

Tuesday, February 27, 2024, Time: 7:00 pm

Recording Link: [Graduate Student Senate Meeting Recording](#)

In attendance

Senators: Alison Hall, Bren Cable, Diego Javier-Jimenez, Emily McDonnell, Emma Myric, Gift O moruyi, Goodness Rex Nze-Igwe, Jenan Husain, Joy Emmanuel, Matthew Breunig, Mona Davo udimehr, Muhammad Adeel Arif, Muhammad Adil, Niara Hicks, Parisa Suchdev, Pawan Bastola, Stephen Marshall, Toyib Aremu, Vanessa Ballard.

Guests: Baxter Worthing, Celia Mojica, Christina Dixon, Franly Ulerio-Nunez, Rosaura Chapina, Mandy Nix, Neil Traft, Rachel Norris.

Executive Council Attendees: Cara Simone, Ijaz Ul Haq, Masoumeh Khodaverdi, Omid Sedighi, Yasaman Pedari.

32 total numbers attended.

GSS Senate Agenda for the Second Spring Meeting: February 27th, 2024

- I. Roll Call
- II. Call to Order

The meeting at 7:00 pm was called to order by Vice-President, Cara Simone

- III. **(February 6, 2024)**

Emma Myric moved the motion to approve the previous minutes, it was seconded by Omid Sedi ghi.

- IV.

III. Old Business:

a. Resolution 2024-2-06

Cara discussed the proposal of a Senate resolution to increase GSS fees for graduate students from \$7-\$10 per semester to \$15-\$25. The current funding allocation has been deemed insufficient to sustain and expand the quality and range of services, activities, and resources necessary for the holistic development of the graduate student community. This increase aims to enhance the organization's viability. Emphasizing the importance of supporting GSS, which oversees 22 clubs and 6 committees crucial for graduate student experiences, expressed a desire for at least a half-time staff member to assist with events, website management, and financial tasks. Highlighting the struggle with graduate student engagement within the student governance structure, Cara expressed a desire to compensate more individuals involved beyond just the Eboard. She compared their governance model to that of SGA, emphasizing the need for sustainable funding to support various initiatives. Mentioning efforts to explore additional funding sources, such as joining the Love Year club through the UVM Foundation,

ability of MSA to host meaningful activities for its members, emphasizing that clubs need more money.

Yasaman expressed her opinion on the fee increase, highlighting a concern about the lack of continuity in knowledge and experience within the organization. She mentioned that while she doesn't have strong opinions on whether the fee should be increased or not, she found Rosie's mention of donations received to be significant. Yasaman suggested that the lack of awareness about such opportunities for funding indicates a gap in knowledge transfer from previous eboards within the organization. She emphasized the need for someone who is not a graduate student to ensure that institutional knowledge and experience are passed on effectively to future members of the organization, thus preventing the need to reinvent processes. While Yasaman didn't explicitly endorse or oppose the fee increase, she concluded by affirming the necessity of having such a person in the organization for better continuity and efficiency.

Alison Hall expressed her concerns about the proposed fee increase, stating that it would place an additional burden on students. She clarified that the fee is not directly associated with the University. When Cara mentioned tuition remission, Alison indicated that she does not receive tuition remission herself, suggesting that she pays the graduate student senate fee as a biology student every semester (\$10). Alison emphasized that she believes she represents the majority of students in her situation, implying that many students are affected by this fee.

Mandy Nix expressed her perspective on the fee issue, emphasizing that her individual viewpoint should not bias others' approaches to the fee. She mentioned that the fee would be covered by the University of Vermont rather than directly burdening graduate students.

Cara clarified that while they aim to collaborate with GSU, GSU will negotiate wages and benefits for students considered University of Vermont employees. She stated that the proposed fee increase isn't exorbitant compared to current comprehensive fees, but it will be substantially higher for students receiving stipends, as it will replace comprehensive fees. Alison Hall pointed out that while union fees are mandatory, joining the union and paying fees are optional. However, Cara reiterated that grad students employed by UVM and covered by the union will be expected to pay union fees regardless of their vote. Ijaz added that the fee constitutes around 2% of a paycheck, equating to roughly \$700 annually.

programs rather than personal opinions in the discussion. She encouraged engaging with fellow program members to gather their perspectives. Jenan expressed support for the idea of the

Vanessa Ballard shared her perspective on the fee increase, highlighting her involvement with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences committee. She noted a decline in interprofessional education events due to COVID-19 and emphasized the importance of networking opportunities for graduate students. Vanessa advocated for the fee increase, stating that it could fund events facilitating networking and professional development. She argued that such opportunities are crucial for graduate students and suggested that the benefits of increased fees outweigh the cost, especially considering other expenses like lab fees. Vanessa expressed support for hiring a part-time position to ensure continuity in initiatives beyond the current board's tenure. She emphasized the importance of long-term planning and sustainability in organizational efforts.

Cara Simone suggested extending the meeting to hear from GSU