\*\*\*Hybrid Meeting link:

<https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/meet/aes21009>

Location: Homer Babbidge Library – HBL2153

1. **Call to Order:** By Alaa Selim (VP) at 6.15 PM.
2. **Recognition of Senators**
3. **Approval of consent agenda:**
	1. GSS Executive Committee Minutes
		1. Emma asked “How do we not have quorum for how do we have quorum for one vote and then not have one quorum for one immediately after?”
		2. Matt replied that “The e-board meeting does not have a quorum of the e-board itself hence It was not counted as the meeting” and it will not be considered for the voting.
	2. GSS Senate Meeting Minutes
		1. Motion to approve the meeting minutes initiated by Sandip and seconded by Matt, motion passes anonymously.
			1. Aye: 13
			2. Nye: 0
			3. Abstain: 0
	3. Discussion:
		1. During the meeting, **Maham** raised concerns that key discussion points from recent E-Board sessions weren’t properly reflected in the official minutes, contradicting bylaws and hindering student awareness. She has said that, she has pointed out what needs to fixed, but she did not get any appropriate response.
		2. In response, Gaurav clarified that he is open to suggestions from the e-board if the minutes require any changes before approval. He did acknowledge that he received an email, and in reply, he said that he would be welcoming any change but did not get any further clarifications on the minutes that need approval. He also clarified that he has 1 week post-every meeting to prepare the minutes, as the December 3rd E-Board minutes weren't ready 24 hours in advance of the senate meeting hence, they are not for approval.
		3. **Sandeep** suggested moving E-Board meetings earlier to allow more time for reviews. **Emma** asked which minutes were being approved, and it was confirmed that only Senate minutes were ready and subsequently approved.
		4. All agreed on the need for more accurate, transparent, and timely preparation of meeting minutes, with scheduling adjustments considered to ensure proper adherence to bylaws.
4. **Issues Forum:**
5. **Executive Board Reports:**
	1. President –Bryan Greene
		1. Bryan Greene, participating remotely, provided an update on the University Senate Executive Committee (SEC) representation for the upcoming spring semester. Currently, there are three individuals representing graduate students—Bryan himself, Alaa, and Emma—but only two slots are available on the SEC. Additionally, he highlighted a broader issue: there is a movement at the University Senate level to limit student participation on committees, affecting both undergraduate and graduate representation.
		2. Bryan indicated that SEC meetings are held on Fridays and occupy most of the day, making it challenging for current representatives to attend consistently. To address this, he plans to solicit volunteers who could serve as proxies, ensuring that graduate student voices remain present despite attempts to reduce their involvement.
		3. He also mentioned ongoing negotiations of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to funding. The original MOU was for $20,000, but after discussions involving the Graduate School (notably Dean Shore and other stakeholders), the Graduate School agreed to contribute $10,000. More details on these financial arrangements, including how these funds will support graduate students, were deferred to the Treasurer’s report.
		4. Bryan Greene reported that the Board of Trustees recently voted to increase undergraduate room and board fees. While there was confirmation of an increase affecting undergraduates, the direct impact on graduate student fees remains uncertain. Greene acknowledged that he was unable to attend the vote and is currently seeking further clarity on whether graduate fees were included or altered in the recent decision.
		5. In anticipation of these changes, various efforts were made to engage with the Board before the vote. These included email campaigns from both the union and graduate representatives, as well as direct outreach urging the Board to consider the perspectives and needs of the graduate student community. Although the outcome for graduate fees is not yet confirmed, Greene emphasized that once more information is available, the leadership will develop an appropriate response and plan of action. Graduate students are encouraged to remain attentive to forthcoming communications, as any confirmed changes to fees could significantly impact the financial landscape for current and future graduate students.
		6. Karen mentioned that all the fee proposed were passed in the BOT meeting.
	2. Vice President – Alaa Selim
		1. Alaa Selim provided brief updates from recent University Senate and E-Board activities. During the last Senate meeting, members reviewed enrollment trends across various departments, noting some programs with surging enrollments and others seeing declines. There were also discussions about changes in student populations—such as growth in engineering and reductions in computer science—and how to maintain balance among different departments. The Senate shared significant data and statistics to inform decision-making, encouraging graduate representatives to raise any issues on behalf of their constituents.
		2. Additionally, Alaa discussed two newly formed ad hoc committees: one addressing campus policing policies and the conditions under which calling campus police is appropriate, and another examining UConn’s investment strategies. Both committees plan to meet in January, inviting key administrators to clarify policies and provide guidelines that ensure responsible actions and investments. Once the committees finalize their statements and recommendations, updates will be shared with the Senate, potentially as early as the next meeting at the end of January. Additionally, Alaa discussed two newly formed ad hoc committees: one addressing campus policing policies and the conditions under which calling campus police is appropriate, and another examining UConn’s investment strategies. Both committees plan to meet in January, inviting key administrators to clarify policies and provide guidelines that ensure responsible actions and investments. Once the committees finalize their statements and recommendations, updates will be shared with the Senate, potentially as early as the next meeting at the end of January.
		3. Emma added details about the University Senate’s recent evaluation of low-enrollment programs. Of over 200 programs reviewed, only 12 were recommended for suspension and 4 were recommended for closure—most of which were already suspended and had no current enrollment. Additional information on program decisions can be found in the Board of Trustees’ documentation.
