



**Graduate Student Organization  
Senate Meeting Agenda  
December 6th, 2022  
Meeting @ 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Student Activity Center, Room 306**

**\*\* Reminder:** Alternate senators cannot vote if the primary senator is present.

**\*\* [Robert's Rules](#) reminders:**

- Please provide a signal (e.g., raising a hand/placard, Zoom gesture), in order to speak at the appropriate times. Attendees will be permitted to speak in order of signaling; attendees who have not spoken yet will be prioritized.
- No one recognized by the Speaker may be interrupted except for a point of privilege (rights of attendees, e.g., difficulty seeing/hearing, comfort, technical issues, etc.) or a point of order (rules of order have been broken).
- Subsidiary motions: Motion may be: amended, substituted, referred to committee, postponed, or tabled, or have its debate/discussion time modified. This requires majority approval (eligible for unanimous consent)
- Six-Step Motion Process: Motion > Second > Speaker Restates Motion > Discussion (Subsidiary motions occur here) > Voting > Results
- For the sake of time, the Speaker may demonstrate **unanimous consent** by asking for objections to subsidiary motions. If there are no objections, we may skip the Six-Step motion process.
- Only voting members (certified GSO senators) may make motions (anyone may speak during discussion periods when recognized)

**\*\* Senate Meeting Rules (Rob's Rules):**

- The Speaker will try to assign time limits to agenda items and discussion periods approximately proportional to the number of agenda items; generally, 2 minutes per person, 10 minute discussion time. Speaker may end discussion early with unanimous consent if there is no interest.
- We will no longer be tallying abstentions, abstentions will automatically be the difference between attendance, and affirmative plus negative votes.
- Please introduce yourself everytime you speak: "[Name], Primary/Alternate

Senator from [Department]”

- The Speaker may (at any time via Point of Privilege) be asked to provide additional accommodations to ensure all attendees have fair and equal access to all meeting elements (e.g., verbal description of a poster/image).

1. Call to order

**2. Announcements:**

a. Upcoming elections timeline

**Vote during februar senate meeting vote**

**Position is only three months because the elections**

**Allowing floor nominations (need 8 senators signatures or 25 grad students signatures)Meet and Greet: mid january**

b. GSO website issues

Website was down we are working with IT and support services to figure out what happened. But the website is back

c. Stony Brook Recreation Center gym membership reimbursement restructuring

Gym membership at a discounted rate for students and we would purchase it for them. Similar to leetcode.

d. RAU and GSEU contract negotiations near the end of the academic year (June)

If you wanna find out more you can contact representatives from both groups

e. See the current Communication Guidelines [here](#). EC will work on revising/expanding.

Expanded according to the emergency meeting. It needs addition and we will be working on that in the coming weeks because we have a decent amount of time before the next senate meeting

f. SAGE: Join a whitepaper committee!

Kurt Bugler (ECE Senator): This year they are going to talk about funding for higher education and funding for research and international student issues. If you are interested in this any kind of help would be appreciated

g. Stony Brook University Middle States Accreditation: seeking graduate student members

Donal Thomas (Interim president): link attached in president's report; Looking for grad students that are available for one year with biweekly meetings.

h. Graduate Student representatives (one Masters and PhD) in the Dean Search Committee.

If anyone is interested, let the interim president know.

Charles Hsueh (GSO member): PhD or doctoral (what about DMA students?): Donal will ask

Donal Thomas (Interim President): Announcing the leave of Gokul and thanking him for his work.

### **3. Presentation: Christine Wang (GSO Treasurer)**

#### a. Overview of funding lines and application requirements

Slides and information with a bit more information linked in the meeting agenda.

Changes:

- 100\$ minimum for application expenses (compile their receipt and reduce amount of application)
- Must apply within 30 days of the last receipt or 30 days after the conference ends

Questions by Joanne Saldanha (GSO member): Could you clarify where in the requirement it states that your receipts need to be debit or credit?

Christine Wang (Treasurer) We are now accepting cash now

Joanne Saldanha (GSO member) When were these changes made?

Christine Wang (Treasurer) Summer

Question by Nandita Kumari (Geoscience Senator): What happens if students are unable to compile more than 100\$ by the end of the fiscal year? Do you have an option for them?

Christine Wang (Treasurer): No

Question Senator Yi: could we get a brief timeline of how long this take so we can give student an idea of the waiting time?

Christine: Currently we do not have staff to complete this application but the FSA just offered 4 professional staff so hopefully we will be able to push through by the end of december.

Charles Hsueh (GSO member): is their funding for committee?

Christine: yes there is a committee line, no max but there is only 5000 in the line atm. Suggestion for all senator to share the application

Question by Senator Marlee: Asking about changes over the summer about the reimbursement and conference and payment overlapping fiscal years.

Christine Wang (Treasurer): there was no change in the end of the fiscal year, it has always been in June

Senator Marlee: how can we solve this

Christine Wang (Treasurer): the 30 day was suggested by the FSA so that we can close the application later. If you have a conference in July try to make the purchase early so you can apply before the deadline

Additional reminder: can only reimburse round flights 1 day before and after the deadline. If you take a different one make sure you screenshot teh prices around the date of the event and show there is no price difference.

Joanne Saldanha (GSO member): asking about the salary of the FSA professional, how has this impacted the budget and how they would be hired.

Christine: The professional staff are given for free because she knows there is a lot we have to get through.

Speaker Robert Wadolowski : encourage your student to apply for DTA the deadline is coming up.

#### **4. Presentation: Douglass Marr (Chair of the Board of Appeals)**

- a. Report from the prior grievance case

Secretary resigned so that part of the grievance does not need to be addressed. There were two other points about

Call for rules and constitutions committee to clarify the role of the TReasure because there are conflicts between two rules and whether the Treasurer gets to vote. (This has been addressed and has been amended)

#### **5. Welcome!**

- a. Determine quorum
- b. Approval of [November Senate Meeting Minutes](#) and [Emergency Meeting Minutes](#) (eligible for unanimous consent) APPROVED
- c. Adoption of today's agenda (eligible for unanimous consent) ADOPTED
- d. Fix the time at which to adjourn the senate meeting to 7:30PM (eligible for unanimous consent)
  - i. Actions items not reached in time will be tabled to the next meeting.
  - ii. Committee and officer reports not verbally presented may be read.

### **Action Items**

#### **6. Voting Items:**

- a. **Batch Vote: Approve the following requirements:**

- i. Vote to have 2 senate meetings attendance requirement to include a meet-and-greet/informational session (virtual meet and greet in mid/late-Jan, Feb Senate meeting mid-Feb)

Senator Dana Golden: are we worried about no one applying or too many people applying

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: the former we want to make these restrictions achievable to make the position more accessible.

Senator Nandita Kumari : if you attended 2 meetings then those additional meetings are not compulsory

Other Senator: Does the senate meeting of the vote count as one of these two

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: this is part of the vote.

- ii. Vote to hold election via senators at the end of the Feb. senate meeting
- iii. Vote to include floor nominations (8 senators signatures, or 25 student signatures)

VOTE 15 in the room and 14 in zoom

- b. **Batch Vote:** Approve use of listed funding lines to fund the respective listed event proposals (approved by the Budget Committee)
  - i. **Speaker & Conference Series:**
    - 1. **Revisiting 5+1** (hosted by the Department of Art) for **\$2,000**
      - a. Proposed expenses for honorariums for 2 guest artist speakers
    - 2. **Art History and Criticism Lecture Series: Dr. Julia Bryan-Wilson** (hosted by the Art History Graduate Student Organization) for **\$1,035**
      - a. Proposed expenses for food, hotel/travel for speaker, venue fees, flyer designer honorarium
  - ii. **General Cultural & Social Events:**
    - 1. **Spring 2023 LACS Cafe** (hosted by the Latin American & Caribbean Studies) for **\$1,200**
      - a. Proposed expenses for empanadas, snacks, beverages for 3 events

VOTE 13 in the room 11 in zoom

- c. **Batch Vote:** Approve the following changes to the Internal Control Program (ICP):
  - i. Change pronouns throughout from he/she/his/hers to they/them/theirs.

Joanne Saldanha (GSO member): Maybe the GSO should consult with the LGBTQ center with this because moving to neutral pronouns does not solve the problem. Maybe consult with the LGBTQ center and see what language they use

In the chat Senator Ashley Barry: Hi I don't work at LGBTQ\* Services but as a gender/sexuality studies PhD candidate, they/them/theirs is considered gender-neutral in formal documents

- ii. SUNY/GSO Fiscal Year
  - 1. **Current language** says: "The GSO fiscal year shall be from June 30th to May 31st."
  - 2. **New language:** "The GSO fiscal year shall be from July 1st to June 30th."
- iii. Productions Budget
  - 1. **Current language:** "By the second week of each semester, the Production Director must submit a proposed budget to the GSO Executive Committee for review."
  - 2. **New language:** "By the second week of each semester, the Productions Director must submit a proposed budget to the GSO budget committee and Senate for review and approval."
- iv. **Add new section: 6.3.13 PhD Works Awards for Career**

### Exploration (PhD Works ACE)

1. Brief summary: Reimbursement language for PhD works awardees
  2. [Link to PhD Works webpage](#)
- v. **Add new section: 6.3.14 [PhD Career Ladder Program \(PCLP\)](#)**
1. Brief summary: Funding for the PhD Career Ladder Program
  2. [Link to PhD Career Ladder Program](#)

VOTE 14 in the room, 13 in zoom

### **7. Actions items from the floor (if any)**

1: Charles Hsueh (GSO member): Requesting to be removed from all the committees as he resigned as Senator.

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: I think your resignation is efficient, I think the rule you mentioned is for case outside of resignation.

Charles Hsueh (GSO member): Requesting to be removed from the roster

2: Joanne Saldanha (GSO member): What are the current guidelines for removing people who are on the listserve?

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: the listserve by default is GSO Senators Officers and Staff so that is it that is the default option.

Joanne: the constitution says that any GSO member can be part of the listserve

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: We are aware of this request and right now we are discussing something with the GSO advisors and they have made a recommendation to not modify anything right now. I don't want to go into too much details to protect privacy I suppose

Joanne: According to the constitution I Ask for myself and Claran to be added back to the listserve because we were removed with no notice and without consulting the senate.

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: individuals who are no longer senators are typically removed from the listserve. Afterwards you can then request to be added to the listserve. All I can say right now is that your request is pending. We did not receive a request from Claran.

Joanne: With the Senate as my witness can I be added to the listserve or are changes from the constitution going to be made. Why are admin involved in GSO affairs and why are you applying their advice above the constitutions?

Senator Doug: Point of order, I believe this discussion is getting a bit lengthy I think this can be hashed out not in a Senate meeting.

Senator Jessica Salmon: Ian and I are both new representative of our school so we just have a few quick question about ways to secure funding for our department

Speaker Robert Wadolowski : You can email the treasurer who is in charge of funding. I would like to open this discussion to senators all I can say right now is that your request is pending there is no specific timeline to deal with these request and I'd like to open it

to the Senate to know if there should be different lines (one with Senators only, one with GSO members and Senators)

Senator Nandita Kumari: I think our current ways of communication are efficient and we should not add more listserv and will confuse people. If non-senators want information they should contact their Senators

Senator David O'Donoghue: What is the concern with giving the former secretary and president access to the listserv?

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: I am not really sure how to answer that right now and in terms of the specific constitutional language.

Senator Dana Olden: A pretty crucial part of democracy is transparency and openness. Having an opt-in system is probably the better system because it allows people to engage with GSO if they wish to. I think this is an important part of transparency. If we can avoid the illusion of doing things behind closed doors I think we should avoid it and let people join if they wish to.

Senator Doug: I think the current system is fine and if they want to opt in they should be able to. I don't see any reason to deny her request.

