



## Graduate Student Association Meeting

Friday, October 13, 2023

### MINUTES

Officers Present: Shenese Patterson, Clivens Fresnel, Desiray Slaughter, Donald “DJ” Hardwick, Lisa Michael, Dominique Parke, Navya Mehta, Katherine Miromonti, Cinnamon Morris, Itoko Kobayash, Veronica Golden

Excused due to illness: Julia Lange

Guest: Charlotte Starnes.

- I. Call to Order - Start time 5:30 pm
- II. Adoption of the Agenda
- III. Introductions & Attendance of GSA Officers Recorded
  - a. Executive Board introduced themselves and shared reason for serving.
  - b. Senators introduces themselves and shared reasons for serving.
- IV. Remarks from GSA President – remarks provided later in meeting.
- V. Remarks from GSA Administrative Liaison, Dr. Kevin Miller, Director, Graduate Studies
  - a. Dr. Miller overseas GSA and GA positions. He loves graduate education and grad students. He has been doing this for 7 years.
- VI. Remarks of Vice President of Finance, Clivens Fresnel
  - a. VP Fresnel in last year of grad school creative and change leader he works at Tesla. He was interested to get back into campus and was a RA in undergrad. He saw GSA as a way to get back involved.
  - b. GSA Balance 10/02/23 = \$112,145 (Student Welfare \$19,720; Academic \$92,425)
  - c. Estimated Revenue Total 23/24 GSA Fees = @ \$54,500
    1. Student Welfare Portion (10%) = \$5,450
    2. Academic Portion (90%) = \$49,050
  - d. GSA Funding per student for 2022-23 maximum at \$3,000. GSA Academic Line took in \$51,301 from GSA fees and reimbursed \$99,767 (\$48,466 over fees) – this is not sustainable.
  - e. After a review of revenue from GSA Fees and expenses for past 3 years, propose a \$1,500 funding limit per student for 2023-2024. This requires a vote.
  - f. Looking for a senators to work on budget and budget recommendations.
  - g. Plan to propose a budget plan at November GSA Senate meeting.

GSA dues for all matriculated students is \$3.50/credit hour.

VP Fresnel – met with Dr. Miller to gain insight on GSA fee revenue for 23/24. Expenses for Academic Lines far exceed GSA fee revenue designated for Academic Line. Overspent \$48,466 for 2022-23. The goal is to implement something that can last. Last year per student maximum was set at \$3,000 for the year. This cannot continue. The proposal is to set the maximum reimbursement for eligible expenses at \$1,500 per student for the 2023-2024 academic year. The plan is to average expenses for the past three years to create a safety net reserve for GSA. Funds



will be available for scholarships etc. VP Fresnel plans to review everything for the past three years to determine potential impact and create a budget plan for GSA.

Dr. Miller added: GSA will owe money if they continue down this road. The fee was reduced during covid because students could not travel. But last year first year students were able to utilize the \$3,000 thousand. Fiscally this amount cannot be supported every year going forward.

Motion made by VP Fresnel to set the maximum limit for Academic Line reimbursement for eligible expense at \$1,500 for the 2023-2024 academic year.

- Senator DJ Hardick – second the motion
- Discussion: Senator Golden- it is appropriate to lower it to \$1,000.
- Motion unanimously passed – new maximum limit set at \$1,500.

Merit Based Scholarship - Merit Based Scholarships for 2022-23: \$1,200 for seven full-time students; \$700 for seven part-time students. Years ago it was \$1,000 for two full-time students and \$500 for two part-time students. Last year GSA set the number of scholarships at 14 total (7 full-time; 7 part-time) and the amount for each scholarship. GSA guidelines state a student may receive the GSA Merit Based Scholarship once in their college career.

VP Fresnel presented a preliminary Academic Line allocation idea subject to revision after additional budget analysis is completed. Initial thought is to dedicate 45% of academic line dedicated for student reimburse to attend conferences and for other eligible expenses, 45% for scholarships, and last 10% is miscellaneous. This may allow more students to receive scholarships and go to conferences. This would allow for more students to get more out of surplus fund. The plan will be proposed by an Academic Budget committee.

VP Fresnel's idea is to create budget plan for GSA. We are looking for volunteers. The following volunteers to serve: Academic Line Budget Committee: Clivens Fresnel (Chair), Senators Cinnamon Morris and Katherine Miromonti. Goal for committee is to present an initial draft Academic Line Budget Plan to GSA Senate at the next meeting.

- VII. Remarks of the President, Shenese Patterson
- a. I am the president for GSA the biggest reason she was interested was to network and connect with others. Bringing grad programs to undergrads showcasing what grad students can do and connect undergrads with grad student programs.
- VIII. Remarks of Executive Vice President, Julia Lange - unable to join meeting due to illness.
- IX. Remarks of Vice President of Administration, Desiray Slaughter
- a. I am looking forward to working with the GSA and bringing together the different graduate schools and creating networking events.
- X. New Business
- a. Zoom account Having a GSA Zoom account allows us to record meetings. Traditionally, Dr Millers pays the invoice and is reimbursed for GSA.



1. Senator Hardick makes motion for GSA to authorize Dr. Miller to pay the invoice on behalf of GSA and be reimbursed by GSA for the expense.
  2. Senator Golden - seconds
  3. Call to question
  4. Vote – unanimously approved.
- b. Planning committee for events – committee volunteers: VP Desiray Slaughter (Chair), Senators Lisa Michael and Navya Mehta. Purpose - generate a list of potential on/off campus events for GSA to sponsor. List from past to build from.
- i. Tabling with Merch
  - ii. Fall 2023 Social Event(s) – Ideas, Planning, Planetarium, Budget
  - iii. End of the Semester social event?
  - iv. Welcome to Spring 2024
  - v. Others

There is @ \$20,000 in the Social Welfare line for GSA sponsored events. The funds in the past have been used for expenses related to the Graduate Student Research Fair every May and other professional development seminars/workshops. Hypothetically we may want to sponsor off campus events that provide food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Ideas generated during meeting:

- Urban soul trivia? The trivia night host does different things.
  - VP Fresnel - Career fair with Tesla recruiting students bring recruiters.
  - Dr. Miller- we can't do career fairs for outside companies; however, we can work with a company willing to host a tour for students to learn about possible types of employment business like Tesla offer.
  - A shadowing event that would help under grads pick a grad program.
  - Evening out Seneca One that includes presentation by 41 North winners.
  - Richardson complex with tour of property, could tie in historian, social time.
  - Senator Michael - Burchfield Penny, Albright Knox, making it a social event a night when we have classes. Or Saturn club - has bowling like the White House or paddle ball.
- c. Professional Development Session Ideas
1. Round Table Symposium
  2. Professional Development/Speakers/Professors
  3. Dr. Miller recommends coming up with list of options for next meeting.

- We can do virtual happy hour to include online learners.

Does anyone have final thoughts?

- Senator Miromonti- looking forward to the year and meeting in person
- VP Fresnel - excited to leave mark on GSA
- Senator Cinnamon- looking forward to working with everyone. Asked if there is anyone on communications or social media and is willing to take this role



- Senator Mehta - excited to join and about conversation. Looking forward to contributing
- Senator Michael - exciting to being in a sense of community and excited people
- Senator Kobayash - is remote so looking forward to trying to help and any way
- Senator Hardwick - serves on College Council with president. Looking forward to getting graduate students' voices out. He is meeting with chancellor and can share any issues to be fixed.
- Senator Golden - interested in wine night with chocolate and cheese. This would be a remote event, if possible. When she was a part of Buffalo Urban League they would have a handshakes and head shots event which would allow opportunities for professional head shots. This would be in collaboration with cinnamon is she were to utilize our social media. Dr. Miller- in the past GSA has done an event like this before.

Two more ideas-

GSA President Shenese Patterson's name will be forwarded to potentially meet with Buffalo State President Candidates. Due to nature of the "representative search" process, she will be unable to disclose who the possible candidates are or if she was selected to serve. Whoever is selected will have an opportunity to meet with potential presidential candidates. They will be required to sign a NDA to make sure they do not disclose any information. Senator Hardwick commented that thus is a good opportunity for students to get their voices out there.

Prior searches were more open. Prevailing though is that open searches can reduce pool of candidates and result in otherwise very good candidates not applying. Applicants may not want their current employer knowing they are being considered for the position for good reason. Some institutions have done totally private searches.

Buffalo State is looking for two to serve on a financial advisory group that will look into how we can use campus to generate revenue. Looking for 1-2 people from GSA. Advisory mostly. Senators Cinnamon Morris and Veronica Golden expressed interest. There will be more opportunities outside of this. Some small conferences and promote events.

#### XI. Closing Comments

- Dr. Miller is super excited. We have a diverse group of students that are international and non-traditional. We have a great group of members.

#### XII. Adjournment - Motion to end meeting by Senator Veronica Golden, Seconded by Senator Cinnamon Morris - All voted to end meeting. .End time 6:46 pm