

1. President Tanja Aho calls the meeting to order at 6:40pm

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2016 Senate Meeting
 - Motion: Community Health & Health Behavior
 - Second: Transnational Studies
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; In favor: 67

3. Announcements

- The GSA Programming Coordinator, Diana Moore, explains that GSA events for December include:
 - December 9th- Jingle Jangle Jam, 7:00 – 11:00pm at Templeton Landing (2 Templeton Terrace Buffalo, NY 14202)
 - Open bar, dinner buffet, music and prizes!
 - Tickets are on sale at the SBI Ticket Offices in 221 Student Union and 350 Harriman Hall for \$20 each until Friday at 5:00pm. If tickets still remain, they will be sold for \$25 at the door. 2 per UB ID.
 - December 9th- Distinguished Speaker Series presents John Cleese, two lectures at 7:00pm and 9:30pm at Alumni Arena.
 - Free tickets available for graduate students at the Alumni Arena Box Office as of tomorrow (December 8th).
 - Students should double check their tickets to verify which lecture time they are expected to attend. Graduate student tickets were supposed to be for the 7:00pm lecture, but we received word that the tickets received were for 9:30pm.
 - February 17th, Buffalo Bandits Lacrosse Game vs. New England Black Wolves, 7:30pm at Key Bank Center
 - Tickets will be on sale January 17th at the SBI Ticket Offices for \$10 each. 2 per UB ID.
- The MDRF Director, Jennifer Schechter, announces that the new online application for Spring MDRF grants is now open and available on the GSA website. She urges applicants to read the instructions carefully, as this is an entirely new application process and some things have changed.
- GSA Office Winter Break Schedule
 - The GSA office will be open through Monday, December 19th.
 - The office will be closed Tuesday, December 20th until Wednesday, January 11th.
 - The office will be open on summer hours from Wednesday, January 11th until Friday, January 27th.
 - Summer hours are Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 4:00pm, and closed on Fridays.
 - The office will be closed Monday, January 16th for Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance (University also closed).
 - Regular business hours will resume with the start of the Spring semester on Monday, January 30th.
- Paperwork Deadline: Monday, December 12th
 - Anything that needs to be paid before the winter break shutdown must be submitted by this date. Otherwise, please notify vendors that they will not receive payment until late January.
- Election Committee Updates
 - The Election Committee Chair, Alexandra Agostinelli, announces that we need to approve a new Election Committee member in order for the committee to have an odd number of representatives.
 - Shraavan Chidambaram (Industrial & Systems Engineering) has volunteered for the position.
 - Call for additional volunteers to serve on the Election Committee
 - No new volunteers
 - Motion to approve Shraavan Chidambaram as the new Election Committee member
 - Motion: History
 - Second: Transnational Studies
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent
 - The Call for Candidates information has been emailed to all graduate students and posted to the GSA website.
 - The petition submission deadline has been moved to Monday, March 6th to allow potential candidates more time to comply with the two Senate meeting requirement prior to becoming a candidate.
 - Candidate meeting dates with the EC have been updated accordingly as well (March 8th to 15th).
 - Petitions will be available as of Monday, January 30th in the GSA office.

4. Report of the President

- Social Work Hope(ful) Winter Clothing Drive winners:
 - Tanja announces that the winners chosen from the pool of students that donated to the Hope(ful) Winter Clothing Drive were Karolina Kulicka and Anne Marie Butler.
- COAL Statement Regarding Events Following the Presidential Election
 - Tanja shares and reviews the statement posted by the Council of Advocacy and Leadership, which is made up of the Presidents of all the student governments at UB, regarding equality for all people and students in the wake of the recent Presidential election. The Council condemns all discriminatory and/or hateful practices in the campus community and urges everyone to engage in meaningful and peaceful discussion. The full statement has been posted to the GSA website for everyone to review.

