



**Graduate Student Association  
University of Rhode Island  
Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** April 1st, 2025

**Time:** 6:34-7:21 pm

**Location:** Zoom

**Members in Attendance:** (Executive Council)

Karolina Wojcik	President
Quinn Tucker	Vice President
Mariam Oladepo	Treasurer
Evelyn Mensah	Secretary
Behtom Adeli	Webmaster
Evans Boateng-Boakye	Social Media Manager/Event Coordinator Assistant
Marianne Otoo	GAU Liaison
Waqar Alam	Event Coordinator

**Member in Absence**

Asta Habtimachael	Past President
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**I. Call to Order**

The third GSA E-Board meeting of the Spring semester 2025 was called to order by the president, Karolina Wojcik, at 6:34 PM. The president began with a land acknowledgement, recognizing the traditional lands of the Narragansett and Niantic people.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes for February 18th, 2025, were approved after a motion by Quinn Tucker and seconded by Mariam Oladepo. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**III. Reports:**

- A. **President:** The Graduate Student Conference (GSC) was a resounding success, marked by significant participation and support. Karolina proposed organizing a pizza party to express gratitude to those who worked tirelessly on the conference, with a suggested budget of \$150 to \$200. Meanwhile, the Office of the President is currently in the process of restructuring the university ombuds office, which

serves as an independent resource for students, faculty, and staff to address their concerns. Karolina, the GSA president, has been invited to join this committee.

- B. **Vice President:** Quinn expressed gratitude to everyone who supported and participated in the recently concluded conference. He has been responding to emails from senators. He and Karolina just attended the final graduate council meeting of the semester.
- C. **Treasurer:** Mariam provided an update on financial expenses. She has been processing regalia voucher discounts and reimbursements, as well as writing checks for expenses under \$50 for regalia purchases. Many expenses relate to the March event and the Graduate Student Conference.
- D. **Secretary:** Evelyn provided updates regarding several emails: the conference, the GSA March event (potluck), nominations and elections, and the feedback form for the conference. She encouraged everyone to offer feedback on the conference using the feedback form that was sent via email to help enhance future conference events.
- E. **Webmaster:** Behtom reported updating the GSA websites as required.
- F. **Social Media Manager:** Evans provided an update on the task force, outlining plans for an event aimed at announcing the establishment of the accessibility and disability task force. He discussed efforts to invite more individuals with disabilities, both faculty and students, to participate. Evans is to provide more information to the E-board about the upcoming Accessibility and Disability Task Force event. During the update, he shared details about the photos and video documentation from the recent conference, noting that he received assistance from four additional team members to ensure comprehensive coverage. He emphasized that any media intended for publicity from the conference should be edited to align with their promotional objectives. The conference was thoroughly documented, yielding over a thousand photos and videos, and there was a discussion about the editing and official use of these images. Evans also informed the executive members that lapel microphones had been purchased for use during panel discussions at the conference; unfortunately, they were not utilized. However, these lapels can still be effectively used for future GSA-organized events. Evans is to hand over the newly purchased lapel microphones to the secretary for inspection and documentation. Karolina inquired about a specific photo taken during the conference that Rhody Today wished to use for their publication. In response, Evans stated that they must credit the GSA media or publicity team when using any of the images. Rhody Today has also requested photos from the conference for their story.
- G. **GAU Liaison:** Marianne provided an update on the ongoing GAU contract negotiations for the next three academic years. She reported that the URI administration has rejected most of their proposed initiatives, including plans to address food insecurity, offer dining hall passes for graduate students, and improve housing and parking. The administration has requested additional time to brainstorm other proposals before finalizing their decisions. Furthermore, Marianne highlighted proposals aimed at alleviating financial hardship and enhancing access to dining facilities and housing for international students. An event is scheduled for April 7th, allowing students to engage with Rhode Island

senators about their concerns. The GAU student advocacy group plans to meet with graduate students, as well as representatives and senators from Rhode Island, to discuss the proposed plans directly, as these officials will be responsible for allocating funds for stipends and other necessities. This meeting is set for Monday, April 7th, from 5 to 7 PM, and Marianne will work with the secretary to ensure this event is communicated to graduate students.

- H. **Event Coordinator:** Updates were provided regarding the March potluck event, which had a good turnout. Waqar led a discussion on planning a formal gala event, focusing on potential venues, budget considerations, and the option of allowing plus-ones for a ticket fee. Waqar discussed the purpose of the GSA gala: to celebrate the hard work of students at the end of the semester. Waqar proposed a venue with an ocean view at the bay campus, which has a capacity of only 75 people, though he was uncertain if that capacity referred to seated or standing guests. Karolina suggested other venues, such as the Memorial Union Ballroom, which can hold up to 300 people, and the Holiday Inn ballroom, while Evans recommended the Welcome Center and Alumni Center. Waqar explored the idea of allowing non-URI graduate students to attend as plus-ones and discussed the potential impact of charging them for entry. Mariam expressed concern that charging for plus-ones might discourage attendance. Waqar countered that it could help justify the event's costs, but Marianne noted that the GAU gala last year was a success, as non-GAU members paid to attend without affecting overall attendance. Quinn suggested booking the Memorial Union on specific available dates, and Karolina attempted to reserve the ballroom. Waqar offered to follow up with the event committee and expressed appreciation for everyone's contributions and the immense help of the event committee. Waqar indicated that the event could be marketed as a formal party with food and music, and they could consider giving out prizes or souvenirs. Marianne suggested polling attendees on their interest in bringing a plus-one to better gauge the demand. Evelyn requested clarification on the gala's concept, and Waqar explained that it would feature food, music, and possibly awards or souvenirs. Karolina provided cost estimates for catering to a specific number of attendees. Quinn, Karolina, and Waqar discussed potential dates for the event, noting they had sent out a form for date suggestions and were considering the last week of the month. Behtom inquired if the feedback form had been reviewed, to which Waqar replied that they had yet to review it and that today was the deadline for submissions. Karolina proposed holding the event after classes end, around May 10th. Waqar agreed that this timing could work, but noted they would analyze the feedback received by the end of the day. The team continued discussing potential venues, with Quinn suggesting the Memorial Union ballroom again for May 2nd. Karolina experienced issues while trying to reserve the room online, and Waqar decided to handle the venue details before finalizing the booking.

#### IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM after a motion by Quinn Tucker and a second by Mariam Oladepo.