

1. President Tanja Aho calls the meeting to order at 6:41pm

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2017 Senate Meeting
 - Motion: Physics
 - Second: Library & Information Studies
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; In favor: 77

3. Announcements

- The GSA Programming Coordinator, Diana Moore, explains that upcoming GSA events include:
 - March 3rd- Java Junction, 11:00am – 1:00pm in 310 Student Union
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee and doughnuts for graduate students.
 - March 4th- Mardi Gras Party, 7:30pm – 11:30pm at Pearl Street Grill & Brewery
 - Open bar, food, DJ, and prizes!!
 - Tickets on sale now at the SBI Ticket Office for \$20 each (\$25 at the door if still available). 2 per UB Id.
 - March 6th- Discount AMC Movie Tickets Available
 - Tickets on sale at the SBI Ticket Offices (221 Student Union and 350 Harriman Hall) for \$6 each. 1 per UB ID.
 - March 16th- South Campus Siesta, 4:00 – 6:00pm in 105 Harriman Hall
 - Free snacks and beverages for graduate students at South Campus
- Tanja introduces Blake Cooper from UB IT to discuss some of the technology resources and services available to graduate students.
 - UBIT is looking to reach out to graduate students about their needs. They offer a variety of teaching technologies for TA's and GA's. They have remote connections and cloud software available for students doing research travel.
 - There is a new Tech Squad service available, which is an on-site or online tech support that is an extension of the UB Help Center. Student can set up meetings and they can help resolve problems.
 - Their goal is to make more connections with students in order to receive better feedback and to help with their decision making. They offer focus groups and annual surveys and encourage all who are interested to reach out to them and participate.
- Tanja announces that the GSA Office will be on Summer Hours for the week of Spring Break.
 - Office open Monday, March 20th to Thursday, March 23rd from 8:30am – 4:00pm (closed for lunch daily 1:00 – 2:00pm).
 - Closed on Friday, March 24th.
- Tanja reminds everyone that the GSA's April Senate meeting date conflicts with the GSA's Choice Distinguished Speaker lecture and has therefore been moved to **Tuesday, April 4th at 6:30pm in the Student Union Theatre**. Please make sure to note this date and location change and plan accordingly with your representatives.

4. Report of the President

- Referendum Vote
 - Tanja explains that this is a referendum year for the GSA. That means that as part of our annual election of new officers in April, students will also have the opportunity to vote and decide whether to keep the student activity fee mandatory or move to a voluntary fee. A voluntary fee would prevent the GSA from being able to continue providing students with all of their club budgets, funding opportunities, programming and services currently offered. This is an important vote and we ask everyone to share this information with their constituents.
- Resolutions in the Making
 - Tanja is working with a number of Senators to prepare various resolutions that will be presented to the Senate at the next meeting for approval. Topics include UB's divestment from fossil fuels, making UB an official Sanctuary Campus, and affordable on-campus graduate student housing options. If anyone wants to get involved in any of these topics, please email gsa-president@buffalo.edu in order to be put in touch with the proper people in charge.
- Broad Based Fee Update: Consultation, Fee Increases
 - UB held a meeting to inform students of what the fee structure is going to look like for the next five years. The positive news is that graduate students will continue to not be charged the recreation or athletics fees for the foreseeable future. The bad news is that every other fee is going up by approximately 4% each year for the next five years. The only exception is the Academic Excellence and Success fee, which is going to increase by \$100 a year for the next five years. We have been encouraging all graduate students to submit feedback to the University as you may have seen in our emails, postings on Facebook, and in the Spectrum, to let them know how you feel about these fee increases. We are also calling on UB to provide more information on where that fee money is going. The stewards at the meeting were not able to answer student representatives' questions about how that money will be used. All of the student governments are considering drafting a resolution to make UB be more transparent with how they determine and spend these fees. An overview with the full breakdown of fees can be found here: <http://studentaccounts.buffalo.edu/tuition/broadbasedfees/input.php>

5. Report of the Treasurer

- Changes to the Budget
 - Anastasia explains that we are in the process of planning the budget for next year. A rough draft that is not up for approval of the general line items and allocation amounts is presented to the Senate in full detail. A number of costs have increased and without making any adjustments to the budget in comparison with last year's allocations we are resulting in a deficit balance of -\$43,000.
 - Main changes that took place compared to the previous year:
 - No money left in reserve
 - Full-time employee expenses – increase of \$10,000 (taxes, benefits, COLA)
 - New accounting system – increase of ~\$5,000 (old system is no longer supported)
 - Phone charges imposed by UB – increase of \$1,100
 - Tanja clarifies that UB charges student governments for telephone expenses because they do not pay rent for office space or any utility charges. This is the university's way of recuperating some of the costs of having us on campus.
 - Result: -\$43,000
 - Anastasia states that the E-board proposes making a few adjustments in order to try and balance the budget.
 - Proposed adjustments:
 - Cutting the Assistant Programming Coordinator position
 - Moving one stipend Editor to hourly (current stipend = \$10,000 +10% for taxes, hourly = \$6,000)
 - Reducing office expense lines (External Affairs- for E-board to attend conferences, Special Projects- to co-sponsor University events, and Miscellaneous expenses)
 - Making changes to the group funding and conference funding allocations according to the actual expenses used over the past few years. This will just reduce the line allocations, but will not impact the amount of funding groups or students can request.
 - Result: approximately \$8,000 surplus
 - Anastasia states that this is a referendum year, as Tanja mentioned previously, and that this is the time for GSA to review the amount we charge for our student activity fee. In order to plan for the next two years until the next referendum vote occurs, we need to consider adjusting the amount of the fee. Due to inflation rates, depreciation rates and our contractual obligations, the E-board is proposing increasing the GSA activity fee by \$4 from \$64 to \$68 per semester. She states that this amount will help us to operate with a surplus for the next two years, it will give us money to put back into reserves, but also that it will allow GSA to provide two more services.
 - The two new services that would be offered as part of this fee increase would be the continuation of the Statistics Lab that was opened three weeks ago and the return of the Childcare Scholarship for parenting graduate students.
 - In order to make the presentation of the budget for approval at next month's meeting go more smoothly, the E-board would like the Senate to vote on these proposed adjustments so that a final draft of the budget can be prepared accordingly.
 - Tanja announces that a survey will be sent out to students by the end of the week so that they will have a chance to give input on where they think student activity money should be spent, and a Town Hall Meeting will be held within the next two weeks before the Finance Committee meets and votes to recommend a final version of the budget to the Senate for approval at the April meeting. The E-board wants to give as many chances for people to submit their input as possible before a final vote has to occur.
 - Student asks whether voting on these adjustments means that someone is going to get fired.
 - Tanja clarifies that this is just an opinion poll and that this is not the official, final vote on the budget.
 - Jen clarifies that removing of positions means that the line item will not exist in the budget for next year and not necessarily that someone will be fired. It just means that no one will be hired for that position next year.
 - Tanja also states that all of these recommendations are being made after consulting with the people currently in those positions and in collaboration with the Directors of those services.
 - Tanja mentions that other changes were discussed, such as increases to conference funding, however because the Senate has approved the idea of creating a Services Committee, some of those changes are being held out in order for the newly created committee to have time to fully investigate those ideas for next year. If the By-Law amendment creating that committee is passed later in this meeting then the committee will be staffed during the next Senate meeting in April and the committee will work over the summer to review those and any other ideas.
 - Vote to remove Assistant Programming Coordinator position
 - In favor: 57
 - Oppose: 8
 - Abstain: 7
 - Vote to move one stipend Editor to hourly

- In favor: 62
- Oppose: 5
- Abstain: 6
- Vote to adjust Scholarly Publication Fund from \$11,800 to \$9,000
 - In favor: 59
 - Oppose: 7
 - Abstain: 8
- Vote to adjust Symposium Fund from \$18,600 to \$15,000
 - In favor: 55
 - Oppose: 5
 - Abstain: 7
- Vote to adjust Special Activity Fund from \$25,000 to \$18,000
 - In favor: 55
 - Oppose: 6
 - Abstain: 4
- Vote to adjust Conference Fund from \$140,000 to \$125,000
 - In favor: 51
 - Oppose: 12
 - Abstain: 6
- Vote on suggested student activity fee increase of \$4
 - Student asks why GSA is only proposing a \$4 increase when the University is proposing increasing fees by over \$100 per year.
 - Stephanie states that the last GSA fee increase was six years ago for \$11 and that the idea was that this increase would cover costs for the next three referendum cycles, which it did. A \$4 increase will carry the organization to the next referendum vote in two years, but the Senate could consider increasing the fee more in order to avoid having to decide on another increase two years down the road.
 - Tanja responds that while increasing the fee more was discussed by the E-board, they felt that it would be unfair to future students to have the current Senate vote on fees which they themselves may or may not be paying. The idea was that it would be more fair to give students the opportunity to vote on these fees every two years in order to have a more direct say in the fees they are charged.
 - Anastasia states that the increase will help GSA to maintain its contractual obligations, rebuild our reserves, but also to provide two new services including the Statistics Lab and the Parenting Students Scholarship.
 - ❖ Rebecca Bryan, the current Stats Lab Director, is introduced and explains that the services are free for all graduate students. Services include research design, simple methods, experimental methods, and programming or software problems. So far she has helped 12 students from 5 different departments. Office hours are Tuesdays 11:00 am – 1:00pm, Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:00pm, or by appointment. Please contact gsa-statslab@buffalo.edu, or check out the GSA website.
 - ❖ Tanja explains that the Parenting Student Scholarship would be bringing back an old GSA program that used to exist to help graduate students offset the cost of childcare expenses. Childcare costs can be prohibitively expensive and since GSA has been advocating for parenting student rights, offering students this opportunity to help alleviate those expenses would fit with our goals. The scholarship used to be \$500 per semester and was awarded based on financial hardship.
 - Tanja expands that the GSA has the lowest student activity fee at UB, and that the undergraduates and other professional schools pay about \$100 per semester and provide less services. SUNY wide we are also on the low end of the graduate student activity fee scale. She reiterates that they still did not want to increase the fee significantly because the E-board is aware that students are already hurting and didn't want to make GSA another fee burden.
 - Student asks about the current GSA fee.
 - ❖ Tanja responds that it is \$64.
 - Student asks why we don't just consider raising the fee by \$6 to make an even \$70.
 - ❖ Anastasia responds that all increases need to be justified and the E-board did not feel that they could justify increasing the fee by more than \$4 since that is all they would need to balance the budget and provide the proposed new services.
 - Student asks for clarification as to when the next time would be that the fee could be increased.
 - ❖ Tanja responds every two years with the referendum vote.
 - Student states that the GSA has the option to increase the fee every year with a general election if they choose.

