

# Graduate Student Senate



GSS Meeting | 4/13/2020 | 12-1:45 PM | Zoom

**1. Bring the Meeting to Session – POGSS**

- a. Meeting called to session at 12:05pm

**2. Roll Call – COGSS**

| Name                        | Role                  | Attendance                         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Casey O'Heran               | President             | Present                            |
| Liz Weidner                 | Vice President        | Present                            |
| Alex Padilla                | Financial Affairs     | Present                            |
| Jacob Koile                 | Community Coordinator | Present                            |
| Jacob Bennett               | External Relations    | Absent                             |
| Sarah Widlansky             | Communications        | Present                            |
| Dominic Payne               | CEPS                  | Present                            |
| Kerry Dykens                | CEPS                  | Present                            |
| Francesco Preti             | CEPS                  | Present                            |
| Sanchari Kundu              | CHHS                  | Absent                             |
| Emily Whalen                | CHHS                  | Present                            |
| Sumeyra Gok                 | COLA                  | Present                            |
| Martine Grenier-Burtis      | COLA                  | Absent, Sumeyra serving as proxy   |
| Allison Giannotti           | COLA                  | Present                            |
| Ben Remillard               | COLA                  | Present                            |
| Lauren Breza                | COLSA                 | Present                            |
| Yoka Milosavljevic Ardeljan | PAUL                  | Present                            |
| Karen Moran Rivera          | International         | Absent, Francesco serving as proxy |
| Marie-Josiane (MJ) Ohoueu   | Grad School           | Present                            |
| Michael Fazi                | Law                   | Present                            |
| Surya Kranthi Siyadri       | Manchester            | Present                            |
| Karla Oñate Melecio         | Housing               | Present                            |

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes - POGSS & COGSS**

- a. 3/30/2020 Meeting: Sumeyra requested an edit to the spelling of her name. Jovana made a motion to approve the amended minutes, seconded by Dominic. Approved unanimously.

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- b. Special meeting on 4/6/2020: Sumeyra requested an edit to the spelling of her name. Dominic made a motion to approve the amended minutes, seconded by Jovana. Approved with one abstention.
- 4. Committee Updates – Committee Chairs**
- a. Jacob K. (Programming Committee): Thinking about setting up Zoom trivia for grad students. Hoping to solidify a date within 2 weeks. Jovana asked about student appreciation week (April 20 – April 24) and suggested that we could do trivia as part of this.
  - b. Alex (Financial Affairs Committee): meeting with Health and Wellness to discuss health insurance, fees, and where H&W funding goes. Also discussed Health coverage for students who may contract COVID-19.
  - c. Liz (Governance Committee): Updates on the elections later in the agenda. Governance Committee was not enforcing the inactive senatorship policy for the special meeting on 4/6/20.
  - d. Sumeyra (Diversity & Inclusivity Committee): No updates. Sumeyra will reach out to the committee to make a plan for future work.
  - e. Ben (Health & Wellness Committee): Updates later in the agenda.
  - f. Michael (Law School): The Law School SGA equivalent will be officially recognizing law school GSS senators as non-voting members that people can reach out to.
- 5. Kevin Charles will be joining a GSS meeting later in the semester to provide updates on H&W for the remainder of the semester and next academic year.**
- 6. Old Business**
- a. Pass/fail for Spring 2020 graduate courses - **POGSS & VPGSS**
    - i. Graduate grading structure is not built for a pass/fail or credit/fail system
      - 1. Discussed with Dean Moorhead and the Grad Council.
      - 2. The GSS resolution in its entirety won't be enacted.
    - ii. Graduate Council motion – this will be a joint statement with GSS urging professors to be lenient with grading this semester.
    - iii. Governance Committee feels frustrated with communication between administration and GSS. After describing pass/fail resolution in detail, we were never told that it wasn't feasible. Dean Moorhead does support the need to make things as flexible as possible.
    - iv. Karla said some professors have already assumed that the pass/fail option applies to graduate classes and have said that pass/fail will be an option in their class. Dean Moorhead has made it clear that there is no mechanism to do this on a large scale for grad classes. The options could

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be murky for classes that are combined grad/undergrad. Karla wonders if we should try to address misinformation that grad students may have heard about this. Liz thinks we should urge the grad school to address this to help clear up any confusion.

- v. Surya asked about how this would be handled on a case by case basis. Casey said this was unclear, but we can find out more from the Grad School about what criteria they would use to evaluate this. Liz is concerned some students may fall through the cracks.
  - vi. Michael mentioned that the Law school got a waiver from the Faculty Senate in Durham and has already gone to mandatory pass/fail. Michael is skeptical that a pass/fail option isn't possible and agrees that students will be hesitant to reach out. He thinks that an email from the Grad School that explains how students should reach out and examples of cases that would warrant pass/fail is necessary.
  - vii. Casey voiced his concern that the university offering a pass/fail option for undergrads and no equivalent for grad students sets a bad precedent.
  - viii. MJ asked about the difference between grad and undergrad classes that makes pass/fail not feasible for grad classes. Dean Moorhead had previously explained that pass/fail was implemented at an undergrad level for classes that are not related to someone's undergrad degree but could make them more well-rounded individuals. Having a pass/fail option encourages students to take classes they are interested in without the concern about their GPA. By their nature, grad classes are focused on your degree, so this would not be applicable.
  - ix. GSS leadership will continue to discuss this issue with the administration through the rest of the semester and next year.
- b. Elections - **COGSS & VPGSS**
- i. Liz summarized the results of the elections. All nominees and elected officers have been contacted.
  - ii. One issue with a tie: There were two people who each received 2 votes through write-in for CEPS, but there is only one vacant CEPS position. The GSS Constitution does not give explicit guidelines for addressing this. They will each become a senator and will be assigned to positions in the fall through a vote.
  - iii. Liz is putting a copy of the election results in the GSS Google Drive folder.
  - iv. Casey thanked the Governance Committee for their work on the elections.

