

UConn Praxis General Membership Meeting 22-23
Monday, March 28th, 2022, 7:00 PM
Koons Hall 201 & Zoom (due to COVID-19 outbreak)

Voting Members (in person): Natalie Seier (President), Rebecca Tripp (Vice President), Benjamin Albee (Treasurer), Monet Paredes (Secretary), Kymberly Roberts, Zoe Baltrush, Esai Marentes, Laura Augenbraun, Mehdi Namazi, Chloe Connelly, Cheyenne Tavares, Peyton Marie De Lorenzo Pease, Rachel Felder, Zoe Macris, Rebekah Wesler, Samantha Lamb, William Ofori, Desiray Green

Voting Members (virtual): Lauren McNally, Kayla DeMoura, Jungwon An, Sophia Kim, Charis Chui, Daniella Diaz, Kaleigh Lambert, Kelsey McMamara, Andre Johnson, Annalie Guzzo, Mary Brick, John Tyler, Rachael Allegakoen

Non-Voting Member (s) (in-person): Ethan Carlone, Johan Soria, Jennifer Garcia, Chase Flynn, Jordan Morrison, Russell Dixon, Katie Lightle, Justin Luan

- I. Meeting brought to order at 7:01pm by Natalie Seier (President)
- II. Welcome & Introductions
- III. Presentation: By-Law and Constitution Updates
 - A. Seier explains edits made to the By-Laws and Constitution.
 - B. Mehdi Namazi elaborates on edits.
- IV. Business
 - A. Minutes
 1. Seier motions to approve the UConn Praxis General Membership Meeting minutes from Monday, March 21st.
 2. Benjamin Albee seconds.
 3. Chloe Connelly, Zoe Baltrush, Samantha Lamb, John Tyler and William Ofori abstain.
 4. Motion passes unanimously.
 - B. Updated Organizational Chart
 1. Seier motions to approve the UConn Praxis Organizational Chart as Updated March 2022.
 2. Rebecca Tripp seconds.
 3. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. Elections
 - A. President
 1. Samantha Lamb nominates Benjamin Albee who accepts.
 2. Rebecca Tripp nominates Monet Paredes who accepts.
 3. Albee nominates Rachel Felder who declines.
 4. Cheyenne Tavares nominates Esai Marentes who declines.
 5. Tripp nominates Kymberly Roberts who declines.
 6. Albee shares their current position as Praxis Treasurer. They note their two years of activist work. They share an array of ideas for Praxis including running DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion) meetings, team bonding,

taking advantage of the fall to prepare for spring legislative work and better support campaign coordinators. They share their vision of a story of Praxis that has disaffiliated, and then been able to; feed UConn's food insecure, defund UCPD to fund SHaW, address sexual violence, get students to vote, press the Board of Trustees about sustainability, making education affordable and inspire students to transcend the university. They encourage members to vote for them based on that vision. They note how their experience as treasurer has allowed them to work closely with the current president to make sure Husky Market runs smoothly, organizing grassroots leaders across campus and being an active member of leadership. They hope to lift members up and create a cohesive team.

7. Paredes shares their current position as Praxis Secretary. They note their urge to join Praxis based on not only its work on environmental justice but the intersection work each campaign does. They share their ability to quickly adapt to become an effective Executive Board member which is something they would translate into their role as president to face any challenge that may come their way. They explain how their role as Secretary has contributed to their organizational and leadership skills which they would bring to be an effective, organized, professional and approachable president. They note their push to close the gap between volunteers/interns and leadership to create a one cohesive Praxis. They encourage members to vote for them based on their vision to continue to lead Praxis based on the on-the-ground grassroots activist work members do and lift the organization as they have grown as a leader.
8. Mehdi Namazi asks how Paredes will overcome any gaps considering they have not been a campaign coordinator.
 - a) Paredes acknowledges even though they have not been a campaign coordinator they have been a very involved campaign member. They note that they have had other valuable leadership experiences in other parts of their life including being a head lifeguard of a team of workers where they help swim instructors produce lesson plans and ensure a smooth running of the facility which overall shows that they are well versed in being able to lead and manage a group of people.
9. Tripp asks how they candidates will be able to work with UConn admin but also hold them accountable when necessary.
 - a) Albee notes their amount of work done with the Board of Trustees, SASFAC and TSOS. They will work professionally to explain to the admin the work Praxis does and what it does well but will also be going to a Board of Trustees sit in protest this upcoming week because they are not afraid to stand up to them.
 - b) Paredes shares they are not someone to be pushed around or run away from confrontation but know the value of preserving and building a mature relationship. They feel they will be able to convey the mission and wants of the constituents to the UConn

admin and are not willing to back down. They share their ability to work with different personality types.

