

1. President Tanja Aho calls the meeting to order at 6:39pm

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2017 Senate Meeting
  - Motion: Transnational Studies
  - Second: Anthropology
  - Oppose: 2; Abstain: 3; In favor: 62
  - Motion passes

3. Announcements

- The GSA Programming Coordinator, Diana Moore, explains that upcoming GSA events include:
  - April 5th- Distinguished Speaker Series presents Roxane Gay (GSA Choice Speaker), 8:00pm at Alumni Arena
    - Free tickets available for graduate students at the SBI Ticket Offices
  - April 7th- Java Junction, 11:00am – 1:00pm in 310 Student Union
    - Free Tim Horton's coffee and doughnuts for graduate students
  - April 7th- Paint Nite, 6:30 – 9:00pm at Pearl Street Grill & Brewery
    - Tickets on sale now at the SBI Ticket Offices for \$25 each. 2 per UB ID.
  - April 9th- Buffalo Untapped, 3:00 – 7:00pm at Ed Wright Practice Facility
    - Live Music, Wineries, Breweries, Food Trucks and local vendors
    - \$5 food voucher and 5 beer and/or wine tastings will be given out free to the first 300 graduate students in attendance
  - April 13th- South Campus Siesta, 4:00 – 6:00pm in 105 Harriman Hall
    - Free snacks and beverages for graduate students at South Campus
  - April 21st- Healthy Options Cooking Class, 6:00 – 8:00pm at D'Avolio (535 Main St. Downtown)
    - Private cooking class including appetizer, entrée, side and dessert
    - Tickets on sale now at the SBI Ticket Offices for \$15 each. 2 per UB ID.
  - April 29th- Distinguished Speaker Series presents James Franco, 8:00pm at Alumni Arena
    - Free tickets available for graduate students April 13th at the SBI Ticket Offices. 1 per UB ID.

4. Report of the President

- Resolutions
  - 1617-02: SUNY University at Buffalo Endowment Divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry (Jenn Schweitzer, UB Society of Feminists)
  - Tanja introduces Jenn Schweitzer, Vanessa Dwyer, and Alexa Rigor who discuss their resolution to try and get UB to withdraw their investments in fossil fuel industries. UB Foundation is a private foundation at a public University, which leads to problems in finding out exactly what the foundation is invested in, and limits transparency for what they support. They seek to have UB freeze any current investments in fossil fuel industries, withdraw any current investments over the course of the next five years, and reinvest this estimated \$50 million in socially conscious investments. These investments in the coal and oil industries are stranded assets, which means that they are over-valued and risky. These are not a good financial investment. Climate change affects everyone, so all students, whether domestic or international, are affected. If UB is invested in companies that contribute to the climate change problem, then they are investing against students, which is unethical.
  - Motion to approve Resolution 1617-02
    - Motion: Transnational Studies
    - Second: Economics
    - Oppose: 7; Abstain: 2; In favor: 55
    - Motion passes
  - 1617-03: UB GSA Resolution to Protect Non-US Citizen Members of the UB Community (Hilary Vandebark, Department of Transnational Studies)
  - Tanja introduces Hilary Vandebark who explains that the Undergraduate SA passed a similar resolution last week and she hopes that we can help keep the momentum going in order to put pressure on the University. This resolution supports what President Tripathi has already stated publicly, that we support the non-citizen community at UB. Documented or not, all students have a right to education free from unnecessary harassment and this resolution will help urge UB to support these students and faculty. It also asks the University Police to refrain from disclosing any unnecessary migration status information with federal law enforcement. 122 members of UB were impacted by the travel ban, and even if this does not affect you directly, it does affect all students as a community.
  - Motion to approve Resolution 1617-03
    - Motion: Social Work
    - Second: Library and Information Studies
    - Oppose: 3; Abstain: 2; In favor: 59

