



**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
**University of Rhode Island**

## **URI GSA General Assembly**

**Date:** 04/12/2024, 11:00 a.m. – 12:36 p.m.

**Location:** In person, Senate Chambers, Memorial Union, Room 300

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

Karolina Wojcik	Vice-President
Obed Baah Amoah	Treasurer
Helani Singhapurage	Secretary

**Members in Attendance: (Senators)**

Adelina Herbst	Dennis Sagamang	Justin Mayers	Marianne Otoo
Cherie Rowe	Fred Addo	Rafeed Hussain	Luis Nunez

**[1] Call to order:**

The GSA third general assembly for the Spring Semester was held in person on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. It began at 11:03 a.m.

**[2] Old Business Report**

- Motion to Approve the meeting minutes for fall 2023 and spring 2024 was made by Justin. Dennis seconded. All were in favor. Minutes were approved.
- VP reported on the GSA sponsorship of the Graduate School graduation reception approval. In favor-14, abstained – 1, Objections – 0
- VP mentioned the need to advertise the GSA contribution to the Graduate Students Graduation reception and that it should be done by the social media manager.

**[3] Updates**

**A. Treasurer report**

- a. Regalia reimbursement - From April 1 through April 24, the URI Bookstore will offer graduating MA and Ph.D. students in May a \$50 promo code for regalia reimbursements. The process of giving the reimbursements by checks is in progress. Mentioned that hopefully by December will have a proper reimbursement process that the bookstore will take care of directly without each student reaching GSA for the regalia reimbursements. The current regalia reimbursement is for those who graduate in May.
- b. Conference Reimbursement – Five reimbursements were there for the Spring semester so far. Gave the criteria for conference reimbursements. Details are on the GSA funding page.
- c. Reported on Monthly GSA spending and accounts. Motion to accept the budget was made by Obed. Justin seconded. All were in favor.
- d. Tax/non-profit status filing update

**B. Webmaster Report**

Since Showrov was absent for the meeting Obed gave the report to the assembly on behalf of Showrov.

- a. Regalia registration form/ website forms  
From April 1 through April 24, the URI Bookstore will offer graduating MA and Ph.D. students a \$50 promo code for regalia reimbursements. Advertising will be done through social media, and a Google form has been developed for students to fill out on our website.
- b. Karolina mentioned about the limited space on the website

**C. GAU Liaison Report**



Since Joseph was not present for the meeting, Karolina gave an update on his work. Karolina - He has attended the GAU meetings. And he is also the elections and nominations committee chair. Along with Showrov he has helped advertise GSA events to GAU body. Requested if there is a need to have a discussion on the Graduate 5+ back pay issue since there were not any complaints raised after the last general assembly.

Discussion:

Cherie – “Is there a number of people will get paid during the next 2 pay periods as per the GAU email?”

Karolina - Shared the information on reviewing 15 submissions per week. We can ask Joseph to send an update to the senators.

D. Social Media Manager/ Event Coordinator Assistant Report

Since Abraham was absent for the meeting no report was provided specifically.

E. Secretary

Helani - Mentioned that though she was elected as the new secretary of GSA on February 9<sup>th</sup>, she received the access to the GSA official email on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Until then she had to request Cara Mitnick, the current GSA Graduate school advisor to spread the word on GSA events via the Graduate School Newsletter. Upon receiving access to the official email, she has been keeping the Graduate Student community updated on GSA news and events. Via the official email, she has so far announced upcoming elections two times, and the April comedy night once and the GSA April General Meeting once. And she mentioned her plans on sending one more reminder on the elections on April 15<sup>th</sup> and three more reminders on the comedy night before April 27<sup>th</sup>, the day of the event. She also mentioned that she signed the bank papers on April 3<sup>rd</sup> to facilitate the President's access to the bank accounts. Furthermore, she mentioned that she created and distributed the google form to vote on the GSA sponsorship of the Graduate School reception on April 4<sup>th</sup> and the results were sent to the President, Vice President and the treasurer on April 5<sup>th</sup> evening.

[4] **Committee Reports**

A. Budget and Finance Committee –

Obed - mentioned that to provide the reimbursement to the senators the VP must check whether the senators have been present for at least 3 meetings for Spring semester and provide the list to the treasurer to issue the checks. Karolina mentioned that if someone has missed a meeting there is an option to request a smaller meeting with the executive council within a week to become updated.

Dennis – Updated on the in-person discussion with the treasurer. Visited the state of Rhode Island secretary state website and found the GSA registered in the state and noticed that the GSA has to file state taxes despite the business cycle of GSA is for a year. In the form he emailed Cara, Obed and Asta states that according to the state of Rhode Island filing the 10K statement at the end of December 2022, the GSA was already a non-profit organization. Anytime GSA has a change of officers GSA must submit an amended form. The officers in that website are not the current GSA officers. The tax filing hasn't been done for 2023 and 2024. He mentioned He can't do anything further regarding that matter since he is not the registered agent of the GSA.

Obed - Currently we are not recognized as a non-profit organization by the IRS at the federal level.

Karolina -Requested to update her on this matter.

Cherie – Suggested to pay the opener about USD 20.

Karolina - Mentioned she must ask from Asta.

B. Community Service and Events Committee

Helani – Gave a report on the April event: a Comedy Night featuring Peter Liu at Quinn Hall on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm. Capacity to seat 180 people, currently approximately 41 registered RSVPs. Shared plans on Regular email, social media, student groups, campus, and university contact promotions to advertise the event.



Karolina – Updated the work by the committee members Karolina, Helani. And Nelly. Mentioned she will communicate on conference proposals in the next meeting under new business. Mentioned the food options arranged for GSA comedy night.

Cherie – Proposed to gather information from graduate students on what kind of events they would like to participate in and requested more information on the Graduation Reception.

Karolina – The GSA provided USD 3000 funds for the graduation reception and that is for the food.

Rafeed – If GSA plans to have a comedy event again, suggested calling for an opener from the graduate community.

C. Elections Committee

Dennis – Mentioned there were 2 meetings with the members Joseph and Karolina. Mentioned, the committee reviewed the nomination form, the timeline. The nominations will be wrapped by April 17<sup>th</sup>. Updated on the discussion they had on anomalies of the nominations (a tie for a position) and also on no nomination for a position.

Karolina – If there is no nomination for a position the next person in the chain gets that position within the executive council.

Cherie – Requested whether the constitution and bylaws allows GSA to approach people to request to take positions in E-board if no nominations are there for a position.

Obed - The president has the power to do that.

Karolina – Gave a summary on ongoing self-nominations in the election. Nominees have to sign the acknowledgment form upon reading the constitutions and bylaws. The GSA will have a 24-hour election window.

Cherie – Need for ensuring nominees are of good academic, social standing, has no history or prior concern on equitable, fair and honest and so on.

Karolina – We can request confirmation from the Program Director if needed.

Dennis - Didn't see any restrictions for students who will be graduating in December in nomination for a position.

Karolina - Constitution states that term is from June 1<sup>st</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>.

D. Constitution and Bylaws Committee

Dennis – They had several copies and had issues finding the latest correct document. Later they did find the correct official version of the pdf document converted to word. Recommended changes were put in the document.

Cherie – The committee met on March 4<sup>th</sup>. We are looking at the finances / bank account to put into the allowed amounts for the events. Looking at non-profit status. We're looking at a raise in payments/ remunerations to committee chairs, members of committees since they are working more than a regular senator. Working on clarification of student fees. Working on information of graduate regalia reimbursement and funding for graduate student body events. Priority areas are on elections and reimbursements.

Dennis- Transparency on remuneration. Proposed to his colleagues of 10% raise on all parties considering the fixed number in the constitution (Executives and senators). Mentioned he proposed to the committee members that instead of issuing USD 50 discount, issuing a 75% reimbursement for the regalia to be more equitable for PhD students.

Karolina – In terms of proposed changes they would have to be presented to the senate and the assembly must vote on that.

Dennis - There is only one document shared in Microsoft OneDrive. Secretary can see the changes made.

Karolina - Only the Secretary can consult and change the document.

[5] **New Business:**

- A. Literary Arts Committee, English Graduate Celebration: funding request at the recommendation of the President was put to the table for a vote by Karolina. Motion made by Cherie. Seconded by Dennis. All were in favor.



- B. Motion to consider the equitable distribution of remuneration among the three members of the Community Service and Events Committee, \$62.50 per person, due to the Event Coordinator's absence was made by Karolina. Cherie requested information to ensure that parity was in place and if other members had stepped into absent positions or had taken on additional workloads to cover gaps/absences. Karolina killed the motion.
- C. Justin recommended having a group chat to discuss things prior to meeting.

**[6] Announcements:**

N/A

**[7] Adjournment:**

Justin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cherie seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed. The meeting ended at 12:36 p.m.

Helani Singhapurage, Secretary  
04/12/2024