

1. GSA President Tanja Aho calls the meeting to order at 6:55pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from the October 4, 2017 Senate Meeting
  - Motion: Anthropology
  - Second: Political Science
  - In favor: 62; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 5
  - Motion passes

3. Announcements

- Di Yuan takes the floor to introduce an intention to organize international students around their unique concerns and for support. Anyone interested is asked to contact [diyuan@buffalo.edu](mailto:diyuan@buffalo.edu).

4. Report of the Interim President

- Tanja Aho has returned to full capacity as GSA President, and thanks Jen for her service as Interim President. The Senate applauds.
- Tanja announces that she is interested in surveying student needs and club concerns that may be addressed by her representation in committees. She states that there was no increase in the controversial Academic Excellence Fee last year due to the lobbying work of all seven student governments.

5. Report of the Vice President

- Due to difficulty reaching many senator members of the Services Committee, a renewed call for the Services Committee is announced.
  - Services Committee (5 Senate Members)
    - Alexandra Agostinelli (Political Science)
    - Amber Kalush (Anthropology)
    - Siddharth Chelladurai (CSEE)
    - Tim Parks (CSEP)
    - Cesar Lubongo (CBE)
  - Motion to approve the Services Committee
    - Motion: Library and Information Studies
    - Second: Mathematics
    - In Favor: 63; Oppose: 2; Abstain: 2
- Vice President Connor Walters states that the Services Committee met to discuss the HR Audit and that more information will be coming in the Old Business section of the meeting.
- Connor states that the make-up meeting for Mandatory Officer Training is on Monday, 11/6 at 12pm in 330 Student Union.

6. Report of the Temporary Treasurer

- Temporary Treasurer Tilottama Turkar announces that the funding account balances have been adjusted in accordance with the Senate votes from last session.
- Funding Account Balances:
  - Special Activity: \$15,000, adjusted from \$18,000.00, to start, \$1,200.00 allocated this month, \$12,625.00 remaining
  - Interdepartmental Activity: \$2,000.00 to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$2,000.00 remaining
  - Symposia: \$15,000.00 to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$13,600.00 remaining
  - Scholarly Publication: \$5,000, adjusted from \$9,000.00, to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$3,700.00 remaining
  - Community Outreach: \$2,000 to start, \$0.00 allocated this month, \$1,750.00 remaining
  - Conferences:
    - 66 requests for \$22,056.67, 65 applications approved for \$14,153.55
    - Beginning Balance: \$132,000.00 to start; Remaining Balance \$86,192.70
- Tilottama announces that due to the volume of conference applications, there was not enough funding for everyone to receive the maximum amount. However, all applicable applications received an equal amount of money based on a hierarchy outlined on the conference application form. Tanja asks if Stephanie can remember the last time GSA was unable to provide full conference funding to all approved applicants. Stephanie says she cannot.

7. Old Business

- Approval of Election Committee Chair
  - The Election Committee has selected Ariel Noffke (Anthropology) as their chair.
  - Motion to approve the Election Committee Chair
    - Motion: Anthropology
    - Second: Library and Information Studies
    - In Favor: 57; Oppose: 4; Abstain: 5

- Connor presents the HR Audit efforts as they currently stand. He states that they are not recommendations at this time.
  - Project 1: Using existing materials: update, add to, delete from and otherwise produce an Employee Manual and Office Policies for GSA.
    - This will be done using the current book and various other materials available. The result will be a Manual consistent with others on campus as well as following the law.
    - First draft done on or before December 8, 2017.
    - Final Product will be delivered on or before January 12, 2018.
    - Cost: \$1,200.00
  - Project 2: Create accurate job descriptions for the GSA (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Webmaster, MDRF Director and Assistant, Managing Editor and Hourly Editors, Programming Coordinator and Assistant, and Professional Staff Members).
    - This will use other relevant position descriptions as available and will then interview staff by November 23 to flesh out the descriptions.
    - Completed descriptions will be provided on or before January 12, 2018.
    - Cost: \$1,450.00
  - Funding Options
    - The SBI Spring Programming Grant was examined as a potential source of funding for this endeavor, but the HR Audit does not fit the scope of the grant.
    - Connor states that with GSA itself becoming a recognized non-profit, external funding opportunities may be applicable for this project. These can be investigated after the GSA is recognized.
    - The recommendation of the Finance Committee is shared. Following an emergency meeting to discuss the HR Audit, the Finance Committee cannot recommend voting to approve the costs at this time, as these costs would be difficult to incorporate into our budget.
  - Connor states that he believes it is important to bring the information on the HR Audit to the Senate, as had been promised at the previous Senate meeting. He opens the floor to questions.
    - Stephanie asks if this will be brought before the Senate again before final actions are taken.
      - Connor states that any further action on this and especially any action that requires spending will be brought before the Senate. He states that he believes it is required by rule that matters involving spending go before the Senate, but adds that he personally feels strongly about the Senate reviewing spending.
    - A student asks for the purpose of obtaining accurate job descriptions.
      - Connor states that due to the high turnover of GSA positions as student employees, strong descriptions help to make duties clear and ensure consistency from year to year. He adds that it is also important in understanding the roles of staff for determining things like salaries/stipends and having a full and accurate understanding of the organization as a whole.
    - A student asks if the currently planned HR Audit would help to address the issues that led to the resignation of the previous Vice President and Treasurer.
      - Connor states that he cannot answer this question accurately, as he was not involved in the conflicts that led to those resignations.
      - Tanja states that the original intent of the audit was to help streamline GSA and examine the big picture of our organization due to financial issues we had the previous year. She reiterates the need for better handbooks and contracts.
    - A student asks what might be done in terms of a financial study of the GSA.
      - Connor states that in the emergency finance committee meeting preceding the audit, the possibility of an organizational effectiveness was discussed, but it would need to be beyond what had been discussed at the last meeting. He adds that the finance committee plans to look into the budget in full. He states that he is open to any recommendations from the Senate.
      - Tanja mentions that many of our financial issues could be resolved by raising the mandatory student activity fee. She states that we provide more services than any student government aside from SA, and that we have the lowest fee of all seven student governments. Tanja believes the projects outlined in this audit are important, and that we as a Senate need to decide if it makes sense to spend the money now for someone to do this for us, or to take on these projects ourselves and pay for the finalization.

- A student asks if the GSA executive board can return with a detailed breakdown of the projects and negotiated costs when it is time to proceed. Connor states that it can. The student then asks if employees sign the current employee handbook.
  - Tanja states that currently, they do not.
- Tanja states that we currently have an SBI lawyer, but that he is not comfortable with things that fall specifically into HR law, as it is not his specialty.
- A student asks about the organizational effectiveness study proposed by the previous treasurer.
  - Connor states that the contract can be made available, and Stephanie displays it on the screen. David Brown from the finance committee takes the floor to discuss concerns with that contract.
  - David highlights language within the contract that states it is solely examining the GSA office managers, rather than looking at the organization as a whole. He expresses that this appeared to allow for an excuse to take action against an office manager without taking blame.
- A student asks if a bake sale or other fundraiser might help cover the cost of this study.
  - Connor states that currently, the money would go through SBI, but he is not opposed to looking into this more.
  - Tanja adds that this is not so much a question of if we have the money, but where that money might come from. If it was deemed important, there are likely places we could make adjustments to allow for this study.
  - Stephanie expresses that there have been many cuts already and the only places we could cut from are not things she would recommend. She does not see where we could budget for the current cost.
- A student asks about the fee increase. Stephanie clarifies that the maintenance of the fee as mandatory is a bi-annual vote, and Tanja clarifies that the fee increase only failed this past year. Stephanie says it is the first time a fee increase has failed. Connor briefly recalls a previous fee increase, but Stephanie states it hasn't happened in seven years. The student asks what can be done to advertise the fee to grad students who do not come to Senate meetings.
  - Tanja states that she should have better promoted the fee increase. She adds a reminder that senators need to be sharing information from the GSA meetings with their clubs, and that senators will need to advocate within their clubs for the fee increase. There is an ongoing discussion about how to advertise the fee increase, and students are invited to share ideas with the GSA executive board. Tanja mentions that there was a survey in which people expressed overwhelming support for services that would only be possible with the fee increase, but then voted against the fee increase. She adds that students may have been confused because of controversy around a University fee increase.
- A student asks if the wording on the ballot might be changed to clarify the purpose of the fee.
  - Stephanie states that it is a mandate from the SUNY board of trustees. She adds that students do access the poll through a page with a flyer that explains what the mandatory student activity fee is for.
- A student asks about the amount of the fee increase.
  - Tanja states that it was a proposed raise of \$4 per semester. Connor and Tanja state that a bigger fee increase would help the GSA to be able to invest money and have better long-term stability. Stephanie mentions that the belief behind the \$4 increase was to ensure that students are only paying for their own GSA usage rather than investing in future years, however, this does not stabilize GSA long-term. Historically, fee increases have always been long-term projections with the intent to invest.
- A student asks for clarity around the fee vote.
  - Stephanie and Tanja explain that the fee is currently mandatory, but every two years (or when an increase is proposed), students are able to vote on whether the fee should be mandatory or voluntary. If the fee was voluntary, the GSA would likely shrink to the point where it would no longer exist. Any fee vote must be part of an open general election to ensure that it is seen by the maximum number of people.
- Some students express interest in donating \$4 or more to the GSA.
  - Connor expresses a commitment to following up with this and other fundraising opportunities.

