

Graduate Student Senate



GSS Meeting | 10/21/2020 | 4:00 – 5:30 PM | Zoom

1. Bring the Meeting to Session – POGSS

- a. Meeting called to session at 4:02pm

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	Present, inactive
Alix Flinders	CHHS	Absent, Allison serving as proxy
Natasha Leuchanka Diessner	PAUL	Present
Cassie Manning	LAW	Present
Griffin Kmon	LAW	Absent, Cassie serving as proxy
Danielle Johnson	MANCHESTER	Present
Caroline Kanaskie	GRAD	Present
Sreelekha Dandu	Financial Affairs	Present
Sanchari Kundu	HOUSING	Present
Akhtar Ardakani	PAUL	Present
Elizabeth Mamros	CEPS	Present
Chika Ugwuodo	ONLINE	Present
Chelsea Cabral	COLA	Present
Janie Bright	CHHS	Present
Chandra Annasamy	INTERNATIONAL	Absent, Sumeyra serving as proxy

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – POGSS & COGSS

- a. Kendra made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 10/07/20, seconded by Sumeyra. Minutes approved unanimously with no changes.

4. Guest Speaker – Peggy Goetz, PACS Mental Health Clinician

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- a. Plan for today: Introduce herself, discuss new programs at PACS, and stress management.
- b. PACS = psychological and counseling services. Free for all students.
- c. Peggy has been working at PACS for 4 years, private practice in Manchester and Dover for many years. Works with narrative fiction and experiential/nature-based work. Positive mood and creating a positive space for yourself. Serves as a liaison to the Grad School and is happy to work with grad students.
- d. Grad support group meets Tuesdays from 5-6:30pm.
- e. New programs at PACS:
 - i. Telehealth therapy (Peggy is working remotely right now), although there are also staff available for in person appointments in Smith Hall. Open for urgent appointments too (call or walk in) Mon-Fri.
 - ii. Protocol (a 24/7, 365-day crisis line). Licensed therapist (not affiliated with PACS) available to talk. PACS will jump in the next day after you've talked to the crisis counselor.
 - iii. Welltrack (wellness tracking app). Similar to Headspace with guided meditations available.
 - iv. Starting next Friday (Oct. 30) and continuing each Friday with good weather PACS will be meeting at Wagon Hill Farm to walk with students. Can bring dogs.
- f. PACS also does consultations with faculty/staff for concerns about students to come up with strategies. All services with students are confidential (can't share information with professors).
- g. Opened up to questions:
 - i. Janie asked about how virtual grad students can participate in programs like the #togetherwalks, and other PACS services. Answer: Anyone can do telehealth sessions (individual and group) but may not be able to join things like nature walks virtually. Janie suggested having a way for people to send pictures of themselves walking with a dog, etc.
 - ii. Natasha asked about services offered to part time grad students. Answer: As long as you're paying the student fee you can use these services. They also have a case manager that helps find resources for students.
 - iii. Dom asked about destigmatizing mental health for new grad students and ways we could work with PACS to help with this. Answer: QPR training (one coming up in January). These trainings cover how to have a question/conversation about mental health with anyone you're worried about. She could do a separate training with GSS too if we wanted. The

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training would be about an hour plus time to ask questions and wrap up. She can also send info to GSS about common concerns for grad students (relationships, juggling work, etc.). Dom followed up by asking if we could recommend these trainings for faculty and TAs. Answer: Yes! They've already done some and encourage doing more.

- iv. Karla asked about other types of preventative sessions and info that might come in before someone needs QPR (e.g., info sessions with departments about resources/talking about mental health). Answer: Peggy is coming into classrooms and working in small groups to talk about these topics. She likes when groups compile questions before she gets there. You can arrange this through her office.
- v. Chelsea asked about ways for TAs to have a virtual pamphlet they can disseminate to students. Answer: The PACS website has virtual care packages, readings, etc. They also have over 100 resources about specific issues on the website that could be good for TAs to share.
- vi. Natasha asked about faculty training covering the way advisors communicate/interact with grad students. More experienced faculty have more experience managing grad students, while newer faculty may not have this experience. Answer: It's helpful to hear input from students about what is useful to add to faculty orientation and trainings. They currently do trainings on using "I" language instead of "you" language to encourage collaboration instead of pushing people away.
- vii. Janie asked about whether Peggy could be a guest speaker for online students. Answer: She is happy to collaborate.
- viii. Natasha asked about the maximum number of counseling sessions offered per year and the possibility of increasing it to help with continuous long-term support. Answer: She appreciates the concern. There is no limit on sessions over the summer and j-term, when many grad students are around. Groups also don't count towards the 8-session limit. Grad school requires health insurance. Students would just need to pay co-pay and they can go off campus. PACS can refer to therapists in the community. Karla followed up by saying that the \$30 copay adds up for grad students and asked who we would speak with to increase limit. Answer: Many therapists in the community would get rid of the co-pay or use a sliding scale fee if someone has trouble paying. PACS can help find these resources for students using their case manager.

