

Minutes of the Graduate Student Association Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 1, 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:	H. Murphy	ISE:	inactive
Architecture:	absent	Indigenous Studies:	inactive
Art:	D. Harder	Information Science:	I. Blyth
Audiology:	H. Kerins	LAI:	M. Elliott
Biochemistry:	S. Ramcharan	Linguistics:	J. Pokorski
Biological Sciences:	S. Gubbi	Materials Design & Info:	A. Neelur
Biomedical Engineering:	R. Bing	Mathematics:	inactive
Biostatistics:	H. Liu	MAE:	absent
Cancer Sciences- RPCCC:	J. DiStasio/ C. Schwarz	Media Study:	H. Treadway
Chem. & Bio. Eng:	inactive	Microbiology:	absent
Chemistry:	absent	Music:	absent
CSEE:	N.T. Hesaramir/ S. Marmarchinia	Neuroscience:	R.A. Sadler
Classics:	inactive	Nursing:	inactive
Communication:	I. Andreeva	Occupational Therapy:	J. Novella
Comm. Health & H.B.	M. McCornick	Oral Biology:	M. Hasanuzzaman
Comparative Lit:	inactive	Pharmaceutics:	J. Farag/ A. Germakovski
CSE:	Y. Verma	Pharm. & Tox:	inactive
CSEP:	B. Krause	Philosophy:	inactive
Earth Science:	E. Haggerty	Physical Therapy:	E. Yarbrough/ G. VanLangevelde
ELP:	inactive	Physics:	absent
Electrical Engineering:	S. Basu/ O. Savkina	Political Science:	absent
English:	B. Rice	Psychology:	M. Samimifar
Environment & Sus:	L. Bargnesi	RLL:	D. Fleetwood
EEH:	A. Grisham	Social Work:	B. Furer
ENS:	A. Gabel	Sociology:	M. Ngwu
Geography:	D. Dzakuma	Speech:	R. Santos/ H. Getsler
Global Gender Studies:	S. King-Shaw	Theatre & Dance:	V. Fish
		Urban Planning:	inactive

International Clubs:

Bangladeshi:	absent		
Indian:	V. Maheshkar	Latin American:	E. Munoz
Iranian:	H. Naeimi	Nigerian:	C. Lawrence

Special Interest Clubs:

Cognitive Science:	inactive	Grad Students of Color:	inactive
Graduate Poetics Group:	absent	UBQ:	inactive

Guests:

J. Lippes	Legal
G. Bellavia	CDC
D. Kalita	ECC

1. President Sarah MacDougall calls the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2025 Board Meeting.
 - Motion: Biomedical Engineering
 - Second: Epidemiology & Environmental Health
 - In Favor: 40; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes

3. Announcements

- The 2025-2026 Board of Directors meeting schedule was included in the packet for everyone's reference.
- Career Design Center
 - Gina Bellavia from CDC reviews the services and resources available to graduate students, including Career Consultant Appointments, Events and Online Tools. She also reviews the Designing you Life program, the PhD Accelerator Series, online resources, Bullseye powered by Handshake, other career training platforms, and the Career Design Studio. Students are encouraged to reach out to her directly at gmb1@buffalo.edu or to stop by the office in 259 Capen Hall at any time.
- Graduate Professional Development Office (GPD)
 - Sarah reviews an announcement from GPD about the Pathway to the PhD program that will be taking place over Fall Break (October 13-14). It will include free food, a free t-shirt, opportunities to explore downtown Buffalo, and a chance to learn about campus resources. Participants will also earn a micro-credential and have the opportunity to connect with peers outside their department. If you are a PhD student and interested, please visit: <https://www.buffalo.edu/micro-credentials/offerings.host.html/content/shared/www/micro-credentials/offerings/pathway-to-the-phd.detail.html>
- Programming
 - October 3rd- North Campus Java Junction and Club Fair, 11:00am – 1:00pm in 145 C&D Student Union
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee and donuts for graduate students
 - October 6th- More Discount AMC Movie Tickets Now Available
 - \$5 each. 1 per UB ID.
 - Reserve online and pick up at the UB Ticket Office in 221 Student Union.
 - October 6th- Mindfulness Monday ~ Hatha Yoga
 - Free tickets available now. Limited spaces available
 - October 10th- South Campus Java Junction and Club Fair, 11:00am – 1:00pm in 105 Harriman Hall
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee and donuts for graduate students
 - October 11th- The Notebook at Shea's Performing Arts Center
 - Tickets on sale now for \$25 each. 2 per uB ID.
 - Limited quantity available. First come, first served.
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4. Report of the President

- GSA President, Sarah MacDougall, asks that people please not look up GSA employees' personal phone numbers and contact them about GSA related matters. Email or the office phone numbers are strongly preferred.
- Sarah reviews the UB Guardian App, as it is not well advertised, and encourages students to use it if they feel unsafe on campus at any time.
- International Student Committee
 - Still 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.
- The next GSA E-board meeting with the Graduate School will be taking place on November 4th. If anyone has an issue they would like the E-board to advocate for on your behalf, please let us know by October 28th so that it can be added to the agenda.

