



Graduate Student Representative's Report to the Board of Trustees

Executive Committee Meeting, September 11, 2014

Patrick Neary, President of the Graduate Student Organization

Advocacy Center Shutdown and Realignment of Services

This summer, Student Affairs shut down the Advocacy Center as part of a realignment of sexual assault and relationship violence support and advocacy services. This change was implemented so soon after announcement that no input could be given, and was performed after the GSO Senate, Student Assembly, and University Senate were no longer in session. The GSO has major concerns about this decision, the manner in which it was communicated, and the lack of student input. The GSO firmly believes that Student Affairs needs to be particularly sensitive to student needs and concerns, and communicate clearly and effectively with the student bodies. Many students have approached us with concerns about the new structure; they feel they have lost a center of trust and community which has not been replicated in the new alignment of services. Several students told the GSO that they have lost trust in central administration and Student Affairs, and are now highly skeptical of the changes on the horizon, including the Fast Forward process. We have been working with Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, Dean of Student Affairs, and others to ensure this type of change does not happen again and look forward to engaging the Chancellor's Workgroup on Sexual Assault to find an optimal solution for Syracuse University.

Student Advisory Board in Student Affairs

GSO and SA are working with Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, Dean of Student Affairs, to create a student advisory board to provide input and advice on potential changes to the division of Student Affairs. We expect that this body will ensure that future major changes within Student Affairs are not conducted without student consultation. While we understand that not all decisions can be discussed and debated publicly, the Student Affairs division is unique in its mission of student support, and should consult with students when it makes major reconfigurations.

Graduate Student Orientations

This summer, the GSO Board participated in most of the orientation programs run for graduate students, running information sessions attended by over 1200 new graduate students. This is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that every graduate student hears of the GSO and understands what we do and where their student fee money goes, in addition to providing information on available services generally. Through these orientation programs, we have directly talked to over 25% of the student body in the past two weeks, a marked increase from past years.