending \$100,000 in one big event reasonable?

Oscar: We have only \$40,000 in our budget for this event. GSO fundraises the rest of the money needed to host the event.

Vahideh: We receive money from various offices on campus such as from the President's office, Provost office, Alumni Association, etc. We also count on the revenue from ticket sale.

Chris Mike: What is the general goal? Is for branding or is for some kind of student influence?

Vahideh: This is the third year, we are hosting a speaker event. It was established by the EC before us. We can debate whether it is useful to our students or not. Next year, the EC can discuss this and decide if they want to continue this tradition. I personally think that we should have this type of event since it brings together all students, faculty, and administration on campus. This year and last year, we also had people from East Campus who attended our speaker event. I think it is important to show that the GSO can host big scale events and can bring high profile speakers to the campus. This is in general beneficial to our students, alumni, and administration since whatever we are doing for our campus affects all of us.

Camilo Rubbini. Will all the due respect, I don't think our role has to be look good in front of the administration, specially with all the current budget cuts.

Vahideh: We all know that the recent budget cuts are affecting our students. It is up to the incoming EC to decide if they want to continue hosting the speaker series event.

Senator: There were no questions from the audience at the event.

Vahideh: Based on our contract, Sanjay was supposed to give a talk for an hour. It was not a question/answer session.

Oscar: Every speaker comes with a different contract, some allow questions or pictures, others don't.

Mariolla: We have to continue hosting speaker events, we need to spend more time on brainstorming and deciding who we should invite.

Vahideh: Yes, it would be good to have suggestions from our students and the senate. This is why having a poll in fall would be helpful. This year, we didn't really receive suggestions from the senate.

Mariolla: I suggested.

Joseph: There were multiple people considered from suggestions, but many were unaffordable.

Oscar: In the case of Michelle Obama we have to pay for the Secret Service.

V. Treasurer's Report (Joseph Verardo).

We have to approve the budget and the changes in the ICP

The first thing is that the activity fee increase pass, the budget increase in 191K a year.

Joe explained the changes in the Budget from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018.

We will receive 10,000 from Research foundations.

Mariolla. Total RAP?

Joseph: \$148,000 a year from all sources.

The NAGPS contributions do not apply to this budget.

The new budget for this year is \$663,070.

The budget was approved.

The ICP changes proposed were approved.

VI. Election's Committee Report Report (David Purificato)

The activity fee increase pass (61%)

The results, there are only two members present:

For President:

Ramiro Malaga Ortega (176 votes)

Vasiliy Safin (130 votes)

For Vice President:

Jinelle Wint (196 votes)

For Secretary:

Luigi Pesce Ibarra (191 votes)

For Treasurer:

Taylor Bouraad (31 votes)

Karen Wishnia (13 votes)

Ramiro Malaga Ortega and Luigi Pesce Ibarra took the oath of office.

David: congratulate to the President and the Secretary.

VII. Secretary Report (Ramiro Malaga)

Senators duties continue until August 31st. Difficult times are coming. Senator need to inform us if you are going to run next academic year.

The good news are that the students of the Health and rehabilitation Science program, after many battles, will secure funding and stipend until completion of their studies.

The bad news are that, as you know that many programs in Art and Sciences will face budget cuts. Both sides of the campus face deficits, I give the word to the representatives of both programs.

Magdala Desgranges (Senator from Cultural Analysis and Theory). We received an email from our chair, that our PhD program will be suspended the admission and will be merged with other programs. This is all the information we have, was a very short email. We were allowed to complete our degrees. That is all the information we have.

José Chueca (Senator Hispanic Department). We received the same information, they are proposing to shut down the PhD program, also say the current student would be allowed (30) to continue their studies. We find a contradiction that the university pursue diversity at the same time is shutting down the hispanic program, is a department that have good measures.

Luigi: 80% of PhD are in tenure track positions.

Jose: Is the second major in the university. All of us we have to be worried, because any department will be safe from these cuts.

Ramiro: it is important to note that when the HRS program received the information the program will be suspended, they do not receive any formal notice. If we do not react the situation will be worse. I give the word to Karen and Andrew from the Student Union.

Karen: Hi everyone, I am from Art History and a senator, let me introduce Andrew from GSEU.

Andrew: Hi everyone, I am from Philosophy and Union Mobilizer, so basically the cuts we have to take action, this is an attack to everybody here, essentially they are saying that not matter what your department it is, how amazing are your professors or your placement. At 1.5 million deficit is nothing for the university. What we are going to do is to call for a protest on Wednesday May 10th. This is basically an emergency protest.

Luigi: In the University Meeting, on Monday, they explain how they are cutting some programs like theater.

Chris-Mike (senator from HRS): Let me ask, what is the position of GSO? What is the position of an organization that is taking money from students contributions? Are we only a dining and eating club that do only cultural and social events? I am not very active in the events, I am not going to criticize, but in times like these is when you want to see. There is a fundamental issue happening in the university and is marooning and could take anyone. First they come for the socialist, I am not socialist; then come for the other one, I am not the other one; then come for the the jews, I am not jew; when they come for you, nobody talk for you. We have to answer specific questions as a organization, the organization need to fight for us, not the departments. In the case of HRS, if were not for Camilo and Ramiro try to advertise our issue in our GSO meetings. We need to be represented by our graduate organization. We need a more organized response. (applauses).

Abraham: Why there are budget deficits, if NYS has surplus?

Andrew: Essentially they create a crisis of austerity, the deficit is less than 0.6% of the budget. This a delivery movement, that is why they announce at the end of the semester. What we need help to organize and announce to your departments.

X. Old Business: no old business.

XI. New Business: no new business.

Meeting adjourned (7:30 pm)

Submitted by:

Ramiro Malaga Ortega

GSO Secretary 2016-2017