UCONN
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
GSS

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
University of Connecticut
Senate Meeting
November 12, 2025 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
BUSN 127

1. **Call to Order – 6:17 PM**
2. **Recognition of Senators**
3. **Approval of consent agenda**
    a. Meeting agenda
    b. GSS Senate meeting minutes
        I. Oct 22, 2025 Senate Committee minutes.PDF
    c. GSS Executive Committee meeting minutes
        I. Nov. 5, 2025 Executive Committee minutes.PDF
    d. **Motion:** Pass the consent agenda with both the Oct 22, 2025 Senate minutes and the Nov 5, 2025 Executive Committee minutes.
        i. *Passes via unanimous consent.*
4. **Issues Forum**
    a. Off-Campus Housing | John Armstrong, Associate Dean of Students
        i. Housing, stipends, and limited financial resources remain major concerns, especially given that UConn is in one of the highest college rental markets in the country.
        ii. There is a need for an internal mechanism to help graduate students safely connect for housing purposes (e.g., finding roommates).
        iii. A timeline for on- and off-campus housing was presented.
        iv. Improved communication with incoming students before or upon arrival is needed.
        v. Efforts are ongoing to reduce housing costs; UConn has begun pre-leasing off-campus properties.
        vi. The rent-by-the-bed model remains a concern due to higher overall costs.
        vii. Students face challenges in connecting and coordinating with each other for housing.
        viii. There are no standard rules for rent increases, which adds uncertainty for tenants.
        ix. Bus service is limited—runs infrequently on weekends and has reduced schedules on weekdays.
        x. International students often arrive with families or without local connections, increasing housing challenges.
        xi. Graduate student campus housing is being assessed under strategic enrollment planning to determine individual needs.
    b. Parking and Transportation | Andy Kelly, Associate Director of Logistics
        i. Discussion included Willimantic transportation for students without cars, particularly through WRTD services. Resources were recently expanded to serve graduate student population centers, with possible future updates to Willington and Ellington.

  ii. E-bikes and scooters: Progress is being made toward a possible pilot program by next fall. The goal is to partner with companies, establish vehicle corrals, and register e-bikes and scooters to supplement limited bus routes.
  iii. Dial-a-Ride serves as a summer option for elderly and disabled riders when regular bus service is reduced.
  iv. Transportation funding comes from the student transportation fee, which supports the UPass, Accessible Land Service, and HuskyGo shuttle system.
  v. There is no direct public transport between Storrs and Avery Point; low ridership density makes it difficult to justify such a route.
  vi. Transportation to UConn Health is also considered cost prohibitive.
  vii. Parking near Horsebarn Hill remains limited. The W Lot is filling quickly due to high demand. While overall parking capacity is sufficient, availability is lacking in the interior of campus.
  viii. Plans are being discussed to expand parking near South Campus, where both staff and student parking are limited.
  ix. North and South Garage parking is increasingly used for hourly parking, and measures are in place to ensure full utilization of interior spaces.
  x. Illegal parking enforcement: The university has contracted with a company to use wheel-lock boots featuring a keypad release system once payment is made.

c. Grad Student Success | Melody Sinch
  i. Collaborations continue with various departments and research institutions to support professional growth.
  ii. Emphasis on building communication and leadership skills.
  iii. Graduate Student Appreciation Week will be held the week of April 6.
  iv. Graduate Student Research Day is planned, with a Postdoctoral Research Day forthcoming.

5. **Executive Committee Reports**

a. President
  i. The committee is seeking improved guidance and resources for graduate students with disabilities who serve as teaching assistants (TAs).
  ii. Event updates:
    1. Survey data from the summer and the Huskies event indicated 23% event satisfaction rate (students who attended at least one GSS event) and 90% satisfaction among respondents at an exit poll at the GSS Halloween event reported by the Communications Director.
    2. Additional surveys will be conducted at the beginning and end of the spring semester, targeting students who have attended GSS events.

iii. The University is forming a multi-campus committee, which will include one graduate student representative.
iv. The Town Hall fee increase was discussed.
v. Information regarding the activity fee increase will be presented by Maham during New Business and in a follow-up email.

b. Vice-President
  i. OneDrive storage is being restricted to manage costs, though expansion is planned. Graduate researchers are encouraged to create custom SharePoint sites for research data storage and collaboration.
  ii. The University is transitioning from desktop computers to laptops for Graduate Assistants (GAs) to simplify equipment management and enhance mobility, especially in lecture halls.

c. Treasurer
  i. Funding allocations to schools, departments, and faculty for new hires remain under discussion, with continued focus on graduate student funding.
  ii. SASFAC (Student Activity and Service Fee Advisory Committee) hearings:
    1. Departments and organizations presented budget proposals for review and potential increases.
    2. Recent years have seen consistent budget increases, including a 0.5% salary increase for graduate students.
    3. This year's proposal requests a 4.5% increase, excluding the Student Union.
    4. Hearings will be conducted online.
  iii. The Student Union has requested additional funding for security.
  iv. All organizations will present their budgets, with an accompanying budget summary sheet for transparency.

d. Communications Director (Absent)
  i. Has been documenting meetings, preparing minutes, and sending communications to graduate students through social media and email.
  ii. If there are any suggestions for improving the website, please reach out to the Communications Director.

e. Activities Director (Absent)
  i. The most recent Huskies event drew over 300 attendees.
  ii. Discussion included ways to improve event promotion and outreach to boost participation.

f. Parliamentarian

6. Old Business

a. Finance Committee Elections
  i. Khadija Danazumi (non-Senator)

ii. David Osei Kissi (non-Senator)
iii. Quin Zabel (Senator)
iv. More Nominations Needed!
v. Election Results: Patrick is elected to the Senator-At-Large seat. Three (3) other non named Senators are elected to the committee.

b. Discussion: Proposed Bylaw Amendments from Procedures Committee
   i. Proposed Bylaw Amendments.
   ii. **Motion:** Move the Bylaw Amendments discussion to the end of Agenda.
      1. *Motion passes via unanimous consent.*

7. New Business

a. **Motion:** Approve $32,315.02 for October TSOS Bills (motion by Quin, seconded by Harrison).
   i. *Motion passes with 10-0-0.*

b. **Motion**: Approve Executive Committee pay for the following members who have met the meeting attendance requirements as set in Bylaw VI.5, paid out as a fellowship with the following amounts as dictated in Bylaw VI.1, with 50% disbursed after meeting the Fall semester attendance requirements, and 50% disbursed after meeting the Spring semester attendance requirements (motion by Harrison, seconded by Bikash).
   i. President: $5,000
   ii. Communications Director: $3,000
   iii. Treasurer: $5,000
   iv. Activities Director: $3,000
   v. Parliamentarian: $1,500
      1. *Motion passes unanimously.*

c. **Motion:** Extend the meeting by 15 minutes (motion by Quin, seconded by Renuka)
   i. *Motion passes unanimously.*

d. **Motion** to approve Executive Committee pay for the following members who have met the meeting attendance requirements as set in Bylaw VI.5, paid out as a fellowship with the following amounts as dictated in Bylaw VI.1, with 50% disbursed after meeting the Fall semester attendance requirements, and 50% disbursed after meeting the Spring semester attendance requirements (motion by Harrison, seconded by Quin).
   i. Vice President: $1,500
      1. *Motion passes unanimously.*

e. Discussion: GSS Activity Fee Increase
   i. Members have been collecting signatures required for Tier II funding.
   ii. All signatures are destroyed once the request is either approved or denied. The process is strictly non-political.

        iii. The Social Work program is seeking incorporation into GSS.
    f. Discussion: SASFAC Updates
        i. Draft SASFAC Document
        ii. A minimum of 75 senator approvals is required to forward the proposal to SASFAC for review. If approved, incorporation would take effect in Fall 2026.
        iii. By the end of the academic year, there will be no remaining funds unless the student activity fee is increased.
        iv. The current budget is approximately $160,000, with $40,000 in fixed costs, leaving only $34,000 available.
        v. GSS must prioritize its own operations and activities before allocating funds to Tier II organizations.
        vi. The full SASFAC packet will be distributed before the next Senate meeting.

---

    g. Motion: Extend the meeting by 15 minutes (motion by Quin, seconded by Harrison).
        i. Motion passes unanimously.

8. Good News
    a. GSS Friendsgiving November 21st, 2025, 4-8 PM at Huskies Downtown
    b. Thanks to the Parliamentarian, Kari, for doing the minutes for the Nov. 2025 Senate meeting.

9. Adjournment