- ❖ Tanja responds that the GSA does not do that.
 - Tanja calls the question on the proposed \$4 student activity fee increase
 - In favor: 58
 - Oppose: 7
 - Abstain: 6
 - Vote on suggested \$10,450 stipend position for Stats Lab Director if the fee increase passes
 - Anastasia states that GSA applied for an SBI Programming Grant to help start this service based on the results received from a survey that was sent out. 70 respondents from 15 departments thought this would be a beneficial service for GSA to offer.
 - Student asks for clarification on the funding for this service if there is no longer a grant to help with the costs.
 - ❖ Anastasia responds that we will only provide this service if the fee increase passes. If that is the case then the E-board would like to know how students would feel about adding an additional stipend to the budget in order to keep offering the service. She states that the lab has only been open for a few weeks, so our data for analyzing the impact of the service is limited, however the Senate has to vote on the budget for next year in the April Senate meeting and therefore they need to make a decision now. The long term goal is to get the University or Sub Board to take over the service so that it is open to all students, seeing as how there is interest in it from other governments, but that will not take place in the near future.
 - Student asks if that amount includes all the costs for running the lab or just the student stipend.
 - ❖ Anastasia responds that there are no other fees associated with the service other than the stipend and the additional 10% cost of the payroll taxes.
 - ❖ Tanja clarifies that this would be a continuation of the existing Stats Lab Director position which is currently being paid for half by the SBI programming grant and half by the GSA. Therefore, unless Sub Board is willing to take over the service, which will probably not happen next year, we need to vote on whether or not GSA should pay the full amount of the stipend, which would involve creating a new stipend line.
 - Student states that there is already a Statistics Lab in the Graduate School of Education that is open to all students and offers the same services.
 - ❖ Anastasia responds that the GSE lab is not actually open to all students and in fact they are doing a favor to students who come in by allowing them to utilize their services.
 - Tanja calls the questions on the suggested stipend position for the Stats Lab Director
 - In favor: 49
 - Oppose: 12
 - Abstain: 7
 - Vote on suggested \$4,000 parenting graduate student scholarship fund if the fee increase passes
 - In favor: 59
 - Oppose: 5
 - Abstain: 2
 - The E-board thanks everyone for their input and feedback, and states that this information will all be taken into consideration when preparing the budgets for approval at the next meeting.
 - Funding Account Balances:
 - Special Activity: \$25,000 to start, \$2,646.43 allocated this month, \$17,723.57 remaining
 - Interdepartmental Activity: \$3,600.00, \$600.00 allocated this month, \$2,691.00 remaining
 - Symposia: \$18,600 to start, \$4,200.00 allocated this month, \$7,405.00 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, \$750.00 remaining
 - Conferences:
 - March: 58 requests for \$20,044.03, 55 applications approved for \$19,008.90
 - Beginning Balance: \$140,000.00; Remaining Balance \$36,315.91
6. Report of Vice President
- Early Recognition Deadline for Special Interest and International Clubs is Monday, March 27th.
 - All clubs who want their 2017-2018 budget to be activated automatically on August 1st must submit the required paperwork by this date.
 - Otherwise, clubs will have to wait for approval at a Fall Senate meeting.
7. Old Business
- No Old Business
8. New Business

- Constitution Revisions
 - Tanja states that she has been working on a full revision of the GSA Constitution to bring it up to date with current policies and the actual practices of the GSA, and to try to work out any inconsistencies in the document. In collaboration with the GSA officers, staff and lawyers, the updated version that everyone received at the beginning of the meeting was drafted. The old version, the new version, and a document summarizing all of the amendments was emailed out to everyone in advance of the meeting, and now what has to happen is that all of the changes must be read to the Senate aloud. Once the changes have been read the Senate will have the option to vote on the changes to the By-Laws only tonight. All changes to the Constitution itself cannot be voted on until the next Senate meeting in accordance with Constitutional procedures for amendments. Tanja states that most of the changes proposed are not content based. The majority are typos, grammatical changes, changes to language that make things easier to understand, or deleting redundant information.
 - Tanja proceeds to read all of the proposed amendments to the GSA Constitution and By-Laws, referencing the comments on each proposed amendment, and asks everyone to follow along with the paper copy they received.
 - Once the Constitution has been read, Tanja asks the Senate to vote on the proposed By-Law amendments individually.
 - Vote to approve Amendment 51 to change from “The By-Laws” to “By-Laws of the Graduate Student Association of University at Buffalo, The State University of New York”
 - In Favor: 68
 - Oppose: 1
 - Abstain: 0
 - Vote to approve Amendment 52 to add an Index to the GSA By-Laws
 - In Favor: 66
 - Oppose: 0
 - Abstain: 0
 - Vote to approve Amendment 53 to change “membership” to “GSA Senate Membership”
 - In Favor: 66
 - Oppose: 0
 - Abstain: 0
 - Student asks if the Senate can do a block vote to approve all of the changes.
 - Tanja responds that the amendments have to be voted on individually.
 - Student motions to temporarily suspend the powerpoint
 - Tanja discusses options with the Senate for continuing voting in a more streamlined fashion, but strongly encourages that the Senate consider voting on the changes that involve content separately from the minor grammatical changes.
 - Discussion continues and it is decided that if Tanja reads out all of the changes at once they can be voted on as a block.
 - Motion to vote on all of the remaining By-Law amendments as a block
 - Motion: Graduate Indian Student Association
 - Second: Education Leadership & Policy
 - Oppose: 1; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent
 - Student asks about Article 4, Section 2 where temporary committees can be appointed by the President. She states that typically committees are appointed by the Senate and asks if students are comfortable with giving that power to the President.
 - Tanja clarifies that there is no change to that part of the Constitution and that the President has always had the power to appoint temporary committees. She states that the student has the option to motion to amend that section of the Constitution as well if they choose to do so.
 - Tanja then continues to read all of the remaining changes to the GSA By-Laws that will be voted on as a block.
 - Motion to approve all of the remaining By-Law amendments as a block (amendment 54 to amendment 120)
 - Motion: Anthropology
 - Second: Transnational Studies
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent
 - Tanja states that there were additional amendments identified after the document had been sent to the Senate, so those will have to be voted on with the Constitution changes at the next Senate meeting. She asks anyone who has additional proposed By-Law changes to email them to her at gsa-president@buffalo.edu prior to March 28th so that they can be circulated to the Senate with the Agenda email.
- 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

- Motivational Interviewing Seminar- Counseling, School & Education Psychology
 - Requested/Recommended: \$560.00
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Alumni Symposium- Pharmaceutical Sciences
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,020.00
- Restorative Justice Day- Social Work
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,066.43
- Motion to approve all Special Activity requests as a block at the recommended amounts
 - Motion: Transnational Studies
 - Second: Physics
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent

Symposium

- GSE Research Symposium- Learning & Instruction
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00
- Symposium on Resilient and Sustainable Civil Structures and Infrastructures- Civil, Structural & Environmental Engineering
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00
- UB Regional Earthquake Engineering Symposium- UB-EERI
 - Requested/Recommended: \$1,400.00

Interdepartmental Activity

- New York Beer Project- Physics/Chemistry/Biochemistry/Mathematics
 - Requested/Recommended: \$600.00

Community Outreach

- Friends of the Night People Food Pantry- Anthropology
 - Requested/Recommended: \$250.00
- Motion to approve all remaining funding requests as a block at the recommended amounts
 - Motion: Transnational Studies
 - Second: Industrial and Systems Engineering
 - Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent

• Election Committee Update

- Candidate Petition Packets are due by Monday, March 6th at 4:30pm.

• Tanja reminds everyone to please turn in their clickers and voting cards before leaving.

9. Roll Call and Adjournment

• Motion to Adjourn at 8:43pm

- Motion: Transnational Studies
- Second: Education Leadership & Policy
- Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0; Passes by consent