- 1617-04: University at Buffalo Support for Affordable On-Campus Housing for Graduate Students (Tanja Aho, GSA President, and Tianle Ma, Computer Science Engineering)
- Tanja introduces Tianle Ma who discusses that on-campus housing costs for graduate students have increased over 30% in the past two years from approximately \$600 to over \$800 a month. Living on-campus is a safe and convenient option for many graduate students, but the University is pricing out many students from being able to afford this option. TA and GA stipends can be as low as \$14,000 per year and rent then becomes 2/3 of their monthly budget. Tianle and Tanja have been working with Campus Housing to try and address these concerns, but they have not been receptive to the criticism. They are not required to get student input in order to make these decisions, which does not seem fair to the residents. This resolution aims to push Campus Living to rethink their rent strategy and calls on the University to establish a sliding scale for parenting graduate students to make things more affordable. In general, this resolution will also encourage the University to increase transparency and support their supposed dedication to shared governance by communicating with students before making decisions.
- Motion to approve Resolution 1617-03
  - Motion: Library and Information Studies
  - Second: Anthropology
  - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 2; In favor: 62
- Parenting Students Campaign
  - Tanja is wrapping up the open letter to the University Provost and Deans as much as possible in order to send the report on Mother's Day. She is still collecting and reviewing documentation and testimonials from students with issues related to being a parenting student. If you would like to share your experiences, or would like to be involved in finalizing the draft, please email Tanja at [gsa-president@buffalo.edu](mailto:gsa-president@buffalo.edu).
- Mandatory Student Activity Fee Survey Results
  - GSA conducted a survey to get graduate student opinions on the services we offer and where you want to see your money spent. We got over 580 responses and want to share the results in the name of transparency. These results are also posted on the GSA website.
    - You love all of our services and you want more of them.
    - Students want to see more money go to conference funding, the Mark Diamond Research Fund, the Distinguished Speaker Series, programming, and club budgets.
    - We used these results in consideration of the new budgets, and they were reviewed in detail by the Finance Committee.
    - Most students were supportive of the Childcare Scholarship idea if the \$4.00 proposed fee increase passes.
    - There were a lot of comments that made us realize that not all students are using the information provided on our website as intimately and thoroughly as possible. For example, we are not the University and we do not charge you \$2,000 in fees. The GSA fee is currently \$64. Therefore, with this in mind we are going to create an FAQ page on the website to address some of the common misconceptions that arose out of the survey comments. That way, if you don't know where to find the conference funding application, or you don't realize that as a distance learner you may be eligible for a fee waiver, you will be able to find this information in the FAQ section. We are hoping this page will be posted by the end of May at the latest.
- Referendum
  - Vote Mandatory, because without a mandatory student activity fee GSA will not exist. We will not be able to give clubs money for their budget, or provide any of the services that currently exist.
  - Vote Yes to the \$4 Increase if you want to continue the Statistics Lab, create the Childcare Scholarship, and increase conference funding.
  - Please take flyers back to your Department and let students know that this vote will take place with the GSA officer elections April 10th – 13th.
- DSS Ticket Policy
  - GSA has reconsidered the ticket policy for the Distinguished Speaker Series. Starting next year, we will be giving out 2 free tickets per UB ID because for most speakers we end up with a number of tickets left over.
- Services Committee
  - The Senate approved the creation of this new committee as part of the Constitution amendments and therefore we now need to fill it with 5 Departmental Senators. We have been circulating the call for volunteers in the newsletter emails and on the website for a few weeks. The committee will hear any disputes or ideas for changes to GSA services. It is a great way to get experience working with the GSA, or learning about the functioning of non-profit organizations.
  - Call for volunteers
    - Caitlin McIntyre (English)
    - Connor Walters (Social Work)

- Alexandra Agostinelli (Library and Information Studies)
- Hilary Vandenkark (Transnational Studies)
- Nicole Wong (Biological Sciences)
- Motion to approve the members of the Services Committee
  - Motion: Anthropology
  - Second: Graduate Indian Student Association
  - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 1; Passes by consent

#### 5. Report of the Treasurer

- Finance Committee Proposed Policy Changes
  - Anastasia explains that there are a few policy changes that the Finance Committee would like to propose to the Senate for approval. She states that the first policy comes from a request received by one of our club's to use their club budget to reimburse students for the cost of buying tickets to GSA's Paint Nite event. She states that while there are few restrictions on the use of club funds, this idea brought up some concerns and so the situation was presented to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee felt that it would be double dipping to use club funds provided by GSA to purchase tickets for events that are already subsidized by GSA, and therefore they propose a change to the GSA Budgetary Guidelines to disallow the use of club budgets to reimburse individual club members for GSA-hosted events.
  - Motion to approve new Budgetary Guideline policy
    - Motion: Library and Information Studies
    - Second: Social Work
    - Oppose: 1; Abstain: 6; In favor: 57
    - Motion passes
  - Anastasia explains that the second policy change is in regard to GSA fee waivers based on financial hardship. Currently the criteria states that "an applicant with annual income less than \$8,000 for a family of three, including at least one minor dependent, may be eligible for a waiver on the basis of financial hardship." The Finance Committee felt that this hardship criterion was very out of date and proposes changing the criteria to "an applicant with annual income less than \$16,000 for a household with at least one dependent, may be eligible for a waiver on the basis of financial hardship on a first-come, first-served basis." The income level was changed to meet with current New York State poverty levels, and the household definitions were updated to be less discriminatory and more inclusive of all potential parenting and/or care-giver situations. GSA has always accepted fee waivers on a first-come, first served basis, but wanted to make this more explicit in the application. The Finance Committee also recommends that GSA collect data on the number of financial hardship fee waivers received during the next year and delegate to the newly-established Services Committee to look into the matter and take the data into consideration when working on the 2018–2019 budget.
  - Motion to approve changes to financial hardship requirements for a fee waiver application
    - Motion: Transnational Studies
    - Second: Anthropology
    - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 2; In favor: 60
    - Motion passes
  - Funding Account Balances:
    - Special Activity: \$25,000 to start, \$4,140.00 allocated this month, \$13,583.57 remaining
    - Interdepartmental Activity: \$0.00, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$2,691.00 remaining
    - Symposia: \$18,600 to start, \$5,189.12 allocated this month, \$2,215.88 remaining
    - Scholarly Publication: \$11,800 to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$2,075.00 remaining
    - Community Outreach: \$2,000 to start, \$250.00 allocated this month, \$500.00 remaining
    - Conferences:
      - April: 59 requests for \$22,073.95, 59 applications approved for \$22,073.95
      - Beginning Balance: \$140,000.00; Remaining Balance \$14,241.96

