

1. Call to Order – 18:15

2. Recognition of Senators

3. Dean of The Graduate School Leslie Shor

- a. The Graduate School offers fellowships, grants, travel funding, and more to support graduate students.
- b. The Graduate Student Senate representative will have the opportunity to join the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC), where graduate student issues can be discussed and relevant topics from the GFC can be shared. Make sure to sign up for the GFC if you're interested.
- c. Hoping to come to every GSS meeting every month to talk and answer questions from graduate students.
- d. Questions
 - i. Graduate student contracts with departments can limit travel. Will there be specific times or days for graduate students to travel to visit family--such as during Thanksgiving break?
 1. Graduate students are encouraged to read their contracts and understand what is stated. Be sure to contact contract negotiators about your needs and expectations. There is time off outlined in your contracts, which typically aligns with UConn breaks. If you believe your department is unreasonably denying a leave request, contact the Graduate School or other appropriate bodies.
 2. Another point in the contract states that departments cannot unreasonably target graduate students for making reasonable requests.
 3. The Graduate School is happy to reach out to departments to ensure that contracts are understood and that graduate students are being treated fairly.

4. Approval of consent agenda

a. Minutes

- i. Sept 10 Orientation Senate committee minutes
- ii. Sept 10 Special Executive committee minutes
- iii. **Motion:** Approve consent agenda with both minutes listed above.
 1. Motion passes via unanimous consent.

5. Issues Forum

- a. None

6. Executive Committee Reports

- a. President (Sandip Roy)
 - i. Senate Logistics:
 1. Two office assistants have now been hired.

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2. We are electing the Parliamentarian today, so we expect to have a full board by the end of the night.
 - ii. Regarding events at bars: In the spring, we will be hosting a Valentine's Day event at the Student Union (SU). It will include a bar, but it will try to not have it held at a bar. We will also organize recreational activities that do not involve alcohol.
 1. We are also hoping to hold our formal event outdoors at the Founder's Green.
 - iii. Budget cuts: UConn has hired a consulting group to assess departmental inefficiencies. Some departments appear to be cutting back on the social events they used to provide.
 1. Nadia: The department no longer offers a monthly meal before Seminar, and the meeting has been moved online.
 2. Maham: The Chemistry department previously hosted an orientation that included lunch, but they are now using different funding and have canceled regular activities.
 3. Faheem: There used to be more social events with food at my department, but these have been reduced.
 4. Nahe: My program used to receive full funding; that funding has now been cut in half.
 5. Jolly: Also reported funding cuts.
 6. Leslie Shorr: There used to be an annual climbing event, but now fewer graduate students are applying. Additionally, some students are graduating later, which limits the intake of new students. Some programs are now required to prove they can fully fund new students--including summer support--before admitting them. This requirement, while restrictive, is seen as somewhat beneficial for graduate students.
 7. Ayah: Some coffee hours are being discontinued. Departments are now encouraging attendees to contribute or bring food for these social events.
 - iv. Leslie Shorr: Enrollment is down by 30% in master's programs within the business school. Overall, there's an 8% decline in both undergraduate and graduate student enrollment--especially among students from China, India, and Iran.
 - v. Committee reports:
 1. UConn initially planned to implement mandatory anti-Black racism trainings, but these are now optional.

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2. Thank you to those who have volunteered to serve on university committees within the Senate. Special thanks to Nadia and Dubey, who also applied to several important external committees.
 3. We met with Nathan, the Vice President of Student Life and Enrollment, to discuss graduate housing issues. There used to be quotas for graduate student housing, which were removed two years ago. We are working to reinstate these quotas to improve housing access for graduate students.
 - vi. Housing demand has increased, but supply remains limited. There is competition with undergraduate students, and we hope that the university can build more housing to relieve these pressures and make it easier for graduate students to secure accommodations.
 - b. Vice-President (Leo Gold)
 - i. Exploring new voting methods, including the development of an electronic voting system. Currently in discussions with USG for support on this initiative.
 - ii. Please return your voting cards at the end of the meeting.
 - iii. If you have any questions about procedures or related matters, feel free to reach out to me.
 - c. Treasurer (Maham Liaqat)
 - i. Regulations on funding procedures are on the website please make sure to follow closely.
 - ii. Regulations on funding procedures are available on the website--please make sure to follow them closely as all Tier-II's are all solely responsible for following all procedures correctly.
 - iii. Budget issues:
 1. There were some budget issues last year.
 2. All TSOS bills have been paid, and all financial records have been reviewed.
 3. All PRs from GSS are filed; Tier-II PRs are processed through TSOS. We are working on a process to ensure smooth and efficient transactions across these systems.
 4. All outstanding TSOS bills from last year have been closed.
 5. Budget calculations from last semester remain consistent, and the records are accurate.
 6. Remember to submit all required documentation and forms for funding requests at least **40 calendar days before the event** takes place.

- iv. A new PR filing system was developed over the summer. It is more streamlined and consistent. Our goal is to make all GSS procedures more efficient and user-friendly.
- v. Currently in discussions with the head of UConn Finances and serving on the SAFAC Committee to address issues such as student fee increases. It is recommended that another Senator join this effort to help track where funds are allocated and explore ways to better support graduate students.
- d. Communications Director (Noah Kravette)
 - i. Over the summer, we held more meetings than the Senate will have during the entire academic year. I've been responsible for documentation and taking minutes.
 - ii. Marketing efforts included reframing our approach and sending out numerous emails. We also helped launch the GSS Instagram (with much credit to Medha, who is currently running it) and managing WhatsApp group.
 - iii. We've made improvements to the website, including adding "News" and "Resources" pages, cleaning up outdated content, and making important information easier to find.
 - iv. All Tier-II organizations: when submitting an event request, you must complete the required **marketing form at least 40 calendar days before the event**. FP 4.1.5 states you must marketing any event funded by GSS in a reasonable way and it needs to be in GSS announcements (managed by the Comms Director). It's also important that all graduate students--who are entitled to attend any event using GSS funds--have a fair opportunity to learn about these events in a timely and accessible way.
 - v. If you're interested in joining my committee, we need help with marketing, keeping our website updated with online resources, minute-taking, and photography. Please reach out if you're interested or have relevant skills.
- e. Activities Director (Medha Aroua)
 - i. We have many upcoming events, including both weekly and large-scale activities. Our next big event is the Y2K-themed party this Saturday.
 - ii. We're working to increase outdoor events and hope to expand these efforts once the Activities Committee is fully formed.
 - iii. We'll also be participating in the upcoming HuskyThon event this year.
- f. Parliamentarian (Leo Gold)
 - i. I've received several appeals regarding Senator status, particularly about missed deadlines or technical issues. While I've tried to address these concerns, the Procedures Committee has made a final decision, and the matter is now settled.

7. Old Business

- a. None

8. New Business

- a. Closed-ballot election to elected Parliamentarian
 - i. Nominee (uncontested): Kari Comstock
 - ii. Kari Comstock is elected as Parliamentarian by a vote of 14-0-1.
- b. Graduate Activity Fee Increase
 - i. The current GSS Activity Fee is \$16 per semester, or \$32 per year, generating a total of around \$100,000 annually (Maham cited \$90,000; Sandip cited \$105,000). This fee has **not been raised since around 2008** through two major US recessions.
 - 1. Event costs have increased--for example, the cost per person at Husky's rose from \$21 to \$30 in recent years.
 - 2. Around two years ago, GSS believed it had a balance of \$300,000. This estimate was incorrect--the actual amount was closer to \$250,000. Based on the inaccurate figure, GSS allocated \$70,000 to Tier-II organizations. It was later discovered that there were around **\$74,000 in outstanding bills** that had not been accounted for. As a result, the **actual available balance was around \$169,010**--not the originally assumed \$300,000.
 - 3. As a result, GSS **suspended fees for a year**, which significantly hurt its financial standing.
 - 4. Without a fee increase, **GSS risks going into deficit**, leaving little to no funding for future events.
 - 5. Of the \$100,000 collected, \$20,000 goes to the university, leaving only about \$45,000 for events, which is already insufficient. Without an increase, Tier-II funding will be eliminated or severely restricted.
 - 6. More information regarding past problems from GSS mismanagement of funds can be found in the Financial Investigation Committee summary report in Feb, 2025 [here](#).
 - ii. To raise the fee, GSS must: Collect 300+ student signatures, after which the proposal goes to a UConn committee for approval.
 - iii. Ideally, raise the fee by \$12 per semester, but GSS will aim for at least \$8 per semester.
 - iv. Most other non-GSS fees have increased over the years. To maintain operations and support graduate students effectively, this fee must increase as well.
 - v. Discussion:

1. Faheem: Can the vote be delayed until the next meeting?
 - a. Sandip: Delaying would push the process back at least a month and could cause GSS to miss the SASFAC meeting where this needs to be approved.
2. Kevin (Quin Alternate): What is the minimum increase required to avoid a deficit next year?
 - a. Sandip: It depends on the level of funding needed, but to maintain current operations, at least \$8–9 per semester is necessary.
 - b. Kevin: If the fee hasn't increased since 2008, adjusting for inflation alone would put it at around \$29.
- vi. **Motion:** Increase the Grad Student Activity fee by \$12 per Semester (motion by Dubey, seconded by Faheem).
 1. Ayah: Is this just the first step in the full approval process?
 2. Sandip: Yes, it will go through SASFAC and other necessary approvals. If passed, the new fee will apply starting AY 2026–27.
 3. *Motion passes with 14-0-1 (Kevin abstains).*
- vii. Sandip: Suggests forming a committee to further investigate the fee increase.
- viii. **Motion:** Create a 3-person committee to explore the fee increase proposal (motion by Shakil, seconded by Patrick).
 1. *Motion passes with 12-0-3 (Ayah, Kolby, and Kevin abstain)*
- ix. Sandip: Notes that approximately 1,700 graduate students do not pay the GSS activity fee because they are under a different fee system called the Comprehensive Fee. GSS should be receiving a portion of this fee.
- x. **Motion:** Authorize the GSS President to send a formal letter to Leslie Shor requesting GSS's share of the Comprehensive Fee (motion by Harrison, seconded by Atta).
 1. *Motion passes with 14-0-1 (Kevin abstains).*
- c. Senator-At-Large Office Access
- d. Wellness Wednesday October Event
 - i. **Motion:** Add "Wellness Wednesday Food" to the agenda (motion by Patrick, seconded by Kolby).
 1. *Motion passes unanimously.*
 - ii. **Motion:** Allocate \$400 for food for the Wellness Wednesday SHAW event (motion by Patrick, seconded by Kolby).
 1. *Motion passes with 14-0-1 (Kevin abstain).*
- e. **Motion:** Extend the meeting by 15 minutes.
 - i. *Motion passes via unanimous consent.*

f. Special allocations

i. TARNAG special allocation - \$1,000 request

1. TARNAG (The Association for South Asian Graduate Student Community) is requesting an additional \$1,000 in special allocations.
2. TARANG has a current budget of \$5,000, but due to the large scale of the event, which includes cultural activities and food, more funding is needed. Attendance is expected to exceed 300 people, and at \$20 per person, the additional funds are necessary. Event will include vegetarian food, and any fee-paying student is eligible to participate.
3. **Motion:** Allocate \$1,000 in special allocations in additional funding for the TARNAG event (motion by Renuka, seconded by Dubey).
 - a. Atta: Is this an immediate allocation or does it go through the Finance Committee?
 - i. Maham: No this is a direct allocation.
 - ii. Sandip: Clarifies that it goes through Treasurer who can then forward it to the Senate.
 - b. Patrick: Is this already in the budget?
 - i. Sandip: Yes, we have \$10,000 allocated for special allocations.
 - c. Ayah: Why is more funding needed if TARANG already has \$5,000?
 - i. Maham: Due to the expected attendance (300+) and the cost of food, an additional \$1,000 is required.
 - ii. Dubey: Reiterated that this is a massive event and any fee-paying grad student can attend.
 - iii. Maham: Confirmed food will include vegetarian and halal options.

d. *Motion passes with 13-0-2 (Kevin and Ayah abstain).*

ii. Grad Society of Bangladesh Special Allocation - \$1,500 request

1. The organization highlighted its vibrant activities and cultural events, specifically noting an upcoming major celebration for both Hindu and Bangladeshi students. They are requesting \$1,500 to support this event.
2. **Motion:** Allocate \$1,500 in special allocations to the Graduate Society of Bangladesh (motion by Shakil, seconded by Patrick).

- a. PATRICK: Will non-fee-paying students pay for attendance?
 - i. Shakil: Yes, any non-fee-paying person will be paying for their own ticket to attend.
 - ii. Sandip: Under Trustee policy, only fee-paying graduate students can benefit from GSS funds, which come from the Graduate Activity Fee. So, you need to get in touch with us so we can set up a ticket-buying system on behalf of GSS. The ticket revenues will need to go through GSS and TSOS to align with UConn and Trustee policy.
- b. *Motion passes with 12-0-2 (Kevin and Ayah abstain)*

9. Good News

- a. GSS Y2K Party on September 20th, 2025, at 9:00 PM at Kathmandu

10. Adjournment

Attendance:

1. Abishek Dubey
2. Atta Seck
3. Ayah Abdullah
4. Bikash Pal (Alternate sent)
5. Harrison Kelly
6. Jakiya Sultana Joya
7. Kolbe Flood
8. Md Abdullah Ali Shakil
9. Medha Aroura
10. Michael Jolly
11. Muhammad Faheem Hassan
12. Nadia Upah
13. Patrick Corrigan
14. Kevin (alternate for Quin Zabel)
15. Renuka Loganathan
16. Vannessa Heigel