May 7th, 2021 Assembly Meeting Officer Reports

President: Florencia Silveira

Kevin Williams (Dean of the Graduate School) attended the April GSA Executive Board meeting to discuss fees and to answer other questions we may have. He is sympathetic to the cause of abolishing fees, but his stance is that fees will not be going away any time soon.

Following up with Mike Christakis regarding the changing of labels for the two fees discussed (currently SEVIS fee and GSEU Comprehensive Fee). Kevin Williams is the point person for Versatile PhD – that should be moving forward during the summer.

Senate meetings are fun; everyone should attend! The University Life Committee brought up the student fees resolution (the GSA resolution) at the University Senate Executive Committee on April 28th.

The Bylaws revisions committee met to discuss already-made revisions and to provide another round of commentary. The Bylaws will not be finalized by the end of the academic year; as such, they will be presented at the September GSA Assembly meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding whether or not current undergraduate students who will be joining a graduate program in the fall are able to run for positions on the GSA Executive Board. The judicial board perspective is that they cannot because they are not GSA members at the time of the election; the elections committee had decided to allow them to run for election based on precedent. The GSA holds the final decision on this matter.

The Policy Advisory Committee is focusing on drafting policy to set forth the university’s principles regarding open access dissemination of scholarship by university authors and to set forth the basic principles of using the university email account for all university communications conducted via email.

The Forward Together Task Force (COVID management, essentially) continues to meet weekly; a fun figure to share: 900 tests were administered on campus in a single day, and 0 came back as positive! The meetings are now more concerned with managing graduation. The University is planning on having in-person commencement. Guidelines for this will be distributed as decisions are finalized.

Recused myself from the SPAC committee due to a conflict of interest in regards to STAR proposal submissions; discussed a replacement with the SPAC organizer, who suggested not sending a replacement for the month since they have enough reviewers for the applications.
SUNY Student Assembly negotiated a three-year tuition freeze for all SUNY University campuses (not community colleges). The Spring SUNY SA Business meeting was 9 hours long (with part of the meeting being postponed!!). Updates: SUNY SA presidential focus on equity across campuses (think access to internet across NY state), giving voice to marginalized and minority students through leadership and faculty training, communication with state representatives, and access to food pantries; SUNY SA proposed a budget to the state legislature to charge a SUNY activity fee of less than $2.00 per student in order to fund SUNY SA programming, advocacy, and leadership. The submitted budget can be found here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oNUlZAWWW1nfq90R7FgZd9YRA2TzN_eZ/view?usp=sharing.

SUNY SA elections update: Bradley Hershenson won the election 44 to 22 for President (he was re-elected). Brad will continue to represent SUNY students to administration and state representatives. Olu won the VP election after a run-off against Gabby Lerner. There was a single candidate for Treasurer and a single candidate for Secretary. Elections for the Executive Committee were completed, but elections for representatives were postponed until May since the meeting had already gone too long. Representatives are elected by quorums formed by institution-specific representatives (community college quorum, PhD granting universities quorum, etc.).

Vice President: Bria Taylor

No report received.

Treasurer: Brennan Stutsrim

Executive Summary:
Payroll through 4/14/2021 has been documented. The incorporation process of The University at Albany Graduate Student Association, Inc. is still awaiting consent from the NYS Education Department. GSA’s legal counsel has continued to contact the NYS Education Department in an attempt to expedite the process, but has been told the consent will not come quickly. As a result, the GSA has not been able to secure NYS Unemployment Insurance as a corporation, causing a delay in the quarter 1 tax filings. Under advice of legal counsel, the GSA applied for NYS Unemployment Insurance as an unincorporated association on 4/26/21. This will allow the GSA to file the quarter 1 taxes, but GSA may be fined due to the late submission. Lastly, the GSA will not retain its status as a tax exemption association until the consent for incorporation has been given, as the application process for tax exemption cannot be completed until that time.

The GSA has opened a new bank account at SEFCU, so that the GSA budget will no longer be kept in UAS’s accounting system. The transfer of money has started with $100,000 being moved
to the SEFCU account on 3/31/21. The transfer of the remaining GSA monies to the SEFCU account will be completed once GSA is fully incorporated.

The incoming Treasurer has started training for the position on 4/30/21.

**Liaising:**
- Emails with UAS and Student Activities
- Emails with RGSO leaders about purchase requests, third party donations and upcoming events

**Meetings:**
- Met with representatives from University Auxiliary Services and Student Activities about incorporation process
- Met with Student Activities and Student Organization Resource Center to discuss student refunds and protocol for transferring responsibilities to new Treasurer.
- Met with Eboard to discuss current business of the GSA
- Met with GSA President and incoming Treasurer to design FY2021-2022 budget proposals

**Financial Activity:**
- FY2020-2021 total income is expected to be $224,600
- FY2020-2021 income as of 16 April 2021 is $169,953.37
- FY2020-2021 total expenses as of 28 April 2021 is $57,715.73
- GSA Remaining balance as of 16 April 2021 is $171,783.51
- GSA balance is currently split between $100,000 in SEFCU and 71,783.51 in UAS account
Equity and Inclusion Chair: Shakera Tems

No report received.

Grants Chair: Christina Scharmer

Executive Summary: The Grants Chair is processing paperwork from award recipients for the Spring 2021 funding period. Additionally, the Grants Chair submitted purchase requests to distribute reimbursement checks for award recipients. The Grants Chair continues to work is with
the GSA treasurer to provide updates for award recipients who have not yet received their reimbursement checks. The Grants Chair also continues to communicate with grant applicants and reviewers via email.

**Oversight:**
- Tracking of grants funding line
- Creation, contact, and oversight of grants committee

**Meetings:**
- Grants Chair is available via appointment for virtual Zoom consultations. Weekly office hours to be determined.

**Information Management**
- All grants-information documents maintained on the GSA share page
- All grants-tracking updated in Financial Budget worksheet created by GSA Treasurer
- List of committee members maintained on GSA share page

**Financial Activity**
- All purchase requests for Spring 2021 award period have been submitted for reimbursement by the Grants Chair
- Grants chair working to reconcile reimbursement for grant recipients from Fall and Spring 2020 funding periods.

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**Programming Chair: Dee Chin-Carty**

No report received.

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**University Council Representative: Jordan McAdam**

The next University Council meeting is on May 7.

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**Lead Senator: Emily Pacer**

University Senate Meeting April 21st- not much information pertaining to graduate students. For those who are graduating and wish to participate in any of the graduation ceremonies, keep checking your emails or visit https://www.albany.edu/commencement for more information. For
those students continuing next year, check your emails regarding information for how our transition back to campus will be conducted from Provost Kim. The last University Senate meeting of the year has been rescheduled for May 12th.

For those individuals serving on Senate Committees and Councils, please check your emails: I will be reaching out to see how many of you are graduating or do not wish to continue to serve. Please respond ASAP as it is crucial to have an organized list of open positions that will need to be filled. For those interested in serving on a Senate Committee or Council: information will be sent out early next academic year calling for applications and/or email gsalead@albany.edu.

Judicial Board Chair: Anwesha Sarkar

No complaints were received by the Judicial Board as of April 28, 2021.

UAS: Dee Chin-Carty

No report received.

Wages and Benefits: Andrew Gill

The committee finished a draft of its Living Wage/Stipend Pre-Report. We've done some research into what constitutes a living stipend/wage, and that research is included in the pre-report. However, we didn't feel comfortable finalizing the report because more work needs to be done determining the cost of living for UAlbany graduate students. The committee has included its suggestions for how a survey could be carried out in the future to gather this information, which will then allow for making more informed recommendations to the university regarding living stipends and wages.

We also would like an update on the issue regarding non-renewal of TA/GA contracts as discussed at the last Assembly meeting.