



## **Graduate Student Representative's Report to the Board of Trustees**

Executive Committee Meeting, March 6, 2014

Patrick Neary, President of the Graduate Student Organization

### **Concerns over the State of the Library**

The graduate student community has expressed great concern over the state of the university's libraries. Bird library needs renovation, principle collections need enhancement, and additional quiet space needs to be created. The library administration has done an admirable job with the funding they receive, but it has been insufficient to meet the needs of the university community. The graduate students strongly support increased funding of the libraries. Bird library and its satellites form the core of our research university, supporting a broad range of faculty, graduate, and undergraduate work, and must thrive if the rest of campus is to thrive as well. We are appreciative of the budget increases already received within the last year, and advocate for continued increases as well as concrete building renovation plans and collections improvements.

### **Childcare Facilities and Family Leave Policies**

Currently, a significant lack of childcare facility space and totally non-uniform family leave policies can put graduate students with children in untenable situations. While some departments take good care of graduate students with families, others have very negative track records. Recently, the University Senate voted to ask their Agenda Committee to determine how additional progress can be made on creating additional childcare opportunities and standardizing and extending family leave policies at the University. This is to be a fast paced approach to solving these long-term problems, an approach I am extremely pleased with. I look forward to making real progress on these long-standing issues.

### **Graduate Assistant Wage Discussions**

Across the university, TAs, RAs, and other graduate assistants are very grateful for the conversations over increasing the minimum pay rate. These conversations have resulted in a proposal to increase the minimum to \$13,000 for a 20 hour/week appointment. We hope that the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees will look favorably upon the proposal and include it as part of the 2015 budget. Also, various individuals in the budgeting and planning process have pledged to have further conversations with the GSO concerning additional increases over the next several years. We greatly appreciate the administration's willingness to find a solution that balances the need for graduate student employees to earn a livable wage and their departments' budgetary constraints. While we are not at our desired point yet, the student body is very appreciative of the direction of these changes.

Thank you for your continued support of graduate education at Syracuse University!