#### 6. Report of Vice President

- Amy states that the E-board made a dispute resolution payment to the GSA Treasurer for stipend expenses not paid. This is the first dispute resolution payment that has ever been made by GSA. Amy wants it on record that she is disclosing to all students and to all of the candidates running for office, all of whom are present, that any person taking a position with GSA must fill out employment paperwork, such as a W-2, an I-9, and identification verification documentation. Amy wants to note that she was uncomfortable with authorizing this payment, but felt that it was necessary. If paperwork is not filled out in a timely fashion when it is supposed to be, then it causes problems for authorizing back-pay, because back-pay is accounting fraud. It could be flagged as creative accounting during an audit. She asks everyone to please always fill out their paperwork.

- Amy wishes to address appropriate behavior when dealing with GSA staff, because we had an incident in the office this past week that was distressing. A student came in with their actual mid-term exam and asked for help from the Statistics Lab Director with answering the questions. When the Director disclosed that we cannot help with specific exam questions due to academic integrity concerns, the student became very upset. They started yelling and slamming things around, and then stormed out of the office screaming and making accusations against GSA. The line between collaboration and consultation has already been brought up as a concern by other departments in regard to the Statistics Lab service, and therefore we have to be careful how we assist students. We can only assist with the teaching of general theory and practices as a tool, but not with specific research or analysis implementation. Please note that this behavior will not be tolerated and will be addressed more directly if it is witnessed again.

## 7. Old Business

- Constitution and By-Law Amendments
  - Tanja explains that we have spent this entire year reviewing the document and that we will be finalizing all of the proposed changes tonight. She states that everyone should have received a hard copy of the amendments and that they were also sent out via the listserv. She will need to read out loud the new By-Law amendments that were not previously reviewed, and then we will vote on the Constitution and By-Law changes separately. She suggests voting on the two content changes to the Constitution individually so that everyone fully understands the intent and reasoning behind these content changes.
  - Tanja reads the amendments to the By-Laws, including grammatical changes, title changes, changes to the formatting and reference locations to some of the cross-references listed within the By-Laws, and giving the Senate the power to call for temporary committees in addition to the GSA President.
  - Motion to approve Amendment #3 to the GSA Constitution (to add “works closely with University administration, faculty, staff, and other student governments” to the Preamble)
    - Motion: GSA President, Tanja Aho
    - Second: Social Work
    - Oppose: 1; Abstain: 4; In favor: 56
    - Motion passes
  - Student asks a question about the purpose of Honorary Membership
    - Stephanie is asked to respond and reports that Honorary Membership was last awarded about ten years ago to a student who was graduating and would no longer officially be a GSA fee-paying/represented student, but who had been Chairing the committee working on revisions to the GSA Constitution who wanted to be able to continue serving on the committee until the revisions were completed. This stipulation allowed them to become an honorary member and continue helping GSA even though they were no longer a Senator.
  - Anastasia asks for clarification as to whether or not this section of the Constitution existed before this particular example, or whether it was created for that person.
    - Stephanie responds that it did exist previously, and the purpose was to allow recently graduated students to continue to serve on committees within GSA.
    - Tanja states that we already allow other UB community members to participate in GSA, and therefore didn’t think it was necessary to keep this stipulation.
  - Motion to approve Amendment #16 to the GSA Constitution (to remove the Honorary Membership section)
    - Motion: GSA President, Tanja Aho
    - Second: Transnational Studies
    - Oppose: 12; Abstain: 7; In favor: 42
    - Motion passes
  - Motion to approve all of the remaining Constitution amendments as a block
    - Motion: Social Work
    - Second: Anthropology
    - Oppose: 4; Abstain: 1; In favor: 56
    - Motion passes
  - Motion to approve all of the By-Law amendments as a block
    - Motion: Economics
    - Second: Anthropology
    - Oppose: 4; Abstain: 1; In favor: 57
    - Motion passes

## 8. New Business

- Funding Requests
  - Representatives for each funding request are asked to give a brief description of their event and answer questions from the Senate.

