

Minutes of the Graduate Student Association Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Attendance:

Officers & Staff:

President: S. MacDougall Programming:
Vice President: S.A. Mirkoohi Dir. of Operations: S. George/ D. Staly
Treasurer: I. Kolding Editorial Assistance:
MDRF:

Board Members:

Departmental:

Africana & Americana:	absent	History:	K. Kostin
Anthropology:	L. Quarles	ISE:	inactive
Architecture:	U. Ramos/ B. Andreu	Indigenous Studies:	inactive
Art:	absent	Information Science:	M. Kimick
Audiology:	absent	LAI:	absent
Biochemistry:	M. Goldberg	Linguistics:	J. Pokorski
Biological Sciences:	B. Liu	Materials Design & Info:	G.S. Oteme
Biomedical Engineering:	R. Bing	Mathematics:	inactive
Biostatistics:	S. Chen	MAE:	A. Nayyar/ S.M. Hatamlee
Cancer Sciences- RPCCC:	T. Shah (absent- 1/2)	Media Study:	C. Hansen
Chem. & Bio. Eng:	O. Desai	Microbiology:	M. Mazzaferro
Chemistry:	D. Edirisinghe/ B. Kumara	Music:	absent
CSEE:	A. Patel/ M. Daud	Neuroscience:	T. Wicks
Classics:	M. Barcarolo	Nursing:	inactive
Communication:	I. Andreeva	Occupational Therapy:	absent
Comm. Health & H.B.	M. McCornick	Oral Biology:	absent
Comparative Lit:	inactive	Pharmaceutics:	J. Farag
CSE:	absent	Pharm. & Tox:	absent
CSEP:	absent	Philosophy:	inactive
Earth Science:	E. Saucier	Physical Therapy:	E. Yarbrough/ G. VanLangevelde
ELP:	J. Holmes	Physics:	absent
Electrical Engineering:	S. Basu/ S. Mundaganur	Political Science:	S. Krzemien
English:	B. Rice	Psychology:	E. Hong
Environment & Sus:	H. Bialecki	RLL:	absent
EEH:	A. Grisham	Social Work:	B. Furer
ENS:	A. Gabel	Sociology:	G.C. Morales
Geography:	absent	Speech:	M. Marsh/ J. Flint
Global Gender Studies:	absent	Theatre & Dance:	I. Downes
		Urban Planning:	absent

International Clubs:

Bangladeshi:	I. Yousef Emon	Latin American:	M. Riquelme Gonzalez
Indian:	absent	Nigerian:	ab
Iranian:	H. Naeimi		

Special Interest Clubs:

Cognitive Science:	A. Ampiah-Bonney	Grad Students of Color:	F. Arcy
Graduate Poetics Group:	A.R. Wagner	UBQ:	C. Doubek

Guests:

J. Lippes	Legal
M. Afrooz	GPD

1. President Sarah MacDougall calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from the April 2nd Board Meeting.
 - Motion: Biomedical Engineering
 - Second: Anthropology
 - In Favor: 38; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 3
 - Motion passes

3. Announcements

- Graduate Professional Development Office (GPD)
 - Monisha Afrooz from GPD explains how their office supports both master's and PhD students at every stage of their graduate journey. Whether you are exploring funding opportunities, preparing for your next career move, or seeking resources for mental wellness, we provide guidance and tools to help you succeed. They also offer the NEER mentoring program for anyone looking to be connected with a mentor in their field. To explore all they offer, students should visit their website: <https://www.buffalo.edu/grad/beyond/professional-development.html>
- Staff Intros
 - Sarah introduces GSA staff by name, though no student staff are present, and explains a little bit about each department and the services they offer, including the Mark Diamond Research Fund grant deadlines and funding limits
 - Stephanie George, Director of Operations (slfrank@buffalo.edu)
 - Diane Staly, Associate Director of Operations (dstaly@buffalo.edu)
- Office Hours
 - GSA Staff work partly remotely
 - Walk-in hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 - 11:30am
 - All other meetings by appointment
 - Email gsa-feedback@buffalo.edu to schedule, or call the office
 - Business hours are Monday-Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm, closed for lunch daily 1:00 - 2:00pm
 - No staff are in the North Campus office on Tuesdays, and staff are fully remote on Fridays.
- Board Meeting Schedule & Training
 - The 2025-2026 Board meeting schedule was distributed with the agenda email and in the meeting packet
 - Required Board of Director training
 - Should be completed before the next board meeting
 - Submit certificates of completion to Diane Staly
 - If you have trouble accessing the certificate, please email info@boardstrong.org with a screenshot of your quiz results showing a score of 100%.
 - Q&A session to be led by GSA Legal Counsel, Josh Lippes, at the October Board meeting
- Programming
 - September 5th - North Campus Java Junction, 11:00am – 1:00pm in 145C&D Student Union
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee, tea, and donuts for graduate students
 - September 8th- Discount AMC Movie Tickets Available
 - \$5 each. 1 per UB ID.
 - Reserve online and pick up at the UB Ticket Office in 221 Student Union.
 - September 12th- South Campus Java Junction and Graduate Student Resource Fair, 11:00am – 1:00pm in 105 Harriman Hall
 - Come meet with representatives from various on-campus offices and organizations that offer events, services and support for graduate students
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee, tea, and donuts for graduate students
 - September 19th, North Campus Resource Fair, 11:00am – 2:00pm in 145 Student Union
 - Come find out about the on-campus resources available for graduate students.
 - Free snacks and giveaways in 145 Student Union.
 - Limited quantity available. First come, first served.
 - October 11, ***The Notebook*** at Shea's Performing Arts Center, 7:30pm
 - Tickets on sale September 8th for \$25 each. 2 per UB ID.
 - Limited quantity available. First come, first served.
 - **ANNOUNCEMENT- Those who purchase tickets for *The Notebook* will NOT be eligible to purchase tickets for *Wicked* in November**
 - November 21st - ***Wicked*** at Shea's Performing Arts Center, 7:30pm
 - Tickets on sale October 27th for \$25 each. 2 per UB ID.
 - Limited quantity available. First come, first served.

- **ANNOUNCEMENT- Those who purchase tickets for *The Notebook* will NOT be eligible to purchase tickets for *Wicked* in November**

- **Coming Soon!**

- Mindfulness Mondays – starting next Monday, September 8th! Free tickets available now.
- Buffalo Bills Football Game – January 4th vs. the Jets (final regular season home game at Highmark Stadium!)
- Becker Farms Fall Fest
- And much more!

4. Report of the President

- GSA President Sarah MacDougall makes everyone aware the Whistleblower and Conflict of Interest policies that were distributed in the meeting packet.
 - Verification of receipt of these policies needs to be received by the October 1st Board meeting
 - Please share the policies with newly elected board members
- GSA Survey
 - There are questions about programming, food insecurity, AI use, etc. Please fill it out to help us tailor programming and advocate to upper administration
- International Student Committee
 - Revamping the committee that was started a couple years ago. Looking for students willing to weigh in on their experiences at UB. Email either gsa-president@buffalo.edu or gsa-vicepresident@buffalo.edu if you are interested.
- AI Town Halls/Roundtables
 - The University is putting these together over the coming year to address AI use in the classroom from student and faculty perspectives. If you're interested in participating, email gsa-president@buffalo.edu
- UB Guardian App
 - This is not well advertised, but can be a useful tool if you feel unsafe on campus, particularly at South Campus
- Advocacy
 - The E-board's primary function is to advocate for graduate students and their needs to upper administration. To that end, they meet with the Graduate School periodically. The next meeting will be September 16th, so let us know if you have any concerns by September 11th so they can be added to the meeting agenda
- COAL
 - Programming Grant applications should be coming soon, but the council is having trouble meeting quorum to get the application approved. Consider applying if you would like to propose hosting a new event or program that impacts a large number of students, or substantially expand an existing one.

5. Report of the Vice President

- GSA Vice President Sevda Abdavinejad Mirkoohi reviews important information and responsibilities for club officers and Board members.
- UBLinked
 - Please be sure to update the roles of club officers appropriately on your club's UBLinked page so the new officers can submit event requests and re-register the club
 - University-wide re-registration deadline for all clubs is October 15th
 - Budget will be frozen by the University (not GSA) for the entire year if this is not completed on time.
- Mandatory Officer Training for all club Presidents and Treasurers
 - Officers should review all of the required materials and then must pass a quiz.
 - Passed Quiz Results must be received from all club Presidents and Treasurers by the September 30th paperwork deadline or club funds will be frozen.
- Listservs & forwarding emails
 - Please remember that GSA is only given very limited access to the University's master listserv of graduate students
 - It is the responsibility of club officers to forward GSA emails to your constituent/Department listservs (i.e., the weekly GSA Newsletter that goes out on Tuesdays). The Newsletter can only be sent to the master graduate listserv once per month (on the first Tuesday).
 - It is the Board of Directors members' job to report back the information presented at these meetings to your club members.
 - No Individual Club By Laws
 - With the changes made to the GSA By Laws in April, clubs no longer have their own By Laws. They should be following the Template GSA Club Rules and Policies now. If you would like to add specific details to the template for your club, please contact Sevda at gsa-vicepresident@buffalo.edu
 - Club Quorum
 - Part of GSA's By Law change made quorum requirements standard for all GSA clubs.
 - Quorum is the minimum number of people needed at a meeting to conduct business, or for elections to be deemed valid

- NY State Non-profit Law Requirement
 - ❖ 18 members or more: 10 members
 - ❖ 17 members or fewer: 50% of members + 1
- We cannot accept online polls
- Meetings can be conducted in person and/or on Zoom, but any votes have to be held with quorum present at the time of the vote.
- We highly encourage clubs to conduct availability polls to find and set meeting times that are convenient for the majority of club members.
- Hiring Second Programming Coordinator
 - GSA is considering the idea of hiring a second programming coordinator, but we would need Board approval. The stipend for the new position would be equal to that of the first coordinator, which is \$20,000. With employment taxes included, this would result in an increased payroll budget expense of approximately \$25,000, which would be added to the budget previously approved by the Board last April. We will not make a final decision until we have a better idea of what budget impacts we may be facing as a result of decreased international student enrollment.
 - Increased Programming Needs
 - ❖ With expanding student interests, needs, and expectations, GSA aims to significantly increase the number and types of programs offered by the end of the Spring 2026 semester to practice responsible and impactful use of student activity fees.
 - Budget Sustainability
 - ❖ GSA has sufficient funds and has received E-board and lawful confirmation that using a portion of the budget for an additional coordinator role is sustainable.
 - Distinct Perspectives
 - ❖ The current programming coordinator brings strengths in specific areas. A second coordinator should complement, not duplicate, this role. The second programming coordinator will conceptualize, plan, and execute new events.
 - Collaborative Division of Labor
 - ❖ Dividing duties between coordinators (e.g., South vs. North campus, social vs. professional, recurring vs. new programming) would ensure stronger project management and reduce burnout. The new programming coordinator will assist the administration of the currently planned events.
 - Motion to approve the minutes from the April 2nd Board Meeting.
 - ❖ Motion: Environment & Sustainability
 - ❖ Second: Biomedical Engineering
 - ❖ In Favor: 32; Oppose: 1; Abstain: 6
 - ❖ Motion passes

6. Report of the Treasurer

- GSA Treasurer Isaac Kolding explains there are funding opportunities that more people can and should be taking advantage of and we are here to help you navigate those opportunities
- Isaac reports the GSA funding account balances
 - We have spent no money to date, as no funding requests have been received, so balances are as follows:
 - Special Activity: \$10,000
 - Interdepartmental Activity: \$3,000
 - Symposium: \$10,000
 - Scholarly Publication: \$6,000
 - Community Outreach: \$3,000
- Conference Funding
 - 18 requests in August for \$10,727.36; 18 approved for \$10,727.36
 - 17 requests in September for \$6,950.00; 17 approved for \$6,950.00
 - Beginning balance: \$225,000.00; Remaining balance: \$207,322.64
 - Conference funding limits were increased this year, so PhD students may now request up to \$825 and Master's/MFA students may request up to \$625. Of those maximums, \$275 may be used for attending only.

7. Old Business

- There is no old business.

8. New Business

- Call for committee members
 - Finance Committee
 - Millicent Odinakachukwu Ngwy (Sociology)
 - Eli Didier (English)
 - Om Desai (Chemical & Biological Engineering)

- Sarbajit Basu (Electrical Engineering)
 - Bhanu Teja Dunna (Management)
 - Arshjit Singh (Management)
 - Abhijeet Kadam (Industrial & Systems Engineering)
 - Hosam Yousef (Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering)
 - Milagros Riquelme Gonzalez (Pharmaceutical Sciences)
 - Alt 1 - Gbassey Stephanie Oteme (Material Design & Innovation)
 - Alt 2 - Hillary Bialecki (Environment & Sustainability)
 - Motion to approve Finance Committee members
 - Motion: Latin American
 - Second: Biochemistry
 - In Favor: 38; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes
 - Services Committee
 - Sherika Caliste (Psychology)
 - Dan Kulesza (Communication)
 - Sophia Olsinski (Sociology & Criminology)
 - Tanvi Dixit (Biotechnology)
 - Vi Trinh (Learning & Instruction)
 - Motion to approve Services Committee members
 - Motion: Political Science
 - Second: Environment & Sustainability
 - In Favor: 37; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 1
 - Motion passes
 - Election Committee
 - Devaleena Kalita (Chemistry)
 - Faithwin Gbadamosi (Geography)
 - Aloysius Mwanje Senono (Information Science)
 - Sarbajit “Sam” Basu (Electrical Engineering)
 - Ben Furer (Social Work)
 - Motion to approve Election Committee members
 - Motion: Environment & Sustainability
 - Second: Biomedical Engineering
 - In Favor: 37; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes
 - Ethics Officer
 - Sarah Krzemien (Political Science)
 - Motion to approve the Ethics Officer
 - Motion: Neuroscience
 - Second: Biomedical Engineering
 - In Favor: 37; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 1
 - Motion passes
 - Club Recognition
 - No clubs up for recognition this month
 - Funding Requests
 - No funding requests received this month
9. Roll Call and Adjournment
- Motion to Adjourn at 7:16pm
 - Motion: Biochemistry
 - Second: Environment & Sustainability
 - In favor: 37; Oppose: 1; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes