

# GSS 2021-2022 Election Summary

*Election Committee Members:* Elsa Cousins (Chair), Clement Boaheng, Patrick Kamieneski, Pulkit Sharma, Xiaoyun Song

For elections to be valid according to the GSS bylaws, a minimum of 5% of fee paying graduate students must vote. The GSS bylaws (as amended March 11, 2021) may be found [here](#), and the constituent bylaws for elections may be [found here](#).

## Senator Elections

\*To have a ballot in the Campus Pulse Senator Elections, there must have been at least one person nominated for that department/program. Nominations were submitted through a google form distributed by GSS over email\*

NOTE: For any ballots where the total number of voters is greater than the total count of votes, this means that some voters who viewed the ballot did not cast a vote.

NOTE: For any ballots with a tie vote, the program/department is responsible for running an internal run-off election and informing GSS of the results as per the GSS Bylaws.

### Senator Elections Results Summary:

Architecture Department (37 Students) - 1 voter. Not Valid

Megan Itzkowitz: 1

Write in: 0

Astronomy (23 Students) - 9 voters. Valid

Patrick Kamieneski: 9

Sarah Betti: 9

Write in: 0

Biomedical Engineering (11 Students) - 2 voters. Valid

Luca Fuller: 2

Write in: 0

Chemistry (141 Students) - 5 voters. Not Valid

Nathanael Kuzio: 4

Paul Marshall: 4

Write in: Jeffrey Cullen: 1

Write In: Gaurav Mitra: 2

Write in: Ruptanu Banerjee: 1

Write in: Kyle Winters: 1

Computer Science (895 Students) - 13 voters. Not Valid

Shashank Srigiri: 9

Education (424 Students) - 49 voters. valid

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Niyanthini Kadirgamar: 42  
Tita Feraud-King: 41  
Benjamin Scherrer: 39  
Verity Norman-Tichawangana: 39  
Laurie Simmons: 30  
Campbell Hart: 26  
Additional 4 seats:  
Write in 1: Sahara Pradhan: 3  
Write in 2: Kimberly Mcintee: 3  
Write in 3: Samuel Abora: 2  
Write in 4: Pempho Chinkondenji: 2  
Write in 5: Bara Mbengue: 2  
Write in 6: Shao Yu (Dora) Tseng: 2  
\*4 way tie for the remaining 2 senate seats\*

### English (157 Students) - 36 voters, valid

Rowshan Chowdhury: 34  
Sally Luken: 26  
Rob Murra: 24  
Additional 2 seats:  
Write in 1: Jarrel de Matas: 1  
Write in 2: Ashley Canter: 1  
Write in 3: Stacie Klinowski: 1  
\*3 way tie for the remaining 2 senate seats\*

### Environmental Conservation (91 Students) - 13 voters, valid

Ayodele Ouhuru: 13  
Amanda E Suzzi: 12  
Additional 1 seat:  
Write in: Sebastian Moreno: 1

### Kinesiology (42 Students) - 7 voters, valid

Joseph Gordon III: 7  
Write in: 0

### Management (225 Students) - 11 voters, valid

Patrick Malone: 9  
Additional 5 seats:  
Write in 1: Trevor Brightman: 1

### Organismic and Evolutionary Biology (44 Students) - 15 voters, valid

Elsa Cousins: 15  
Kimberly Acevedo: 14

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### Polymer Science & Engineering (79 Students) - 3 voters, not valid

Khatcher Margossian: 3

Write in 1: 0

Write in 2: 0

### Public Health: Biostatistics & Epidemiology (86 Students) - 2 voters, not valid

Alvaro J. Castro Rivadeneira: 2

Stevaughn Smith: 2

Write in: 0

### Public Policy & Administration (91 Students) - 12 voters, valid

Khalif Nunnally-Rivera: 12

Nia Johnson: 11

Lucas Henrique: 10

Write In: 0

### Regional Planning (33 Students)- 1 voter, not valid

Victoria Desclos: 1

Write in: 0

### Resource Economics (38 Students) - 1 voter, not valid

Jonas Schmidt: 1

Write in: 0

### Sociology (71 Students) - 2 voters, not valid

Thomas Corcoran: 1

Write in 1: 0

Write in 2: 0

### Sustainability Science (34 Students) - 7 voters, valid

Angie Gregory: 7

Write in: 0

## Internal Senator Election Results reported to the elections committee:

The Graduate History Association reported the following senators elected for the history department:

- Alison Russell
- Marwa Atef Amer
- Kimberly Enderle

The ballot for this program was generated in campus pulse as well, with the following results. GSS will prioritize the program's internal elections over the Campus Pulse elections.

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History. UMass/Five College Program - 14 voters

Marwa Amer: 13

Write in 1: 3

Write in 2: 2

The Chemical Engineering Graduate Student Society reported the following senators elected for the Chemical Engineering Department:

- Emily Diep
- Sam Hoover

\*They noted that they have only filled  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their available senate seats and plan to hold a special election at the beginning of next semester to fill the open seats.

### Additional notes on Senator Elections

One individual was nominated into the wrong program (Public Health Biostatistics and Epidemiology instead of Public Health Promotion and Policy). Since no other individuals were nominated for the Public Health Promotion and Policy senate seat, no ballot was generated during the first day of voting. After contacting Scott Campbell at Student Affairs Technology Services who assists GSS with running elections through Campus Pulse, we were given the choice of 1) removing the nomination from the incorrect ballot and contacting the Public Health Promotion and Policy program to run internal elections or 2) Generating a ballot for the Public Health Promotion and Policy program at 5pm after the first day of the voting period, with the warning that if anyone from that program already submitted votes for Pres/VP/Treasurer, they won't be able to come back into the election to submit again for HPP senator, the Elections Committee determined via majority vote that GSS will contact the Public Health Promotion and Policy program to run internal elections.

### GSS Officer Elections

**Officer Election Results summary: 269 voters**

**Total Number of Eligible Graduate Student Voters: 4,344**

*President:*

**Justin Burch**                    **244 votes, 96.44%**

Write in                            9 votes

*Vice President:*

**Mariam Rashid**                **194 votes, 76.98%**

Jarrel De Matas                57 votes, 22.61%

Write in                            1 votes

*Treasurer:*

**Laura Hancock**                **242 votes, 98.37%**

Write in                            4 votes

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*According to the results, the 2021-22 Academic Year GSS President is Justin Burch, the Vice President is Mariam Rashid and the Treasurer is Laura Hancock*

### Summary of election timeline:

#### ***Nomination period: March 2nd - March 15th***

We received 4 self nominations - Justin Burch, Mariam Rashid, Jarrel de Matas, Laura Hancock. All candidates who ran submitted a picture and statement and confirmed that they would follow the GSS Election guidelines.

#### ***Campaigning period: March 16th - March 28th***

We received and approved campaign flyers from Justin Burch. We received a question about the facts stated in one campaign statement pertaining to the period of time serving as GSS Senator. We pursued the inquiry via student leadership in the department and determined that the statements were valid. Please see the appendix for additional details and the email statements confirming this. We determined that the miscommunication likely stemmed from internal election communications, and recommend that clearer communication guidelines for programs running internal elections be established.

We received a question about the appropriate use of email campaigning and confirmed that email campaigns do not need to be approved by the GSS Election Committee as long as they include the appropriate references to other possible candidates, listed on GSS website, as outlined in the GSS election guidelines

We debated the use of the GSS Senator List as a GSS Resource, and determined that the GSS Senator List was publicly available information and therefore could be used during campaigning.

#### ***Voting period: March 29th - April 2nd***

The Committee received several requests for clarification and one formal complaint, as follows:

1. *Formal complaint:* "I would like to lodge a formal complaint that GSS Vice Presidential Candidate Jarrel De Matas is campaigning beyond the allotted and scheduled campaigning period. I ask that the committee inform Mr. Jarrel De Matas that he needs to immediately cease all campaigning activities as we are now in the voting period."

#### ***Election Committee ruling:***

In response to a recent inquiry, the Elections Committee has determined by majority vote that campaigning may continue through the voting period, based on our interpretation of the GSS bylaws and election guidelines:

Reference to campaigning in the Election guidelines:

"Campaigning, hereafter to mean working "in an organized and active way towards being elected," including written or verbal solicitation of votes or support, is not permitted until after the close of the nomination period"

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and in the bylaws, Article III A:

"5. Elections shall begin no less than one week after the candidates are announced publicly to allow for a minimum one week, but maximum two week, campaigning period."

There is no rule in the Bylaws that campaigning must end during the voting period. Additionally, prohibiting campaigning during the voting period may lead to lower voter turnout, a longstanding issue in GSS elections. We interpret the "maximum two week" campaigning period to mean that voting MUST start by the end of two weeks, not that all campaigning activities must cease after two weeks or at the end of the campaign period. The Election Committee hopes that by allowing candidates to continue campaigning during the voting week, as long as they continue to follow the code of conduct outlined in the GSS Election bylaws:

*" 1. No person who is not a candidate, as defined above, shall campaign. 2. No person(s) shall appropriate funds for the purpose of campaigning. Candidates may not pay anyone to campaign on their behalf and/or vote for them. 3. No candidate shall wrongfully represent any campaign material as being the material of any other candidate. 4. No candidate shall violate the University Code of Student Conduct; for more information please see [http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/) 5. No candidate shall corruptly give, offer or promise to any GSS member any pecuniary or other benefit not authorized by the Campaign Guidelines, Candidate Code of Conduct, which is intended to influence the vote(s) of GSS member. 6. No candidate shall be physically present nor shall influence GSS members' choice when he/she is voting online. 7. Under no circumstances should a candidate attempt to use any GSS resources. This includes, but is not limited to, GSS office space, printer, paper or Facebook Groups. "*

that we may see increased voter turnout due to voter awareness and increased perception of the election process.

### *2. Requests for clarification:*

- a. Which members comprise the GSS election committee?

#### *Election Committee Response:*

Election Committee members for 2021-2022 Elections are Elsa Cousins (Chair), Clement Boaheng, Patrick Kamieneski, Pulkit Sharma, Xiaoyun Song

- b. Who has access to the voting results? And, are the incumbent officers privy to the voting numbers during the voting period? Or, is every candidate prohibited from accessing the live voting numbers as they come in?

#### *Election Committee response:*

Currently, [at the time of this email] only the election committee has access to the full election results. The voting results are not available until the end of the voting period, 4/2 after 4pm when they are generated by Scott Campbell from Student Affairs Technology

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Services who runs the elections through Campus Pulse. The results are then sent to the full election committee via email as a series of spreadsheets and a summary form. GSS has no direct access to the Campus Pulse system.

### Appendix

Pertaining to inquiries on duration of candidate Jarrel De Matas term as GSS Senator

Inquiry received by the Elections Committee during the Campaign Period:

“I am writing to point out a discrepancy in the statement by Jarrel De Matas. He claims to be a Senator with the GSS through 2021. However, GSS records do not indicate that he was a senator for the [2020-2021 academic year](#). We would like clarity on this point from the candidate.”

#### *Elections Committee Ruling:*

We have concluded that the candidate statement in question is accurate and does not violate the GSS Elections Guidelines. We obtained statements from the 2019-2021 program leaders of the EGO that Jarrel de Matas was elected in 2019 (confirmed via the Senate's 2019-2020 senator records, with Jarrel De Matas listed as a senator for the English Department) and that he stepped down in March of 2021, confirmed by the current program leader of the EGO.

We have concluded that it is likely there was a mistake on behalf of the EGO/English department in informing GSS of senators who were elected to continue on in their role rather than newly elected that year, stemming from communications procedures about internal elections. They also did not inform GSS when Jarrel De Matas stepped down from his position in March 2021.

Email statements confirming Jarrel De Matas status as GSS Senator:

“Jarrel De Matas is my colleague in the English department. He has served as a GSS senator from Fall 2019 to Spring 2021. I received his resignation on March 2nd, 2021.

Thank you,  
Shwetha Chandrashekhar  
EGO Co-chair  
Department of English  
University of Massachusetts Amherst”

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“Hello All,

Jarrel is right. He was elected to be a GSS senator for English Graduate Organization during the 2019-2020 academic year. I was co-chair of EGO during this time and happy to provide any additional information.

Best regards,

Sharanya

Sharanya Sridhar [EGO Co-chair during 2019-2020 academic year]