- Notes on the GSA Survey so far
 - The survey is anonymous, so please take it! We need more data to be able to make decisions that are in the best interests of our constituents.
 - Reminders about how the mandatory fee works
 - This is a referendum year, so GSA will be asking students to vote on whether to keep the fee mandatory or whether to make it voluntary in the Spring. There is no mechanism in place for students to be able to opt in to a voluntary fee, as the amount is either included on tuition bills or it's not, so without a mandatory fee GSA will no longer exist.
 - We've received a lot of feedback that students want us to host events similar to those offered by SA, but please remember that there are more undergrads than graduate students, and our fee is the lowest on campus. We do the best we can with what we have to fund clubs, conference funding, research funding, programming activities, and all the other services offered, but we will not be able to afford to host a concert like Fall Fest. Graduate student fee money does not contribute to the organization or those events, which is why they are only available to undergrads.

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. There will be no way to get the budgets unfrozen after that date.
- Important Rule Recaps
 - Club Officers and Board of Directors members are different positions and should be elected separately.
 - If your officers are going to fill the Board roles, they need to be elected into both positions by club members via UBLinked.
 - Board meeting representation and attendance requirements
 - All elected Board seats must be filled in order for the club's attendance to be counted in full.
 - All representatives must be present from the beginning to the end of the meeting. Times are logged automatically by Zoom.
 - If you miss two consecutive Board meetings in a row, then your club's budget will be frozen until full representation is resumed at a future Board meeting.
 - It is the Board members' job to report back the information presented at these meetings to your club members.

6. Report of the Treasurer

- GSA Treasurer, Isaac Kolding, reports the GSA funding account balances
 - We have two Special Activity funding requests this month, so balances are as follows:
 - Special Activity: \$10,000 to start; \$2,310 recommended this month; \$7,690 remaining
 - Interdepartmental Activity: \$3,000 to start; \$0 recommended this month; \$3,000 remaining
 - Symposium: \$10,000 to start; \$0 recommended this month; \$10,000 remaining
 - Scholarly Publication: \$6,000 to start; \$0 recommended this month; \$6,000 remaining
 - Community Outreach: \$3,000 to start; \$0 recommended this month; \$3,000 remaining
- Conference Funding
 - 64 requests were received in October for \$29,417.97; 58 approved for \$26,567.97
 - 1 request was ineligible and 5 were late
 - Beginning balance: \$225,000.00; Remaining balance: \$180,754.67

7. Old Business

- Board of Directors Training Review and Q&A
 - GSA Legal Counsel, Josh Lippes, reviews the key points mentioned in the BoardStrong training regarding fiduciary responsibilities and making decisions in the best interests of the organization. He asks if there are any questions from the Board, but there are none.
 - If anyone has questions at any time, or needs legal advice or assistance, they can reach out to Josh for help or a referral at jlippes@lippeslaw.com.
- Policy Receipt Acknowledgements for Conflict of Interest and Whistleblower Policies
 - Conflict of Interest Policy and Whistleblower Policy were distributed to all in the meeting packet
 - Please make sure you keep a copy for your records.
 - Each club must have at least one person sign the Policy Receipt Acknowledgment (also included in the meeting packet) and email it back to GSA tonight!

- Please send them to Diane at dstaly@buffalo.edu
- Approval of Election Committee Chair
 - The Election Committee met and elected Devaleena Kalita (Chemistry) as this year's Election Committee Chair
 - Motion to approve Election Committee Chair
 - Motion: Biomedical Engineering
 - Second: Social Work
 - In Favor: 40; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes
 - The Election Code will be revised and reviewed for approval at the November Board of Directors Meeting

8. New Business

- Club Recognition
 - Sevda reports that there are no clubs up for recognition this month
- Funding Requests
 - Isaac reports that the Finance Committee has reviewed the two Special Activity funding applications that were received and is recommending full funding for both, with the stipulation that Pharmaceutical Sciences must meet the minimum co-sponsorship requirements to qualify for funding.
 - Representatives from GISA and Pharmaceutical Sciences give brief descriptions about their Diwali and Distinguished Alumni Symposium events, respectively
 - Motion to approve the Special Activity funding requests, with the stipulation, as a block at the recommended amounts
 - Motion: Epidemiology & Environmental Health
 - Second: Information Science
 - In Favor: 44; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 1
 - Motion passes

9. Roll Call and Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn at 7:15pm
 - Motion: Anthropology
 - Second: Global Gender Studies
 - In favor: 44; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes