



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

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, September 17, 2015

Can Aslan, Graduate Student Organization President

### **GSO Senate**

The GSO Senate will be holding its first meeting of the new academic year on September 9, 2015. As usual, the GSO Senate will elect two officers and various senators for the remaining seats. In addition, a number of GSO Senators have expressed their intent to discuss several issues in this first Senate meeting, including the new health insurance requirement. We hope to build excitement for student governance and involvement at this and future meetings.

### **GSO Fall Picnic and Future Events**

The annual GSO Fall Picnic was hosted at the Inn Complete on August 28, 2015, to give new and returning graduate students a warm welcome (back), introduce the GSO and its services, and spread the word for more involvement in student governance and activities. Attendance to the Fall Picnic was higher than anticipated with over 500 graduate students. We plan to host several professional and social events throughout the new academic year.

### **Student Health Insurance Requirement**

The GSO broadly supports the new requirement that all students hold adequate, affordable health insurance. We have been working with the University administrators to address several concerns and answer questions of students, particularly international students. As the health insurance waiver deadline of September 8<sup>th</sup> passes, we expect to receive more feedback from graduate students and their representatives in the GSO Senate. We would like to extend our deep appreciation to the University administrators and staff, who have put exceptionally hard work into this project.

A health insurance committee, consisting of University administrators, faculty, staff, and students, is currently being formed with the charge of determining how the University can sponsor a student health plan that would ensure all students have access to an affordable, ACA-compliant plan and identifying criteria for future subsidization of graduate students, including fellows and graduate teaching and research assistants currently eligible for the employee plan. We look forward to discussing health insurance options and subsidization plans over the coming year to determine the best way forward for students and student employees.

### **Syracuse Welcome Shuttle Service**

An initiative, in collaboration between Enrollment Management, Office of First-Year and Transfer Programs, and the GSO, to transfer new incoming students from the Syracuse Airport and Regional Transportation Center to Syracuse University campus and campus area, has been successfully completed by the end of August 2015.

The Syracuse Welcome Shuttle Service provided a warmer welcome to approximately 350 incoming undergraduate and graduate students by providing transportation from the airport and the train and bus station to Syracuse University campus and campus area, while giving the GSO a chance to connect with incoming students and introduce our organization and its services.

The GSO President would like to acknowledge and thank Nancy Cooper, Office Coordinator in Enrollment Management, Gabby Chapman, Associate Dean of Graduate School, and Stephanie Irwin, Director of Administration in Enrollment Management, for their tremendous help and support in setting up and running this project, even though none of them had been involved in the initial planning process.

--

I would like to thank the former members of GSO Executive Board and Senate for their outstanding service to the graduate student population. I look forward to a productive year in full, open collaboration with the University leadership.