

Minutes of the Graduate Student Association Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Attendance:

Officers & Staff:

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

Board Members:

Departmental:

Africana & Americana:	absent	ISE:	inactive
Anthropology:	H. Murphy	Indigenous Studies:	inactive
Architecture:	U. Ramos	Information Science:	I. Blyth
Art:	H. Lin	LAI:	M. Ma
Audiology:	H. Kerins	Linguistics:	J. Pokorski
Biochemistry:	S. Ramcharan	Materials Design & Info:	A. Neelur
Biological Sciences:	S. Gubbi	Mathematics:	inactive
Biomedical Engineering:	absent	MAE:	S. Behboodi
Biostatistics:	S. Chen	Media Study:	H. Treadway
Cancer Sciences- RPCCC:	C. Schwarz/ J. Wright	Microbiology:	A. Betadpur
Chem. & Bio. Eng:	K. Leatt	Music:	inactive
Chemistry:	A. Abanikanda (absent 1/2)	Neuroscience:	T. Wicks
CSEE:	S. Marmarchinia (absent 1/2)	Nursing:	inactive
Classics:	M. Barcarolo	Occupational Therapy:	J. Novella
Communication:	D. Kulesza	Oral Biology:	absent
Comm. Health & H.B.	M. McCormick	Pharmaceutical Science:	K. Lu/ T. Adeniyi-Aogo
Comparative Lit:	inactive	Pharm. & Tox:	inactive
CSE:	Y. Verma	Philosophy:	inactive
CSEP:	B. Krause	Physical Therapy:	E. Yarbrough/ M. Hogan
Earth Science:	E. Haggerty	Physics:	A. Islam
ELP:	J. Holmes	Physiology & Biophysics:	J. Tondreau
Electrical Engineering:	S. Basu/ O. Savkina	Political Science:	S. Krzemien
English:	B. Rice	Psychology:	E. Hong
Environment & Sus:	L. Bargnesi	RLL:	M. Flores Lopez
EEH:	absent	Social Work:	B. Furer
ENS:	A. Gabel	Sociology:	M. Ngwu
Geography:	D. Dzakuma	Speech:	H. Getsler/ H. Carrasco
Global Gender Studies:	M.L. Nutting	Theatre & Dance:	V. Fish
History:	L. Peterson	Urban Planning:	C. Powell

International Clubs:

Bangladeshi:	I. Yousuf Emon	Iranian:	H. Naeimi
Ghanian:	L. Pakmoni	Latin American:	A. Alfaro Chacon
Indian:	V. Maheshkar	Nigerian:	C. Lawrence

Special Interest Clubs:

CSP&C Reading Group:	K. Persaud	GSPHA:	E. Morton
Graduate Poetics Group:	A.R. Wagner		

Guests:

J. Lippes	Legal	M. Canfield
E. Kerr	Psychology	
A. Martin	History	
E. Didier	English	
S. Caliste	Psychology	

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2026 Board Meeting.
 - Motion: Social Work
 - Second: Neuroscience
 - In Favor: 43; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 3
 - Motion passes

3. Announcements

- UBIT Services
 - Mike Canfield from UBIT gives a brief synopsis of the improvements they have been making to the university WiFi systems, he shares help links and tech news that could be useful for students, and reminds everyone that the Tech Squad will meet you anywhere on campus, and the Help Desk in Silverman Library is available for anyone in need of technical assistance. If you have any questions or concerns, students can reach out to Mike directly at canfiel2@buffalo.edu.
- GSA will be on summer hours for the week of Spring Recess
 - Business Hours: Monday, March 16th to Thursday, March 19th from 8:30am to 4:00pm. Closed for lunch daily 1:00 to 2:00pm
 - Walk-in Hours: Wednesday and Thursday from 8:30am to 11:30am, as usual
 - Closed Friday, March 20th
- Programming
 - More Discount AMC Movie Tickets Now on Sale
 - \$5 each. 1 per UB ID. Reserve online and pick up at the UB Ticket Office in 221 Student Union.
 - March 6th, North Campus Java Junction, 11:00am to 1:00pm in 145 C&D Student Union
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee, tea and donuts for graduate students
 - March 9th, Mindfulness Monday ~ Mindful Movement
 - Free tickets available now at the UB Ticket Office
 - March 10th, Distinguished Speaker Series presents Hoda Kotb
 - Free tickets are available now for graduate students. 1 per UB ID. Limited quantity available.
 - March 13th, South Campus Java Junction, 11:00am to 1:00pm in 105 Harriman Hall
 - Free Tim Horton's coffee, tea and donuts for graduate students
 - March 20th, Know Your Rights Workshop with Anna Porter, Senior Manager of Community Engagement for Western New York from the [New York Immigration Coalition \(NYIC\)](#)
 - March 27th, Know Your Rights Workshop with Amanda Opperman, Staff Attorney for [Journey's End Refugee Services](#)
 - MDRF Spring Grant Application deadline is Friday, March 27th by 4:00pm
 - For research to be conducted between May 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027

4. Report of the President

- GSA President, Sarah MacDougall, reports that it was brought to our attention that April 1st is the start of Passover. We would like to hold a vote to see if the Board would prefer to move the April Board meeting to Thursday, April 2nd so that observant students will still be able to attend.
 - Motion to vote on moving the Board meeting
 - Motion: Earth Science
 - Second: History
 - Those in favor of keeping it April 1st: 19; Those in favor of moving it to April 2nd: 30
 - The meeting will be moved to Thursday, April 2nd
- NSF Funding Workshop will be held April 9th in 330 Student Union
 - Jorge Valdez Kroff will give tips on how to help secure NSF funding amidst the recent changes to policies.
- Write Your Reps Campaign
 - GSA will be providing letter writing materials, supplies, postage and contact information during the remaining Java Junction events this semester for students to contact their legislators and let their opinions be known.
- Call for Volunteers for CAS PhD Excellence Oversight Committee (PEOC)
 - Looking for two graduate student representatives to serve through June 30, 2026, starting with the March 30th meeting. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Sarah at gsa-president@buffalo.edu by Friday, March 6th to be appointed.
- Interprofessional Mixer is being hosted by the UB professional schools and is scheduled for Saturday, March 14th from 8:00 – 11:00pm, at The Admiral Room. Additional tickets will be on sale tomorrow at 6:00pm for \$35 each. First come, first served.
- Text and Email Scams

- We have been notified that some of you are receiving texts and emails that appear to be coming from GSA officers. Please know that GSA will never text you for anything, nor will we email you asking for gift cards. Please be aware of these scams and report them accordingly.
- GSA Referendum Vote
 - Every two years SUNY requires that we put the mandatory student activity fee up for a referendum vote on whether the fee should remain mandatory or become voluntary
 - A mandatory vote ensures funding for GSA clubs, programs and services.
 - There is no mechanism available to collect voluntary fees, so if the referendum fails, GSA will cease to exist
 - We will not be able to ask for a re-vote until Spring, 2027, so there would be no club budgets, no conference funding, no research grants, no programming, etc. offered for at least a year.
 - We will be asking all club representatives to help us get the word out about the importance of the GSA Referendum vote that will be taking place along with the officer elections April 6th – 9th online.

5. Report of the Vice President

- GSA Vice President, Sevda Abdavinejad Mirkoohi, reports that the Early Club Recognition deadline is Wednesday, March 18th.
 - Special Interest and International clubs that do not apply for Early Recognition will not have access to their club budget when the new fiscal year starts August 1st!
 - Clubs will then need to apply for recognition at one of the Fall semester Board meetings before their club will be considered active.

6. Report of the Treasurer

- GSA Treasurer, Isaac Kolding, reports that budget preparation is underway within the Finance Committee and will be presented to the Board for a vote at the April 2nd meeting.
 - If the budget passes on April 2nd, then the April 22nd meeting will be cancelled.
- Please note that the final deadline for all funding requests for this year (Special Activity, Interdepartmental Activity, Symposia and Community Outreach) is Wednesday, March 18th by 4:00pm.
- This is also the final deadline for clubs to submit proposals for capital equipment purchases so that they may be reviewed by the Finance Committee accordingly.
 - No club capital equipment purchases will be allowed that have not been properly reviewed and pre-approved by the GSA Finance Committee. Capital equipment is anything with a useful life of a year or more, and costing \$1,000 or more.
- GSA Funding Account Balances
 - There are eight funding requests up for approval this month, so balances are as follows:
 - Special Activity: \$10,000 to start; \$3,600 recommended this month; \$2,890 remaining
 - Interdepartmental Activity: \$3,000 to start; \$500 recommended this month; \$2,500 remaining
 - Symposium: \$10,000 to start; \$5,032 recommended this month; \$3,568 remaining
 - Scholarly Publication: \$6,000 to start; \$0 recommended this month; \$0 remaining
 - Community Outreach: \$3,000 to start; \$0 recommended this month; \$3,000 remaining
- Conference Funding
 - 54 requests were received in March for \$31,378.93; 50 were approved for \$29,570.42
 - One request was ineligible for funding, and three were late
 - Beginning balance: \$225,000.00; Remaining balance: \$80,985.57
- Symposium Funding Highlight
 - Isaac reminds everyone that this fund exists to provide graduate students with the opportunity to create and organize formal meetings that will allow graduate students to prepare and present research papers, posters, programs and projects to their peers.
 - Any club may request up to \$1,400.00

7. Old Business

- No Old Business

8. New Business

- Graduate Student Health Insurance Discussion
 - Representatives from the Cancer Sciences- RPCCC GSA club explain to the Board that the university's decision to stop offering medical insurance to domestic students last year has caused major problems for many of their members. RPCCC students are not considered state employees and therefore are unable to receive the same benefits as TAs and GAs. The university and RPCCC's proposed solutions were to have students go to the NYS Marketplace for coverage, but that may now be ending as early as July. They are wondering if any other graduate students are having similar problems.

- Reps from other clubs mention that they are in the process of forming new unions for RAs and for the Research Foundation (RF) employees. They will then be able to collectively bargain for health insurance benefits. They recommend that RPCCC students may want to consider doing something similar.
 - RF elections will be taking place March 25th from 11:00am – 1:00pm in JSMBS (downtown)
 - RA elections will be taking place March 24th from 3:30 – 5:30pm on North Campus
- Funding Requests
 - Isaac mentions that the Finance Committee has reviewed all the proposals and is recommending full funding for each.
 - Reps from Iranian, GISA, Bangladeshi, Biochemistry, Media Study, Psychology, History and English all give a brief description of their Special Activity, Interdepartmental Activity and Symposium events.
 - Motion to approve all funding requests as a block at the recommended amounts
 - Motion: History
 - Second: Geography
 - In Favor: 48; Oppose: 0; Abstain: 2
 - Motion passes
- Election Committee Update
 - Sarbajit (Sam) Basu presents the candidates for office
 - For President: Sarah MacDougall (Psychology PhD)
 - For Vice President: Sherika Caliste (Psychology PhD)
 - For Treasurer: Daniel Kulesza (Communication PhD)
 - The Candidate Q&A will take place during the April 2nd Board meeting.
 - Elections will be held online April 6th – 9th in conjunction with the GSA referendum vote

9. Roll Call and Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn at 7:24pm
 - Motion: Political Science
 - Second: Counseling, School & Education Psychology (CSEP)
 - In favor: 43; Oppose: 1; Abstain: 0
 - Motion passes