

# Graduate Student Senate



GSS Meeting | 10/07/2020 | 4:00 – 5:30 PM | Zoom

1. **Bring the Meeting to Session – POGSS**
  - a. Meeting called to session at 4:01pm.

2. **Roll Call – COGSS**

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

3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes – POGSS & COGSS**
  - a. Karla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 09/23/20, seconded by Griffin.
  - b. The minutes were approved unanimously with no changes.
4. **Guest Speaker – Dr. Nadine Petty, Chief Diversity Officer**

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- a. New at UNH. Previously from the Univ. of Iowa where she was the Executive Director of the Center for Diversity and Enrichment for five years and held other positions previously. She has also spent some time in business, but felt most fulfilled in higher ed. She has done diversity work formally for 8-9 years and informally for more than 20 years.
- b. Multifaceted role at UNH as an advisor to President Dean and also working across the institution in different departments and colleges meeting with their diversity committees.
- c. “Transformative change at UNH”. Initiatives tend to be tied to a leader who creates it and then falls flat when leadership changes over. Doesn’t want this to be the case here. Hopes to embed programs into the fabric of UNH so it doesn’t matter who is in the leadership position.
- d. Opened it up to questions from GSS:
  - i. Dominic mentioned the GSS Diversity and Inclusivity committee and asked how that committee could work with her to promote longevity. She encouraged reaching out to her. She is trying to figure out what all committees are working on so people don’t have to re-invent the wheel. She will keep us up to date on what is happening at a higher level to help with collaboration.
  - ii. Karla asked about the DEI initiatives and what her main priority is right now. Answer: Diversifying the student body, diversifying faculty, inclusivity (education, curriculum, trainings, etc.), mentoring, and building a budget line that departments can use for anything DEI related. Many donors are interested in the wake of George Floyd murder.
  - iii. Griffin asked how she plans to tackle systemic racist issues, including support for diverse students after they arrive. Answer: We have some systems in place already, but some are broken. The Beauregard Center is an example of a resource that already exists. Students often encounter micro or macro aggressions on campus and there is still a lot to work on. Incident reporting system has problems and there will be a new reporting system coming out next month. Many people don’t trust the current system. Bias/racism has been handled differently than Title IX in the past. She proposes creating an advocacy position for people who have experienced bias, so they know their rights, are familiar with the process, etc. (similar to SHARPP).
  - iv. Caroline mentioned doing programming with the Grad School and how women and minorities tend to be the only people going to optional

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trainings. Asked about whether you can make things mandatory. Answer: Mandatory training for faculty will never happen. Could happen for students, but tricky and often not helpful. Doesn't recommend this. She hopes that people will learn to engage and step into discomfort. Mentioned many white, conservative, male, heteronormative people have reached out saying they don't feel comfortable at UNH. She mentioned that inclusivity means everyone, including people in the majority. Wants to promote being there for everyone. Civil discourse. Their office would treat acts of bias against conservative people the same way they treat other submissions and she found that explaining this helps people feel more comfortable. Doesn't think mandatory trainings should happen.

- v. Dominic mentioned that grad students often have mentors who are also from underrepresented groups and this can put extra pressure on them. Wants to know ways to address this. Answer: It is difficult, but diversifying will help with this. Faculty of color will still be asked to do more. Sometimes other connections can be just as meaningful, and the university could look to other people to be effective mentors. Spread mentoring capacity more broadly. No perfect answer though.
- e. Dr. Petty asked us about trainings for TAs, RAs, etc. A colleague from Univ. of Iowa was interested in collaborating. She wanted to know about timing (weekend, evening, etc.) for a ~4-hour block. Dominic said probably difficult on a weekday. Karla agreed and said 9am-5pm wasn't good time. TAs often teach night labs too, so weekends might be better. Sanchari asked about breaking it into two 2-hour sessions. Natasha mentioned that grad students with children often have tight schedules and would also like shorter time windows. Kendra suggested having two options (morning and evening). Sanchari suggested using an online portal that you can go back to when you have time. Caroline mentioned non-semester times (J-term, summer) as good options.