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: I will take this discussion as overriding the conversation with our advisor and add her to the listserv.

3: Senator Nandita Kumari: I think we should really reconsider the 100\$ limit and add a close where student can apply for less if they haven't accumulate more than 100\$ by the end of the year

Christine: Yes we can consider that.

## **8. Discussion Items (Non-binding Resolutions):**

### **a. Opinions on ranked choice voting?**

Particularly relevant when you have an election with more than two candidates.

Senator Dana Golden: 1; we don't get that many candidates 2. Many people get confused by ranked voting so it tends to privilege people that are more informed with the system 3. As cool as it is very often it does not come down to ranked choice, it is very rare that it comes down to ranked choice

Senator Douglas Marr: I don't think it would hurt to have ranked choice. In terms of people being confused I hope people here would not be confused by it, we are all relatively well informed. I am in favor in the major even if might not come into play just because it allows people to express their opinion on voting.

Senator Nandita Kumari : what if there is only one candidate and I don't like them

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: we amended the constitution to add a vote of no confidence so no you will always have the option for nobody.

- b. GSO budget usage: Source of funds versus usage of funds
  - i. Largest proportion of graduate students are Master's students
  - ii. Presumably, PhD students are primarily taking advantage of high expense reimbursements (e.g., conferences)

In the chat Senators indicate that masters student do attend conference

Senator Nandita Kumari : what would we have if not reimbursement for travel?

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: larger social events, bigger speakers

Senator Dana Golden (ECE): it sounds like we are just making guesses, is there a way to collect data on this?

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: not retroactively but from now on we could try and collect that data.

Senator Dana Golden: I think it is definitely true that masters students attend conferences at a lower rate. In some fields it is very unlikely for masters students to present at conferences. Whether or not it is an inefficient allocation of funds. I think we should definitely consider a professional development program that would fit the master program. But i think one of the reason we don't is that PhDs stay longer and usually get more involved

Senator Doug Marr: would it be possible if it turns out that masters students don't use our funding as much as PhD students would we just reduce their student activity fee?

- c. What are the thoughts on the Policy Action Chair position?

PAC. How involved do we want GSO to be involved with the outside world.

Alternate Senator Gaelle Colin: I think it is important to maintain this link with outside world, it is important for advocacy and protecting the grad student community

- d. Should committees that are involved with advocacy for vulnerable groups (e.g., Disability Advocacy, DEI) be eligible for involuntary senator assignment?

Senator Tracy (current chair of the Disability Advocacy): We have enough interest and these groups benefit more from people who already have an interest in it so they don't have to learn as much about disability and stuff. I think it makes sense. We want people who care about the students we are trying to serve.

Senator Doug Marr: This problem will probably become redundant if we decide not to make committee membership mandatory but the ones that do want to join would get a small stipend. If we can pass that legislation that would probably solve this issue.

- e. Student Activity Fee Referendum

- i. Has not been held in years, will be held in the April alongside EC elections (all votes will be via SOLAR)
- ii. Bursar requests the fee amount by May (separate referendum for fee adjustment)
- iii. Should be held every two years as per [SUNY policy](#)
- iv. Referendum vote determines whether student activity fee is voluntary or mandatory
- v. Current fee collection is mandatory; students may opt out per semester, but lose access to GSO resources if they do so



Senator Dana Golden: is this one of the fees that is usually paid by your TAship or RA ship

Rob: No

Senator Dana Golden: Please convince people to vote yes for this. If this fee is not mandatory this cannot work.

Donal Thomas (Interim president): It is something that we need to work on collectively as a team, because as we know participation in elections is very low. We really need to get the information out there and we need to get people involved because we need people to vote. If you have any idea on how to communicate with students so that we can get more participants.

Senator Doug Marr: I wanted to give a dissenting opinion, it is just something I have been wrestling with. The current system makes GSO funding only accessible to those who have information. If everyone is paying and then only people with information can profit from it then we are creating an anti-equity system

Senator Maria Feller: if we are going to advocate for my conscience. GSO sometimes is broken (the fiscal year issue). I personally don't know how I can even advocate for my conscience knowing that so many people have issues with how GSO distributes funding.