		4. Finally, Sandip mentioned that last year there was a proposal from the university to cut the Thanksgiving break from a week to Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and give 2 days of break in October. If there is any update on that? Alaa replied, While no new information was available at the meeting, Alaa agreed to follow up and report back with any developments.
	3. Treasurer- Maham Liqat
		1. Maham described her recent participation in multi-day budget hearings of Sas-fac committee, where every department’s financial requests were reviewed. Following these hearings, the proposed allocations will advance to higher university authorities for final approval.
		2. Maham noted that the GSS must present a “satisfaction report” detailing this year’s spending and propose tentative budgets for 2026 and 2027. Although the future budgets (2026-27) are only projections, the next GSS leadership can adjust those allocations as needed. She will share the current budgets and projections, which show a decline in available funds over time and will need Senate approval.
		3. Maham reiterated that funds are becoming limited, making it harder to plan large events. However, there is positive news, the Graduate School has agreed to contribute $10,000 for a major spring event, demonstrating administrative support and collaborative interest in graduate activities.
		4. A previously discussed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for services—originally priced at $25,000—has been renegotiated down to $20,000. This reduced cost will help preserve more funds within GSS’s budget.
		5. The Senate will need to approve the newly negotiated $20,000 MOU, so that TSOS can keep working on GSS finance.
		6. Other items pending Senate approval include routine bills, payroll for E-Board fellowships (based on meeting attendance and job performance), and allocations for special events hosted by Tier II graduate organizations.
		7. Maham explained the process for Tier II organizations to request special funding for single events. She provided spreadsheets for senators to review the budget request for each and every organization. Most requests follow established funding rules, but TARANG, as they anticipated attendance of over 250 people in their event, and therefore is seeking funds beyond the standard per-event limit ($1,500). They will present their case directly to the Senate, which can vote to approve additional funding.
		8. Maham emphasized the 40-day lead time required for Purchase Requests (PRs) to ensure all necessary paperwork and payments are processed in time. Late submissions risk event delays or additional costs. She also offered assistance to any organizations with questions about the process.
		9. Maham urged groups needing support or who want more funding than standard guidelines allow to bring their requests before the Senate for a vote. She also suggested that senators use the emailed materials and consider attending informational sessions to better understand the budgeting system.
	4. Communications Director – Gaurav Gupta
		1. Gaurav reported on his role as a representative on the Marth award committee, which recognizes faculty members who have worked at the graduate school level for at least ten years and have notably guided graduate students. Since the semester’s end is approaching, the committee is currently reviewing faculty applications. Gaurav indicated that the final meeting to select the award recipient will be held on December 16th. No further questions were raised, and attendees appeared supportive and interested in hearing the final outcome once it’s decided.
	5. Activities Director-Leo Gold
		1. Leo announced that several Senators—Matt, Sandeep, and Kaylee—have joined the activities committee to help plan upcoming events. He expressed gratitude for their involvement.
		2. He announced an End-of-Year event Scheduled for this Friday at 5:00 PM in the Business School. Thanks were given to Sandeep for securing the venue on short notice.
		3. Additional events are being planned, though some scheduling issues have arisen with vendors.
		4. Weekly or biweekly coffee hours will return starting the second week of the next semester, providing regular informal gatherings for graduate students.
		5. Leo mentioned that he would need a motion for planning a spring welcome-back event for students. He will put forward this motto in new business.
	6. Parliamentarian – Noah Kravette
		1. Noah announced that the Procedures Committee met the day before and successfully brought in additional senators. He expressed enthusiasm about collaborating with these new members. Moving forward, Noah plans to update the Constitution in January, inviting any input or suggestions via email. Additionally, two of the newly added senators are “senators-at-large,” and per Article III of the governing documents, they must undergo a closed ballot election for confirmation. This vote is expected to take place later in the meeting.
6. **Old Business:**
* GEU Town Hall Coordination-Virtual Town Hall on Thursday, Dec 5th (Update-Brayan)
	+ Bryan mentioned despite outreach efforts, including emails and testimonies from graduate students and union representatives, the BOT voted to raise undergraduate room and board fees. The exact impact on graduate fees is unclear from this excerpt, but Bryan acknowledged the attempts made to influence the decision.
	+ Bryan stressed that these forums are opportunities for collective graduate student voices to be heard. Increased coordination between GSS, the GU, and other stakeholders is crucial. He encouraged senators to attend these events, stay informed about changes, and get involved in advocacy efforts.
* MOU from TSOS (Update-Maham)
	+ Motion to approve the $ 20,000 contract in updated MOU by Sandip and seconded by Huraira.
	+ Discussion:
		- Maham announced that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) fee for services, originally set at $35,000 and previously negotiated down to $25,000, has now been further reduced to $20,000 for the entire fiscal year. This reduction represents a significant cost-saving measure, allowing the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) to allocate more funds toward other initiatives. Even if GSS utilizes more services, the total fees will not exceed this amount.
		- Acknowledgments: Maham and attendees expressed gratitude to Karen, Dean Shore, and others who assisted in negotiating the reduced amount.
	+ Aye: 11
	+ Nye: 0
	+ Abstain: 1
	+ Motion passes.
1. **New Business**
	1. Motion to amend the order of agenda made by Matt and seconded by Sandip
		1. Aye: 16
		2. Nye: 0
		3. Abstain:0
		4. Motion passes anonymously.
	2. Motion to vote on SASFAC budget presented by Maham made by Sandip and seconded by Matt. Motion passes anonymously.

Discussion:

* + Maham reminded attendees that previously, the Senate approved a $2 increase in graduate fees earmarked for student activities. While the GSS approved this internally, external administrative approval was still required. Alaa stated that the proposal had been sent to the university administration, and they were now preparing to implement this $2 increase. If enacted, it should provide additional funds for GSS activities in the coming fiscal years.
	+ Maham displayed a spreadsheet outlining past, current, and projected budgets:
	+ FY 2024**:** At the end of the year, the GSS had approximately $54,000 left.
	+ FY 2025: GSS originally expected around $105,000 in revenue, but revised estimates are now closer to $90,000 if the $2 fee increase is fully approved. Without this increase, funds would be even tighter.
	+ Laura asked about the $3,000 allocated to “awards and prizes.” Maham explained that GSS routinely awards graduate students annually. In previous years, this line item was around $1,500. However, some unpaid awards of the prior year carried over, increasing this year’s allocation.
	+ Gaurav added context, the GSS Service Award and other awards are part of a yearly tradition. a committee is typically formed in January to oversee nominations, and the awards are announced before the last Senate meeting of the academic year.
	+ Overall, the discussion served as a thorough review of the GSS’s financial status, the implication of fee increases, anticipated budget constraints in the coming years, and specific allocations for awards and events. Senators were encouraged to familiarize themselves with these details in preparation for upcoming votes and decision-making sessions.
	1. SASFAC approved budget pass with 13 aye, 0 nayes and 0 abstains. 3 people does not vote.
	2. E-board Stipend/Fellowship payments

Discussion:

1. The Senate attempted to address the issue of disbursing stipends (referred to as fellowships) to E-Board members for the current semester. The conversation quickly became complicated due to differing understandings and historical context regarding how and when stipends are paid—particularly for the President and Treasurer, who have additional responsibilities extending into the summer months.
	1. **General Rule:** According to the bylaws, E-Board members receive their stipends at the end of each semester, provided they meet attendance requirements (at least 75% participation in Senate and E-Board meetings).
	2. **Special Cases (President and Treasurer):** Historically, the President and Treasurer had summer responsibilities, and previously, some form of summer funding or adjusted payment schedule existed. However, these arrangements were modified last year when changes to summer funding were made.
	3. Senators raised questions about why the President’s and Treasurer’s stipends might be handled differently and why the Treasurer’s current stipend was not included in this vote. References were made to decisions from the prior academic year that altered how these two roles are compensated, but newer senators were unfamiliar with these historical changes.
	4. Senators, including Matt, asked for clarity on why the payments were split, what amounts were being voted on, and how previous changes to the bylaws and funding impacted the current situation.
	5. Emma and Karen provided some historical background, noting that the difference in payment schedules stemmed from past decisions and circumstances unique to the President and Treasurer positions.
	6. The complexity of the situation caused confusion, with many attendees expressing uncertainty about the exact amounts, the justifications for exceptions, and the proper interpretation of the bylaws.
	7. Motion to table this for discussion made by Sandip and seconded by Kaliegh
		1. Aye: 14
		2. Nye: 0
		3. Abstain: 0
	8. Motion to extend the meeting by 20 min.
		1. Aye: 10
		2. Nye: 0
		3. Abstain:0
		4. Motion passes
	9. Monthly Bills Payments for maintaining GSS active status. Motion to pay all the bill made by Emma seconded by Laura.
		* 1. July: $0
			2. August: $2013.56
			3. September: $8010.02
			4. October: $3207.69
			5. Nvemebr: $3435.26
			6. Discussion: In the monthly payment, the summer payments for the previous treasurer and current president are included, as asked by Matt.
				1. Aye: 14
				2. Nye: 0
				3. Abstain: 0
				4. Motion passes.
	10. Special allocation for Tier-II organization to be approved including Tarang’s budget ($4,775) made by Matt and seconded by Sandeep.
		1. Discussion: Total money is $20,000. The breakup is $10,000 for each semester. The spreadsheets were sent in advance and hence the budget for all the organization can be seen there.
			1. Aye: 13
			2. Nye: 0
			3. Abstain: 0
	11. Vote for senators at large (Mahjabeen Fatema Mitu and Musawir Abrar),
		1. Mahjabeen Fatema was unavailable and here statement was read by Alaa.
		2. Abrar gave a small speech about himself and his passion to represent Grad students as a senator.
		3. Aye: 11 for Mittu and 10 for Abrar.
		4. Both are elected as senators at large.
	12. Motion to hold e-board meeting at least 2 weeks in advance and the minutes should be posted on the website a week in advance of the senate meeting made by Emma and Mitchell

Aye: 12

Nye:0

Abstain:0

Motion passes.

* 1. Motion to allocate 10,000$ for the spring welcome-back event including everything (It is a cap) made by Matt and seconded by Sandip.

Aye: 12

Nye:0

Abstain:0

* BoT Presentation for DEC GSS meeting
* Constitution-Revisions and possible Special Session for that (needs to be done and presented to GSS by \*\*\*February 21, 2025, \*\*\*
* FY 26 Budget-possible Special Session for that issue as well
1. **Good News**
2. **Adjournment** Initiated by Sandeep and seconded by Matt. Motion passes anonymously.
3. **Attendees:**
4. Noah Manuel
5. Siegfried, Emma
6. Michael, Jolly
7. Holt, Laura
8. Musawir Abrar
9. Hannah Cooke
10. Michael, Griffith
11. Amit Hasan
12. Yinyu, Wang
13. Quinn packer
14. Hoang Phuc, Pham
15. Lizu, K M Abu Hurayra
16. Matt, Silverman
17. Abhishek Dubey
18. Kayleigh Morse
19. Sandip Roy
20. Ashwin Abhang
21. Gaurav Dutta (Alternate filled in: Swara Bhatt)
22. Makduma Badhan
23. Pravaal, Yadav