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- ix. Akhtar added a question later clarifying whether the 8-session limit was per topic or total. Peggy was not here to answer this question.

5. Committee Updates – *Committee Chairs*

- a. No updates.

6. Old Business

- a. CHHS Vacancies
 - i. Kamala Nasirova – First year PhD student in Education. This is her first year in NH from Azerbaijan. Interested in understanding how people work with issues in higher ed. to support students and learning more from the GSS. Janie made a motion to appoint Kamala as a CHHS senator, seconded by Caroline. Approved unanimously.
- b. Public Engagement & Outreach Award (Caroline)
 - i. General discussion: No new updates since the last meeting. Acknowledged some uncertainty in criteria and eligibility. Discussion with Clarice and maybe the Grad Council could have some suggestions for the criteria. Natasha suggested putting a note that nominees “do not hold employment outside of their assistantship” or some other message. Doesn’t want people doing applied research to not be eligible for the award. She is hesitant to support this proposal as it is. Caroline is aiming for “excellence” in engagement beyond what is required for their job. First round of the award would be 2021, so there is plenty of time to be purposeful in the wording. Dom suggests holding off on voting and having Caroline and Clarice join the Grad Council meeting for their input.

7. New Business - *POGSS*

- a. Spring Planning Discussion
 - i. Faculty Senate, Grad Council, and the Spring Planning Committees are all looking for input from students, including grad students, on topics like teaching, classes, transportation, etc. Looking for specific things that did or didn’t work.
 - ii. Akhtar was asked to gather feedback from grad students about our experiences and/or challenges (particularly from the fall).
 - iii. Sumeyra mentioned that her online class allowed her to teach people from more than one campus (positive aspect of remote classes). Suggests having more online or hybrid courses in the future.
 - iv. Sreelekha said that international students are here for the exposure and an in-person experience and suggested having a poll for students asking what they want to do. Akhtar thinks the committee will not suggest fully

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in-person courses, but thought hybrid was always an option. Danielle suggested adding a question, like “did this class do well online or in person?” to the course evaluations at the end of the semester.

- v. Chelsea said she has heard that in hybrid classes many people who are supposed to be in class just Zoom instead and there are only two people there in-person. Also, many complaints from faculty about grad students not coming to class. RAs can also share their experiences. For example, Caroline’s earlier comment about places to eat on campus - no firm solutions offered yet, but it will be getting harder as it gets colder outside. The Nest and Hive aren’t open right now. Caroline heard some buildings might close over winter break and offices might be shuffled.
 - vi. Dom asked about students having difficulties organizing work/teaching schedules? Example: a student is on campus for research but scheduled to be remote for their class that day. No one had input on this issue. Natasha added that her friend who is remote said she is having a positive experience overall but was having a problem connecting to the VPN.
 - vii. Karla had someone ask her to bring up the possibility for TAs to get an additional week’s pay because they have more course prep work for classes that wouldn’t normally be online. Akhtar added that some TAs may have had out of pocket expenses for at-home teaching supplies too. Akhtar said her department reached out at the beginning of the semester to ask if they needed a laptop or tablet, but she thought it was coming from the Grad School. She got a laptop from the Univ. Janie suggested reaching out to a local union who will sometimes donate laptops to education.
 - viii. People can email Akhtar any time with more input.
- b. Sustainability Task Force
- i. Looking for a student representative to fill MJ’s role from last year.
 - ii. This task force covers a variety of initiatives related to sustainability (e.g., creating a tobacco free campus). Anyone can reach out to Dom via email if interested. Not sure about meeting time or frequency.

8. Open Forum – *POGSS*

- a. Emily petitioned to be made active. The Governance Committee approved this.

9. Adjournment

- a. Cassie made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Caroline. Meeting adjourned at 5:27pm.