

**UConn SSW Graduate Student Organization  
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 14, 2020  
1:30 to 3:00 p.m.**

**Members present:**

Kayla Perkins—GSO Secretary  
Milagros Marrero-Johnson—GSO Faculty Advisor  
Lynne Alexander—Educational Review Committee  
Megan Krementowski—GSO Co-chair  
Sarah Dottor—GSO Treasurer and PRIDE Chair  
Amanda Carrington—OBSWS Co-chair  
Krystina Jackson—GSO Co-chair  
Alberto Cifuentes, Jr.—DSO Representative  
Jasmine Mendez—OBSWS Co-chair  
Trisha Hawthorne-Noble—Incoming GSO Faculty Advisor  
Natalie O'Connor—OSAS Program Assistant  
Vicki Szantyr—LASO Co-chair  
Jessie Black—POPR Concentration Chair  
Chrystal Sparks—IGFP Representative  
Morgan Reiss—Educational Policy Committee and Field Education Committee Representative  
Kelly Ha—PEERS Co-chair (Arrived at 1:47pm)

- I. Meeting was called to order at 1:35pm
- II. Updates/ Announcements:
  - a. Trisha Hawthorne-Noble introduced herself to the group as the new OSAS Program Coordinator and incoming GSO Faculty advisor. She discussed her background in the athletics department at Storrs. She shared she is available for students who have questions and is looking forward to working with GSO moving forward
  - b. Approval of minutes  
Megan made a motion to approve the minutes, Jessie seconded the motion  
12 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed
  - c. Pass/Fail Update + Check in
    - i. Krystina provided update that the school is still discussing the pass/fail option, and that the Graduate Senate will be having a meeting to vote on the option
      1. Milagros noted there was a Graduate Senate meeting yesterday (4/13) and information will be passed along to students soon
    - ii. Krystina asked leaders to check in about how they are doing with social distancing and distance learning
      1. Jessie shared that she has been struggling to get school work done. She also reported stress because of close family who are essential employees and being impacted by COVID-19. Jessie also

shared a positive experience with a professor who has been understanding of the student experience and has been advocating to the administration on behalf of students

2. Lynne discussed the difficulty of leaving field abruptly and maintaining a routine while social distancing
3. Alberto discussed the struggle of working from home all the time. He shared that he has been focused on the importance of prioritizing self-care and care for loved ones. He also noted the myth of productivity at this time and to be gentle with ourselves
4. Vicki shared the difficulty of increased workload with classes moving to an online format. She also shared how difficult it has been to be away from family at this time, as well as challenging financial circumstances and uncertainty about the job market
5. Milagros validated the feelings leaders expressed and noted that we are not alone. She echoed the importance of being gentle with ourselves

d. Interest for next year

- i. Vicki and Kelly have communicated interest in the Co-chair positions
  1. Kelly and Vicki shared that they are excited to work together and have been bouncing ideas off of each other already. Kelly discussed that she and Vicki are both strong women, and Vicki discussed that they both value honest and open communication. Both leaders indicated they feel their partnership is off to a good start
    - a. Krystina thanked Vicki and Kelly for their leadership and indicated she and Megan are available as a resource during the transition
    - b. Megan discussed that as of May 1, all social media accounts and the Co-chair email will be transferred to Vicki and Kelly
- ii. Vicki shared that David has indicated interest in continuing to serve as LASO Chair
- iii. Kelly noted she has communicated with incoming MSW students who may be interested in the secretary and IGFP representative positions. Kelly will pass along their information to Milagros and Trisha
- iv. Lynne indicated they would like to remain ERC representative for next year

III. Treasurer Report

- a. Before approval of expenditures, Sarah reported changes that were made from the report emailed to leaders
  - i. DSO direct payment was changed to reimbursement
  - ii. OBSWS submitted a voucher for sweatshirts

1. Amanda will be handling the distribution of sweatshirts when the school reopens
  - iii. Co-chairs submitted vouchers for early fall events, including fall kickoff event and September Steering meeting
- Sarah made a motion to approve expenditures, Vicki seconded the motion
- Sarah opened the floor for discussion
- Alberto noted that a DSO event was pushed to August because of COVID-19 and asked what will happen to any unused funds
- Sarah reported that funds will be reabsorbed under the GSO umbrella budget for next semester. Most likely, these funds will be evenly redistributed between interest groups based on GSO Bylaws
- 13 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 opposed
- b. Sarah asked if leaders had any treasurer related questions or comments
    - i. Alberto thanked Sarah for their hard work and open communication as treasurer
    - ii. Sarah noted they are still looking for someone to take over the role of treasurer and asked leaders to spread the word
    - iii. Milagros asked Sarah if they are willing to serve as a resource to an incoming treasurer
      1. Sarah indicated they are open to it and invited Milagros and Trisha to share their email address with the incoming treasurer

#### IV. Updates

- a. Interest Groups
  - i. OBSWS
    1. Amanda and Jasmine thanked GSO leaders for a great year
  - ii. PRIDE
    1. Sarah indicated no updates, but they are still looking to identify a chairperson for next year
      - a. Lynne offered support to the incoming chairperson in getting the group up and running in the fall
  - iii. SAMI
    1. No representative present
  - iv. LASO
    1. Vicki reported that David will continue to chair LASO next year
    2. Vicki reported she and David are considering hosting a Zoom meeting to check in with students. Details will be shared with leaders if LASO moves ahead with this event
  - v. PEERS
    1. Kelly reported she and Xholina are considering hosting a Zoom call for people to show off their pets and destress. Details TBA.
    2. Kelly thanked all the leaders for all the hard work and solidarity through the year

b. Concentrations

i. IGFP

1. Chrystal reported no updates and thanked leaders for a great year

ii. CORG

1. No representative present

iii. POPR

1. Jessie reported no updates
2. Jessie asked if it was possible to use the remaining POPR budget for some kind of stress relief care package
  - a. Sarah noted that the date for new voucher requests has passed

iv. DSO

1. Alberto reported end of year party that was scheduled for May has been changed to a kickoff party in August, assuming the venue will be open at that time
2. Alberto reported he will still be serving as DSO Co-chair next year and will continue involvement with GSO

c. School Committees

i. Educational Policy Committee

1. Morgan reported no updates

ii. Educational Review Committee

1. Lynne reported no updates

iii. Field Education Advisory Committee

1. Morgan reported no updates

iv. Just Community

1. No representative present

v. International Center

1. No representative present

d. Co-chairs

i. Krystina asked for feedback on BH365

1. Jessie noted that the meetings were productive as well as relaxed and fun, and she enjoyed participating
2. Krystina noted that the BH365 committee discussed the possibility of making an interest group for BH365 part of GSO. She discussed that the committee feels there needs to be stronger involvement from the SSW administration and faculty in the planning of BH365, and creating an interest group may continue to put more responsibility on students. At this time, the plan is to have BH365 as a school-wide committee with student representatives to ensure the initiative's longevity

- a. Vicki voiced support for this plan. She agreed with Krystina that a great deal of the work fell onto the students' shoulders, and that this is a lot to ask of students
  - 3. Krystina expressed pride in the BH365 initiative and thanked all leaders who were involved in the planning or supporting of the initiative
- ii. Social media
  - 1. Megan will hand over the login information to Kelly and Vicki
  - 2. Megan asked anyone with ideas for COVID-19 resources/fundraisers to post on GSO social media platforms to reach out to her
  - 3. Milagros asked Megan about social media guidelines that were in development earlier in the semester
    - a. Megan indicated she will revisit the document and send to Milagros and Trisha
- V. Additional questions, concerns, recommendations
  - a. Vicki asked for someone to share Trisha's email address so that she and Kelly can set up a time to meet
  - b. Lynne shared a virtual panel taking place this afternoon hosted by the CT Trans Advocacy Coalition. The panel will focus on queer resilience during COVID-19
    - i. Megan asked Lynne to email the details so they can be shared on GSO social media
  - c. Milagros thanked all leaders for their service this semester and the work that was done to support students. She specifically thanked Krystina, Megan and all BH365 leaders for their work that has helped lift marginalized voices
  - d. Congrats to the graduates!!!!
- VI. Meeting was adjourned at 2:37pm

*Kayla Perkins*

*4/21/2020*

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Kayla Perkins, Secretary

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Date

*Milagros Marrero-Johnson*

*4/21/2020*

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Milagros Marrero-Johnson  
Faculty Advisor

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Date