- Parenting Graduate Students Resolution
 - Tanja states that she has been updating the Senate for the past few months on her efforts to improve services for parenting students on campus. In order for her to show the University that the student population is officially in support of these ideas she is proposing a resolution to the Senate for a vote.
 - The resolution was emailed out to all Senators in advance of the meeting, is included in the Senate packets, and is reviewed for all in order to give people time to make comments.
 - Motion to support the Parenting Students resolution
 - Motion: Social Work
 - Second: Community Health and Health Behavior
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent

5. Report of the Treasurer

- New Statistics Lab
 - Anastasia states that in order to launch the new Statistics Lab, for which GSA received a Programming Grant, we will need to create a new stipend position. She would like to hire a graduate student with statistical analysis experience to be the Director of the new lab. The position would run for a half year from February 1st until July 31st and the proposed stipend would be \$5,500. The Programming Grant will cover \$3,000 of this cost, so GSA will need to contribute another \$3,000 to \$3,500 in order to cover the remaining stipend amount and payroll taxes.
 - To help fund the position, her proposal is to pull funding from the Scholarly Publication budget in order to cover the amount of funding needed that exceeds the Programming Grant award.
 - The final Scholarly Publication deadline for this year has now passed and there are funds remaining in the budget line that can be reallocated for this purpose with the Senate's approval. This budget adjustment has been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee.
 - Question is asked if the position has a job description.
 - Anastasia responds that she has drafted a job description for the position, which she then presents to the Senate to review.
 - Question is asked if the cut off for Scholarly Publication funding is for the whole year.
 - Anastasia responds that yes, the final deadline for the 2016-2017 year has passed.
 - Question is asked if this Statistics Lab will be under any particular Department.
 - Anastasia responds that it would be a new GSA provided service and not under any Department.
 - Question is asked as to the function of this lab.
 - Anastasia responds that it would help students with statistical analysis for their papers and projects.
 - Question is asked what percentage of students would use this service.
 - Anastasia explains that the Spring semester will be a trial basis for the service and will help us to gauge student need and interest. Once we have some data on the actual usage of the service we can consider extending it into a permanent service/position for the future.
 - Question is asked as to how GSA will know if a person is qualified for the position.
 - Anastasia re-reads the job description and explains that she will be looking for a candidate that has prior experience taking and teaching statistics classes.
 - Question is asked as to how GSA will pay for this service next year once the grant has run out.
 - Anastasia responds that when the Senate votes on next year's budget a new payroll line will be established to fund the position. She again explains that this year the Programming Grant is covering a portion of the expense. She also states there is a possibility that either the University or Sub Board I may take over the service if the need is deemed to be sufficient.
 - Motion to approve the budget adjustment of \$3,500 from unallocated Scholarly Publication funding in order to fund the creation of a new Statistics Lab Director position
 - Motion: Social Work
 - Second: Community Health and Health Behavior
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent
- Funding Account Balances:
 - Special Activity: \$25,000 to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$20,370.00 remaining
 - Interdepartmental Activity: \$3,600.00, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$3,291.00 remaining
 - Symposia: \$18,600 to start, \$1,400.00 allocated this month, \$14,400.00 remaining
 - Scholarly Publication: \$11,800 to start, \$2,025.00 allocated this month, \$5,575.00 remaining
 - Community Outreach: \$2,000 to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$1,250.00 remaining
 - Conferences:
 - December: 23 requests for \$9,716.00, 23 applications approved for \$9,716.00
 - Beginning Balance: \$140,000.00; Remaining Balance \$70,227.45

6. Report of Vice President

- Final Mandatory Officer Training Meeting
 - For any newly recognized/elected club Presidents and Treasurers
 - Monday, December 12th at 2:30pm in 310 Student Union

