



Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, February 9, 2016

Can Aslan, Graduate Student Organization President

Student Health Insurance

Since last year, the topic of the new health insurance requirement for all students at SU has been a top priority on our list. As the Student Health Insurance Committee continues to meet weekly, doing an incredible job at tackling issues as they come up, we arrived at a brief interim phase of collecting feedback from students. We are hoping that the focus groups –to be conducted by Student Affairs in three sessions within the next couple of weeks– will provide invaluable feedback from students who had experience this year with the process and services, which will help the Committee evaluate and make decisions for the upcoming year and beyond.

The GSO continues to support the new requirement, and although graduate students have expressed several concerns, we are confident that the Committee and the University leadership will evaluate all options and find solutions with the best interest of students in mind.

A second (graduate student benefits) committee, consisting of administrators, faculty, and graduate students, will also be formed shortly to work on health insurance options for graduate employees (teaching and research assistants), which also remains to be a top priority for the GSO. The current option for graduate employees to enroll in the employee health insurance plan sponsored by the University has been an important factor for graduate students in choosing Syracuse University. The GSO strongly supports graduate employees in keeping these benefits or finding an identical alternative, if necessary, and believe that the committee will do due diligence.

Free Speech Report

Background

In Fall 2014, all three student organizations at SU (Student Association, Student Bar Association, and Graduate Student Organization) passed virtually identical resolutions “supporting a change to the Syracuse University Computing and Electronic Policy’s definition of harassment so as to protect free speech.” Chancellor Syverud took immediate action and formed a working group to address this issue. The working group, lead by Professor David Rubin, presented their report to Chancellor Syverud, who personally forwarded it to the student organizations and asked for a joint report by April 15, 2016, after reaching out to their constituents.

Current Phase

We have shared the report on free speech with members of the GSO Senate towards the end of Fall 2015. We will be reaching out to all graduate students by mid-February to call for a forum to discuss the report and get feedback. This will be followed by meeting(s) with SA and SBA to finalize a joint report to be presented to Chancellor Syverud by April 15, 2016.