



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

Date: February 18, 2025

Time: 6:05- 7:40 pm

Location: Zoom

Members in Attendance: (Executive Council)

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

I. Call to Order

The second GSA E-Board meeting of the Spring semester 2025 was called to order by the president, Karolina Wojcik, at 6:05 PM.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from January 15th and 29th, 2025, were approved after a motion by Quinn Tucker and seconded by Behtom Adeli. Abstention by Mariam Oladepo.

III. Reports:

- A. **President:** A statement was read by Karolina acknowledging that the meeting was taking place on the traditional lands of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic people. The statement emphasized the importance of honoring and respecting the enduring relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land. During the meeting, she provided updates regarding the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO), as well as legal and financial resources and housing and residential life. We are currently awaiting the approval process for the constitution and bylaws from Abigail in the ISSO, which includes discussions about payment and disbursement processes. Examples from other universities, such as Colorado Boulder, Stony Brook, Maryland, and North Carolina State, were referenced. She

also mentioned the potential hiring of a firm to facilitate question sharing between the Student Senate and the GSA, with Melissa Boyd Colvin from the Memorial Union and Student Involvement expressing interest. Regarding Housing and Residential Life, the campus plan includes the construction of new housing, with plans for 900 beds for undergraduate students and 200 beds for graduate students. The feasibility study for the graduate village has been extended to March 7th, and ongoing assessments are being conducted to evaluate the costs of necessary improvements.

- B. **Vice President:** Quinn reminded the executive board members to send agenda items for the upcoming senate meeting before Monday. He updated the executive members on makeup senate meetings and attendance tracking.
- C. **Treasurer:** Mariam discussed the issues regarding students who have not yet registered for regalia. There is a plan to publicize the regalia discount coupons in March to ensure students receive the coupons. Students must register for graduation before they can get the voucher. Karolina asked for clarification on the registration process. Mariam explained the need to advertise the coupon code to compile a list of registered students. Asta mentioned that last year, students registered and received the coupon, but Mackenzie only allowed those with coupons to participate. Mariam noted that Cara would send her a list to cross-check with the graduating list. Karolina requested details about the email that will be sent out. Mariam confirmed that the coupon would indeed be advertised. Behtom inquired about the format and details that should be included on the website. Evelyn will draft the email regarding the regalia. Additionally, Mariam noted that Asta's name was not on the reimbursement list from 2019, and she needs to determine the payment amount based on either the old student fees or a fixed amount. Karolina stated she would discuss this later with Mariam to find the appropriate solution. Mariam raised a concern about the reimbursement process, which was noted for further discussion. The team agreed to discuss the reimbursement issue later in the meeting.
- D. **Secretary:** Evelyn informed the executive board that the emails regarding the conference and the GSA events in February had been sent out. She reiterated Quinn's reminder for executive members to submit their agenda items for the upcoming senate meeting. Additionally, Evelyn asked Karolina if the president would be attending the senate meeting, to which Karolina replied that she would confirm the president's attendance.
- E. **Past President:** Asta mentioned he was available to advise any executive member; he was collaborating with Quinn on elections and praised everyone's hard work.
- F. **Webmaster:** Updates regarding the recent changes to the GSA website, including details about the senators.
- G. **Social Media Manager:** Evans inquired with Asta about another Facebook page he was moderating. Asta explained that he was added as a moderator while serving as the secretary, and he had no prior knowledge of it. Evans offered to assist Asta in transferring access. He mentioned that this page was more developed and functional than the current official GSA page, and he needed to streamline the information being shared there. Evans received a report from a

senator on the publicity committee who sits on the graduate student conference committee regarding conference advertisements and a special budget for conference publicity. Karolina sought clarification on the supplemental budget. Evans explained the necessity of a supplemental budget for publicity and other conference-related expenses, which required Senate approval. Karolina noted that there would be no need for lapel microphones due to the room size. However, Evans insisted that they were necessary to record sessions and ensure good audio quality. The conference committee also needed additional items (yard signs, banners, and other promotional materials) besides the lapel microphones. Evans discussed the importance of managing social media platforms and ensuring effective publicity for events, especially the conference.

- H. **GAU Liaison:** Updates on GAU negotiations: A preliminary meeting will be held with school administrations to establish introductions and ground rules. Proposals are set to begin on February 26, with additional updates expected from Marianne at the next executive board meeting. Marianne mentioned an upcoming event organized by the Student Advocacy Committee on February 24, which faces a potential conflict of interest due to the dean's involvement in negotiations. To resolve this, Marianne proposes a collaboration between the GAU and GSA for the event. Karolina expressed support for this collaboration, while Asta advised exercising caution, as the GSA might not take the lead on the agenda. Evans noted that the agenda should not pose an issue, as the welfare of graduate students is a primary concern for the GSA. Karolina requested more information from Marianne to ensure that no boundaries were crossed. Marianne confirmed that there would be no discussions related to negotiations during the event, but topics would include immigration and changes in the US government. Karolina asked Evelyn to share information about the event with all graduate students.
- I. **Event Coordinator:** Updates for this semester's events include a bowling event scheduled for February 23rd and a potluck along with a game night planned for March 31st. They are still deciding on the location for the latter event. The team is also working on a collaborative data project to help the next events committee. Waqar noted that the event committee now has additional senators to assist with event planning. The committee intends to collaborate with the graduate student conference committee on the gala; however, there were concerns raised about the timing of the gala, and they are still awaiting a response from the conference committee and the possibility of organizing a gala on a different day. Mariam provided clarifications regarding the process for budget approvals and reimbursements. It was emphasized that reimbursement requests should be submitted by the committee chair or designated representatives. Waqar is to submit reimbursement requests to Mariam for Events Committee expenses. Waqar discussed the possibility of a large end-of-term event.

IV. Old Business

- A. **Unpaid Remuneration:** The executive members voted to compensate Asta, a former GSA secretary, in 2019. The motion was made by Quinn Tucker and seconded by Waqar Alam. It was approved with 7 votes in favor. Mariam is to process a payment of \$495 to Asta for 2019 back pay.

V. Open Forum

Communication and collaboration issues with the GAU came to light during the event planning discussions for the graduate student conference. Marianne referenced concerns raised in the GSA meeting minutes regarding the collaboration between GAU and GSA for the gala. She expressed her dissatisfaction with recent miscommunication incidents. She felt that her role as the GAU liaison for GSA was not being respected, as she was often not informed about important matters. An apology was issued, and moving forward, all matters involving GAU will be managed through her role as the GAU liaison. Asta inquired whether the committee could address matters through Quinn and Evelyn instead. Quinn confirmed that a reminder would be distributed to all committee chairs about proper communication channels and the roles of Executive Board members. It was emphasized that all communications with GAU should be directed through the designated liaisons.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM after a motion by Behtom Adeli and a second by Quinn Tucker.