



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: SEPTEMBER 14, 2012**

**MELISSA KIZINA MOTSCH, PRESIDENT OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

As we gear up for fall semester, the GSO looks forward to a promising 2012-2013 academic year. This report will highlight the GSO's activities over the summer and give the Board a preview of what is to come.

### **New website up and running; all forms digitized**

Over the summer we rebuilt our entire website, improving the layout and making it much more straightforward for graduate students to find and utilize resources. We streamlined and digitized nearly every form, configuring them to be submitted entirely online, which has drastically cut down on the amount of paper circulating through the office on a daily basis and has reduced our carbon footprint.

### **Increased presence at PhD and Masters' Orientation**

One of the goals of last year's administration was to increase graduate students' awareness of the GSO and all that we offer right out of the gate. To that end, our Internal Vice President, Todd Metcalfe, visited and spoke to new Maxwell and Newhouse students at their orientations about the benefits extended to them through the GSO.

We put together about 700 hundred packets which included a letter of welcome, information about the GSO's affiliates, and a description of the benefits and services provided through the GSO. Todd distributed these packets during his visits, and they were also provided to new TAs at the general TA Orientation. We are optimistic that by reaching out to new grads, we will increase the likelihood of expanded involvement in the coming year and in years to follow.

### **Strong Turnout at Welcome Back Picnic**

We had an incredible turnout for our Welcome Back Picnic: nearly 1,000 of about 4,550 graduate students were in attendance. Representatives from the Graduate School, Career Services, and Student Legal Services were on hand to talk to grad students and answer questions. The GSO raffled off several prizes, including an Apple iPad at the end of the picnic. This event continues to be a graduate student tradition that benefits students and serves as a powerful vehicle to promote awareness of and involvement in the GSO.

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In the upcoming months, I am committed to pursuing the initiatives I laid out in my report last June: to assess the feasibility of implementing a campus-wide family leave policy for graduate students, and to pursue a more comprehensive safety system for classrooms. I would welcome questions or feedback from the Board while we are at the early stages of these projects, and throughout the research and recommendation process.

Above all, I am enthusiastic about leading the GSO this year. This is an organization that has accomplished much in the past few years, and I am committed to maintaining our momentum and continuing the work of making Syracuse University the best place it can be for graduate students and for everyone who is a part of this distinguished institution.