



Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, April 14, 2016

Can Aslan, Graduate Student Organization President

Graduate Student Health Insurance

The graduate student employee benefits working group continues to gather information and discuss options for graduate student employees. The working group had two meetings so far with more scheduled to take place before the end of the 2015-16 academic year. The GSO thanks the members of the working group for their efforts in collecting information and being understanding of the intricate nature of graduate student life.

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. A final report will be ready by April 15, 2016, to present to Chancellor Syverud. The GSO 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.

GSO Child Care Task Force

The GSO has recently formed a task force to address the child care issues and needs of graduate students at SU. The GSO has worked on child care issues with the University leadership and offices in previous years, and would like to continue to keep child care a top priority on our agenda as we prepare to finalize this academic year and get ready for the next one.

New York State Park Passes (Empire Passports)

As in previous years, the GSO will again be offering Empire Passports to graduate students at a subsidized price of \$20 (original value at \$65.) The Empire Passport “provides unlimited day use vehicle entry to most facilities operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. There has been an incredible interest from graduate students each year, and the GSO will again be offering 450 passes for sale this year. The 2016 Passports can be used through March 31, 2017.

Spring Picnic 2016

The GSO is getting ready to host its biannual picnic towards the end of April at the Inn Complete. The GSO Spring Picnic brings together hundreds of graduate students from across the University to wind down at the end of a busy year, while enjoying free food and drinks, games, and music with their colleagues, friends, and families. We look forward to another great picnic and, hopefully, the perfect weather for it.

GSO Officer Elections

The GSO is getting ready for officer elections to be held on April 13, 2016. The GSO Senate will elect four executive officers (president, vice president of internal affairs, vice president of external affairs, and comptroller), along with several University Senators and GSO Senators. Newly-elected executive officers will take office on June 1, 2016. The remaining two executive officer positions (Recording and Financial Secretary) will be filled at the elections to be held in the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester.