



**Graduate Student Association**  
University of Rhode Island  
**Senate Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** 10/25/2024

**Location:** Hamilton Senate Chamber, Memorial Union (3rd floor, Room 300)

**Time:** 5:19-6:40 pm

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

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

**Members in Attendance:** (Senate)

Quorum:  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Voting Members

**Member in Absence:** (Executive Council)

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

The GSA's second General Assembly meeting for the Fall Semester was held in person on October 25, 2024. Quinn Tucker, Vice President and Chair of the Senate called the meeting to order at 5:19 pm. Quinn Tucker thanked and welcomed everyone for attending and emphasized the importance of scanning the QR code for attendance tracking and payment. He also welcomed new members, and Abby, the Parliamentarian, was introduced to keep the time and meeting according to Robert's Rules.

**II. Approval of September 27th, 2024, Senate Meeting Minutes.**

The minute from the September 27 meeting was approved after a motion by Sarah and a second from Kirk. Karolina emphasized the importance of reviewing the previous minute before its approval. The minute was approved unanimously with no opposition.

**III. Executive Board Reports**

- A. President:** Withum CPA Firm Update: Review of Form 990 for the year ending June 30, 2024. Efforts are being made to update records for good standing with the federal government and CPA's work to maintain the association's nonprofit status and tax filing. Communication is ongoing, with a \$500 charge of \$4000 committed. VP of Diversity and Equity, Markeisha Miner, and GAU Leadership Presentations: In the upcoming senate meeting in November, presentations on inclusion, diversity, and equity will be made to target a greater audience and salary negotiations by the GAU. Appointment of Accessibility Taskforce GSA Representative: Evans Boateng-Boakye was appointed as the GSA representative. Karolina encouraged representatives on university-wide committees to prepare reports to update the senate at the next meeting.
- B. Vice President:** Director of Libraries Search Committee: Appointment of Suzanne Reynolds-Alpert. Not a senator but recommended for the search committee. Efforts to increase representation from the Library Science program. Welcome to New Senators from MLIS: 3 new senators were self-nominated from this discipline. Quinn encouraged students to show interest in becoming senators. New University-wide Committee Representative Appointments: Appointment of Kirk Brown to the IT Governance Committee. URI-Involved Account: Created an account and profile for GSA for better event publicity and turnouts by graduate students, as GSA events will be added to the website's calendar.
- C. Treasurer:** Overview of financial activities and budget allocations: September report: \$7000 spent on conference reimbursements, GSA events, and bank payments. Mariam clarified that event expenses made for October will be reported in the next senate meeting. Emphasis on the importance of itemizing expenses and maintaining transparency.
- D. Event Coordinator:** Waqar discussed the need for better attendance and engagement in future events. Recap of recent events and plans for future activities. October Event Recap: Movie night with food, \$1000 spent. Plans for November and December events, including an end-of-year dinner/gala.
- E. Webmaster:** Open Position Announcement: Position ending by the semester's end. Applications open on or after October 31st. and the need for a new webmaster with skills in web software and management (WordPress, Themify template, and/or HTML), he is ready to train and smoothly transit the position. Updates on the GSA website: Updates made on the website include uploading the current list of senators and their respective committees with the assistance of Quinn and the webmaster, Showrov. GSC Website Accessibility: Efforts are being made to get and maintain access to the website for the smooth running of the graduate student conference and to manage transitions between officers as advised by Karolina and Showrov. The importance of maintaining digital access and transparency was also emphasized.
- F. Social Media Manager: October Activities:** Not very busy, focused on organizing events and gathering feedback. Plans to create a common Google Drive for event pictures and videos. Efforts to improve communication and engagement through social media. Plans to create a feedback mechanism for better interaction with the student body.
- G. GAU Liaison:** Updates on GAU activities and the importance of participation in union-related events. Coffee Hours and Negotiation Ideas: Coffee hours for departments to discuss ideas for GAU and contract negotiation encouraged all to look out for emails about this. Formation of a Racial and Social Justice Committee currently has 3 members; the committee is still looking for two members, which is a paid opportunity. Interested students can communicate with Mariyam. Upcoming pumpkin carving event organized by GAU for all students.
- H. Secretary:** Office Space Update: Old pieces of furniture were removed from GSA office space, Room 128A, after clean-up and organization of the GSA office. Receipt of

Committee Budget Proposals: Collection and forwarding of budget proposals from committee chairs. Delays due to leadership changes, but a round figure was provided.

#### IV. Committee Reports

- A. **Constitution and By-Laws** (*Kirk*): The objectives for the committee were set with Quinn's help. Objectives include improving the governing document's grammar and readability, changes in the constitution, and election clarity. No budget is needed for the term. The next meeting is planned for next semester. Possible update on remuneration suggested by Karolina. Quinn said he awaits the budget report before taking any further action on the committee's budget.
- B. **Events** (*Nelly Akissi*): Difficult in meeting committee members but proposed 8 event ideas. Only \$10,000 was approved out of \$17,000+ requested. Karolina suggested the committee focus on 6 events instead of 8. Planning and execution of events, with a focus on increasing participation and engagement.
- C. **Publicity** (*Terpase*): Emphasis on social media and physical presence on campus. Budget for camera, accessories, marketing, and branding materials. Efforts to enhance the visibility of GSA activities and events through various media. There was a 50% budget cut, but the chair stated publicity was deemed essential. Quinn noted the need for Victor to present the budget to clarify the budget cuts.
- D. **Graduate Student Conference** (*Doris, Ghazal, & Samuel*): Planning for the upcoming graduate student conference, including budget considerations and potential speakers. Responsibilities were divided among co-chairs and committee members, with specific roles such as hospitality, submission review, art and design, and program management. The committee met with Professor Haile from the Philosophy Department to discuss budget requirements. They aimed to create a comprehensive budget for a one-day conference, considering various costs and potential sponsors. The committee discussed securing sponsors to cover costs and enhance the conference's scope. They planned to contact previous sponsors, including various university departments and external organizations. The committee also considered including established and junior scholars as keynote speakers to attract a diverse audience. The committee brainstormed potential themes for the conference and planned to vote on the final theme. They discussed different models for the conference structure, aiming to balance academic rigor with accessibility and engagement. The initial budget proposal included detailed cost estimates for various aspects of the conference, such as speaker fees, venue costs, catering, and promotional materials. The committee aimed to keep the budget realistic while ensuring a high-quality event. The adjusted budget for the conference was approved, ensuring a balanced approach to funding the event. Mariam and Abby suggested considering URI scholars to cut costs. Quinn emphasized participation and credit for work. Karolina extended an invitation for representatives from the other committee to sit in the graduate student conference for guidance and to streamline communication. The committee planned to actively seek sponsorships to cover additional costs and enhance the conference experience. Specific roles and responsibilities were assigned to committee members to streamline the planning process and ensure accountability. There was a further discussion on GAU collaborations at the conference, but Marianne, the GAU liaison, said that would not be possible since GAU only supports dues-paying membership events. According to Robert's rule, there was an extended time for presentation by the committee, and this was approved unanimously.
- E. **Budget and Finance** (*Victor*): Presentation of the proposed and adjusted budgets. Discussion about the sustainability of the budget and the need to balance current needs with future financial stability. Approval of the adjusted budget with a plan to revisit and amend as necessary. Time was extended indefinitely, with no opposition for the

committee to continue its presentation. Discussion on essential items and budget constraints. Emphasis on passing 30% of funds to the next executive board. Clarification on remuneration and budget impact. Discussion on the number of senators and budget implications. Existing programs offer services to graduate students. The adjusted budget was presented to the Senate for approval. After discussions and considerations, a motion was made to approve the adjusted budget. The motion was seconded and put to vote, resulting in the approval of the adjusted budget. The adjusted budget proposed by the Budget and Finance Committee was approved. This budget aims to balance current needs with future financial stability, considering the available funds and anticipated expenses. The Budget and Finance Committee reviewed the proposed budgets and adjusted them to ensure financial sustainability. It was noted that the budget could be amended in future meetings if necessary, allowing for flexibility in response to changing needs and circumstances.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM after a motion by Lee and a second by Behtom. The motion was passed unanimously.

## Addendum

### GSA 2024 BUDGET

S/N		2024 Proposed	2024 Adjusted
1	Constitution and By-laws	\$ -	\$ -
2	Publicity	\$ 9,299.71	\$ 4,745.71
3	Graduate Student Conference	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
4	Events	\$ 17,625.00	\$ 10,000.00
5	Fall Renumeration	\$ 8,800.00	\$ 8,800.00
6	Spring Renumeration	\$ 9,800.00	\$ 9,800.00
7	Conference Reimbursement	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
8	Regalia Reimbursement	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
9	Bonding Issurance	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
10	Envelope and Stamps	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
11	Graduate Student Group Funding	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
12	GSA Graduation Dinner	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
13	Non-profit status	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
14	GSA meetings (5)	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 88,674.71</b>	<b>\$ 68,495.71</b>