### Special Activity

- Job and Career Perspectives in Computational Science- Computational Science
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,200.00
- Greek Easter BBQ- Hellenic
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,200.00
  - Student asks if there will be any vegetarian options available at the BBQ.
    - Representative responds yes.
- Holi Festival- GISA
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,200.00
- Social Sciences and Humanities Interdisciplinary Symposium- Management
  - Requested/Recommended: \$540.00

#### Symposium

- Anthropology Poster Competition- Anthropology
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,099.40
- Philo-Fiction: On Integrative Objects Workshop- Media Study
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00
- Graduate Student Symposium- Chemistry
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00
- Behavior and Brain Sciences Symposium- Psychology
  - Requested/Recommended: \$1,289.72

#### Community Outreach

- Center for Hospice and Palliative Care- Psychology
  - Requested/Recommended: \$250.00
- Motion to approve all funding requests as a block at the recommended amounts
  - Motion: Chemical and Biological Engineering
  - Second: Anthropology
  - Oppose: 7; Abstain: 0; In favor: 55
  - Motion passes

#### • Early Club Recognition

- Amy states that all clubs must seek annual recognition from the GSA in order to be a legitimate club on campus and to receive a budget. Amy suggests that the Senate consider voting as a block to approve all of the clubs listed for early recognition with the stipulation that those clubs who are not in compliance with the 30% membership rule must submit an updated membership list before they will be given access to their new budget.
- Early Recognition is explained as a simplified recognition process that GSA offers to existing clubs so that they have access to their new budget immediately at the beginning of the new fiscal year. If clubs do not apply for Early Recognition, they still have the ability to apply for recognition in the Fall semester, but their new budget would not start until after they have received Senate approval. International clubs will receive a budget of \$650, but Special Interest clubs will receive \$300 to start the year and then after the December, 2017 Senate meeting, once all clubs have been recognized and awarded funding, all of these pre-existing clubs will be given an additional budget increase of up to \$300 (funding permitting) so that they receive the full \$600 that Special Interest clubs are eligible to receive.
- Representatives from each of the club seeking Early Recognition are asked to come forward and give a brief description of their club and answer questions from the Senate.
- Motion to approve all clubs as a block at the recommended amounts with the stipulation of pending membership lists included for CSSA, GISA, Argentine Tango Club, and Graduate Poetics Group
  - Motion: Social Work
  - Second: Economics
  - Oppose: 2; Abstain: 0; In favor: 58
  - Motion passes
- Student asks why new clubs are only allowed to seek recognition in the Fall semester and not in the Spring semester.
  - Amy states that there are budgetary concerns because budgets have to be set by the end of the Fall semester.
- Student asks if there is any way to recognize a club in the Spring if they are not seeking a budget.
  - Amy responds that currently that is the way our policies are written, and therefore we cannot allow any recognition of new clubs in the Spring.
  - Stephanie elaborates that a policy change would need to be proposed and voted on before clubs would be allowed to seek recognition in the Spring, but that because budgets have to be activated by the December Senate meeting then they would not be eligible for funding.
  - Tanja suggests that this issue could be brought to the Services Committee to explore.

- Approval of 2017-2018 Budgets
  - Anastasia states that the budget included in everyone's Senate packet was created by the Finance Committee with input from all of the GSA staff. She thanks everyone for their assistance. She states that she presented most of this information at the last Senate meeting, but will walk everyone through the information again. She presents last year's approved budget in the left column, the proposed budget without the \$4.00 fee increase in the center column, and the proposed budget with the \$4.00 fee increase in the right column.
  - Anastasia reviews the major changes to the budget if the referendum passes, but the fee increase does not, including:
    - Moving one stipend Editor position to an hourly position
    - Moving the Assistant Programming Coordinator stipend position to an hourly position for large events only, with the stipulation that E-board and staff will be expected to help out at events as well
      - Diana elaborates that last month the Senate discussed removing the Assistant Programming Coordinator position all together, however after discussion with the Finance Committee it was determined that one person would not be able to run the large scale events by themselves. She acknowledges that cuts must be made in order to help alleviate the budget constraints, so it was agreed that an Assistant Programming Coordinator would be hired on an hourly basis for only a few hours a month when needed.
    - Reserve funds are depleted
    - Group funding allocations and conference funding allocations are reduced based on actual usage, but do not constitute an actual cut in funding
  - Anastasia reviews the major changes to the budget if the referendum and the fee increase both pass, including:
    - All of the changes listed above
    - Add a Childcare Scholarship of \$4,000
    - Increase the conference funding allocation by \$10,000, which could lead to increased conference funding award amounts if the Services Committee were to review and approve those changes
    - The continuation of the Stats Lab for one more year
    - Adding \$20,000 to reserves in order to help offset future inflation changes and/or contractual obligations without having to reconsider the fee, or reduce services until the next referendum
  - Student asks for verification that if the referendum doesn't pass and students vote against the mandatory activity fee then we will have to go to the back-up budget where everything gets cut, and then have the Senate reconvene to approve that budget.
    - Anastasia confirms that that is correct. Because all of our revenues are generated from the student activity fee, if the fee were to become voluntary then we would not be able to fund any GSA services and may cease to exist.
  - Diana states that a lot of credit should be given to Jen for preparing this budget.
  - Student asks who the Office Managers are and if the amounts listed in the budget are what they are paid.
    - Anastasia states that Gena and Stephanie are the Office Managers.
    - Holly states that those amounts are not what the Office Managers are paid. They are their salaries plus all of the overhead charges of taxes, fees, pensions, and all other benefit costs typically incurred by an employer for salaried employees.
      - Stephanie clarifies that GSA staff do not have a pension.
      - Amy states that Gena has worked for GSA for 42 years and Stephanie for 12 years, and therefore salaries would normally increase a certain percentage over that many years.
      - Student states that she can guarantee that a Services Committee is not going to work without the institutional knowledge provided by Gena and Stephanie about how GSA services and funding have been distributed in the past.
  - Student asks what the back-up budget is, and if there is one.
    - Anastasia states that she has it prepared, and presents the proposed budget scenario to the Senate even though it has not been approved by the Finance Committee. In this scenario she would cash in all GSA investments that can be liquidated, renegotiate all SBI contracts, and cut all GSA services and club budget in order to keep the doors open until the referendum vote can be re-run.
    - Tanja states that because the Finance Committee did not vote on this budget, changes can still be made to it. She states that Finance Committee meetings are open to everyone and tells anyone interested that they can come to give their opinions and ideas. There are still some lines in this back-up budget that will need to be decided on if necessary.
  - Jen states that she has a comment and a question. Her comment is that she keeps hearing the word "cuts" and that the changes to the funding allocations are just adjustments based on actual spending. They do not impact the amount of funding that will be available to students and do not actually cut any programs. Her question is in regards to the budget with the increase. She states that based on all of the feedback received from students in the

survey, she asks why no additional money is being put into programming if the fee increase passes. Seeing as how almost all of our events currently sell out, but we do not run out of conference funding money, she would like to know how the decision was made to put more money into conference funding and not programming.

- Anastasia responds that first, this suggestion did not come up during the Finance Committee meeting, the staff meetings, or the Town Hall meeting. Secondly, judging by the survey results, people seem to want more research money. Therefore, more money was allocated to research through the conference funding line. She also indicates that she did state that the changes were based on actual spending.
- Tanja comments that GSA programming seems to be doing great, thanks to our Programming Coordinators, and that if students want to increase funding to programming then that is also an issue that could be brought to the Services Committee.
- Student asks if it is possible to make adjustments to the budget mid-year, for example if the Services Committee does decide to increase funding for programming, or if changes would have to wait for the following year's budget.
  - Anastasia responds that the budget is approved for the whole year, but that the Finance Committee and the Senate have the ability to recommend changes to the budget. Any student can open the discussion in a Finance Committee meeting and then propose it to the Senate.
    - Stephanie clarifies that a recommendation would be made by the Finance Committee and voted on by the Senate, but that the Senate would have to decide what they are going to cut in order to free up the money needed for the adjustment.
    - Tanja explains that it would be similar to what was done this year to fund the Stats Lab, where unallocated Scholarly Publication money was then moved to another line to fund the Stats Lab Director position.
- Motion to approve the 2017-2018 Budgets with and without the fee increase, to be based on the outcome of the Referendum vote
  - Motion: Library and Information Studies
  - Second: Biochemistry
  - Oppose: 4; Abstain: 4; In favor: 51
  - Motion passes
- Tanja thanks the Finance Committee for all their hard work this year.
- Tanja also clarifies that if the referendum fails and students do not vote for the Mandatory activity fee then we will have to hold an Emergency Senate Meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup> and all Senators will be expected to attend in order to make quorum so that we can vote on an alternative budget. If the referendum passes, however, this will be our last Senate meeting of the year.
- Election Committee Update
  - Alexandra Agostinelli, Election Committee Chair, presents a screenshot of the GSA ballot for approval by the Senate. She reads all of the names of the candidates in the order they were drawn randomly.
    - For President: Tanja Aho
    - For Vice President: Amy Miu
    - For Treasurer: Anastasia Stepanova and Tilotama Turkar
  - Alex then shows the Senate how the referendum vote and the fee increase vote will be presented and the wording for each individual question on the ballot.
  - Motion to approve the ballot
    - Motion: Library and Information Studies
    - Second: Anthropology
    - Oppose: 4; Abstain: 0; In favor: 58
    - Motion passes
  - Alex announces that elections will take place online via a link on the GSA website ([www.gsa.buffalo.edu](http://www.gsa.buffalo.edu))
    - Polls will be open 24 hours a day starting at 12:00am on Monday, April 10th until 11:59pm on Thursday, April 13th.
    - Results will be announced Friday, April 14th
  - Holly announces that the link to the voting page will be in a post on the GSA homepage and on the "Election 2017" page of the GSA website as of Friday, but that it will not go live for voting until Monday morning at 12:00am. She asks that people please not email her to tell her that the link is not working over the weekend. She is aware of that, and it will magically begin to work on Monday morning.
- Tanja calls for a five-minute recess before starting the Candidate Debate. She reminds everyone that this is not the end of the meeting and that they must come back and stay for the Debate in order for their club's attendance to be counted.
- Candidate Debate
  - Alex outlines the structure of the Debate. Each candidate will be given 60 seconds for introductions. Next, two questions will be presented to each of the candidates from a list of questions prepared by the Election Committee.

