



Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, March 5, 2015

Patrick Neary, Graduate Student Organization President

Fast Forward Communication Successful

Communication about Fast Forward and its various components has improved significantly. Avenues of communication have expanded greatly, with more detailed information being delivered regularly. The GSO is an active partner in helping to get the message out via email and social media. In particular, the student videos, showcasing involved students and their thoughts and reactions to Fast Forward, have been very effective in engaging and informing students. In addition, the work done with the Daily Orange to produce accurate articles concerning Fast Forward has improved student knowledge of the entire process.

As the Academic Strategic Plan moves into its writing phase, we anticipate messaging concerning the level of input gathered by the working groups. The GSO is committed to help spread the message that the process has been very inclusive, with considerable input from across the campus. In addition, the ideas presented are very student-centered, demonstrating the process's considerable focus on students. The GSO looks forward to the Day of Conversation (Feb 25), where many of these ideas will be unveiled.

Tuition and TA/RA Stipends

The tuition and budget group has continued to meet since December. The GSO has been very happy with the productive discussions we have engaged in through these meetings. We deeply appreciate the work done on graduate teaching and research assistantship stipends. An increase to the minimum stipend is to be included in the budget presented to the Trustees which meets our immediate goals for the stipend.

In addition, we commend the administration's commitment to keeping tuition increases relatively low. Through our meetings, the GSO agrees that the increases in tuition and fees are well justified, especially in light of requests from various student groups and task forces for increased student support resources. We are excited to work on educating the wider student body on these increases and their justification. The GSO thanks everyone involved for the considerable time and effort; these sessions clearly demonstrate that university leaders consider students as partners to collaborate with, for which we are very appreciative.

Chancellor's Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education, and Advocacy Report

The Chancellor's workgroup released its recommendations in December and met with the Chancellor in January. Graduate students were pleased with the recommendations, noting that they represent a broad commitment to safety and advocacy. The GSO thanks the workgroup for their efforts.

There remains some confusion within the student body over the extent to which these recommendations will be implemented, although the GSO understands that the Chancellor is committed to seeing the implementation of the recommendations. We are excited to see them implemented over the coming years, and are eager to help spread the message concerning any timelines that can be provided. The GSO is currently working with various student interest groups around the most productive way to assure the student body that these recommendations are being taken seriously and will be implemented. At the same time, we are working with these interest groups to form a student committee that will monitor the implementation of these recommendations over the coming years.

GSO Survey

The GSO conducted a survey of the graduate student body in early February in an effort to gauge student perceptions of the GSO, our effectiveness, and the relevance of our initiatives to the student body. We are currently analyzing the results, which will be made public as soon as possible. We were pleased to reach 17.7% of the entire graduate student body, with little skewing toward any particular sub-population.

Early analysis shows broad support for the GSO's funded programs and advocacy initiatives. Nearly every graduate student surveyed was aware of the GSO and its mission to represent graduate students. We continue to work to improve our own communication efforts, especially around the details of our own budget. We are committed to ensuring that students understand what their student fee goes toward.