GSS Fall 2019, Health and Wellness Committee Report
Ben Remillard (Co-Chair), Martine Grenier-Burtis (Co-Chair), Kerry Dykens, Emily Whalen, Will Lush (former)

Dental/Vision/healthcare--Emily, Martine, [Will]
- Beginning of semester status/issues
  - UNH doubled the co-pay on services, including mental health services
  - Currently healthcare is being taxed as income
  - Wentworth Douglass--covers some areas (but not all, like Newmarket)
  - It was recommended that we work with Lauren on this, in Finance

- Updates
  - With Will having stepped down from GSS, Ben [in place of Martine], Alex, and Will met in November to talk about the current health care efforts, with the emphasis being on more cross-committee efforts between Health and Wellness and Finance to try and work out possible health care plans for graduate students

Creating and Disseminating Student Health Benefits Plan (SHBP)--Will
- How to navigate around their website. This was something Will was interested in doing at the beginning of the semester given his prior expertise with that document.

Reduction in Summer Gym Fees--Kerry and Emily
- Financial services committee also looking into this.
- After reviewing the competing options in the surrounding area, it seems like UNH offers the cheapest option for gym access during the summer. We may not have much of an option, then, for asking for lower or waived summer fees.

Childcare--Ben and Kerry
- Ben and Kerry compared the current childcare options at UNH to a number of surrounding/competing schools. The goal of this activity was to see if we could somehow negotiate with the University to decrease the amount our institution charges for childcare services
- We were surprised to find that most of the large public universities in the region offer fairly extensive childcare options (with the exception being URI, which has none). Most of those schools, however, charge much more for childcare services than UNH does.
- The University of Maine is a notable exception here in that its services are much cheaper, in no small part due to the fact that they incorporate student labor and thus do not need to be fully staffed by professionals
- The biggest issue with our current services, it seems, is that space is incredibly limited.
- Ben and Kerry also met with Jovana and Steve in their new graduate student parents support group. While we discussed the possibility of applying for the alumni grant to try and provide extra resources for student parents, the biggest
issue is space; while there may be the new lactation rooms around campus (which the faculty senate helped fight for last year) there is no communal space that those resources could go toward—this is something which needs to be addressed if the MUB is rebuilt, per the discussion at the last GSS meeting.

• Next Steps
  ○ Ben is going to set up meetings with the childcare services on campus, as well as with financial aid. Meeting with the latter could help us understand and compile the possible list of resources our students could benefit from and take advantage of which they may not currently know about. The meeting with the former will be directed at trying to figure out if there are any ways of expanding the services the university already offers.
  ○ We are also going to look into what sort of communal child support programs other colleges (like BC) offer, and to see if such an endeavor might be possible at UNH, thus relieving us of the issue of paid, on-campus services and the limitations there. Whether this is something which could be done by the parents themselves, or if this can be done in coordination with the Nursing program to help some of their students fulfill their requirements for graduation (which also needs to be further investigated), remains to be seen.

Hamel Rec Partnership

• I met with Dave Charette back in November and he expressed an interest in partnering more with grad students in the future to try and increase our overall participation at the Rec Center. One idea I had that I’m gonna try out next year is that, when we do our departmental orientations, I am going to give our new History grad students around campus, which would include a tour of the gym. That way they at least get in the door at least once in order to familiarize themselves with the space.