Candidates will have 60 seconds to answer and uncontested candidates will have a choice as to whether or not they wish to answer the questions. These questions will be followed by up to 15 minutes of open forum questions from Senators. Candidates will have 60 seconds to respond to these questions and any candidate can choose not to reply to the question(s). We will then end with 30 second closing remarks.

- Alex presents the candidates and gives each 60 seconds for introductions.
  - Tanja states she is the current GSA President and is running again for the same position. She is a graduate student in the department of Transnational Studies and is an international student here at UB. She has done a lot of work in the last year on various issues, and has been working with the University administration and other entities for more transparency and shared governance. She has fought for more support for parenting students, worked on all of the resolutions you have seen come through the Senate, and she would like to continue that work next year if the students will allow her. She especially wants to work for more support for professionalization of graduate students, and more support for students who need help, making education more accessible and inclusive for everybody.
  - Amy states that she is running for her third year as the GSA Vice President. She is from the Classics Department and tends to be a big picture person who tries to make sure that we don't get sued. She feels that paperwork is the most important thing, and she likes to delegate the small things.
  - Anastasia states that she is the GSA Treasurer and that she came here from Russia as a Fulbright Scholar for a Master's in Linguistics and decided to stay. She is in her sixth year here in Buffalo, and her GSA involvement started with her GSA club. She served as club Treasurer and in different capacities later in other clubs, and then joined the Finance Committee. She states that she sees the role of the Treasurer as the Chief Financial Agent of the GSA, but also she advocates for students as a member of the E-board. She is ABD and has the energy to continue the work she has been doing this year.
  - Tilottama states that she is from India and this is her first year in Buffalo. She is doing her Master's in the field of Finance and is very passionate about her field of study. That is the reason why she is running for Treasurer in this election and she looks forward to being able to help students.
- Tanvi Jain from the Election Committee asks all of the candidates what skills or experiences prepare them for the office they are seeking.
  - Tanja states that she was just the President of the GSA for a year, so she thinks she is pretty qualified.
  - Amy states that she has been Vice President for the past two years.
  - Anastasia states that she has been part of several clubs in different capacities, has been part of the Finance Committee, and also has a year of experience as the GSA Treasurer. She has served on the SBI Board of Directors as well, and participated in every process of GSA throughout this year. She states that this year has been particularly challenging because of the referendum and the reserves being depleted, but nevertheless we balanced the budget. She states that in general the Treasurer's role is the executive role and believes her experience in GSA has taught her how to identify a problem and assist the Finance Committee in solving it. She did that by listening to different perspectives and following the policies to the letter and spirit.
  - Tilottama states that the skills needed are important. You need to know what you are doing, be good with numbers, and she feels she has those skills because that is what she has been studying. As far as experience, she has been working as a financial professional, so she knows how to prepare a budget and create balance sheets. She feels she can do justice to this position and thanks everyone for their support.
- Alex asks all of the candidates what they see as the main issues they will face during their time in office.
  - Tanja responds that some of the issues she has been working on, and hopes to continue working on, are pushing UB for more shared governance, especially when it comes to unjustified fee increases. She started working on that with COAL this year, but wants to more actively push against that next year. She wants to address issues around housing on and off campus, transportation to campus and between campuses and downtown, trying to support parenting students more, international students, and pushing more for professionalization for all students, which the University has promised but has not yet fulfilled.
  - Amy states that her crowning achievement was in May 2016 when she was pushed professionally to authorize a scanner so that one of the E-board members could work overseas. Her concern was that it was a security issue for peoples' confidential information. Any student who has submitted paperwork for conference funding or a speaker series knows that there are social security numbers and person numbers involved in the paperwork. Amy was accused of extortion and blackmail for not agreeing to this idea, though the charges did not go through. This reduced three months of working into one month. She states that these are liability issues on many levels and thinks that her job is to protect GSA on the big points. She was very upset by the situation and wants people to take this into consideration.
  - Anastasia states that this year we implemented a lot of changes to MDRF, to the fee waivers that were just approved, and the new statistics service that she will work to promote so that UB will take it over in the future and provide it to all students. Those changes require monitoring and she intends to do that. Also, there is a

- new accounting system that was approved this year, so she will make sure that it works well. During the next year, depending on the outcome of the referendum vote, she would like to make GSA more environmentally friendly by putting such processes as conference funding online.
- Tilottama thinks that the main issue we face is creating a budget that prepares us and carries us through more than one year in advance. She would try, if elected, to solve the budget problems we currently face without cutting services. That would be her number one priority.
- Alex opens the floor for open forum questions, but states again that every candidate will have a chance to answer each of the questions if they choose to do so.
  - Student asks all of the candidates when they expect to graduate.
    - Tanja states that she is in the final dissertation stages, and is hoping to graduate next May in 2018.
    - Amy thinks that, unfortunately for her, it may be 2020.
    - Anastasia states that she is ABD as well, but will definitely be here for the next year and maybe a couple of years.
    - Tilottama states that she is scheduled to graduate in December, but if she gets elected for the position then she will extend her studies through May.
  - Stephanie asks all of the candidates whether they will be present to start on June 1st and serve throughout the summer, and if so, how many days a week they can be in the office.
    - Tanja states she will be here because she is not allowed to leave the country at the moment, so she jokes that she can be in the office seven days a week if necessary. She clarifies that on average they work 15-20 hours per week and maybe a little less in the summer. She tries to be in the office three days a week, plus any time the University schedules a meeting or an appointment, which is almost every day.
    - Amy states that because of the nature of the job you cannot be gone more than three weeks without disrupting operations for all. She states that she will be here June 1st and throughout the summer because she lives here.
    - Anastasia states that she will definitely be here on June 1st and throughout the summer, as well as throughout the year. She does not feel like leaving the country at the moment either and overall she tries to be in the office two to three days, and balance it with her schedule. She states that it really depends, and that she holds office hours at certain times and by appointment. In addition, there are meetings that take longer, and she is there for those as well.
    - Tilottama states that she will definitely be here on June 1st and if the work requires then she will be in the office seven days a week.
  - Student states that based on the comments in the funding survey, a lot of students are online only or cannot easily make it to campus, and therefore cannot participate in GSA events. Student asks what the candidates are going to do to allow students to be part of GSA events, or to waive or reduce fees for solely online students.
    - Tanja states that she appreciates that question and that it will be part of the FAQ's being put on the GSA website soon. She states that first of all if you are an online student who lives more than 75 miles from campus then you are eligible for a fee waiver and do not have to pay the GSA fee. It seems that a lot of students don't realize that. However, there are some students who do not fall within that radius and may live 50 miles from campus, but still cannot come to our events. One of the things that we are going to do is to encourage clubs to do a lot more video recording and share things online so that people can participate in different ways. The other idea would be for the Services Committee to look into the Fee Waiver application and see if they want to consider changing the radius for a waiver based on distance learning, or consider other ways to review applications for those students. Currently, we get about 150 waiver requests for distance learning per semester.
    - Amy states that there is a fee waiver.
    - Anastasia states that a lot of our services are available to students, especially looking at the survey results. It seems that people are most interested in research funding, which is something that is available. MDRF and conference funding are available, Editing and Stats services are available through email or Skype, therefore she feels our task next is to make sure that the FAQ page clarifies that a lot of our services are available to them and they do benefit.
    - Tilottama states that making the website more appealing could help students, and provide better information. The current site seems a bit stale, but she would try and do her best to get people involved.
  - Student asks if there was one thing you could change about the past year, something that did happen or something that didn't happen, what would it be.
    - Tanja asks for a moment to think about her response.
    - Amy would change the fact that she got vertigo and was out sick and completely incapacitated for two weeks back in October therefore making her unable to do the Mandatory Officer Training meetings as requested by Student Life. There were a number of new requirements implemented by the University, such as the Sexual

Harassment Training, and she wishes she had been there to better explain all of the information to students. Previous trainings had been done insufficiently and she wanted to help rectify the situation. She states that this year's staff was great, and that the hiring was great with mostly veterans, but that she would love to see new faces in the future too.

- Tanja states that she would have loved to change knowing about certain things and requirements in advance so that she could have addressed them better when they happened. One of the things she wants to change next year is to make handbooks for the E-board to help with the transition of officers. The new person is often just thrown into the position without knowing when things are supposed to happen, what you are supposed to be doing, how you are supposed to be reacting, what kinds of channels are available, and that all takes a long time to learn and figure out. She states that when we had issues come up it was difficult dealing with them and in retrospect it would have been nice to know more about all of the different options available. Anything from the incapacity clause that we added to the Constitution, to making sure that if somebody is gone for more than a month then they do not get paid, to many other issues. She would have liked to change a lot of things and will change them for next year.
- Anastasia states that one thing she would change was that last year there was a Constitution amendment and the role of the Treasurer was actually changed. Previously the Treasurer had a lot of power over financial policies and it was changed so that now the Finance Committee prepares the budget and the role of the Treasurer is to assist them with that procedure. She thinks that if she could change that she would, and also that she would make sure that next year the transition would be better because there seems to still be a perception that the Treasurer's role is to provide...
- Tilottama states that she thinks the Finance Committee is working fine, but that without being in the position she does not know what changes would need to be made. She would have to wait and see what works and what doesn't. If anything does need to be changed, she will work hard to accomplish it.
- Diana asks all of the candidates if they have ever pushed their duties in their position on to somebody else, and if so in what capacity, and what did you do to correct this.
  - Tanja states that she doesn't know what to do with the word "pushing," but because there is no real handbook for the position sometimes Gena and Stephanie had to tell her what some of her duties included. They told her things like next month this is what the Senate should be discussing, or we need to start talking about members for this committee, and that with their prompts she was able to then do that work. Therefore, often times she has heavily relied upon their advice and guidance and could not have done a lot of the things that she was supposed to be doing without that help.
  - Amy states that it is alright for the candidates to not know some of the aspects of the jobs because they are bureaucratic duties of the organization, but what she does want the candidates to be aware of and be prepared for are the big picture issues, like don't sign this, or this number is bad, legally we can't do that, or there are labor law issues, etc. Those are the important things that she recommends all students look for in their candidates. Amy states that she is shameless and that there is one thing that she specifically is supposed to do as part of her duties, which is to write the Senate meeting minutes, but she relies on Stephanie to help with writing these because she does not make them as detailed as necessary. Therefore, she loves Stephanie and thanks her sincerely for all of her help.
  - Anastasia states that she does not think that she ever pushed her duties on to anyone else, and actually she thinks that her problem is that she is still learning to delegate because she tends to take things over. An example would be the new Statistics Lab that she started. She feels like she has a problem with micromanaging sometimes, so she is trying to stay away from it right now and learn to delegate.
  - Tilottama states that she does not like to push her duties on to others, but if she does not understand something then she would welcome assistance and enlightenment from others with experienced minds. She thinks that if it would help her in her work, then why not. Personally though, she feels that practice is not good and she would not intentionally push her duties on to someone else.
- Student asks the candidates how they would contribute to the GSA if they were not paid, or if they were not elected to their position.
- Connor states that this will be the last question.
  - Tanja states that in the case of the doomsday budget, which is what she assumes the student is referring to, the E-board would not get paid anymore, but she would still do as much work as possible. She served five years in the GSA Senate for UB-SoFem and the AMS GSA, and she really cares about a lot of the issues that she has been advocating for this year. She states that now she can do it with the backing of the GSA, which gives her a little more heft behind her arguments, and that the pay check does help her to partly pay for her health insurance and tuition expenses, but even without that she would continue to do some of this work because she actually cares about how UB treats graduate students.



- Tanja asks everyone to please become more involved next year. She would like to see some of you be part of the decision making processes. She states that meetings are always open, and she encourages everyone to come, bring their concerns, and use the Services Committee. This is really your governmental body and whatever you want to do can be done. The E-board is not the final arbiter of most things if you just get involved. She thanks the Senate for their time.
- Amy says “ditto,” and states that she wants to reinforce and stress financially literate, legally-minded, and willing to compromise as the important things to consider when voting for all three positions. She thanks the Senate for their time.
- Anastasia would like to reiterate that she wants to make a few changes such as increasing the online presence of GSA and making it more environmentally friendly. She would also like to work on the Services Committee to address conference funding in order to make sure that more funds are available. She also agrees with Tanja that she would like to see students participate more.
- Tilottama states that if you have seen what is written on the GSA website, she means every word. Please choose wisely and thank you for your time.
- Alex thanks all of the candidates for participating in the Debate, and thanks the Election Committee for all of their help and hard work.
- Tanja reminds everyone to please turn in their clickers and voting cards before leaving.

#### 9. Roll Call and Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn at 9:06pm
  - Motion: Anthropology
  - Second: Graduate Indian Student Association
  - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent