

# Graduate Student Senate



**GSS Meeting | 03/17/2020 | 12:00 – 1:30 PM | Zoom**

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

- a. Meeting called to session at 12:01pm.

**2. Roll Call – COGSS**

<b>3. Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Dominic Payne	President	Present
Karla Oñate Melecio	Vice President	Present
Michael Fazi	External Affairs	Present
Sarah Widlansky	Communications	Present
Nishitha Kamini	Community Coordinator	Present
Sumeyra Gok	COLA	Present
Kendra Bostick	COLA	Present
Allison Giannotti	CEPS	Absent, Sumeyra serving as proxy
Hamad Zaheer	CEPS	Absent
Emily Whalen	COLSA	Present
Alix Flinders	CHHS	Absent, Inactive
Natasha Leuchanka Diessner	PAUL	Present
Cassie Manning	LAW	Present
Griffin Kmon	LAW	Present
Danielle Johnson	MANCHESTER	Absent, Sumeyra serving as proxy
Caroline Kanaskie	GRAD	Present
Sreelekha Dandu	Financial Affairs	Present
Sanchari Kundu	HOUSING	Absent, Inactive
Akhtar Ardakani	PAUL	Absent
Elizabeth Mamros	CEPS	Present
Chika Ugwuodo	ONLINE	Present
Chelsea Cabral	COLA	Present
Janie Bright	CHHS	Present
Chandra Annasamy	INTERNATIONAL	Present
Kamala Nasirova	CHHS	Present

**4. Approval of Meeting Minutes – POGSS & COGSS**

- a. Cassie made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 3/03/21, seconded by Janie. The minutes were approved unanimously.

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## 5. Committee Updates – *Committee Chairs*

- a. Sumeyra has been in touch with the undergrad Diversity Committee and discussed the campus climate survey.

## 6. Old Business – *POGSS*

- a. Spring Leadership Conference
  - i. GSS is helping to run a workshop on applying to grad school and it will incorporate a peer mentoring opportunity. Session will be from 1:00 – 1:45pm on Saturday, 3/20.
  - ii. Looking for someone from GSS to help facilitate this meeting. This person will help with breakout rooms, etc. Michael is posting a message to the slack channel about this.
  - iii. Michael is sending the conference pack out today or tomorrow. This will include all Zoom links and the schedule for the conference.
- b. GSS Merchandise
  - i. Dom reached out to Beth Sheckler (UNH Innovation) and has a call with her later today to discuss use of the UNH logo on merchandise.
  - ii. Dom shared a potential mug design that could also be used on a shirt. General approval from GSS.
- c. Nominations
  - i. There have been 15-20 nominations so far. Many executive positions are still open, including President.
  - ii. Janie nominated herself for the Online position.
  - iii. Karla nominated herself for Financial Affairs.

## 7. New Business – *POGSS*

- a. Elections
  - i. Elections will start at 8pm on 3/17 and run through 8pm on 3/24. They happen on Wildcat Link.
  - ii. Write-in votes are welcome.
- b. Library Services Letter
  - i. Library has been hit with financial hardships. They are asking for advice for how they will save money (For fiscal year 2023).
  - ii. Major points:
    1. Not planning to reduce library hours.
    2. Not planning to renew their contract with Elsevier journals.
    3. Dimond Library will update the HVAC system in the next five years. This will be an additional cost.
    4. Considering consolidating the branch libraries.

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5. Want to keep library liaison program.
  6. They are open and willing/ready to help with open access efforts if the university considers this worth pursuing.
  7. Efforts to digitize more of their collections.
  8. Dedicated to working with university on DEI efforts. No particular budget for this.
- iii. Decisions will occur over the next few months. They are asking GSS and others for input.
1. Natasha said having access to research journals is important for grad student success and that it could be good for us to voice a reminder about this to the library. Also mentioned the interlibrary loan system and suggested encouraging UNH to maintain and strengthen this relationship. Natasha is concerned about the consolidation of the branch libraries into one. Natasha worked for all three of these libraries as an undergrad and briefly as a master's student. She recommends they consult with individual library branch managers before consolidating to hear their concerns for the programs, resources, physical space, etc. (Potential contacts that Natasha mentioned: Heather Castle, Barbara Morris, Bob Constantine.) She disagrees that consolidating the branches will only affect CEPS students.
  2. Karla asked whether this letter has been sent to faculty as well. Dom assumes that it has. Karla seconds what Natasha said. She said a big selling point when students are coming to UNH is that many CEPS departments have their own library and she feels they would be doing a disservice by taking these away. She also regularly accesses the Elsevier journals and is concerned about this change.
  3. Dom added that they do say they will be leaning on the interlibrary loan service to accommodate students with this change.
  4. Dom also said the physics library stood out to him when he was visiting UNH.
  5. Sumeyra said that if they are going to unsubscribe from journals and switch to interlibrary loan, they need to promote it more. She stumbled upon it by accident and didn't know it was a resource.

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Natasha agreed that many new grad students don't know about it or how it works.

6. Library needs initial comments back by March 21<sup>st</sup>.

c. Childcare Needs of Graduate Students

- i. Child Study and Development Center on campus reached out and said some grant funding could be available to people with families. Typically, grad students have not been eligible for this. Dom added that this is tangentially related to housing, with Forest Park closing.
- ii. Natasha asked for more information about what the grant is. Dom doesn't have much more information, other than that they have funding to help with tuition for parents, but typically they've assumed grad students aren't parents. Natasha stressed that this is not an accurate assumption and that she knows several students who have expressed concerns for childcare.
- iii. Emily mentioned that Ben Remillard was working on this last year on the Health & Wellness committee. These efforts may have dropped off because of COVID. She also said she had a constituent reach out about parental leave and how there is no institutional-level support.
- iv. Natasha mentioned how many grad students hesitate to bring this up with their advisors. She also added that looking at grad student health insurance and how it covers child health costs (pre-natal, delivery, etc.) compared to how much they earn. Stressed that we need less stigma from faculty around grad students' choices to have kids.
- v. Caroline added to keep in mind how much it costs on a grad student income and whether the discounted programs are even still feasible. Natasha seconds this. It is also important to make sure people get a spot for childcare, not just reduced costs.
- vi. Natasha added that with COVID, many childcare centers have kids taken out when they are feeling sick, but parents still have to pay to keep their spot. It is also difficult working from home during COVID with kids and discussing this hardship with advisors.

d. Public Transportation Updates

- i. Ending the Wildcat Transit Route 5 service to Newmarket because ridership has decreased to the point that it does not make sense financially. Can no longer justify the costs. They will still operate basic weekday service in the 2021-2022 academic year. They will completely stop this service after that year. Seems like this decision is final.

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- ii. They plan to host a virtual town hall to discuss/announce this change and this will be posted on the UNH website. They want to help with this adjustment, including assisting with housing decisions.
- iii. Chandra is concerned about how people will commute. The bus is what allowed her to commute to school and get around. They have already reduced to only four runs. She mentioned that the same thing happened with the Lee route four years ago.
- iv. Dom added that when you keep reducing service and then assessing ridership, it becomes harder to truly know what the ridership would be if it wasn't reduced.
- v. Natasha agreed with Chandra and said it will be difficult for students who are already living in Newmarket and rely on the bus. Says Wildcat Transit is a big draw for students who are considering UNH. Cars can be a big expense on a grad student salary. She wondered whether there could be an alternative (10-person van, etc.). UNH used to have a shuttle service for people who had been drinking and needed a ride home. Something similar could be used on an as needed basis, potentially.
- vi. Dom mentioned that there is still an as needed service, but what they can't afford are the consistent routes. It's very costly for UNH to experiment with routes.
- vii. Caroline agreed about the cost of experimenting and added that this is such a bad time to assess because many people are making decisions based on COVID right now. Karla added this was their plan since before COVID. They could be using data from COVID to justify their choice. Also added that she thinks the shuttle service is just for students whose class ends after the last bus. Dom says they brand it as "you are guaranteed a ride if you need one". According to the website, it is just for emergencies and can only be used 2x per semester.
- viii. Chandra added that the Coast Bus has also been reducing service since 2018, which could be an extra hardship.
- ix. Natasha said that partnering with the Coast bus could help (consolidate services).

## 8. Open Forum – *POGSS*

- a. None

## 9. Adjournment

- a. Karla made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Janie. Meeting adjourned at 1:20pm.