



Graduate Student Organization President's Report

Senate Second Business Meeting, October 22, 2014

Fast Forward Syracuse - Update

Fast Forward is in full swing, with various working groups and committees gathering input in the form of focus groups, surveys, and other instruments. Anyone who wishes to provide input should go to the website: fastforward.syr.edu. I have been working to present major student priorities and concerns to the steering committees, in particular the desire for better library and research funding, better advising, a commitment to transparency and clarity in decision-making, and the appropriate provisioning of student support services given the increases in student enrollment over the past decade. Recent conversations have revolved around how to better engage and communicate Fast Forward to the student body, from which several exciting plans have developed. Regular monthly emails should be coming out on the status of the project, and more digestible material will be created explaining the aims of Fast Forward, amongst other projects.

Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Services – Update

Substantial improvements have been made to the sexual assault and relationship violence services provided on this campus. The Chancellor's Workgroup on this topic is meeting regularly, and Sam Leitermann has reported great progress and success in studying the present situation. We have not completed our work on this subject, but movement has been in a positive direction. To be more specific, the Counseling Center has hired not two but five more personnel to work in this area, advocacy services have been greatly expanded, so that victims can receive the same or better services as before, ensuring there are people able to meet victims where the victim is, provide extensive assistance in dealing with on and off-campus resources, etc. More work needs to be done to ensure education and outreach is successful, however.

Student Affairs Advisory Group

The previously mentioned advisory group is now functional. Meetings with SVP and Dean Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz should begin sometime soon. The group has begun meeting independently already to formulate plans for official meetings with the Dean, gather information on student concerns, and plan a possible student summit. This summit would attempt to draw many students from across campus to discuss, gather, and validate these concerns and issues. These concerns would then be provided to senior administrators for action. However, much planning still remains, and complications have arisen over the interaction between this group and the "General Body" group discussed below.

"General Body" Student Coalition and Upcoming Rally

There are currently several major groups performing student activism activities. These include the Campaign for an Advocacy Center, Divest SU, NAACP, and others. These groups have joined together and are holding regular meetings titled the "General Body" meetings. These meetings, facilitated by various committees it has spawned, aim to deliver a comprehensive list of student concerns, issues, and demands to the administration. I have become involved with this group to ensure broad graduate

student concerns are included in the final document. This group has been impressively well-led and coordinated, and has done an excellent job of producing well-researched documents, despite only existing for three weeks. In addition, the level of energy, passion, and dedication is substantial. This movement has the power to affect real change on campus, hence my involvement.

There are several concerns, however, that are also motivating my involvement. First, the Student Affairs Advisory Group may be attempting to duplicate the efforts of the General Body. This would be an unfortunate waste of effort that I wish to avoid by creating a close partnership between the groups. Also, I have some concerns on the representative nature of the General Body group, and wish to pass their concerns to both us and the Student Association in order to validate and legitimize their actions. There is also a continued concern over tone and context, which I have been assisting to ensure their final products have maximum effectiveness.

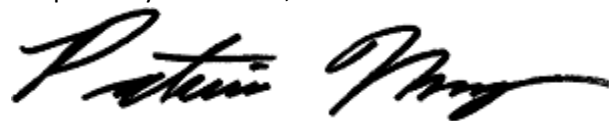
This group is planning a rally for Nov 3 at 3:30pm on the steps of Hendricks Chapel. Seeing the broad success and impact of the rallies previously held by the Advocacy Center campaign and NAACP, I am excited by the prospect of continued rallies. Expect to see additional details as we get closer. This rally would be focused on diversity and transparency at the university, areas the GSO has traditionally supported and advocated for, especially the issue of transparency in decision-making and clarity in information. Hence, I may have GSO officially support the aims of the rally, a decision in line with previous Senate action and authorizations.

Survey

The Board is still planning a survey to all graduate students. I am hoping to begin planning this week and have it ready for deployment as soon as the first week of November. This survey would focus on how much students know about the GSO, what they would like us to do, that they would like us to advocate for, and whether what we do now is in line with these desires. This last point will be used to do validation of the various concerns and issues the above groups have brought up. This survey will be distributed to all graduate students in a manner that prevents any one person from filling it out repeatedly. We will be enlisting help from Senators to push the survey. We will also offer a raffle for \$50 or \$75 prizes (likely cash) to incentivize completion. The aim is for a 10-15 minute survey conducted via the university's Qualtrics software, available for no charge to university members.

As always, do not hesitate to talk to me, or any Board member, about issues or concerns you have. Please feel free to email me at gso@syr.edu, and encourage your constituents to contact me there as well.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Neary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Patrick Neary
GSO President