

Graduate Student Senate



GSS Meeting | 9/9/2020 | 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
Alix Flinders	CHHS	Absent, Allison serving as proxy
Natasha Leuchanka Diessner	PAUL	Present
Cassie Manning	LAW	Present
Griffin Kmon	LAW	Absent
Danielle Johnson	MANCHESTER	Present
Caroline Kanaskie	GRAD	Present
Sreelekha Dandu	INTERNATIONAL	Present
Sanchari Kundu	HOUSING	Present

- a. Official note of quorum

3. Introductions

- a. Each person gave a brief introduction

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes – POGSS

- a. Karla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 11, 2020. Sumeyra seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously by all who were in attendance on 05/11/2020.

5. New Business - POGSS

- a. Vacancies
 - i. Financial Affairs
 - 1. Two people currently interested
 - 2. Online voting to choose between these candidates

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- ii. CEPS
 - 1. Two write in candidates for CEPS – Aktar Ardakani and Elizabeth Mamros
 - 2. Whoever doesn't win can choose from another vacant position
 - 3. Voting will take place online outside of the regular meeting.
- iii. CHHS Approval
 - 1. Kate Phelps is interested but was not present at the meeting.
- b. Constituencies
 - i. Reaching out to constituents will be a primary senator responsibility
 - ii. Constituency list is on the main page of the GSS 2020-2021 Google Drive - gives a rough idea of the number of constituents for each senator. These are approximate and may change as more positions are filled.
 - iii. Senators should reach out to the department contacts over the next few weeks and check that their information is correct.
- c. Committee Overview
 - i. Dominic gave a brief powerpoint overview of the GSS committees
 - ii. Standing Committees
 - 1. Executive
 - 2. Financial Affairs
 - a. Advise Financial Affairs Officer on finance matters
 - b. Monitor annual fee oversight process
 - c. Committee needs at least 2 more people
 - 3. Programming
 - a. Planning and coordinating events (social, town hall, professional development, etc.)
 - 4. Governance
 - a. Run and organize elections
 - b. Monitor inactive senator process
 - c. Oversee removals from office, amendments to the constitution and bylaws, and review old GSS policies.
 - d. GSS communication
 - iii. Ad-Hoc Committees
 - 1. Only discussed 3 ad-hoc committees in the meeting
 - 2. Diversity and Inclusivity
 - a. Promote inclusive environment on campus and draft resolutions that are relevant to these issues.
 - b. Improve campus climate

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3. Housing and Transportation
 - a. Monitor grad concerns on these issues
 - b. Campus housing for grad students
 - c. Participate in university committees
4. Health and Wellness
 - a. Promote H&W through university committees
 - b. Focus on mental and physical health
 - c. Childcare options on campus, vision and dental, food insecurity are common topics
- d. Goals for the Year – Discussion
 - i. Dominic maintained a separate document with a more detailed summary of the discussion around ad-hoc committee goals for the year. This document is available in Google Drive (GSS AY 2020/2021 > Committees > “Committee_Notes”) and summarized here.
 - ii. Diversity and Inclusivity (D&I)
 1. Suggestions included: Following up on campus climate survey results, collaborating with new Chief Diversity Officer (Nadine Petty), partner with OISS and/or the Beauregard Center (formerly OMSA), removing/modifying GRE requirements, content that should be covered in intro seminars (like office hours).
 2. Kendra asked to clarify whether D&I would help to plan and promote events to help bring grad students together. Dominic and Karla pointed out that the Programming Committee would do this, but D&I could help.
 - iii. Housing and Transportation (H&T)
 1. Suggestions included: getting an updated estimate of grad students using Wildcat Transit and when they need it (i.e., time of day), developing a swipe system to get accurate ridership info, working with Strafford Regional Planning Commission for ridership info, support for international students looking for housing (i.e., building credit for background checks with no on-campus option), clarifying COVID guidelines for commuters in terms of places to eat, remove masks, etc., PlacesForStudents service (number of users, promoting this, getting accurate listings)
 2. Allison added that students can email covid.response@unh.edu to get modified testing days, times, frequency, etc.

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3. Natasha asked to clarify whether Babcock students were relocated to accommodate quarantine housing. Karla added that students were moved to Karsten House.
 - iv. Health and Wellness
 1. Suggestions included: COVID-19 (all committees will end up dealing with this), mental health and suicide prevention (high priority), events to promote reaching out and connecting to others (e.g., BYOM (mug) events in departments), promoting PACS among grad students and destigmatizing mental health, Peggy Goetz as a connection in PACS, PACS resources (e.g., ProtoCall, grad student support groups), helping grad students recognize and intervene in toxic work situations, other aspects of wellness including financial wellbeing.
 2. Many suggestions around the Student Health Benefits Plan (SHBP), including updates on vision and dental progress, determining students' satisfaction with the plan, providing SHBP literacy to students through regular programs, advocating for more flexibility seeing off-campus providers.
 - v. Discussion on First Thursday replacement and how to go about organizing events
 1. Some suggestions: outdoor events (these would have a limited time window), weekend events could be good for larger gatherings.
 2. Some students may want to connect but don't have the clearance to come to campus.
 3. Kendra suggested a grad student poll to select events that students would like to see.
 4. Unclear whether in-person events are allowed at this time.
- 6. Adjournment – POGSS**
- a. Karla made motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sumeyra. Meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.