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## c. Housing - **POGSS**

### i. Main Street

1. The vote for this project will likely not be going to the Board of Trustees due to the COVID situation. Jacob B. will update at a later time. Casey and Alex reached out to the Town of Durham where the Economic Committee was discussing this housing project. Christine from the committee laid out some of the challenges, including university hurdles, granite bedrock, parking, and various residential ordinances.

### ii. Woodside pilot program

1. Seemed promising before COVID
2. No updates from Kathy Irla-Chesney recently. Alex will follow up with her.

### iii. Housing letter - **POGSS/Housing & Transportation Committee**

1. Letter was initiated by a discussion with the Grad Council
2. Casey incorporated feedback from our last discussion, including adding a statement about UNH's R1 status that Dominic suggested.
3. No additional discussion.
4. Dominic made a motion to approve the letter, seconded by Surya. Letter was approved unanimously.
5. Casey will send to Dean Moorhead and the Grad Council.

## d. Immunization letter - **H & W Committee**

- i. Ben (H&W committee co-chair) shared. This is the same letter that was discussed a month ago. Acknowledged that there is a double standard against international students as the requirements currently stand. Ben reached out to Kevin Charles and hasn't heard back. Hoping for more input from him when he comes to a GSS meeting.
- ii. Casey mentioned that academic holds should be the penalty for non-compliance. This was based on discussions with Dovev. Friendly amendment to make urge more specific with regards to penalties. Ben made a motion to friendly amend the letter to specify that the penalty would be an academic hold. This was seconded by Sumeyra. Amendment was approved unanimously.
- iii. Casey thanked the H&W committee for working on this, even before pandemic was happening.

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- iv. Sumeyra made a motion to approve the letter, seconded by Karla. Letter was approved unanimously.

## 7. New Business

### a. MUB renovations letter - **H & W Committee**

- i. Ben introduced the letter and added that he wants input on the wording. Casey suggested adding that the new MUB should include space that is grad student specific, rather than just GSS space. Something like the Hive/Nest, but in the MUB.
- ii. Dominic made a motion to friendly amend the letter to say that the space would be used for all graduate students, rather than just GSS. This was seconded by Sumeyra. Amendment passed unanimously.
- iii. Casey also thinks the new space should have a larger capacity than the Hive/Nest (40+ students).
- iv. Ben wants to get more input from Jovana and vote on the letter during the next meeting.

### b. Space for students with families

- i. Ben introduced the letter, stating that it is based on discussions with Jovana and Steve who run the support group for grad students with families. General concern that there are not a lot of childcare options in the area.
- ii. Having space in the MUB dedicated to students with families could provide useful resources and promote communal support.
- iii. We will vote on this at the next meeting along with the related MUB letter.
- iv. Discussion: Liz asked about existing childcare options and noted that for students, it is not clear what options are even available. This may not be communicated as well to students as it is to faculty. Liz thinks this should be communicated better. Ben will incorporate this feedback into the letter for our next meeting.

### c. Budget – **FAO**

- i. ~\$1500 is left in GSS budget. ExComm has discussed buying swag for next year to use at events early in the fall. Looking for input on swag ideas. Still need to decide on whether to use the UNH logo.
- ii. Alex will compile a list of possible items to purchase.
- iii. Liz mentioned that some of our swag in the past was from the Grad School and asked whether we pay for those. Alex will check with Jovana.
- iv. GSS leadership will discuss further next Monday in the ExComm meeting.

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## d. Exit surveys – **POGSS**

- i. Previous years have done exit surveys, though this was not done last year. Casey will send a survey to everyone that they can submit if desired.
- ii. Casey shared a potential template but wants to create an online survey submission.
- iii. Dominic asked to include a question on what people feel is the most important issue GSS should focus on next year. Karla agreed with this. MJ suggested adding an open-ended box to write any additional comments at the end.
- iv. Survey will be open to all GSS members.
- v. Survey will be sent out before the next meeting and the results will be compiled by the last meeting.

## e. Any other new business

- i. Email just went out about fee refunds. Fees that aren't being utilized right now (e.g., athletic fee for undergrads) have been refunded to student accounts. Several senators said that they have a credit for \$166 listed as "Grad Mand. Fee credit – COVID". It is not clear which actual fees were refunded. Liz says we could ask for this information if we thought it was important.

## 8. Upcoming Events/Important Dates - **POGSS**

- a. April 17th: Casey O'Heran thesis defense @ 1 PM via Zoom ([https://unh.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_IlgMCeDTQegCI7HETgHdw](https://unh.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IlgMCeDTQegCI7HETgHdw))
- b. April 27th: Next GSS meeting (Last full GSS meeting of the session)
- c. May 11th: Last GSS meeting (Partial meeting/end of year celebration)
  - i. Casey will be recognizing people who are leaving GSS at this meeting. Send Casey information on how long you've been on GSS, etc. before then.

## 9. Open Forum – **POGSS**

- a. Jacob Bennett successfully defended his PhD last week.
- b. Liz mentioned that there will be a virtual toast for Casey's defense that she will be organizing, and you can contact her for info to join via Zoom.

## 10. Adjournment

- a. Liz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Allison. Meeting adjourned at 1:33pm.