

# Graduate Student Representative's Report for the Board of Trustees

Full Board Meeting

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Melissa Welshans, President of the Graduate Student Organization

As the year progresses, the GSO continues to work towards our primary goals as listed in our first report: expanding and improving services we already provide to graduate students, exploring new ways to meet the needs of our community, and advocating for graduate student rights across campus.

In an effort to increase transparency and openness within our organization, the GSO Executive Board will be holding open forum meetings throughout the year (in addition to our monthly senate meetings) so as to stay in dialogue with the Graduate Students of SU. Our first open forum will take place November 7<sup>th</sup> and we are looking forward to holding future events of this nature throughout the academic year. Also, we are continuing our work on streamlining the processes of applying for our travel grant and other financial transactions, as well as becoming a recognized graduate student-only organization. We have also instituted a Facebook page as well as made improvements to our website, <http://gradorg.syr.edu/> to better serve our Graduate Student body.

As we work towards transparency in our own organization, we continue to pursue our interest in improving the clarity with which graduate students are offered tuition and assistantship awards at SU. With the help of the Office of Enrollment Management, the Graduate School and the Associate Provost for Academic Programs, we continue to make recommendations for ways in which graduate students can be better informed of their responsibilities and benefits as TAs, GAs, RAs and Administrative Assistants. By improving these processes, we hope to improve graduate student time to completion and students' abilities to support themselves and their families while working towards advanced study at Syracuse.

Finally, as I have previously mentioned, we are now members of the national umbrella organization for Graduate Student Organizations: The National Association for Graduate and Professional Students. In my last report I indicated that we are sending two representatives from SU to the national conference at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Since then, we have also decided to place a bid to host the regional conference this Spring, 2012. If our bid is accepted, our GSO will host members from the Northeast region (Columbia, MIT, Bryn Mawr, Harvard, Penn State, and the University of Pittsburgh to name a few) for a two day conference on student governance. I hope to announce the good news of our bid's acceptance at the November 11<sup>th</sup> Trustees meeting.

As always, thank you all for your continued support of the GSO and I will continue to update the Board on any of the above as advancements are made.