



Graduate Student Association
University of Rhode Island
GSA General Assembly

Date: 9/27/2024

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

Time: 5:15-6:17 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
Asta Habtemichael	Past President

Members in Attendance: (Senate)

Quorum: 39/40. 1/3 of Voting Members

I. Call to Order.

The GSA's first General Assembly for the Fall Semester was held in person on September 27, 2024. The vice president called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

II. Welcome Note

The Vice President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), opened the meeting, welcoming members and acknowledging the progress made by the association. Karolina emphasized that the GSA's primary mission is to improve the graduate student experience, addressing their concerns and fostering a supportive academic environment.

III. Approval of May 14, 2024, Senate Meeting Minutes.

Yvonne Wingard moved to approve the May 14, 2024, General Assembly minute, which Behtom Adeli seconded. The minute was approved unanimously without amendments or comments. This routine step confirms that the Senate agrees with the record of the prior meeting.

IV. **Executive Board Introductions/Reports**

- A. **Webmaster:** Showrov reported progress on updating the GSA website. This update aims to improve communication with graduate students and provide a centralized platform for important information. The GSA website contains essential information, including details on housing for graduate students. All members are encouraged to visit and utilize the resources available on the website.
- B. **Treasurer Report:** Mariam spoke briefly about her role and the ongoing budget and tax filing processes. She mentioned handling a few reimbursements and sought clarification regarding expenses from the last executive board. During her presentation, she provided an overview of the budget from the time she took office until now. She highlighted significant expenses, including the acquisition of GSA banners, t-shirts, luncheon, and other miscellaneous items. It was also mentioned that committee budgets will be presented for approval during the October meeting.
- C. **Social Media Manager:** Evans emphasized the importance of using social media to engage students with the GSA. Members are encouraged to follow the association's social media handles to stay updated on upcoming events.
- D. **GAU Liaison:** Marianne mentioned her role as a connection between the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the Graduate Assistants United (GAU). She urged members to familiarize themselves with the GAU agreement booklet and participate in initiatives to promote student activities.
- E. The **past president** (Asta) gave a brief overview of his contributions so far in the current E-board. Karolina, the current president, added some remarks to highlight his work.
- F. **Event Coordinator:** Waqar discussed his role in organizing events for the students. He mentioned an upcoming event and sought the senate's approval for cheaper options, welcoming suggestions from senators on the event's planning.
- G. **Secretary:** Evelyn highlighted her duties, which include managing internal communications, note-taking, and ensuring that meeting minutes are shared with members promptly. Quinn and Karolina mentioned that all meeting minutes are uploaded to the GSA website for members to review while agendas are shared before each meeting.

V. **New Business**

- A. **Department Senator Committee Selection Update:** Several committees were either formed or discussed to tackle various ongoing projects and issues within the GSA. Quinn spoke about the ongoing committee selection process. Karolina provided an update on members who have already filled out the committee forms and encouraged others to do the same.

- B. **Pending 10 Commitments and English Department Elections:** Ten committee appointments remain pending, and elections in the English department are still awaited, as reported by Karolina.
- C. **All Committees but the Events and GSC Committees are open:** The Events Committee and Graduate Student Conference Committee (GSC) require more members. Quinn emphasized the importance of filling these roles and urged senators to review the roles and responsibilities associated with each committee.

VI. Committees

- A. **Events Committee:** (5 Committed)
 - 1. Chair: Nelly Akissi
Help with the consideration, organization, and implementation of events in conjunction with the Event Coordinator (Waqar Alam).
- B. **Constitution and By-Laws Committee:** (5 Members, including Chair)
 - 1. Chair: Kirk Brown
Works to implement changes to the current GSA Constitution and By-Laws with Vice President Quinn Tucker. Changes may include remuneration, graduate student assistance programs, and rules and guidelines.
- C. **Graduate Student Conference Committee:**
 - 1. Chair: TBD
Collaborate with committee members to organize and plan the graduate student conference for Spring 2025. This includes coordinating logistics, managing conference schedules, and assisting in identifying and inviting keynote speakers, panelists, and moderators. The conference is a significant event for the GSA, designed to showcase graduate research and foster collaboration across departments.
- D. **Publicity Committee:** (5 Members, including Chair)
 - 1. Chair: Terpase Gbaa
Assist and advise the Social Media Manager/Event Coordinator Assistant (Evans Boateng-Boakye) in creating outreach campaigns and growing the GSA's presence in the graduate student body. Tasked with managing the GSA's social media presence, promoting events, and organizing activities that engage graduate students.
- E. **Budget and Finance Committee:** (5 Members, including Chair)
 - 1. Chair: Victor Olaoye
Establishes the GSA budget and provides financial guidance in coordination with the GSA Treasurer (Mariam Oladepo). This committee will oversee the management of the GSA's budget, ensuring that funds are allocated appropriately for events, conference planning, and other initiatives.
- F. **Parliamentarian Appointment:**

Abby Smith was appointed as the parliamentarian. Her roles include providing essential guidance on parliamentary procedure and ensuring that senate meetings are conducted efficiently and per Robert's Rules of Order.

VII. University-wide committee appointments

Several volunteers were confirmed for roles on key committees, such as the Graduate Council and the Graduate Conference Committee. These appointments are crucial to ensuring broad representation of different departments and effective decision-making in these areas.

- A. **Grad Council:** Sarah Behm will represent GSA in the Graduate Council with Karolina and Quinn.
- B. **JAPORA:** Evelyn Mensah was appointed to this role.

VIII. Announcements

- An event is scheduled for October 5th; a movie night will take place at East Hall from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. This event is aimed at fostering community engagement among graduate students. The specifics of this event were not detailed in the meeting but will be discussed in future sessions.
- The GSA is actively seeking more volunteers for open committee positions. This is particularly important to ensure that each department is represented and that the workload is distributed across multiple members.
- Karolina discussed the budget for the various committees. The main points raised included allocating funds for the Graduate Conference, ensuring adequate funding for other events and activities planned by the GSA, and possible salary adjustments for certain roles within the GSA to reflect the increased workload and responsibilities.
- It was noted that some departments still need to elect representatives, and this will be addressed in the coming weeks. Efforts to recruit more representatives will continue in the upcoming semester.
- Quinn reminded each committee chair to take responsibility for leading their committees and pushing forward GSA initiatives.
- Showrov asked if senators are paid. Karolina confirmed that senators are paid \$100 and that every senator must sit on at least one committee.
- There was a discussion about elections for the next academic year. Asta emphasized the need for establishing a committee for elections; Karolina mentioned that will be done next semester; and Asta mentioned every election needs a rubric that must follow the by-laws: Karolina outlined procedures for appointing committee members for the election committee, including self-nomination. Rumon, Evans, and Showrov also contributed to the discussion.
- Quinn reminded senators of the importance of attending meetings, reviewing the constitution, and keeping up with GSA-related activities.

IX. Adjournment

Quinn thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm after a motion by Yvonne Wingard and a second by Kirk Brown. The motion passed unanimously.