10. Jessica Roberts asks how the candidates will incorporate DEI in their presidency.
 - a) Albee shares their excitement for bi-weekly DEI meetings, which will work well with other people's perspectives and be able to collaborate with other groups on campus to educate ourselves.
 - b) Paredes shares they hope to create a DEI coalition to bring groups on campus together to not only collaborate with them but create a foundation of a proactive relationship. They would want all of Praxis leadership to be involved so that they could cultivate an established relationship. They also hope to create a text blast chain so when different focusing events are happening around campus, resources can be put in the hands of students immediately and directly. This would include resources like donation links, hotlines, ways to contact administration and representatives etc.

Albee and Paredes exit the room at 7:39pm.

11. The general membership engages in closed discussion.

Albee and Paredes return to the room at 7:54pm.

12. Albee is elected at UConn Praxis's 2022-23 President.

B. Vice-President

1. Marentes nominates Tavares who accepts.
2. Tripp nominates K. Roberts who accepts.
3. Tavares nominates Paredes who declines.
4. Tavares nominates Peyton Marie De Lorenzo Pease who accepts.
5. Tavares shares their experience as a visibility intern, a co-Campaign Coordinator for NVP (New Voters Project) and then the sole Campaign Coordinator for NVP. They were the Vice Chair of the former UConnPIRG state board (before the rebrand) and are the current Director of Communications. They emphasize the importance of leadership development and the space the organization has allowed them to grow. They understand that the Vice President is a big role to fill but will continue to transform the role and make it their own to serve Praxis to the best of their ability. Their main focuses would be on leader development, community and team building, direct campaign action and service initiatives. They would also bring back the focus on grassroots organizing that has been lost through transitions.
6. K. Roberts shares their experiences running the Public Health Campaign and as an intern on Sustainable Skies. They saw the value of supporting student leaders and activists. They note the gap between leadership and Campaign Coordinators which they would hope to bridge through, a leadership newsletter, mobilize student voices, and have an intersectionality committee for interns from each campaign. Finally they want to create a Praxis podcast so everyone knows the work of the campaigns to share with a variety of organizations.

7. De Lorenzo Pease shares they joined Praxis as an intern and came back from a year of a pandemic to back a new organization that they believe in since the rebrand. They lead initiatives to fight against sexual assault on campus through the Public Health campaign. They have collaborated with many organizations on different project ideas such as the sexual assault Day of Silence and workshops last week.
8. Tripp asks how they would continue or modify or add to the current responsibilities of the Vice President to serve leaders and a broader base of constituents.
 - a) Tavares shares activist class as a big part of the organization where it is important to work with and lift interns. They want to bring back retreats in the fall and spring. There is not much they would change. They want to be involved in working with the Director of Legislative Advocacy if it becomes a new position..
 - b) K. Roberts would mobilize student voices, focus on intersectionality by having intersectionality committees that they would take on considering the Vice President works with all campaigns.
 - c) De Lorenzo Pease would bring an outside view to the role by splitting responsibility and having meetings on how other leaders can be a way of relief for anyone feeling they are taking on too much work.
9. Namazi asks what is the most beneficial experience in this or another organization that will help perform their role effectively.
 - a) Tavares says her role as a Campaign Coordinator and Director of Communications, they already work with Campaign Coordinators to manage their campaign and their vision. They believe the way issues are phrases is something they would work on..
 - b) K. Roberts shares their experience as secretary of her high school Black Student Association. They tried to educate students on the experiences of those in high school. They will take their experience and put it into practice while managing Campaign Coordinators.
 - c) De Lorenzo Pease shares their experience transitioning into a covid world. As a freshman they helped as a NVP visibility coordinator. In high school they were on a leadership panel and administration panel in charge of bringing all student worries to the school administration. They worked with scholars at risk and note their lack of leadership role within Praxis but will still use these valuable experiences.

Tavares, K. Roberts and De Lorenzo Pease exit the room at 8:27pm.
10. The general membership engages in closed discussion.

Tavares, K. Roberts and De Lorenzo Pease return to the room at 8:27pm.
11. Tavares is elected as UConn Praxis's 2022-23 Vice-President.

C. Treasurer

1. Tripp nominates Marentes who accepts.
2. Tavares nominates Zoe Macris
3. K. Roberts nominates Desiray Green who declines.
4. Green nominates De Lorenzo Pease who declines.
5. Namazi nominates Paredes who declines.
6. Namzi nominates J. Roberts who declines.
7. Albee nominates Laura Augenbraun who declines.
8. Marentes shares their current role as Praxis's Treasurer's Assistant and was the former Treasurer for PowerUp UConn. They are running to further develop their leadership skills. As Treasurer's Assistant they were able to learn the role of the Treasurer and understand the financial processes and stewardship of the organization. They understand the importance of relationship building with all members. They will have everyone in the know in terms of purchases to combat a slow start due to a lack of communication. Additionally they will make sure they are running the organization as effectively as possible. They note one of the biggest challenges of getting acquainted with responsibilities but will use their current knowledge to diminish such challenges.
9. Zoe Macris shares they currently are an intern for the Sustainable Skies Campaign. They found it difficult to get involved after covid so they joined Praxis. They note how their involvement in Praxis has made various impacts on a variety of issues across campus. They have developed their leadership skills by put on their own events. They share that they are a Statistics major and have a quantitative and detail oriented mind. If elected they will use the responsibility to make a budget to continue the work and bring environmental issues on the table. They will hold integrity, transparency, timeliness, and patience when dealing with the business office.
10. Tripp asks how they will effectively and responsibly use the surplus and advise Campaign Coordinators on using it.
 - a) Marentes says they have met with all Campaign Coordinators and have been a part of submitting purchase requests. They would first understand the campaign missions and learn how to benefit constituents directly with the surplus.
 - b) Macis says they found the surplus surprising. They will continue to work on bigger projects like Husky March and ensure Praxis can keep running events. They will not make a plan until they understand what people hope to accomplish.
11. Tavares asks if they have ideas for services or organizations that Praxis can contract out to benefit UConn students.
 - a) Marentes would like to contract out through a potential Director of Legislative Advocacy and contract out for health clinics.
 - b) Marcis would contract out to anything constituents want to work with such as the clothing swap.

12. Namazi asks how Marentes would fill a gap of experience in the campaign planning process and how Macris would fill a gap of experience in the purchasing process.
 - a) Esai shares their good understanding of the budgeting process and purchase request process and will be able to inform people.
 - b) Macris would gain as much knowledge from the current Treasurer and use other resources to educate them self and be proactive.

Marentes and Macris exit the room at 9:00pm.
13. The general membership engages in closed discussion.
Marentes and Macris return to the room at 9:07pm
14. Marentes is elected as UConn Praxis's 2022-23 Treasurer.

D. Secretary

1. Namazi nominates Macris who accepts.
2. Green nominates K. Roberts who accepts.
3. J. Roberts nominates Rachael Allegakoen who declines.
4. Marentes nominates J. Roberts who declines.
5. Tripp nominates Paredes who declines.
6. Paredes nominates Zoe Baltrush who accepts.
7. Tavares nominates De Lorenzo Pease who accepts.
8. Tripp nominates Augenbraun who declines.
9. Marcis shares they would love to be the Secretary to use their skills and experience on Sustainable Skies to help the organization in any way they feel necessary.
10. K. Roberts shares they would expand on their role as a campaign coordinator. They would want to expand intersectionality on weekly emails, send bi-weekly pieces to the Daily Campus, launch a podcast and create a town hall to hear what non general members want.
11. Baltrush shares they joined Praxis as an intern on the Women's Rights Campaign and are now a Campaign Coordinator for Voter Voices. They have learned recruitment is very hard and would want to provide and communicate with the rest of the community by sending out events in emails. They would serve as that basis for Praxis and have great organizational skills.
12. De Lorenzo Pease shares they would use their organization skills and experiences as secretary of their National Honor Society chapter.
13. Paredes asks how they would change, add to or modify what they have done as the current Secretary.
 - a) Macris would send the slide shows of each general meeting in email so members could refer back to them.
 - b) K. Roberts would expand on biweekly reach out to Campaign Coordinators and let them know how they can get involved across campus.
 - c) Baltrush would communicate what is going on campus and attach slide shows to weekly update emails.

- d) De Lorenzo Pease would try to improve communication across campus and work to talk with other orgs. They would work to ensure events do not overlap so there could be bigger turn out and less repeating events to keep interest high and improve communication with other organizations specifically Tier II organizations.

Macris, K. Roberts, Baltrush and De Lorenzo Pease exit the room at 9:23pm.

- 14. Exit at 9:23 return at 9:29

Macris, K. Roberts, Baltrush and De Lorenzo Pease return to the room at 9:29pm.

- 15. K. Roberts is elected as UConn Praxis's 2022-23 Secretary.

VI. Announcements & Action items

- A. Seier thanks everyone for staying later than usual and thanks everyone who ran for a position.

Meeting adjourned at 9:32pm

Minutes submitted by Monet Paredes (Secretary)