



Tuesday, March 19, 2024, Time: 7:00 pm

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

In attendance

Senators: Alison Hall, Anthony Barrows, Carlos Amissah, Daniel Peipert, Diego Javier-Jimenez, Emily McDonnell, Gift Omoruyi, Goodness Rex Nze-Igwe, Jenan Husain, Joy Emmanuel, Matthew Breunig, Mona Davoudimehr, Muhammad Adil, Niara Hicks, Pawan Bastola, Shashank Poudel, Taylor Kocian, Vanessa Ballard.

Guests: Baxter Worthing, Jacob Dearborn, Mandy Nix, Neil Traft, Paola Pena, Rigo Melgar, Rubaina Anjum

Sam Brewer,

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

25 total numbers attended.

Agenda:

GSS Senate Agenda for the Third Spring Meeting: March 19th, 2024

- I. Roll Call
- II. Call to Order

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

- III. **(Feb 27, 2024)**

Goodness Nze-Igwe moved the motion to approve the previous minutes, it was seconded by Daniel Peipert and Diego Javier-Jimenez.

- IV. Officers Reports
 - a. **President**

The President of GSS and Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, Ijaz UI Haq provided updates regarding the upcoming 2024-2025 Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Executive Council elections, encouraging participation and healthy competition. He mentioned plans to print posters to attract diverse nominees for Executive Council roles. Additionally, he highlighted the responsibilities of Eboard members and the transition to a new office space. Ijaz emphasized

needs. He also discussed the upcoming GSU union elections, stressing the significance of voting and absentee options. He urged active participation and making a difference through engagement in the democratic process.

b. Vice President

Cara Simone provided updates on survey results, mentioning the closure of the survey on March 18th and ongoing work on data representation. She discussed the success of the survey, noting the response rate. Cara also discussed the diversity in names and budgets of other graduate student organizations from other universities suggesting that GSS might consider changing their name to better represent the students they serve. She also highlighted these organizations' interesting allocation of funds, including support for childcare and conference

on funding for the Carrier Mobility Club Workshop, which would exceed the proposed budget for sponsorships (asking for \$1000-see Table 1). Yasaman emphasized the need for careful consideration due to the expenditure of all revenue for the semester and the use of rollover funds from the previous year.

Table 1. GSS Spring Budget

Social events	
Coffee hours 1	\$449.92
Coffee hours 2	\$449.92
Coffee hours 3	\$449.92
Coffee hours 4	\$495.92
Coffee hours 5	\$495.92

VI. Committee Reports

a. Standing Committee reports

Events Committee

Niara Hicks from the Events Committee has announced two upcoming events. The first event is will be provided, catered by American Flatbread. The second event is Ladies Bowling Night at Spare Time in Colchester, scheduled for Friday, April 5th. This event includes appetizers and access to arcade games. It is open to the first 30 grad students who sign up via the provided link.

upcoming events, expressing uncertainty about the eligibility beyond grad students. Yasaman clarified that since the events are paid for from the GSS budget on a per-person basis, attendees can bring guests, but for certain events like bowling night, separate tickets might be

might prefer attending with a partner. Yasaman agreed, acknowledging the likelihood of attendees bringing partners to such events.

VI. Club Reports

a. SACNAS Club

Paola Pena, Ph.D. Candidate in the CMB program and the current President of UVM SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) provided an overview of UVM SACNAS activities over the past year, emphasizing its inclusivity

diverse membership, including graduate students, postdocs, staff, faculty, and undergraduates. She discussed various events and collaborations aimed at community building and professional development, such as recruiting events, general body meetings, workshops, and attendance at the SACNAS National Diversity in STEM conference. Paola also outlined upcoming events and future directions for the organization, expressing optimism about its continued success under the next Eboard.

VI. Club Reports

a. Career Mobility Club Funding Request

workshop, emphasizing the need to convey soft skills for professional development. The funding request amounted to \$1000. He outlined the budget, which allocated \$250 each for speaker honorariums, aiming to attract established speakers like Lindsey Goodwin from Champlain College and Beth Martell, who conducts a Communication Skills Workshop series. Additionally, the budget included provisions for snacks, refreshments, and prizes as incentives to encourage student attendance. Jacob noted that the workshop was a collaborative effort with the Professional Development Committee.

The Senate voted on the bill to hold the board of trustees responsible for their commitment to divest from fossil fuels. 14 senators voted out of 18.

Ijaz moved a motion to increase the time. Diego Javier-Jimenez: Motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes, seconded by Taylor Kocian.

c. Statement in Support of GSU

Anthony Barrows emphasized his support for GSU by stating that The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) has a responsibility to act in the best interests of all UVM graduate students. Graduate students with academic appointments at the University of Vermont can vote on Wednesday, March 26th,

26th, and Wednesday, March 27th, in person on the 2nd floor of the Davis Center. They mentioned that graduate student workers can walk in and vote in a fully anonymous official election conducted by the Vermont Labor Relations Board. There will be two questions on the ballot, addressing not only the unionization of students but also ensuring organizational support and legal resources through an affiliate union, which have contributed to the successes of staff and faculties at the bargaining table. They encouraged everyone to vote yes on both questions.