7. Old Business

- MDRF Committee Recommendation Vote
 - Tanja explains that for the past few months the Senate has been reviewing the recommendations made by the MDRF Committee in their final report. Tonight we are going to take the final vote on these recommendations. All of the committee's recommendations, presented side by side with the GSA's responses, were emailed out to Senators before the meeting, are included in the Senate packet, and are also posted on the GSA website.
 - Tanja explains that, unfortunately, Michael Cimasi, the Chair of the Review Committee, cannot be present this evening due to a scheduling conflict, so she invites anyone else that served on the committee to come forward to speak on the committee's behalf if they are interested.
 - No one from the committee presents themselves to the Senate.
 - Tanja states that in order to give fair representation to all points of view, in order to streamline and simplify the voting process, and in order to keep things democratic, she suggests that the Senate handle the voting for these recommendations slightly different from the typical voting format using motions. She states that if no one is opposed to the idea, she will present each point of the committee's recommendations and Senators may then vote for option A to support the committee's recommendation, option B to support the GSA's recommendation, or option C to abstain from a vote if Senators are not in favor of either suggestion.
 - No one opposes this suggested method for voting.
 - Question is asked if discussion may still occur on these recommendations.
 - Tanja responds that questions may be asked for clarification purposes, but we are going to limit discussion as much as possible in order to move things along.
 - The recommendations and GSA responses are then reviewed and voted on one at a time (for detailed positions that were read out verbatim please refer to the Senate handout):
 - Adopt MDRF Statement of Mission and Purpose to be posted on the GSA Webpage and MDRF Application form GSA is in support of this idea, therefore we just need a vote either for or against this recommendation.
 - All in favor of adopting an MDRF Mission Statement: 64
 - Adoption of an MDRF mission statement passes by consent.
 - The MDRF Director clarifies that this vote was to adopt a mission statement that will be used universally across all MDRF media, but explains that the wording may be changed slightly.
- 2. a) Create "Services Committee" to bifurcate review and award process, structured broadly so this committee can act as fact-finding body for other GSA services on behalf of the Senate when called on. Committee not to hold general Executive Authority over MDRF.
- b) Committee to be constituted by 1 GSA Officer, 1 stipend admin from GSA Editing Services, 1 stipend admin from MDRF, 1 stipend admin from GSA Programming, and 5 GSA Senators (total 9 seats).
 - c) All grievances received at GSA regarding MDRF policy, procedure, and/or grant awards (not staff grievances which are directed to the Vice President) to be heard by "Services Committee," which then presents its report to the GSA Senate. GSA is in support of the committee, but not as a dispersing agent for MDRF funds because the Review Council volunteers are the ones who read all of the applications and should be making funding decisions. Checks and balances are handled through GSA E-board oversight. GSA would still support the creation of a committee to address other issues and to get more students actively involved in GSA, but it would have to be done as part of Constitutional revisions that are coming in February. A standing committee would be created and filled as suggested.
 - Option A: All in favor of creating the Services Committee with the power to be the dispersing agent for MDRF: 5
 - Option B: All in favor of creating the Services Committee without the power to be the dispersing agent for MDRF: 60
 - Option C: All abstaining in order to oppose the creation of a Services Committee: 2
 - Creation of a Services Committee that is not the dispersing agent for MDRF passes.
 - Tanja reiterates that this will take place as part of the upcoming Constitutional revisions that will be presented in February.
- 3. a) Create Asst. Director stipend position for MDRF to serve as pipeline to Directorship to better facilitate the continuation of institutional knowledge in face of routine staff turnover.
- b) E-mails be sent to Department Chairs and Department GSAs after each award cycle listing that department's award recipients and all award recipients be posted conspicuously by GSA on social media and hard copy at Departmental Club lounges twice annually.

