



President's Report to the Senate

Senate Fourth Business Meeting, January 21, 2015

Patrick Neary, President

Academic Strategic Plan Progress and Update

Fast Forward continues at full pace. The Academic Strategic Plan is coming together – the Working Groups will submit their recommendations in mid-February to the Steering Committee, which will then craft the strategic plan itself. The document is expected to be released in March for public comment. The plan will guide the university's direction and investments over the next decade, and therefore has been a critically important part of the GSO's work this year, to ensure graduate students' interests are well represented. This work has gone well to date, with graduate students actively participating in all areas of the plan that impact our education and experiences at SU.

Tuition and Budget Group, TA/RA Pay Increases 15

Sarah Ledford, Jose Muller, and I have continued to have regular meetings with Lou Marcoccia, Exec VP and CFO, Gwenn Judge, Dir Budget Office, Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, Dean Student Affairs, Hoang-Anh Tran, Chancellor's Chief of Staff, and Boris Gresely, SA President. We have discussed a number of items within the university budget and the expected tuition and fee increases next year. We are preparing a more detailed report to the Senate and the grad students at large for later this semester, but at this time, we have been pleased with the limited increases in tuition and fees for next semester. The university has been working very hard to keep increases next year to historic lows. In addition, we have looked at overviews of the financial state of some units at the university, including athletics. We've talked about holding a session with this group in a public setting where grad students can ask questions. The Senate was raised as a possible forum for this.

Discussions of increases to the minimum TA/RA stipends have been very positive. No increases are "locked in" until the Board of Trustees votes on the budget, so we cannot speak with absolute certainty about them, but the GSO has gotten meaningful commitments to include increases in each of the next two years at the levels we have requested in Resolution 15.11. We also looked at data showing that only after these increases will the minimum pay levels be commensurate with similar private peer institutions, bolstering our position.

Electronic Harassment Policy Change

In response to Resolution 15.06 and similar resolutions from the Student Bar Association and Student Association, the Chancellor has requested that Kevin Quinn, SVP for Public Affairs, and Dan French, General Counsel, form a task force to investigate our requested change to the electronic harassment policy. We will push for a quick resolution of this matter, as we feel it is relatively uncomplicated. We will update the Senate on further developments.

ADA Coordinator

The university has committed to hire an ADA coordinator, as requested in Resolution 15.08, as quickly as possible. A search committee is being formed currently. We expect more news on this matter before the semester is over.

Chancellor's Response to Request

The Chancellor wrote a detailed response to our request for an investigation as per Resolution 15.13. This response was sent to all Senators last week and was posted to the SU News portal by the university. The Board has not taken a definitive stance on the investigation and report, but we have thanked the Chancellor for his prompt, detailed response. Informally, the Board has reacted positively to the bulk of the report. The Senate should consider whether or not they wish to take further action.

Spring Semester – Look Forward

This semester should prove very active for us. The various Fast Forward groups will be putting forth major documents that need our input. The Workgroup on Sexual Assault's recommendations will begin implementation, which we should monitor for full compliance and implementation. Items such as the TA pay increases, harassment policy, and others need to be "locked in" before the semester ends and many of us leave for the summer (or graduate).

Thank you for your continued service to the graduate students of Syracuse University!