## 8. New Business

- Club Recognition

- No applications for recognition have been received.
- Funding Requests
  - A representative from CSSA presents on their Singing Contest special activity.
    - Requested/recommended: \$1200.00
    - Motion to approve funding request at recommended amount
      - Motion: Political Science
      - Second: Math
      - In favor: 30, Oppose: 18; Abstain: 15.
- Approval of By-Law Amendment
  - Tanja states that SBI is requiring that we add a Dissolution clause to the GSA By-Laws in order for us to file as an Unincorporated Association with the IRS. She also recommends adding this clause to the Table of Contents.
  - Tanja reads the text of the dissolution clause.
    - Article V. DISSOLUTION
    - Upon dissolution of the organization, the members, after paying or making provision for the payment of the just debts, obligations and liabilities of the organization, will dispose of all of its assets by transfer to such other non-profit organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes, or such other purposes as shall at that time qualify for exemption under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and Section 420 of the New York Real Property Tax Law as in judgment of the members is best qualified and competent to promote the purposes of the organization, subject to an order of a Justice of the Supreme Court of New York.
  - Motion to approve these By-Law Amendments
    - Motion: Transnational Studies
    - Second: Classics
    - In favor: 58; Oppose: 3; Abstain: 5
- Approval of the Election Code and Code of Conduct
  - Election Committee Chair Ariel Noffke discusses the changes to the Election Code, including: the updating of dates and deadlines for the election in 2018; the removal of references to reimbursement for campaign expenses to reflect the updated budget; and the updating of which University offices host the online election. The Code of Conduct was updated to remove the reference to complying with the spirit of the Code of Conduct and Election Rules.
  - Motion to approve the Election Code and Code of Conduct
    - Motion: LIS
    - Second: ENS
    - In favor: 61; Oppose: 2; Abstain: 3
- Election of Treasurer
  - Tilottama Turkar introduces herself as the candidate for the position of Treasurer. She states that she studies finance and has enjoyed filling the Temporary Treasurer position and would like to continue as the full Treasurer.
  - A student asks what would happen if people voted D using the clickers, given that there is no option assigned to that button.
    - Connor states that this happened last month and it is recorded in the minutes as any other vote would be.
  - Election of GSA Treasurer
    - Tilottama Turkar: 57; Abstain: 7; Unlisted Option D: 2

## 9. Roll Call and Adjournment

- Students are reminded to please make sure to turn in their voting cards and clickers before leaving in order to be counted for Roll Call.
- Motion to Adjourn at 8:09pm
  - Motion: Chemistry
  - Second: Library & Information Studies
  - In favor: 58; Oppose: 1; Abstain: 0
  - Motion passes