Senator Nandita Kumari (geoscience): Existence of this organization is crucial for a lot of students, if possible that remain mandatory and we could reimburse students that haven't been able to use it can still get their money back. In my department a lot of people depend on GSO funding and I think we really really need this

Senator Dana Golden: When you give money to one person it has a massive ripple effect and does not only serve that student but Stony Brook as a whole. GSO also puts several events that

Senator David O'Donoghue : What % of our budget comes from the activity fee?

Christine; most of our budget comes from the fee we get: 300000 from the president's office and 250000 from the graduate school for 1M of the budget. So all of it is from the fee.

Senator Maria: asking clarification about the idea of reimbursing students who did not use.

Senator Dan: I think this pretty much would be impossible because we can't determine who used the fees because we fund events and departments etc.

Joanne Saldanha (GSO member): I agree with Doug's previous comment that it seems inequitable but at the same time. As Dana said when we go to conferences and it profits the university, I think the university should be funding that instead of student funding students.

Claran Martis (GSO member): We have been thinking of GSO as just a reimbursement body and GSO is also an advocacy body. If you only see the reimbursement as the value, you are also missing the point of a lot of work that GSO is doing.

Senator Doug Marr: Probably the better decision is to improve the communication and make sure everyone can use the GSO

Speaker Robert Wadolowski: there is also some scale advantage where GSO might be able to save money on purchase in bulk etc.

- f. What should be done with unspent student activity fees at the end of a fiscal year?
  - i. Unspent monies are kept in a money market account (e.g., bank or credit union)
  - ii. Money is eligible to be invested in accounts that preserve the principal (e.g., Government securities), as per [SUNY policy](#)
- g. What defines a standing committee?

## Committee and Officer Reports

- 9. **Interim President's/VP's Report:** Donal Thomas
  - a. Stony Brook University [Middle States Accreditation](#): Graduate Student Members in Working Groups
  - b. GSO meeting with President Maurie McInnis, 11/11/2022
  - c. GSO meeting with SEA Advisor
  - d. Attended University Senate
  - e. Productions Directors and Assistant Treasurers Applications
  - f. GSO Christmas Game Night: 12/01/2022, SAC Ballroom A
  - g. Thanksgiving Dinner: 11/22/2022, SAC Ballroom A
  - h. Invited to attend SBU Commencement, 12/16/2022
  - i. **Production Director's Report:** Gokul Ramanjaneya
    - i.
- 10. **Treasurer's Report:** Christine Wang
  - a. Budget report update
  - b. Received audit report for fiscal year 2021-2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)
  - c. Meetings
    - i. GSO budget planning meetings with admin
    - ii. GSO workflow meetings
    - iii. Recreation and Wellness Center
    - iv. Student Support - Regalia Assistance Fund
    - v. Working with Student Engagement & Activities, GSO club advisor, USG on club/organization funding for graduate students
    - vi. Stony Brook Child Care Services
- 11. **Speaker's Report:** Robert Wadolowski
  - a. Held November Legal clinic using a Google Forms based application
  - b. Worked with Squarespace support/IT to restore GSO website content
  - c. Processing Spring 2022 DTA Awardee reimbursements
- 12. **Officer Reports**
  - a. Graduate Student Advocate's Report: Alexandra Checkers
    - i.

- b. International Student Advocate's Report: Gaelle Aminata Colin
  - i. Answer and advice international students encountering issues
  - ii. Finished one round of Emergency Fund Applications with the Grad Advocate
  - iii. Minutes for the Emergency Senate Meeting
  - iv. Planning a food drive
  - v. Postponed Mentor-Mentee program to Spring due to technical issues
- c. Media & Communication Specialist's Report: Tiffany Martino

**13. Disability Advocacy Committee**

- a. [Revised GSO Senator Guidelines document](#) to be compatible with screen readers.

**14. Old Business**

- a.

**15. New Business**

- a.

**16. Adjournment 7.30**