## 5. Committee Updates – *Committee Chairs*

- a. Sanchari – Academic Programs Committee is working on teaching evaluations, including more questions on how teaching can be improved for new TAs. The transportation Committee is meeting 2x per semester. Gregg Hall parking is closing soon for construction.
- b. Dominic – Christine Soutter has requested some changes to the housing survey that went out to grad students to ask if they would prefer to be “walking distance” to campus, instead of “on campus”. Overall, found the survey helpful.

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- c. Health and Wellness committee needs to pick a chair. Peggy Goetz (PACS) will be joining next meeting as guest speaker.
- d. Kendra – Spring Engagement Committee wants to see all surveys related to COVID. Kendra has already shared the GSS COVID and housing surveys. They are worried that students aren't feeling engaged and able to find community. Thinking of bringing in food trucks and heating towers to encourage outdoor gathering. Worried about people not coming back in the spring. Want to consolidate student interest.

## 6. Old Business

- a. International Students Senator
  - i. Chandra Annasamy ran for the position in the spring.
  - ii. Brief intro: Chandra is an international student from India. In the US for 6 years, second year in the Agricultural Sciences PhD program. Two masters degrees in India. Interested in societal needs. Former facilitator in academia. Wanted to run for International Student Senator role because of interest in engagement and international students.
  - iii. Caroline made a motion to approve Chandra Annasamy as the International Students Senator, seconded by Natasha. Chandra was elected unanimously.

## 7. New Business - *POGSS*

- a. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Town Hall
  - i. President Dean, Provost Jones, and Chief Diversity Officer Petty hosted this town hall last week.
  - ii. Sumeyra shared the university's DEI initiatives to the Zoom chat (<https://www.unh.edu/inclusive/our-community/dei-initiatives>)
  - iii. Open to thoughts: Michael will share suggestions/thoughts with the administration. Sumeyra mentioned that there were no clear goals to increase diversity, especially since most people are from NH. The university is working with an organization for undergrads, but there is no clear plan for grad students. Caroline mentioned wanting to know who specifically will be working on each item/initiative. Karla felt like her questions were answered at the town hall.
  - iv. A recording of the town hall is linked on the university's initiative page
  - v. Natasha asked about any short-term specifics that were given. Michael mentioned the change in reporting software that will happen this semester. Some mention of implicit bias training as a near future goal.

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- vi. Natasha asked about Powerplay sessions for grad students. Actors play out role playing scenarios and engage with audience participation. Janie also mentioned NH Listens. Karla said they are planning on doing some student sessions, but there may be some limits on how many can attend. Also gets expensive for a 90 min session. Caroline also noted she isn't sure if they do an online version and suggested going to Dean Moorhead for potential available funding.
  - vii. Kendra mentioned the Browne Center (high ropes course). Experiential educators that she is very involved with and located at UNH. She could reach out to Tara Flippo and Pam McGee at the Browne Center.
  - b. Public Engagement & Outreach Award
    - i. Caroline presented this. It is a joint effort with Clarice Perryman (NRESS PhD student). Want to get this award approved because it would show that the Grad School values outreach as much as teaching and research. Proposal would need to be submitted to the Grad Council for approval
    - ii. This would go along with other Grad School awards (e.g., the Graduate Teaching Award, Research/Scholarship/Creativity Award). They don't want the award to go to someone who does public engagement and outreach as part of their job.
    - iii. Natasha added that you wouldn't want to exclude people who are doing applied research but isn't sure how to go about that. Also mentioned potential overlap with the Leitzel Center Award. Karla mentioned overlap with the Kittredge Award in CEPS.
  - c. Mandatory Fees Update
    - i. Dominic talked to Jovana and Dovev who said that the remote fee can't be waived. Other mandatory fees can. Students can submit a petition to Dovev. The form should be online.
    - ii. Caroline mentioned that if you're being tested for COVID-19, you're considered "on campus".
- 8. Open Forum – POGSS**
- a. Natasha reminded everyone to send voting information out to constituents.
  - b. Chika asked about the UNH Online contact person and for more information about committees to join.
- 9. Adjournment**
- a. Karla made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Griffin. Meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.