- c) MDRF staff to create procedure/operations manual to be opened to period of public comment and reviewed by “Services Committee” recommended in 0623-1.
- d) MDRF staff to create resubmission form that clearly articulates the suggested changes that must be included with resubmission of application if any deference to be given to prior Review Council’s recommendations.
- e) All communications soliciting MDRF application to departments should also solicit students to sit on Review Councils to further encourage disciplinary diversity amongst the reviewers.
- f) MDRF Staff to run short (i.e. ~20 to 40 minute) orientation/training sessions (i.e. Perhaps 2 per week) for review council volunteers on staggered schedules in the weeks prior to a Review Council meeting—each first-time reviewer must attend one such session.
 - g) When feasible, preference should be given to first-time reviewers on Review Councils. GSA supports this idea and has already created this new MDRF Assistant position. The MDRF Director and the Assistant are already performing all the suggested tasks proposed by the committee. Tanja notes that GSA will have to honor the contract that was made with the Assistant Director for the remainder of this year, as officers are in charge of staffing as per Constitutional powers, however she states that if the Senate is opposed to the creation of the Assistant position then changes would be implemented for next year.
 - Option A: All in favor of adopting the Assistant position: 59
 - Option B: All in favor of revoking the Assistant position: 1
 - Creation/continued adoption of an MDRF Assistant position passes.
- 4. a) Separate, non-cumulative funding caps for Masters and Ph.D. students based solely on enrollment status in HUB: \$3,000 for Ph.D. students and \$1,500 for Master Students with \$4,500 lifetime cap regardless of the number of degree programs a student undertakes. Services Committee charged with review of sustainability over first 3 grant cycles.
- b) Total funding per student over life of student’s UB Graduate career not to exceed \$4,500 regardless of how many programs in which student may be enrolled.
- c) Funding receipt per individual based on current active grant award close date. If reapplying within 12 months, must have submitted a grant closure form (exhausted funds or no longer using funds).
- d) Applications for Final Projects in current degree programs to be given a two (2) point bonus not to exceed the maximum score.
 - e) MFA student awards to remain at \$2,000 based on longstanding policy and logic, but still subject to \$4,500 lifetime maximum cap. GSA supports raising the lifetime funding cap to \$4,000, but does not support the \$500 increase to the Ph.D. level (as per the GSA Finance Committee recommendation), nor the reapplication for funding within the same degree program. We have already made multiple changes to MDRF (new point system, electronic submission starting in the Spring, more outreach, increasing the number of offered workshops, personal consultations, detailed feedback for resubmissions), which have led to increased allocations. We need to see how those changes impact the fund before we decide to increase maximums. \$500 increases were just made 2 years ago to all funding levels, and increases may be considered in the near future if reserves remain high, but we would want to increase funding at all levels, and not just for PhDs. Furthermore, we want to give preference to those for whom this is the first learning experience (since the grant is primarily a learning grant).
 - Tanja states that we will vote on the parts of this recommendation individually in order to be clear:
 - For recommendation #4a, Option A: All in favor of PhD’s getting a \$500 increase to their maximum: 31
 - For recommendation #4a, Option B: All opposed to PhD’s getting a \$500 increase to their maximum: 25
 - For recommendation #4a, Option C: All abstaining from the vote for PhD’s to get a \$500 increase: 1
 - Recommendation that PhD’s get a \$500 increase to their maximum passes.
 - For recommendation #4b, Option A: All in favor of raising the lifetime funding cap to \$4,500: 31
 - For recommendation #4b, Option B: All in favor of raising the lifetime funding cap to \$4,000: 31
 - For recommendation #4b, Option C: All those opposed to raising the lifetime funding cap (cap would remain at the current cap of \$2,500): 4
 - No recommendation received a majority vote, therefore we are going to recall the vote.
 - For recommendation #4b, Option A: All in favor of raising the lifetime funding cap to \$4,500: 26
 - For recommendation #4b, Option B: All in favor of raising the lifetime funding cap to \$4,000: 38
 - For recommendation #4b, Option C: All those opposed to raising the lifetime funding cap (cap would remain at the current cap of \$2,500): 0
 - Recommendation to increase the lifetime funding cap to \$4,000 passes.
 - For recommendation #4c, Option A: All in favor of allowing recipients to reapply for funding within the same degree program if they have not yet exhausted their maximum funding: 45
 - For recommendation #4c, Option B: All opposed to allowing recipients to reapply for funding within the same degree program if they have not yet exhausted their maximum funding: 15

- Recommendation to allow recipients to reapply for funding within the same degree program if they have not yet exhausted their maximum funding passes.
- Tanja explains that we are going to table the vote on recommendation #4d regarding a 2-point bonus for final projects for the time being, because it will only be relevant if the Senate votes in favor of recommendation #6.
- 5. Point penalty system will remain for review process, which shall include four (4) suggested funding levels: (1) 100 to 90-point score at 100% funding requested; (2) 80 to 89-point score at 90% of requested funding; (3) 70 to 79-point score at 80% of requested funding; and, (4) 69 point scores and below are encouraged to resubmit with revisions as necessary. GSA is in support of this idea, and MDRF is already using this scoring system, therefore we just need a vote either for or against this recommendation.
- All in favor of keeping the current scoring system: 64
 - Recommendation to keep the current scoring system passes by consent
- 6. Funding eligibility open to any project undertaken in furtherance of the eligible graduate student's pursuit of their degree per faculty and student written attestation, and not be limited to solely "final projects." GSA does not support this idea because GSA feels Departments will use this as justification to reduce funding for pre-final projects. MDRF will clarify that any stage of the final project (including pilot studies) may be funded
- Option A: All in favor of allowing funding for any projects: 12
- Option B: All in favor of limiting funding to final projects: 51
 - Recommendation to continue limiting funding to any stage of a final project passes.
- Tanja states that due to this vote outcome, recommendation #4d becomes irrelevant and is no longer applicable, and that recommendation #4e is just a statement of fact and does not require a vote.
- 7. Grammar penalty to remain as means of objectively assessing applications. GSA does not support this idea. She clarifies that there currently is no penalty for grammar, but there is for lack of clarity. Therefore, there is no need to penalize an applicant twice for the same thing. GSA also feels that this grammar penalty would discriminate against ESL students.
- Option A: All in favor of adding a grammar penalty: 8
- Option B: All opposed to adding a grammar penalty: 54
- Option C: All abstaining from a vote on the grammar penalty: 1 (student states that her club asked to bring to the floor the point that her Department opposes the clarity penalty as well, as it has adversely affected people in her program)
 - Vote against the committee's recommendation to add a grammar penalty passes, therefore there will be no grammar penalty added to the review process.

8. New Business

- Club Recognition
 - Amy announces that she has reviewed the paperwork of the International Clubs "Hellenic GSA" and "Native GSA" and is recommending recognition for both with a budget of \$650 each. She has also reviewed the paperwork of the new Special Interest Club "Medical Scientist Training Program" and is recommending recognition with a budget of \$300.
 - Stephanie states that, unfortunately, due to the fact that no one from Native GSA is present at this Senate meeting to represent the club, they cannot be considered for recognition.
 - Representative from Hellenic GSA gives a short description of their club and their planned activities.
 - Question is asked whether or not the club participates in Buffalo's Hellenic festival downtown.
 - The representative states that the event is organized by the Greek Orthodox Church, and while the club is considering having a booth at next year's festival, they do not help to organize the event.
 - Question is asked whether or not this is a religious club.
 - The representative responds that they are a cultural club for socializing and not a religious group.
 - Motion to approve Hellenic GSA at the recommended amount
 - Motion: Psychology
 - Second: Library and Information Studies
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent
 - Representative from Medical Scientist Training Program gives a short description of their club and planned activities.
 - Motion to approve Medical Scientist Training Program at the recommended amount
 - Motion: Urban Planning
 - Second: Community Health and Health Behavior
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent
- Funding Requests
 - Representatives for each funding request are asked to give a brief description of their event or publication, and answer questions from the Senate.

Symposium

- Biological Sciences Symposium- Biological Sciences
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00

Scholarly Publication

- theory@buffalo- Comparative Literature
 - Requested/Recommended: \$625.00
- P-Queue- English
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00
- Question is asked to the Biological Sciences representative if the Department contributes to this event.
 - The representative responds that the Department contributes the majority of the funding for the event.
- Question is asked to the Biological Sciences representative if students from other departments, such as Psychology, would be able to apply to present at their symposium.
 - The representative responds that typically other departments are not invited to present, but suggests that the student contact the organizers directly if they think their research would be relevant.
- Question is asked to the P-Queue representative as to the difference between the English and Comparative Literature journals.
 - The representative responds that she is not familiar with the Comparative Literature journal, but assumes it deals more with theory than concept.
- Motion to approve all funding requests as a block at the recommended amounts
 - Motion: Community Health & Health Behavior
 - Second: Urban Planning
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 1; Passes by consent

9. Roll Call and Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn at 8:10pm
 - Motion: Social Work
 - Second: Community Health and Health Behavior
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent