

Nov 9, 2022

Meeting minutes

**Executive Summary**

On November 9, 2022, the Graduate Student Organization at Syracuse University convened in Newhouse 3-141 at 5:30 PM for the third Senate meeting of the 2022-2023 school year. At the meeting, Steven Bennett, Dr. Gretchen Ritter, and Dr. Jamie Winders presented on the Academic Strategic Plan. The Senate elected two new at-large senators, Richard Kaufman IV, and Sai Krishna Bolla, confirmed the new Parliamentarian, Zafar Ali, and passed two new resolutions. The resolutions, “A Resolution to Recognize Veterans’ Day” authored by Gabriel Uy, APS Business Administration, and “A Resolution to Reclassify the Graduate Pandemic Committee as an Ad-Hoc Committee”, authored by Daniel Kimmel, Vice President of Internal Affairs, both passed. The GSO President, Yousr Dhaouadi, reported on the progress of the GSO Climate Action Committee’s work with the undergraduate Student Association, the current deliberations of the University Senate to introduce annual reporting by GSO and the Student Association, and the deliberations of the Syracuse University Alumni Association to revisit the Alumni Engagement and Institutional Memory resolution drafted in late 2020. The Vice President of Internal Affairs welcomed new SUNY ESF senators Michael Goodman, Jordan Elliott, and Gabriella Wemple. The Vice President of External Affairs also reported on the Senators Gala and the Festival of Lights. The Comptroller reported on the plans to raise the GSO operational budget and on the plans for Carry Forward. The Senate also approved $1,375 for the African Graduate Student Network’s plan to host a viewing night for the new Marvel movie “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever”. The Climate Action Committee reported on Syracuse University’s STARS rating, and CJ Arnell, APS Biology, reported on the current state of Graduate Student Employees. The next GSO Senate meeting is on December 7, 2022, in Newhouse 3-141.

1. **Call to order – 5:38 PM**
   1. Present
      1. 39 senators and entire executive board
2. **Approval of October 12, 2022 Senate Meeting Minutes – 5:39 PM**
3. **Invited guests**
   1. Steven Bennett, Senior VP for Academic Operations and International programs & Chief of Staff of Academic Affairs.[[1]](#footnote-1)
   2. Dr. Gretchen Ritter, Vice Chancellor, Provost, and Chief Academic Officer.[[2]](#footnote-2)
   3. Dr. Jamie Winders, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs.[[3]](#footnote-3)
4. **2022 Academic Strategic Planning – 5:41 PM**
   1. Steven Bennett
   2. Associate Provost for faculty
      1. Questions for working groups
         1. What are existing areas of distinctive excellence for each theme/topic?
   3. Questions about the process or thoughts? – 5:46 PM
      1. Daniela Puente, Comms. Sec
         1. Workforce for DEIA is volunteer-based. Is there an intention to make that paid?
            1. Provost Ritter: Currently thinking about it
      2. Kellin Tasber, DEIA Chair
         1. Some positions were cut after the freeze of the pandemic, such as the LGBTQ+ resource center. International students are also facing a lot of issues with accessibility.
      3. Dr. Gretchen Ritter
         1. University has always been committed to being international. Understands that it can be challenging at this point to be an international student. Have to think of it in a collaborative way. Will surface the thoughts that students have in feedback
      4. Roselyn Impink, MPA student
         1. What will the implementation of this plan look like? When will it kick in?
            1. Provost – hope to implement in a year approximately. Hope to have it be a living document with an annual assessment with areas such as what have we achieved and where are we falling short?
      5. Benjamin Tetteh, University Senator
         1. How can international student orientation be institutionalized so that new students have the orientation in a way that is more accessible?
            1. Provost – got a new VP for DEIA (MaryGrace Alondres), co-charing along with…for the DEIA working group. May invite MaryGrace to speak
      6. Zafar Ali, APS Political Science
         1. Comment: need to emphasize the need for trauma-informed staff and faculty. Important for how students engage throughout their time at SU
      7. Hemalathaa Kasiviswanath Yuvaraja, University Senator
         1. Evidence of cross-school research
      8. Kellin Tasber, DEIA Chair
         1. MaryGrace Alondrez will be coming to the DEIA meeting on Nov 30, 2022
   4. Concluded at 6:05 PM
5. **Motion to recess - 6:06 PM**
6. **Senate reconvened at 6:22 PM**
7. **Elections - 6:23 PM**
   1. At-Large Senators
      1. Richard Kaufman IV
      2. Sai Krishna Bolla
8. **At-Large Senators self-introductions – 6:26 PM**
   1. **Questions**
      1. As an at-large senator which committee would you like to serve on?
         1. Richard – DEIA
         2. Sai – Outreach
   2. **Vote:** both nominees elected
9. **President’s report – 6:33 PM**
   1. The GSO’s Climate Action Committee met with the undergraduate Student Association (SA) and discussed the goal of reaching carbon neutrality on campus by 2030. The Student Association is working with the SU Chancellor Kent Syverud and Le Moyne College. GSO will contribute the Climate Action research towards a sustainability report being drafted by the Student Association. The report will be finalized by mid-December.
   2. The University Senate is currently considering introducing an annual report by GSO and the Student Association to the University Senate.
   3. The Syracuse University Alumni Association is considering revisiting the Alumni Engagement and Institutional Memory resolution drafted in late 2020. It would provide current graduate students with alumni GSO members for advice, networking, and collaboration. In the Spring semester, the GSO will invite the current SUAA president and Syracuse University Trustee Ryan McNaughton to speak on ways he envisions alumni relations as a resource for graduate students.
   4. The GSO will advertise open seats for student representatives in various University Senate committees, particularly in the Student Life committee.
10. **Questions** 
    1. Vito Iaia, President Pro Tempore
       1. Will the stipend increase be only implemented on the TA salary or on the RA (Research Assistant) salary
          1. Will be implemented on any assistantship, but only distinguishing factor will be between Masters and PhD
       2. CJ Arnell, APS Biology
          1. Was there a reason why they distinguished between PhD and Masters students? Minimum between both
             1. Based on initial feedback, it is because of budgetary restrictions and differences in rigor
11. **President’s report concluded at 6:51 PM**
12. **VP of Internal Affairs Report – 6:52 PM**
    1. Welcome new ESF Senators
       1. Michael Goodman, Jordan Elliott, Gabriela Wemple
    2. Introduce candidate for Parliamentarian – Zafar Ali
13. **Speech by Parliamentarian – 6:57 PM**
    1. Speech concluded at 6:59 PM
14. **Questions**
    1. Benjamin Tetteh, University Senator
       1. Is the Parliamentarian position a staff position?
          1. Yes
       2. Asking because he is wondering whether it is within the powers of the executive board to appoint rather than the senate have it be an open spot
       3. VP of Internal Affairs noted that Article 5 section 2 gives executive board the power to appoint and the senate the power to confirm; subsection B further explains it
15. **Voting on the Parliamentarian**
    1. 37 Yes, 1 No, 4 abstain—confirmed.
16. **Vice President of External Affairs Report – 7:07 PM**
    1. Summary of the Senators Gala, festival of lights
    2. The festival of lights had some problems of attendance because there was no transportation available
    3. Questions
       1. Vito Iaia, President Pro Tempore
          1. How do the present social media insights compare to previous years?
             1. Gone up by double digit percentages
       2. Kellin Tasber, University Senator and DEIA Chair
          1. How you intend to increase accessibility for future events
             1. Looking at venues that are closer, etc. struggling with the number of tickets and the budget as well. Budget constraints prevent against having big events
       3. CJ Arnell, APS Biology
          1. If limiting space, is there ever a point where you are cutting students out?
             1. Yes
17. **Comptroller’s Report – 7:23 PM**
    1. Almost all GSO funds come from the student fee; very little from the university
    2. Plan to raise our operational budget. Next goal is to convince Dean Vanableto increase it to at least 370k
    3. Plans for Carry Forward
       1. Starting the process of requesting carry forward.
    4. Concluded at 7:49 PM
18. **Special funding request – 7:50 PM**
    1. African Graduate Student Network (AGSN) wants to host a viewing night for the new Marvel movie Black Panther: Wakanda Forever, and requests $802
    2. Vito Iaia, President Pro Tempore
       1. How to determine who will get tickets
          1. First come first serve
    3. APS Biology CJ Arnell made a motion to increase the funds requested to $1,375
    4. AGSO approved for $1,375
       1. 39 yes, 1 abstention
19. **A Resolution To Recognize Veterans Day[[4]](#footnote-4) – 8:15 PM**
    1. Authored by Gabriel Uy, APS Business Administration
    2. 17 sponsors
       1. 15 Masters students, most of which are MBA/EMPA students, and two undergraduate students.
       2. Resolution noted that Syracuse University observes Veterans’ Day with events on campus, but does not currently recognize it as a federal holiday in the academic calendar, and therefore it called for the encouragement of Syracuse University leadership to recognize Veterans’ Day as a federal and bank holiday in Syracuse University’s academic calendar.
       3. Resolution listed the history of “Syracuse University’s commitment to veterans and military students” from 1919 to the present.[[5]](#footnote-5)
    3. The VP of Internal Affairs read the resolution
    4. Votes: 27 yes, 7 no, 4 abstain—resolution Passes.
20. **A Resolution to Reclassify the Graduate Pandemic Committee as an Ad-Hoc Committee[[6]](#footnote-6) – 8:26 PM**
    1. Authored by Daniel Kimmel, Vice President of Internal Affairs
    2. The resolution proposed the name change for the following reasons:
       1. That the Graduate Pandemic Committee was established as a standing committee in 2020 for the purpose of helping graduate students navigate graduate life under pandemic conditions and therefore for the purpose of collecting and disseminating accurate information on COVID-19 and university policy on the pandemic.
       2. That the committee had successfully carried out its duties for two academic years (2020-2021 and 2021-2022) during the height of the pandemic, but currently has no members.
       3. That as a result, the committee might better serve as an ad-hoc committee temporarily staffed as needed by directive of the GSO Senate to provide an infrastructure for a coordinated graduate pandemic response should the need ever again arise.[[7]](#footnote-7)
    3. Vote: 35 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain—resolution Passes.
21. **Committee Report – 8:30 PM**
    1. Climate Action Committee
       1. Report focused on Syracuse University’s STARS rating for recent sustainability efforts. Syracuse University was awarded its second STARS Silver rating, which is 61.49/100.[[8]](#footnote-8)
       2. The Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) is a national framework to provide transparent self-reporting for measuring sustainability performance. It is reviewed annually but reported measures are not additionally assessed by other third party or STARS staff. The categories include: Academics, Engagement, Operations, Planning and Administration, and Innovation and Leadership.
       3. The Climate Action committee found that “the university (Syracuse University) has taken concrete, actionable steps toward reducing its gross carbon emissions while improving its relationships with the more-than-human world. However, there are still glaring issues and significant failings, including important areas the university has decided to not pursue at all.[[9]](#footnote-9)
    2. Report available for every student.
22. **Graduate Employee Issues Committee Report[[10]](#footnote-10) – 8:50 PM**
    1. Focused on the cost of living, fringe benefits, and stipends, and gave an overview of GSO employment advocacy for the past decade. Regarding stipends, the committee reported results of surveys from four years: 2013, 2017, 2019, and 2022. Each of the four surveys shows a pay discrepancy between departments at Syracuse University. The 2013 survey results reported that 59 percent of graduate employees earn less than the living wage, and the 2017 survey results reported that 32.14% earn less than $10,000. The 2019 survey showed a strong statistical difference between Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and other on-campus employment. The 2022 survey showed that nearly all departments are paying below the living wage.
    2. The presentation also discussed the cost of living and housing costs in the city of Syracuse, as well as health insurance subsidies as it relates to graduate employees. In this, the committee argued that “there should be enough to fully subsidize health insurance for the individual (and maybe provide some subsidy for families).” The committee noted that “out of 41 peer institutions, 56 percent provide fully subsidized health insurance to their Graduate Employee population.
    3. Some goals of the committee include understanding where funds are being allocated for health insurance allocations, and addressing stipend increase longevity and labor inequity.[[11]](#footnote-11) Some roadblocks and challenges include the fact that graduate students, the GSO Senate, and the GSO Executive Board are transient.
    4. Concluded at 9:39 PM.
23. **Next meeting is Dec 7, 2022 in Newhouse 3-141**
24. **Remarks for the record**
    1. Give name for hockey game tickets

**Recording Secretary**: Abiodun Adeoye

1. “Steven Bennett”, Syracuse University. [Steven Bennett - Chancellor – Syracuse University](https://chancellor.syr.edu/university-leadership-2/chancellors-council/steven-bennett/). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Gretchen Ritter”, Syracuse University. [Gretchen Ritter - Chancellor – Syracuse University](https://chancellor.syr.edu/university-leadership-2/chancellors-executive-team/gretchen-ritter/). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Jamie Winders”, Syracuse University. [Jamie Winders - Office of Academic Affairs – Syracuse University](https://academicaffairs.syracuse.edu/about/administrative-office/jamie-winders-2/). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “A Resolution to Recognize Veterans Day”. Author(s): Gabriel Uy, APS Business Administration, Army Officer. Sponsor(s): Michael Ammoury (Vice President of External Affairs); Kellin Tasber (University Senator); Mike Headley (MBA/EMPA, Air Force Veteran); Gentry Hill (MBA/EMPA, Navy Veteran); Ellen Sutey (MBA/EMPA, Army Veteran); Nathan Whitham (MBA/EMPA, Army Chaplain); Peyton Jarrell (MBA/EMPA, Army Officer); Di Wu (MBA/EMPA, Army Officer); Theresa Loftin (MBA/EMPA, Army Civilian); Bong Chi (MBA/EMPA, Army Officer); Leslie Tamez (MBA/EMPA, Army NCO); Dominique Gibson (MBA/EMPA, Army Civilian); Eric Timko (MBA/EMPA, Army Civilian); Ayad Al Dakheel (CS/EE); Laurie Coffey (Law); Samuel Bowden Murray (Undergraduate); Jean Marcus Castilla (Undergraduate). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “A Resolution to Recognize Veterans Day”, GSO Senate Resolution 23.02. Page 1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Resolution to Reclassify the Graduate Pandemic Committee as an Ad-Hoc Committee”. Author(s): Daniel J. Kimmel (GSO Vice President of Internal Affairs). Sponsor(s): Vito Iaia (At-Large Senator, Pro Tempore, Committee Founder & Former Chair. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid, page 1-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “Syracuse University”, The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System. Accessed 12/3/2022. [Syracuse University | Scorecard | Institutions | STARS Reports (aashe.org)](https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/syracuse-university-ny/report/2022-01-07/) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Substantial Room for Growth: Review Syracuse University’s Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) Report”, Climate Action Committee, Graduate Student Organization, Syracuse University. November 11, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Graduate Employee Issues Committee Members: CJ Arnell, Guarav Sarraf, Bertie Probyn, Hakki Ozan Karayigit, Dimpy Ghaswala, Karisa Bridgelal, Tyler Logie, Apurva Billuri, Gowtham Behara, Hussain Suwasrawala, Komal Sharma, Durga Naidu, JT Paustian, Sergio Saravia, Riya Kannampuzha, Kellin Tasber, Partha Kachireddy, Michelle Asiedu-Danso. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. On stipend increase longevity, the committee reported that stipends have been advocated for since the inception of the GSO; since 2011 there has been a push to bring the minimum stipend levels up to the living wage; and stipend levels need to increase according to the real Cost of living of Syracuse each year. On labor inequity, the committee reported that in 2017 the GSO addressed the discrepancy between hourly workers (class assistants, instructional associates) and Graduate Assistance. The committee argued that departments use this labor force to address labor shortages or avoid paying the full price of an assistant. They also noted that an investigation was promised, but nothing from it has been made publicly available. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)