Graduate Student Association
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2014

I. Call to order:
Chairman called to order the regular meeting of the Graduate Student Association at 6:09 pm on November 14, 2014 at University of Albany East Campus 110A.

II. Remarks by the Chair: People sometimes feel uncertain about speaking with procedural concerns and feel like they don’t know how and when to speak up. I encourage the students to voice their concern openly and we will acknowledge you. We want everyone to feel that they can contribute and they can speak and will not be ignored.

a. Motion to move all items on the docket 10 minutes later due to late start. Motion seconded and approved.

b. Motion to move the judicial rep report (amend agenda) to old business, seconded and approved.

III. Officer Reports – Can be found online at the GSA website.

   a. President (Caitlin)

   b. Vice President (Kat)

   c. Treasurer (Bob)

      Approval of Treasurer Report – motion to approve budget in the treasurer report, seconded and approved.

   d. Grants Chair (Kim)

   e. Programming Chair (Hanne)

The President's response to an inquiry about the workshops – The spoken word poets can get some notoriety for GSA by bringing in this speakers group. Their package is a 25 person workshop where they help with spoken word poetry. There is a performance at night that will be open door and free. It isn’t locked in right now but we’re looking and in conversation with them. We will push for Friday unless Saturday is the only day they can really offer but we want Friday.
President’s comments on Spring 2015 orientation and Honorarium: We will be having another orientation in the spring for students and it will not be another 3 day one, the budget doesn’t allow for it – look for a spring orientation. For this semester we have something coming up – and honorarium – but not directly from us. Look on listserv on Monday for the honorarium information. We originally wanted to do something in December but we have run out of time with our intense planning for the spring.

f. MCAA Chair (Amani)

IV. Other Reports (6:54)

a. Leader Senator – Can be found online at the GSA website.

The president: we need to focus on the committees of the provost. If you’re contacted please help with the provost deal with the problems we face. We should take a position, as GSA, on issues like childcare. When the President’s forum is established….Go to them!

Statement from floor: I urge the different clubs to sit down with the graduate directors in each department to work with them on these issues.

Leading Senator: We do have people in the councils in the Senate so we are kept up to date. Certain things continue to be a struggle.

Statement from floor: Are senate meetings open to the public/grad students. Is there an open forum? We should take advantage of that.

Leading Senator: usually yes and yes.

The President: Monday 2:45 in assembly hall.

b. University Council Rep

c. UAS Report - not on the docket.

d. Wages and Benefit Report – not on the docket
V. **Old business (7:11)**

a. **Clickers for Voting**

Chair: We did not have enough and it did not work as well as we wanted.

The Vice President: I did some research on the clickers – my opinion is that voting is made easier because the time used to vote was quicker and to tally 2/3s was easier and attendance was easier. Some require software but isn’t too difficult and some require smartphones but we don’t want to go that route. The clickers are $45 apiece for version 2.1 and we currently have the need for 39 – we should buy at least 50 for future expansion. The expense is $2,200.00 – we have the surplus that is why we are entertaining this notion.

**Motion** to approve purchase of the clickers for $2,200.00 plus whatever shipping is. The motion is seconded.

John Stovall: I thank the E-Board for coming forward with the idea and the notion for efficiency and impartiality. I back the intent 100%, however I speak against the motion. We need to question if the amount outweighs the benefits. With only 8 meetings are year with only 2-3 close votes we do not need these clickers for only 10-20 votes per year. Is there not a cheaper way? According to Robert’s Rules we have other ways such as hands, standing, or by roll call alternatively. We can look for a 4th way. Consider your position. I implore you to vote down this motion.

Programming: I understand John’s points. Your math is incorrect. We will not replace year after year – we will use them year after year and look for warranty. The payment will be large this year but will dwindle in the future – we have to be more inclusive for people with disabilities and clickers help people who can’t physically stand. The warranties are only 1 year – but I doubt that we would replace year after year.

**Call to Question** brought from the floor, seconded from the floor, and approved with supermajority.

**Motion** has been made to purchase clickers, seconded, and approved.
b. Judicial Board Rep Report (motion to move from New to Old Business adopted at opening of meeting)

J-Board Representative: The JBoard would like to report on the investigation of the former treasurer and new investigation to former President and VP. Emails show rules were broken, and the President admits to breaking some rules. The President refuses to comply and we are using our authority with no help from the E-Board. The E-board is not complying with our rules and authority. The former treasurer was pressured not to comply by the J-Board as pressured by the President. He has stated with the current handling of the budget by the E-Board without assembly approval. This year the GSA will be expected to deal with $180,000 and there are expected misuse of that money. This investigation is necessary. The former treasurer has stated that the E-Board is misusing money. We hope that this isn’t true but we desire transparency and an audit. We ask the assembly to approve an investigation. If the president is innocent what harm will an investigation do? If she is guilty then we need to take care of this situation, consider the harm to GSA of a large misuse of money by the GSA E-board – we need to fulfill our mission. This is GSA money and we are the stewards of this money and we need to allocate money.

Personal statement by J-Board Representative: The president feels that J-Board is not objective, and I state publically that I have never engaged in a personal attack on the president. I disagree with her in the investigation, but not personally. I want to say that this is not just this J-Board – the last one wanted another investigation but the J-Board did not have sufficient evidence. Finally, we understand that the GSA rules last fall were confusing and not working and that the President was under pressure to come into an unorganized situation – we want a transparent investigation to understand her actions and make better rules. I want there to be accountability on the end the assembly for our officers to be accountable to the governing documents. I hope the investigation will find that things went as well as possible. I think the President does a good job and do not press for impeachment.

Chair: please remember that remarks should not be tailored to specific members, only to the chair due to the emotionality and seriousness of the issue.

J-Board Committee member Gary: I’ve been here for over 4 years and I witnessed the last meltdown. The new E-Board is dealing with a surplus
that was actually a deficit but the warning signs were ignored. I got focused on the rules because of this mess. There are a lot of questions pointed at us about the investigation and we would be happy to explain it and show the evidence. The investigation was started by the President’s request of what went wrong under previously. We did not do this without transparency. We requested evidence and statements and were public about our requests – we requested emails and statements – a large body of evidence we would happy to make public. The fact is that we must look at this with a fair mind of the ruling. The ruling is not a request of impeachment – we do not want to seek this. Rules have been broken which could be grounds for impeachment but we did not make this investigation for the purpose of impeachment. If a rule is broken that leads to unconstitutionality we need to investigation in light of the resignation of the treasurer which is similar to the last meltdown. The resigned individual came forward with evidence and statements. The assembly cannot afford to ignore and we need to ensure a system of checks and balances and they need to be followed.

Committee member Brad: I’m new and don’t know much of the history of this debate. I apologize for the tone of the ruling and it came across as harsher than it was meant. I want to talk about big-picture things. The president objects to our jurisprudence, but we have precedence. The governing documents allow for inherent judicial review and was not explicit. We hold the inherent right within the governing documents for an independent judiciary to investigation. Our legitimacy is being questioned and history backs us up for our legitimacy. History stands on our side as a judicial review. It is important that the legitimacy of the J-Board is not threatened or questioned. We have the evidence and we are willing to show them publically.

The Treasurer: This is out of control. I think we are in a personal conflict and there is not a good way to get around it.

Motion – The Assembly shall create an ad-hoc committee of at least three members not of the Judicial and Executive Board to look into the conduct of all parties involved in the investigation and report of October 10, 2014. (----- --- vs. GSA). The committee shall interview all parties and collect relevant documents and report back to the assembly at the next GSA meeting in December. This committee shall have no additional independent authority but will make recommendations to the assembly, subject to assembly vote, regarding the conduct of all individuals involved in the investigation as well as the recommendation on how to move this matter to conclusion. Bylaws,
Article VII, Section 7. The motion was seconded by the J-Board Representative.

**Discussion was called.**

The President: the J-Board has misrepresented my reasons for noncompliance. I have clearly stated that the unconstitutionality is present of their ruling and they are not being impartial – they have misrepresented me at assembly meetings, and are directly challenging and being inappropriate in meetings. I will submit to an investigation of the assembly, not to those who cannot act impartial.

Programming: There are now two cases that need to be distinguished.

Chair: I Support the motion made by the Treasurer.

Assemblywoman Jessica – I strongly encourage and agree with the ad-hoc committee idea motion from the Treasurer. We shouldn’t use the term investigation because there is a question of unconstitutionality. Shut down the nonsense that is going on. I stand with the President because this is a dangerous precedent in investigating people from the past and the documents do not support the investigation.

Call to question brought to the floor by Assemblyman Stovall, seconded, and approved with supermajority.

Motion to approve the creation of an ad-hoc committee, already seconded, was approved.

