I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm.

II. WELCOME

President Bonistall reminded attendees to take an agenda and sign in.

The format of the agenda has changed in order to contain a greater quantity of information and to help streamline the flow of the meeting.

President Bonistall thanked the Events Committee and Co-chairs Brittany Scott and Mikahila Bloomfield for their hard work making the PhD Movie event and the Grad Expo a success. There were more than 350 tickets were sold for the movie and nearly $900 was donated to the United Way.

The Golden Key International Honour Society is conducting a membership drive, and anyone interested in joining can contact President Bonistall for more information.

In response to the wishes of the GSS expressed at last month’s meeting, a Town Hall event with Vice Provost Riordan is being planned. Several graduate students currently sit on a committee to review documents coming out of the Office of International Student Services to ensure that the graduate student perspective is heard. Following this, the town hall meeting will be held to discuss support and programming for international graduate students.

President Bonistall concluded her opening remarks by stating that she wants members to be happy and fulfilled in their respective roles in the Graduate Student Senate, and that she would like to hear how she can help members enjoy their experience more.

III. EXTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Newark City Council - Senator Adams

Senator Adams introduced the Newark City Council Vice President, Jerry Clifton.

Mr. Clifton introduced himself, stating that he represents the second council district, which encompasses much of the University of Delaware, and has served on the Council for the past fifteen years. He was interested to hear any graduate student concerns about living in Newark.

Senator Walkons asked what his responsibilities are. Mr. Clifton responded that as Vice Mayor he acts on the Mayor’s behalf in his absence. He emphasized that each Councilmember and the Mayor each have one vote on the Council.
Senator Pons asked why the Town and Gown Committee was dissolved. Mr. Clifton responded that primary factors included lack of attendance and the fact that many issues brought before the committee needed to be handled by other departments. Even so, the Council can still form an ad hoc committee to resolve a particular issue. He emphasized that the relationship between the city government and the university is very strong.

Mr. David Murrows from the Undergraduate Student Government asked who Mr. Clifton reached out to in that organization in the past. Mr. Clifton responded that last year’s executive board was at President Harker’s Tailgate Party, and he has previously spoken before the SGA.

Mr. Clifton stated that the City has a budget of about $40 million, roughly $4.5 million of which come from property taxes. The Council will be examining property taxes as part of the next few years’ budgets, with the first discussion of the new budget on Monday, November 28. He personally feels that the City has not done enough internally to streamline and manage the City’s finances, and encouraged students to voice their opinions.

**Faculty Senate - Senators Portnoi and Pons**

Some faculty do not want their class material posted by students on commercial websites because a student’s own personal notes would also be subject to the instructor’s copyright per the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Faculty need more instructions on how to address this.

Senators voted to accept American Sign Language as qualified for admission under a foreign language. It would not, however, be offered as a foreign language here.

The Faculty Senate voted to propose not having regularly scheduled final exams on Saturdays for Fall and Spring Semesters. Some faculty do want to maintain the ability to schedule those exams on Saturdays if needed; they did not come to consensus on the wording of supporting argument for banning regular scheduling.

Senator Pons announced that he and Senator Portnoi have an opportunity to present items of relevance from the graduate student population to the Faculty Senate. He asked that issues be emailed to him by November 30.

**Diversity and Equity Commission**

President Bonistall announced that the Diversity and Equity Commission agreed upon its goals and agenda for the year, which include a statement of diversity, retention of students of color, recruitment and retention of faculty/staff of color, cross-cultural dialogue, and UD’s progress on diversity initiatives and plans for next year. The committee engaged in a statement of diversity exercise, which she presented took to the Diversity Committee for follow up.

**IV. INTERNAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Vice President Ralston reiterated thanks to the Vice Mayor for attending, and stated that Senators can email the Executive Committee with any other comments or concerns.
Communications Committee - Senator Dahl

In the past, the Communications Chair has collected and distributed information relevant to graduate students. Expanding on this mission, Senator Dahl also offered services relating to posters/digital advertising/communication for graduate student events.

Events Committee - Senators Scott and Bloomfield

Vice President Ralston reiterated that the PhD movie was screened because the Graduate Student Senate received feedback from grad students that they wanted to see it. The PhD movie was a complete success. The night went very smoothly due to the hard work and dedication of Events Committee members that were in attendance as well as President Bonistall, Vice President Ralston, Assistant Provost Martin and Vice Provost Riordan.

Vice President Ralston also thanked the volunteers who helped make the Grad Expo a success.

The committee is now focusing its attention on the Grad Forum in the spring.

Organization Committee - President Bonistall

President Bonistall thanked all the Senator who filled out the Organization Committee's survey, the results of which were discussed during New Business.

The Organization Committee has decided to meet weekly due to the amount of work they have to do. Meetings are held Wednesday nights at 5:30pm in Trabant. Email President Bonistall if you want to be added to the meeting email list.

Social Committee - Senator Frederick and Officer Markland

There will be a Happy Hour following this meeting from 7:15 to 9:00 pm at Caffe Gelato on Main Street. There will be lots of great food and drink specials.

There will be an Ice Skating Social on December 2 from 8:00 to 10:00 pm. The Social Committee will also be having a canned food drive at this event for the Food Bank of Delaware.

The committee is also planning a January Happy hour, bowling night during the Winter Break, and a Super Bowl Party on February 5.

The next meeting is on December 5 at 12:30 pm at Brew Ha Ha.

V. STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEES

Vice President Richards asked everyone to take a moment to introduce themselves to someone new in the room.

Diversity Committee - Senators Hefner and Active Member Ifill

Senator Hefner introduced Andre Ifill as new co-chair for the Diversity Committee.
The Diversity Committee provided input to President Bonistall regarding the creation of a Diversity Statement by the University’s Diversity and Equity Commission.

The committee will be moving forward with the idea to have representatives of Graduate Student Organizations on campus attend meetings and work collaboratively in partnership with the Diversity Committee. They plan to discuss their findings from informal interviews with professors about their experiences with diversity issues relating to graduate student life/education at UD.

The next meetings are on November 11 and December 2, both at 2:00pm in 205 Trabant.

**Student Life Committee - Senator Jain**

The Student Life Committee still needs a co-chair, since the committee would like to expand. If anyone is interested in co-chairing, please Senator Jain.

Senator Jain will be sending out a survey to assess mentorship programs in academic departments and graduate programs. He also wants to include Graduate Student Organizations in the survey.

The committee wants to continue to work on the Graduate Student Investigative Fee committee report, and examine how such funds could be administered in the future.

The next meeting is on November 11 from 12 noon to 1:00 pm in Trabant.

Vice President Richards encouraged Senators to reach out to their constituents to see if there is anyone passionate about the Graduate Student Fee Issue that can help the committee with that task.

**Sustainability Committee - Senators Thomson and Ardini**

Over 500 trees have been surveyed on campus as part of the tree canopy survey. Since leaves have fallen, no more work can be done on the study until the spring. The report will be written then and there will be discussion once it has been submitted.

The Sustainability Committee is interested in placing stickers on paper towel dispensers in restrooms throughout campus to encourage students to limit paper towel use. They committee is waiting to hear from facilities regarding how many paper towel dispensers exist on campus.

U Don’t Need It is a service opportunity where items are collected during Spring move-out that would otherwise be thrown away. The committee is interested in setting up tents/pods for students to donate items when they move out. They are soliciting interest from facilities, and food donations stations being planned separately. They still need to identify local charities to work with, costs of materials, and student volunteers.

The committee wants to put stickers on fume hoods as well since variable-flow fume hoods use significantly less energy when the sash is closed. There are an estimated 150 variable-flow fume hoods on campus. The print shop will be contacted for stickers. The committee is looking into this initiative on the Lewes campus as well.

The committee will be conducting a building efficiency study of temperature levels in buildings around campus. The questions still have been drafted and reviewed by committee.

The next meeting is on December 6 at 11:00 am in Trabant.
VI. OLD BUSINESS

President Bonistall complemented committees on all of their work in the past month.

Approval of October Minutes

Senator Pons motioned and it was seconded to approve the minutes from the October meeting of the Graduate Student Senate. The motion passed.

Approval of 2011-2012 GSS Handbook

This document was presented at the last meeting, and it was tabled in order to give Senators more time to review it. Senator Pearson moved and it was seconded to approve the 2011-2012 GSS Handbook. The motion passed.

Introduction of SB-1112-XX

The Organization Committee rescinded the bill it introduced last month.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Information Dissemination

President Bonistall clarified that on the morning following the meeting, an email will go out to every graduate student encouraging them to get involved in GSS committees and informing them about who their academic program representative is (or whether their program is unrepresented). The minutes of the November meeting will be attached to this email as well. She reminded Senators to follow up with their constituents after the email goes out.

Officer Markland reminded Senators to carbon copy (CC) the Graduate Student Senate email (ud.graduatetestudentssenate@gmail.com) when they communicate with constituents.

Senator Jain asked whether the minutes can be distributed before they are approved. President Bonistall replied in the affirmative, but noted that they will not be posted on the website until they are approved.

Senator Thompson asked when Action Items will be coming out, since they are in the Handbook. President Bonistall replied that there will be a highlight reel of the minutes instead.

December & January Meetings

Since there may be discussion at the December meeting about Constitutional changes, President Bonistall asked for discussion about whether to hold a meeting in January, and how to can improve attendance at the December meeting since the meeting currently falls on Reading Day.

Senator Norbutus stated that she preferred having the meeting a week earlier than scheduled.
The consensus was that most Senators are on campus during January.

**Agendas**

The Executive Committee would like to send the meeting agendas out in advance in order to help streamline the flow of the meeting. Committee reports and announcements should be submitted to Secretary Castillo by noon the Monday before the meeting; the agenda will come out on Tuesday.

**Email Subject Lines**

Senator Jain asked that Senators who use the Senators-only email distribution list utilize the subject line of the email to specify the audience (e.g. members of a particular committee).

Senator Barclay asked if there are many of those emails coming around. Officer Markland responded that she had just added her to the list; she can add anyone else who is not getting the emails.

President Bonistall liked the idea of sending reminder emails about committee meetings.

Senator Pons noted that the Senator list on the website is out of date. President Bonistall replied that it is a concern shared by the Executive Committee, and that they are working to correct the problem.

Senator Thomson asked for clarification as to what key words to use in these email subject lines. Vice President Richards suggested “GSS - (name of committee)” as appropriate, or “GSS - general” for general interest items.

**Organization Committee Presentation - Senator Ayers and Active Member Caro**

On behalf of the Organization Committee, Senator Ayers and Active Member Caro presented a summary the feedback the committee received on its survey.

Where is the Graduate Student Senate going? The consensus was that the Graduate Student Senate should have more presence and influence on campus, but there were concerns about the logistics of the organization growing too large. Senator Ayers emphasized that the organization first needs to align its practices with its constitution in order to legitimize its presence on campus.

The role of Graduate Student Organizations. The consensus was that members want Graduate Student Organizations to be more involved, either as voting members or representatives, or as part of their own committee.

Should all graduate students vote in executive officer elections? The consensus was no, primarily because of logistical concerns and not because there was fundamental disagreement with the practice. Senator Ayers emphasized that the current internal elections structure is healthiest for the organization and is helping to move it forward.

How should Senators be elected? The feedback was mixed: either election practices should be standardized, or each academic plan should decide on its own how to elect its Senator. Active Member Caro noted that the Senate should be representative of the entire graduate population. A compromise was suggested that the executive committee is elected internally (by Senators)
whereas Senators elections would be standardized.

How would a graduate student fee be handled? Senator Ayers noted first that the discussion on this issue is only preparatory, and not indicative that such a fee is forthcoming. The consensus is that if there is a fee, the Graduate Student Senate should have a voice as to how it is used. To do this, the organization would need a Vice President of Finance or a committee to deal with the issue.

Does the Graduate Student Senate adequately represent the students? The consensus was “yes”, but it can do better by involving more people and improving communicating.

Roles of Active Members and Senators. The consensus was that the roles of Senators and Active Members needed to be clarified. All graduate students should be welcome to participate in and speak at Graduate Student Senate meetings and committee activities. Active Members should be allowed to chair or co-chair committees, but they should be accountable in such roles on par with Senators. The right to vote should be exclusive to Senators. Senator Ayers noted that this is reflective of what we do now, but that technically it reflects a government, rather than a senate. Updating the constitution allows the Graduate Student Senate not to devalue or dilute the role and importance of a senator; constitutional changes just mean improving participation, legitimacy, inclusion and the ability to represent the graduate student body.

Rate of constitutional change. The consensus was that changes need to be approved gradually, as gradual change will help everyone understand what changes are being made. The Graduate Student Senate needs Bylaws, and it needs to update the constitution to reflect member feedback.

Senator Ayers and Active Member Caro thanked Senators for their feedback on the survey.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Senator Orozco raised a concern about latin honors being available to undergraduates, but not to graduate students. Senator Norbutus noted that graduate students are not on the Deans List. Senator Jain explained that graduate students are required to maintain a higher GPA, and that graduate school is more about research than grades. Vice Provost Riordan reminded everyone that Golden Key is an opportunity for graduate student recognition.

Senator Norbutus announced that on Monday, November 14 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm there will be an informational meeting about the Delaware Public Humanities Institute.

Senator Adams asked why many streets near campus are permit parking only, when they appear to be empty every evening and the houses have long driveways. Vice Mayor Clifton responded that the current regulations are a product of past behavior where students would park their cars on the streets for days at a time. Senator Adams suggested opening the streets for daytime parking and restricting parking at night as a matter of student convenience. Vice Mayor Clifton asked Senator Adams to bring the idea to the City Council.

President Bonistall received an email from a student who is concerned about parking: she paid for a Gold parking permit, but often there is very limited availability of Gold parking spots. Senator Jain sat on the Parking Committee last year, and noted that there is a new person in charge of parking at the university. He also noted that some Gold lots are very popular, but there are usually other Gold lots nearby that are not filled. Senator Pearson asked Senator Jain to bring up the issue of better signage to the committee, should it form again. Senator Thomson further
recommended an option for a pass valid only on nights and weekends. Senator Jain said that he had campaigned for availability of Blue passes for graduate students. Senator Orozco stated that a Red pass allows holders to parking on evenings and weekends. Senator Racco asked why the Library lot is not available to Gold passes during the day when it is typically empty. Senator Jain did not know; he stated that in many of these cases, people take unfair advantage of lots that do not have controlled access. Senator Norbutus noted that many classes start at 5:00, and that it would be helpful for the evening passes to be valid starting around 4:30. Senator Jain noted that he raised concerns that graduate students are not paid much and that they have to be on campus, so they should either have discounted passes or more accommodating parking options.

President Bonistall asked if there is a desire to invite a representative from Parking Services to the next meeting. There was consensus in the affirmative.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Senator Jain motioned and it was seconded to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Castillo
GSS Secretary