

# Senate Meeting Minutes

## September 15th

T: Good evening everyone. Welcome to senate meeting. I'm Ran Tao. It's my duty to run the meeting first time. In this meeting, we elect a speaker to run the meeting in the rest of the year. There are some things need to vote in this meeting. Therefore, make sure you are on the form as active.

T: Ok, Do you approve the agenda for today's meeting? Any questions or objections? First chance for questions or objections? Second chance? If there's no objection, this agenda is now final.

T: Next, Do you approve the minutes for last meeting? You should read the minutes. OK, Any questions? Second chance? If there's no objection, this minutes will be the final.

T: Next, the President Vahideh Rasekhi will give her report.

V: Hello everyone, thank you for coming. My name is Vahideh Rasekhi. This is our first meeting, some of you are new and some of you are not. A few things you should know: We will have senate meeting once a month and dates are posted on the website. For those of you who are new to stony brook, we represent Graduate students, masters and PhD students who pay the graduate activity fee. We have two main jobs in GSO, one is to hold social events, we have a lot of event throughout the year and we have weekly events at UCafe, like Jazz nights. In addition to holding social events, our important job is to advocate for grad students. And for this, we need your help and support. You have already seen the list of committees that you need to be involved in. It's important to have an active role in the committees.

We had a successful orientation on Aug 20<sup>th</sup>, it went well but the only problem was that we had so many people who came in at the same time. Unfortunately, we had to ask some people to leave because we didn't have enough space for them. We were told that we can't have more than 310 people in the room and we had already people standing in the back of the room, so we couldn't have more people than what we already had in the room. We have been writing down some ideas for the next EC, next year they either need to book a bigger place since we don't want to ask people to leave or to have two orientations on the same day.

This year we have two student advocates. One is for PhD students, Zahra Ebrahimi; and one is for masters, Ann Marie Levy. The job of the student advocate is to help you with any problems you have. It can be personal or academic problems, you might have problems with your professor, problems with your landlord so you can talk to the student advocates, they know the school, they know the offices, they can tell you where to go. So make sure that your department knows about our student advocates, they are located in the computer science building in the second floor, the graduate school, and their email is [gradadvocate@stonybrook.edu](mailto:gradadvocate@stonybrook.edu) It's confidential, any thing you talk with them is going to be confidential, so don't worry if you have any problems with your advisor or anyone in your department, you can talk with them and your department will never know about it.

This semester, the GSO office is open Monday through Thursday 9am to 1pm. When you submit your receipts for reimbursement, your checks will be ready in three weeks. We are not going to send you an email; you just need to come back to the office in three weeks to pick up your checks. If your check is more than \$1000, it might take longer. Otherwise it should not take more than three weeks. It's your responsibility to make sure that your application is complete, if any receipt is missing or any document is missing, it will take longer to issue a check. This has happened before but we want to avoid it. You should know that the fiscal year ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. So it means that if you go to a conference in May, you have to submit your receipt by the end of June. If you submit it in July, you will not get any money for that, because May is in the last fiscal year. Make sure people in your department know about the dates. It's important. Otherwise, they will not be reimbursed.

So we briefly talked about Committees, in GSO we have the advantage of meeting different deans, vice-presidents, provost, and many other high-ranking officials. You should take advantage of this and be involved in different committees; we want to make sure that the graduate students are represented in university wide committees. The EC can't be in every committee, that's why we want you to help us. It is very important that you are active in the committees you sign up for, some people attend meetings but they just sit there and don't say much. Make sure that say whatever you think is good for graduate students. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns or give suggestions. Some committees emailed me to say thank you for senators who were in their committees and they asked for the same people again this year. You should all be like those senators who were actively involved in their committees.

We have a lot of committees but two things we want to focus more on are housing and funding. We know that these have been on-going problems: we don't have enough housing on campus, and TAs, GAs, and RAs are not paid enough. Based on my conversation with different high-ranking officials, I have realized that we need to have the exact numbers and statistics when we go to meetings. We can't just tell them that, for example, our salary is not enough to pay for the rent, food, etc. So it's important to give them specific data, if you give them numbers, they take it seriously. Without that, we are just students complaining. So, what we want to do is that we are going to collect information about the rent, on campus & off-campus, food, cost of living. For instance on campus, the rent is increasing every year, this year, we had 3.5% increase, but we get the same service as last year.

Another important issue is funding, we want to collect information from different departments at SBU and other SUNY and public universities. We are always compared with the schools that are below us in the ranking considering tuition, cost of living, etc. But what about schools that are better than us? If we know about other universities' situation, their rent and cost of living, stipends, we can show the data to the administration and then they will take these issues into consideration seriously. I hope that some of you are interested in joining the housing and funding committees so that we can collect the data together.

Another thing that we want to do is offering Grant writing workshops. We are always talking about getting more money, but we should also do something to get money from external sources. We should show that as an organization, we can

organize workshops and help students develop their professional skills .I had contact with different faculty to see who can do it for us, because we want someone who is capable to lead the workshop. If you know any faculty who can help us with the workshop or if you have any ideas, please let me know. Maybe we can do two workshops, a general one as an introduction to help students to get started and then a more specific one based on the type of grants or colleges. After the workshop, we want to see how many people win grants.

About events: every Wednesday night we have Jazz nights at UCafe, please make sure that people in your department know about it, and take advantage of UCafe. UCafe is going to close in the spring, so we will use it as much as we can. All our events are posted on the website.

And for those who are new here, we have legal clinic on the third week of the month. The date and time are posted on the website. We have a good lawyer. If you have any questions, problems with your landlord, bank, or any other legal issues, you can go and talk with lawyer directly and he will give you advice. You need to make an appointment by sending an email to [secretary@sbgso.org](mailto:secretary@sbgso.org) . You should include your name, department, student ID#, and a brief description of the problem. Any questions for me?

Senator: For the workshop, I know a professor who is working in a workshop and it's open so everyone can go in.

Senator: And another thing is about the reimbursement, about the checks, I know that they did email people for checks last year, so I suggest that for students like me, we'd like to receive an email about check and we are expecting it.

V: last year, some students received emails and some didn't. I personally didn't receive any emails for my checks. But the problem is that it takes time to send emails to people. I want our office manager spend his time on creating vouchers, approving them, and making checks ready.

T: We had budget meeting last week. Now Joseph will present the approved budget proposals from the budget meeting.

J: Hi, this is the budget proposal for September. We have this approved for conference and speaker line. The first one is from behavioral ecology group, and the speaker is Claudia Valeggia. The first event will be between Nov 12 and 13, and the location is in SBS building, Turkana Basin Seminar Room, 5th Floor. They expect 30 - 50 people to attend, in the budget, we approve the \$43 travel for the speaker, \$149 for hotel, lunch for student \$100, reception \$100, Dinner/talk \$120, Breakfast for Speaker \$20, Honorarium \$100, The Total is \$632; The next one is from Art history graduate lecture series, the speaker is Lev Manovich. It will take place on Oct 30th, between 7 to 9pm, the location is SBU Manhattan, it expected 100 people to attend. Promotion, including art and education, \$710, Videographer \$150, SB Manhattan Security Guard \$130, Parking \$10, Total \$1000. And it go with the speaker line. The cognitive science in the arts and humanities Speaker Series: Dr. Marco Caracciolo and Dr. Matt Hayler, it's on Sep 25, 1pm. The location is Poetry Center, Humanities

2001, they expected 30-35 people to attend. And about the budget, Reception \$100, Transportation \$177.50, Lodging Costs \$520, Food \$100, Total \$897.50. The next is Graduate Chemical Society (GCS) Annual Halloween Party on Oct 20<sup>th</sup>, 5-7pm in Chemistry Main Lobby, expecting 60-80 people to attend. Food and Drinks \$350, Prizes \$100, Game Supplies/Activities \$200, Decorations \$45, Advertising \$5, Total \$700. Non-fitness recreation was running low and to apply soon if they want reimbursement from that fund.

R: Thank Joe. Do you have any question to approve the budget?

R: We are so happy that we invited three excellent guest speakers come to our meeting The first one is Alfreda James come from career center.

A: I am present the career center, you can find me in the ground floor of library. First I want to explore since you are graduate, we want to do something for graduate students. I want to connect with people on campus and off campus about your professional development. You came to this university for a reason, and then you go to find a job, that's takes time and energy, and we can help you do that. If you will graduate in 2016, you need to start now to prepare you for job market. You will get email about the job affair and other events from career center. You need to collaborate with career center, and you can find my email is right here. Or you can find me by the GSO EC member or you can find me by anyone in career center. Career center is here to help people with professional career development, we want to focus on that you after graduation. I can talk with you about the speech in professional conferences, and networking. You don't have the job resource for it, but we do help you to prepare. Thank you!

R: Thanks Alfreda! The next speaker is Sitapriya Moorthi from the GCA.

Sitapriya: Hi, I'm Sitapriya Moorthi, the president of the GCA. I'm here to talk about what's the GCA all about. We are here to help you about the professional skills, how to improve your networking skill, or how to active in workshops, and we can introduce you to whose people doing interesting things after they graduation. So I want to introduce the EC to you. You already meet Alfrada, we meet with Alfrada every month, and try to figure out what's the problems for grad students and the solution of them. One question from last year is that what can I do once I graduated? What are the all options we have after graduation? So we basically have these goals for grad students. So we have workshop for PhD or Masters who trying to connect with other people that have a job or are finding jobs. We will have four events for social networking, and you can share your concern or your idea in the seminars. For last year, we had over 200 or 300 people for events, and now we are asking GSO members for advise about how to improve the events, how to serve grad students better. What we have for this year is that we will have one topic per month. For each step we have it like that identify your career, identify what option available, whatever skill you need to do with your career and how you can do that. If you interested, we will have our forth event this Friday afternoon in computer, you can check from website for details. We are also looking for members who want to join GCA,

if you know about anyone who's interested in, please let us know. We want to know what we can do for you, and the events need your participation. If you got any question or suggestion, please contact me.

Senators: What are you doing for students who want to be in finance?

Sitapriya: We do have people in industry, but they are graduated. So my point is to have more diverse. So if you have any idea about the field or you know someone who knows about it, you can talk about it and help us.

R: The next speaker will be Tiffany Victor from GWISE.

Tiffany: I'm Tiffany Victor, I'm from the chemistry department, and I'm also the president of GWISE. I'm in this organization for a year, and I would say that we had a quite successful year, and we are going to accomplish things this year. Our mission is quite straightforward and simple: to enhance the scientific, professional, and personal development of our members. To do that, we both run activities and events, some of which you can see on this screen. We have monthly Brown Bag discussions. And GWISE Fall 2015 Social on September 20 in Chemistry room 412. And we are looking for mentors, so if you are interested, send us an email. We will have the annual Mixer in December, which you can find all the information on Facebook. We will invite a speaker, and I think everyone who attended last year enjoyed it, so we invite you to be it in December. We are always looking for new members, send us an email, find us on Facebook and Twitter. Any questions?

Senator: Do you have events about BWISE?

T: We are trying. We speak with them, and want to have an event together.

Senator: Do you cooperate with BWISE?

T: We do reach out for them, and they do reply. But we don't get the chance to have an event together.

Senator: I will try to talk with the president to see how things work.

T: Thanks.

R: The next item is the election for the speaker of the senate. The speaker chairs several committees. And will chair the rest of the meetings for this year. Besides, the speaker works as a member of the EC, and has voting rights and can affect our planning. For the process of election, we'll take nominations, and those who accept will be allowed to participate. They will be given 3 minutes to speak about what they want to do and what they're going to do in this position. Then they will leave the room and we can vote for them. Now any questions about the process? And nomination of speaker?

Ramiro: I want to be the speaker.

Yannick: I want to be the speaker.

V: First of all, it's a paid position; the speaker will get \$4500 for the whole year. And the speaker will run the senate meeting like Ran did today. The speaker will also chair DTA and Rules & Constitution committees.

Max: I nominate Michael Boerner.

V: Michael, Do you accept the nomination?

Michael: No, sorry.

V: Any nominations?

V: Ok, we have two candidates.

R: So who wants to speak first?

Ramiro: Hi, I 'm Ramiro, the fifth-year student from economics department. I think this position is every important, because it's a connect between all of you and EC members. So I'm plan to be your voice in EC. I will give my opinions and collect yours, you are from each department, so you can tell me problems in departments and we can solve it together. And I will be in committees, so I'd like to change the situation for students.

Yannick: Thank you. Hi, I'm Yannick, a fifth-year student in Materials Science. I nominate myself to be the speaker of Senate. Why should you consider me in the position? This is my second year in Senate, so I know how this work should be done. As a speaker, you have to connect with senators. What I want to share with you is that we want to decrease the rent every year, but instead it increases every year. It did increase but it didn't increase as it planed to. So as a speaker, I will connect to every single of you and participate committees and do thing for GSO and students. Please vote for me.

R: Any question for speaker candidates?

Senator: Do you have experience to run a meeting?

Yannick: Yes, I do have the experience to run a meeting in my undergraduate year. And I chaired committees and is responsible for Schomburg residence. We did hold some events, and have residence participated in it.

R: I think that formal rules are important. We always try to focus on the important things.

R: Any question? Candidates please leave the room. Thanks.

V: Two people didn't vote. Ramiro has 18 votes and Yannick has 17 votes. Congratulations Ramiro!

R: The last item. Linrui will do the committee assignment.

(Committee assignment)

Done.