The Vice President: Do we form this right now?

Chair: We should do it now.

Programming: Is this to cover the financial review in addition to the other investigation?

Chair: Only to the investigation.

Treasurer: all parties in the report and the investigation into the former VP but not any further

Motion made by the Treasurer to appoint Assemblyman John Stovall as chairman of the ad-hoc committee, seconded by Programming.

Chair: Stovall will be in charge of filling and doing the committee.
Programming: I fully back John Stovall as the chair.

**Motion** to appoint Assemblyman Stovall to chair the committee having been already seconded, is unanimously approved.

J-Board Committee member Gary: The committee will put a stay on the ruling until the committee makes their own ruling.

Chair: Let’s not make statements of legitimacy.

Question from the floor: Do we have to form the committee in any more depth at this moment?

Chair: We have done our job by appointing the chair of the committee – it is now their duty to appoint people into positions on the committee. The committee does not need to be congealed at this time.

Statement from floor: We need transparency to provide the role and names of the committee members and the methods.

**Motion** made from the floor to require the above information be disseminated by Chairman Stovall as he finds appropriate, seconded by the Treasurer.

Question form floor: Will listserv show this?

Chair: Stovall’s efforts will not be hindered by GSA.

J-Board committee member Gary: Consider whether or not if the members might be unduly influenced, the committee should be able to function anonymously.

Sociology Assembly Rep – I request first year members to be included on the ad-hoc committee because they will be most impartial.

MCAA – I think we need to go public with this information. I understand the other points, but we need to be transparent – the chair of the ad-hoc committee should be required to disseminate information.

Call to question is brought from the floor and seconded and is approved by supermajority. Assemblyman Stovall abstained from vote.

**Motion** to require information dissemination having already been seconded is approved. Assemblyman Stovall abstained from vote.
Motion brought to the floor by Assemblywoman Jessica to take the current ruling in question off the website. I also motion that at least one first year RGSO representative be placed on the ad hoc committee. (Seconded by VP). The motion read: Be it resolved that the current J-Board ruling in question for the ad hoc committee will be removed from the website.

Lead Senator: We should divide the motion into two.

Call to question was brought to the floor and seconded and fails to meet the supermajority needed to end discussion.

J-Board Committee member Gary: It should remain on the website for transparency – it would be like pulling the wool over the constituents’ eyes. The personal attack against the J-Board by the president should also be removed. I move to amend that we strike the president’s statement be removed.

Motion to amend the original motion by Assemblywomen Jessica has been seconded and will now read: The section of the president’s report responding to the J-Board ruling will also be removed from the website in addition to the aforementioned motion.

J-Board Committee member Brad: We should leave it up there for the sake of transparency

The President: I haven’t been given an opportunity to defend myself against these allegations. I have been stuck – and I support the motion to take this off the website because it is currently not impartial.

Secondary Motion brought to the floor by Assemblyman Stovall to extend time to 8:30 was seconded and approved. Time is now extended. Currently, time is 8:10pm.

Call to Question brought forth from the floor, is seconded, and is approved.

Amended motion (look above) having already been seconded is moved to a vote and is approved.

Motion brought to the floor by the Programming Chair: At least one member must be a 1st year member that is not John Stovall/Assemblyman Stovall: Please email me if you’re interested.
Call to Question brought to the floor by MCAA chair, seconded, and approved.

Motion to have a first year student not including Chairman Stovall, having already been seconded, is approved.

Motion, a new motion is brought to the floor by the Treasurer: I move that the assembly appoint Assemblywoman CJ Werking as the acting Chair of the Rules Committee, and that the committee be formed and begin exercising its remit immediately. GSA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 6. The motion is seconded.

Call to Question brought by the Chair – immediately move to a vote.

Motion to appoint Assemblywoman CJ Werking is approved.

VI. New business (8:24)
   a. The Treasurer’s appointment

   Motion brought to the floor that requires the election committee to hold a special election. The motion is seconded.

   Call to Question brought to the floor by the Chair – immediately move to vote.

   Motion on the special election is approved.

   b. Vice President – The Allocation of additional funds to RGSOs by 10,000 to the spring

   Motion has been made to allocate $10,000.00 to the Spring Semester, and is seconded

   Call to Question brought to the floor by the Chair – immediately move to vote.

   Motion on allocation is approved.

VII. Open Forum

   Motion to approve October minutes seconded, and approved unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

   Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:30.

   Minutes submitted by: Eric Martell