

**UConn SSW Graduate Student Organization**  
**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, October 8, 2019**  
**1:30 to 3:00 p.m.**  
**HTB room 216**

**Members Present:**

Travis Tanuis—International Center for Social Work Student Representative  
Meg Wolfe—International Center for Social Work Student Representative  
Gabrielle Conrad-Amlicke—SFEJ Co-Chair (left at 2:56)  
Alberto Cifuentes, Junior—DSO Chair  
Jessie Black—POPR Chair (left at 2:59)  
Amani Shirley—SAMI Chair (left at 2:59)  
Tae Ward—PRIDE Co-Chair  
Jasmine Mendez—OBSWS Co-Chair (arrived at 1:43)  
Chrystal Sparks—IGFP Co-Chair  
Sequoya Patterson—CO Co-Chair (arrived at 2:24)  
Amanda Carrington—OBSWS Co-Chair  
Megan Krementowski—GSO Co-Chair  
Kelly Ha—IGFP Co-Chair and PEERS Co-Chair  
Nina Rodriguez—JUST Community Chair  
Jewell Jones—ERC Student Representative  
Kayla Perkins—GSO Secretary  
Lynne Alexander—ERC Student Representative  
Dana Kras—CO Co-Chair  
Xholina Nano—PEERS Co-Chair  
Sarah Dottor—GSO Treasurer and PRIDE Co-Chair  
Victoria Szantyr—LASO Chair  
Natalie O'Connor—OSAS Program Coordinator (left at 2:46)  
Krystina Jackson—GSO Co-Chair  
Milagros Marrero-Johnson—GSO Advisor (left at 2:46)

- I. Meeting called to order at 1:41
- II. Updates/ Announcements
  - a. Co-Chairs opened the floor for questions from leaders about any logistical processes that are unclear
    - i. Jessie asked the treasurer if leaders are bound to the budget
      - 1. Sarah replied that the budget is a rough guide to outline how funds will be used and that groups have flexibility to change things
    - ii. Alberto asked where leaders can find a list of approved vendors
      - 1. Milagros discussed there is no list accessible to students, but Iris in the finance office has access to them and is the person to ask

- b. Co-Chairs presented the group with the current bylaws drafted at the last steering meeting and asked for any additions
  - i. Current bylaws:
    - 1. Be respectful
    - 2. Don't talk over people
    - 3. Disagree respectfully
    - 4. Be conscious of space you take up
    - 5. Respectful phone use
    - 6. Use trigger warnings
    - 7. Assume good faith
    - 8. Respect confidentiality
  - ii. Group is satisfied with current document
- c. Co-chairs discussed meeting accessibility and Groupme communication
  - i. Megan shared that we will get information about calling into the meeting soon
  - ii. Krystina reminded leaders to use the calendar in the Groupme so everyone's events are in one place
  - iii. Jessie suggested a cohort Facebook page for 2020 graduates
    - 1. Megan also suggested one for 2021 graduates
      - a. Travis suggested making a general alumni page
        - i. Milagros indicated groups typically have pages for each graduate cohort
- d. Voting
  - i. Approval of Students for Environmental Justice (SFEJ)
    - 1. Krystina requested a motion
    - 2. Jessie made a motion, Jasmine seconded the motion  
18 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed
  - ii. Approval of Providing Education, Empowerment, Resources, and Support (PEERS)
    - 1. Megan requested a motion
    - 2. Jasmine made a motion, Jewell seconded the motion  
19 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed

### III. Treasurer Report

- a. Approval of Voucher Request Report & Budgets
  - i. Sarah requested a motion to approve the voucher request report
  - ii. Jessie made a motion, Dana seconded the motion  
20 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed
  - iii. Sarah requested a motion to approve the budgets for IGFP Concentration, SAMI, PEERS, POPR Concentration, CORG Concentration, LASO, OBSWS, PRIDE, and DSO
  - iv. Jasmine made a motion, Lynne seconded the motion  
20 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed
- b. Approval of September steering committee meeting minutes
  - i. Sarah requested a motion

- ii. Jessie made a motion, Amanda seconded the motion  
20 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed

#### IV. Updates

##### a. Co-chairs

##### i. BH365

1. Co-Chairs announced BH365 kickoff event with a tentative date of November 7 in the evening. Speaker will be Ericka Hart.
  - a. Krystina shared a possible alternative date for the event on Friday, November 8 in the time between field seminars
  - b. Co-Chairs requested feedback on which day would be better
    - I. Dana discussed that the Friday time would interfere with CO advising
    - II. Krystina mentioned that the Law School is having another event with a black speaker Thursday evening and we may not want to do our event on the same night
    - III. Jewell asked how are we promoting this event and other BH365 initiatives
      1. Krystina discussed we will be sharing a BH365 video featuring Black students from SSW, as well as promotional fliers
    - IV. Jewell asked if we will be inviting other campuses to this event
      1. Krystina discussed that we are receiving some funding from Storrs so the event will be advertised there, as well as on the UConn Hartford campus generally. The main goal is to engage SSW.
    - V. T-shirt design is forthcoming and shirts will be free

##### ii. Social Media

1. Megan requested 4 volunteers for upcoming social media spotlights
  - a. Amanda, Amani, Travis, and Jessie volunteered to be featured
2. Megan requested any non-GSO students to be featured
  - a. Dana suggested reaching out to recent alumni
    - I. Travis discussed he has a connection to a graduate of the doctoral program
3. Megan asked for any additional social media suggestions
  - a. Dana asked if interest groups can send fliers to be posted
    - I. Megan responded in the affirmative

- b. Jessie commented that she believes current social media is great
- iii. Community action
  - 1. Co-Chairs asked for feedback from those who attended the CT Climate Strike
    - a. Jessie discussed that many of those involved in the planning of the event were White, so although it is important to support youth activism, she would have liked to see more inclusivity
    - b. Travis discussed a lack of clarity in some of the messaging at the event and suggested that social workers could play a role in clarifying this for future events
      - I. Megan agreed and discussed that attending the event was a good learning experience for planning our own events
    - c. Gabbi discussed feeling that the agenda was a bit confusing, and it was unclear what groups were being represented and what message they were hoping to convey. She raised the question of how we as adults can get involved in youth movements to provide some direction without taking over their mission
      - I. Jewell asked if we have a contact so that GSO can be involved in future activism events
        - 1. Gabi discussed that she had some contact with leadership but it was not clear who was ultimately in charge
  - 2. Volunteer opportunities
    - a. Co-Chairs discussed a Fellowship opportunity that was emailed through the listserv. If any leaders are interested in the position, they are invited to follow up with Co-Chairs
    - b. Co-Chairs discussed that they were approached to participate in a DCF New Britain Office Toy Drive this holiday season. They opened the floor for discussion of whether leaders are interested
      - I. Jewell asked if there is a similar initiative in Hartford
      - II. Krystina stated that we were contacted about the New Britain event but will follow up to see what may be happening in Hartford
      - III. Jewell expressed interest in participating in the New Britain event if we can also participate similarly in Hartford, reflecting GSO's mission to be more involved in the Hartford community

- c. Sequoya presented an opportunity from the Sacred Heart School of Social work
      - I. Color Me Marigold is an initiative to promote collective identity for Muslim and South Asian communities. They have a speaker in mind and are looking for collaboration
    - d. Jessie mentioned a call to donate candy for Hartford kids to trick-or-treat at Dunkin Donuts Park this Halloween
    - e. Co-Chairs offered to write up these opportunities and send them to leaders
  - iv. Constitution update
    - 1. Voting is coming up
      - a. Megan presented plans to hold coffee breaks in SSW to encourage individuals to vote and having GSO members mention the election in classes
        - I. Co-chairs will follow up with dates when they are finalized
        - II. Alberto asked what the threshold is to pass
          - 1. Krystina shared that they have not received an answer but will keep leaders posted
        - III. Travis suggested handing out a QR code linked to the voting site
- b. Interest Groups
  - i. OBSWS
    - 1. Jasmine presented a free anti-racism training being held on October 12, sponsored by City of Hartford Court of Common Council
      - a. Vicki mentioned the link for registration on the flier does not work and to email [hartfordetc@gmail.com](mailto:hartfordetc@gmail.com) to register for event
    - 2. OBSWS has been meeting twice a month and finalizing plans for the year
    - 3. Amanda shared plans for a community service event at the end of the academic year as well as a Kwanzaa event at the end of this semester
      - a. The Kwanzaa event will be a collaboration with other Black student groups at the Law School and Medical School, as well as other nearby schools of social work
  - ii. PRIDE
    - 1. Sarah shared they have had 2 meetings, only 1 member attended and that person is already part of GSO but they are still advertising and trying to get more members

2. Sarah indicated that PRIDE will act as more of a change agent if membership continues to be down
- iii. SAMI
  1. Amani shared they have had 1 meeting and 1 person came who offered a connection to another similar student group
  2. Amani is looking for a Co-Chair so please contact her if interested
- iv. LASO
  1. Vicki shared they are meeting this Thursday to work on planning events
  2. In the spring, they are hoping to do an event with a Haitian to talk about Haiti's influence on Latin American culture
    - a. Anyone interested in collaborating please contact Vicki
- v. PEERS
  1. Kelly shared they had their first meeting with 9 people attended. Next meeting is October 22 and will feature a positive social media campaign
  2. The first event will be Hallows Eve game night and trivia on October 30
  3. Xholina discussed different ways PEERS members brainstormed to improve mental health and connection with students across different domains
  4. Have a list of events and potential events and would love to collaborate
- vi. SFEJ
  1. Gabbi shared that 6 people came to the first meeting
  2. Gabbi reported struggling with lack of framework related to environmental justice and its intersection with social work. She reached out to NASW CT, and requested feedback from the group
    - a. Krystina suggested people were looking for more action-oriented opportunities
      - I. Gabbi discussed that Co-Chair Melissa is interested in taking this role on
    - b. Alberto suggested having speakers to handle some of the education piece and offered suggestions of some connections to get started
    - c. Travis suggested hands on activities to get people out and then incorporate some educational components before or after
    - d. Krystina suggested reaching out to organizations that have MSWs doing environmental justice work, such as CTCORE
    - e. Xholina suggested holding catalyst conversation to start by discussing things like food justice, land use, clean water, etc. and how they relate to different levels of practice

- f. Lynne encouraged Gabbi not to be afraid to get interdisciplinary in who is invited to speak or participate
- g. Vicki suggested not to lose focus on the people who are impacted by environmental injustice
- h. Dana mentioned groups doing similar work for potential speakers, like neighborhood revitalization in Hartford
- i. Megan invited Gabbi to follow up with Co-Chairs outside of this meeting to continue the conversation

c. Concentrations

i. IGFP

- 1. Kelly reported 3 events planned
  - a. Finals self-care packages during last week of classes including things like resources, candy, hand sanitizer, tissues, etc. Kelly indicated she would like suggestions of other things to include
  - b. Pop-up food pantry that will be partially supported by the budget and partially supported by donations
    - i. Milagros indicated the campus plans to offer a food pantry and to connect with her before planning
  - c. Therapy dog and pizza event next semester
- 2. Chrystal and Kylie will hold open office hours October 15 from 1:30-3 in the SSW basement. They will also have an anonymous survey available for anyone uncomfortable with bringing issues to the office hours

ii. CORG

- 1. Dana requested a motion to approve Sequoya as Co-Chair
  - a. Jessie made a motion, Krystina seconded the motion  
20 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed
- 2. Dana mentioned a class organizing a field trip to the North End and would like to do similar field trips or speakers
- 3. Dana discussed an issue of hiring that was brought up at CO concentration meeting regarding a vacant position that had previously been staffed by Arvia Walker and has been filled by Bob Fisher for this year. Dana asked for suggestions from the group of a person of color who could teach the grassroots organizing class next year
  - a. Jasmine clarified the importance of this role being filled by a Black woman specifically because of the perspective they would bring
- 4. Megan brought up the ongoing conversation the Co-Chairs have been having with the administration about hiring, The administration agreed to have interviewing candidates teach a

class to be audited by students and student feedback will be taken into account.

iii. POPR

1. Jessie discussed she is trying to set up an advisory board meeting with Dr. Thomas
2. POPR and CORG will cohost a mixer event on November 2 at 4pm at Blind Pig. All macro students are invited to attend, food will be provided. RSVP link will be sent out soon
3. Jessie also discussed she would like to do a speaker or documentary screening with discussion of how it relates to SW, such as navigating social work values in the political landscape

iv. DSO

1. Alberto announced DSO scrapped events that were planned for this semester and will keep GSO posted on future events
2. Alberto announced that instead of having a DSO representative on the hiring committee, they will be hosting workshops about professional development topics like job talks

d. School Committees

i. Educational Policy Committee

1. No updates

ii. Educational Review Committee

1. No updates

iii. Field Education Advisory Committee

1. No updates

iv. Just Community

1. Nina shared upcoming solidarity hours on October 15 at 2pm. This is an open forum to talk about social justice and advocacy issues
2. Nina shared JUST Community's commitment to letting the hiring committee know the student body wants more people of color hired as faculty
3. Nina is planning a book club event for next semester, with a book to be chosen to be read over winter break

v. International Center

1. Travis and Meg discussed a generation gap occurring on the committee, giving the example of members struggling with effectively using social media
2. They plan to revamp the website and social media in order to improve access to information like potential international field placements
  - a. Alberto suggested delegating this task to interns at the center
3. Travis discussed looking into fundraising for hurricane relief in the Bahamas



4. No events are currently scheduled

V. Additional questions, concerns, recommendations

- a. Lynne announced they are on the Graduate Career Council in Storrs and they want to make sure graduate students are using these resources and would be interested in having events for SSW students in the future

VI. Adjournment 3:05

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Kayla Perkins, Secretary

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Date

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Milagros Marrero-Johnson

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Date