Adjournment

Adjournment 8:44 pm

Next Meeting: April 9, 2024, 7:00 - 8:00 PM

Mode:

Whereas, the University of Vermont’s Socially Responsible Investing Advisory Council posted an update on fossil fuel divestment on its website page² in the Spring of 2023, however, they did not release any figures or public reports necessary for transparency and accountability, and;

Whereas, the University of Vermont is undergoing a “brand refresh” with an explicit positioning of “for people and planet” beginning in February 2024,³ and;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the graduate students of the university of vermont call upon the president and the board of trustees to demonstrate their progress towards the climate goals of the university by releasing and presenting a public report detailing how the investment portfolio of the endowment is being divested from fossil fuels. Because the administration has indicated they have the data prepared, we ask that the report be made available by Earth day (April 22 2024), and;

Be it further RESOLVED that the University of Vermont Graduate Student Senate urges the President and Board of Trustees to release bi-annual updates (Spring and Fall), available to the

~~Public Affairs Office (U.S. Postal Route 4) at 100 Main St. (Shelburne VT 05472) or by email at publicaffairs@uvm.edu~~

Whereas, production and consumption of fossil fuel products disproportionately pollute communities of color,^[8]

- [2] Cook, J., Oresekes, N., Doran, P.T., et al., 2016, Consensus on consensus: a synthesis of consensus estimates on human-caused global warming. *Environmental Research Letters*, v. 11, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/11/4/048002>
- [3] Boden, T.A., Marland, G., Andres, R.J., 2015, Global, Regional, and National Fossil-Fuel CO₂ Emissions, Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, Oak Ridge, Tenn, U.S.A.
- [4] Le Quere, C., Andrew, R.M., Canadell, J.G., et al., 2016, Global Carbon Budget 2016, *Earth System Science Data*, v. 8, p. 605-649, doi:10.5194/essd-8-605-2016.
- [5] NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, State of the Climate: Global Climate Report for Annual 2019, published online, January 2020, retrieved on January 30, 2020.
- [6] Karmalkar, A.V., and Bradley, R.S., 2017, Consequences of global warming of 1.5C and 2C for regional temperature and precipitation changes in the contiguous United States. *PLOS ONE*, v. 12, n. 1, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0168697.
- [7] Dupigny-Giroux, L.A., Mecray, E.L., Lemcke-Stampone, G.A., et al., 2018, Northeast. In *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II* [Reidmiller, D.R., Avery, C.W., Easterling, D.R., Kunkel, K.E., Lewis, K.L.M., Maycock, T.K., and Stewart, B.C. (eds.)]. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA, pp. 669-742, doi:10.7930/NCA4.2018.CH18
- [8] <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/13/6001>
- [9] <https://www.naacp.org/issues/environmental-justice/>
- [10] <https://www.uvm.edu/trustees/policymanual/VIII%20B%20%20Diversity.pdf>
- [11] <https://gofossilfree.org/divestment/commitments/>
- [12] Klein, N., 2015. *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate*. Simon and Schuster.
- [13] <https://gofossilfree.org>
- [14] <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/15/climate-change-un-backs-divestment-campaign-paris-summit-fossil-fuels>
- [15] <http://math.350.org/>
- [16] <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/research/the-carbon-underground>

Bill: Resolution 4.9.2024

and Graduate College to set up an open access publication fund for graduate students.

Sponsors: Toyib Aremu (SDPEG), Alison Hall (Biology), Rigo Melgar (RSENr), Mandy Nix (RSENr), Shashank Poudel (SDPEG)

Co-sponsors: Rethinking Economics UVM, Rubenstein Graduate Student Association (RGSA), Sustainable Development Policy Economics and Governance (SDPEG) Student Club, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), Indian Subcontinental Student Association (ISSA)

Whereas, open access publications are an essential requisite for the professional development and advancement of today's and tomorrow's graduate students at the University of Vermont, and;

Whereas, there is a growing need to fund open access publication to reduce critical barriers to information access, reimagine the onto-epistemological foundations of exclusion in higher education, and share knowledge emerging from the University of Vermont with the world, and;

Whereas, knowledge improves with access and use, not in isolation but in communities of learning, making it imperative to collectively fund open access journals and publications at the University of Vermont,^{4,5} and;

Whereas, as Donella Meadows, a pioneer of systems thinking and sustainability, stated: "Missing information flows is one of the most common causes of system malfunction. Adding or restoring information can be a powerful intervention, usually much easier and cheaper than rebuilding physical infrastructure,"⁶ and;

Whereas, the Covid-19 pandemic and the intertwined social and ecological crises that we now face require us to rethink and overcome the privatization of knowledge because "treating knowledge as a commons and a public good is much more likely to deliver efficient outcomes for the entire global population,"

Whereas, the University of Vermont has repeatedly recognized respect, integrity, justice, and responsibility as core values of its mission, and;

Whereas, providing funding for open access publications will enable the University of Vermont to fulfill its mission by helping heal the information inequity associated with closed-system publications and privatized knowledge, which gatekeeps peoples around the world from accessing information blocked by paywalls, and;

Whereas, graduate students come from and conduct research in parts of the world where information inequity issues are prevalent, and both the graduate student researchers and the communities they conduct collaborative research with will benefit from open access to the research and knowledge that we co-create, and;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the graduate students of the University of Vermont call upon the President, the Board of Trustees, and Graduate College to establish an open access publication fund, through which graduate students can cover fees to publish their open access research without resource constraints; and develop, deepen, and disperse our and the university's knowledge for the interconnected well-being of people and planet locally to globally, and;

Be it further RESOLVED that the University of Vermont Graduate Student Senate urges the President, Board of Trustees, and Graduate College to engage in public discussions with relevant stakeholders from across the university, including but not limited to UVM graduate students, faculty, research staff, and libraries, to collaboratively (1) explore the critical need for the co-creation of an open access publication fund, and (2) establish open access journals that can be funded in the short- and long-term.