



Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, March 10, 2016

Can Aslan, Graduate Student Organization President

The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) continues to be involved in the many initiatives and changes across our campus, including student health insurance, free speech policies, sexual assault and relationship violence mandatory trainings, academic strategic plan implementation, and more. I would like to report on the two of the most important ongoing work the GSO is currently heavily involved in.

Graduate Student Health Insurance

A graduate student employee benefits working group, comprised of administrators, faculty, and graduate students, has been formed and started meeting as of February 29th to work on affordable health insurance options for graduate employees (teaching and research assistants), which 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 a similar (if not identical) alternative, if necessary. We believe that the working group will do due diligence and thank all members of the working group for agreeing to serve on it.

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

Combined efforts of the three student organizations (Student Association, Student Bar Association, and the Graduate Student Organization) and the University Senate to analyze and gather feedback on free speech policies at Syracuse University is ongoing with planned open discussion and feedback sessions.

The GSO strongly believes this work is paramount in making sure that Syracuse University is among the top institutions in the world that promote freedom of expression, educating students and advancing frontiers of human knowledge.