



Report of the Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees Executive Committee, September 15, 2016

Rajesh Kumar, President, Graduate Student Organization

The Free Welcome Shuttle Service

Building on remarkable success of the last year's welcome shuttle program, once again, the GSO collaborated with three administrative offices, namely, Enrollment Management, The Graduate School, and The Office of First-Year and Transfer Programs, and provided a warm welcome to the incoming students by transporting them from the airport and train/bus stations to their apartments/hotels. The shuttle service was available from 10am to 10pm from August 1st to 27th. The arrival traffic is presented in Fig 1. A total of ~500 pick-up requests were received. More than 97% of requests were served. In addition, 100 immediate requests (received through email, social media or text) were also served. The service was available to both undergraduate and graduate students. However, the majority of students who availed the shuttle service turned out to be the international graduate students.

Fig1: Date-wise arrival of incoming students

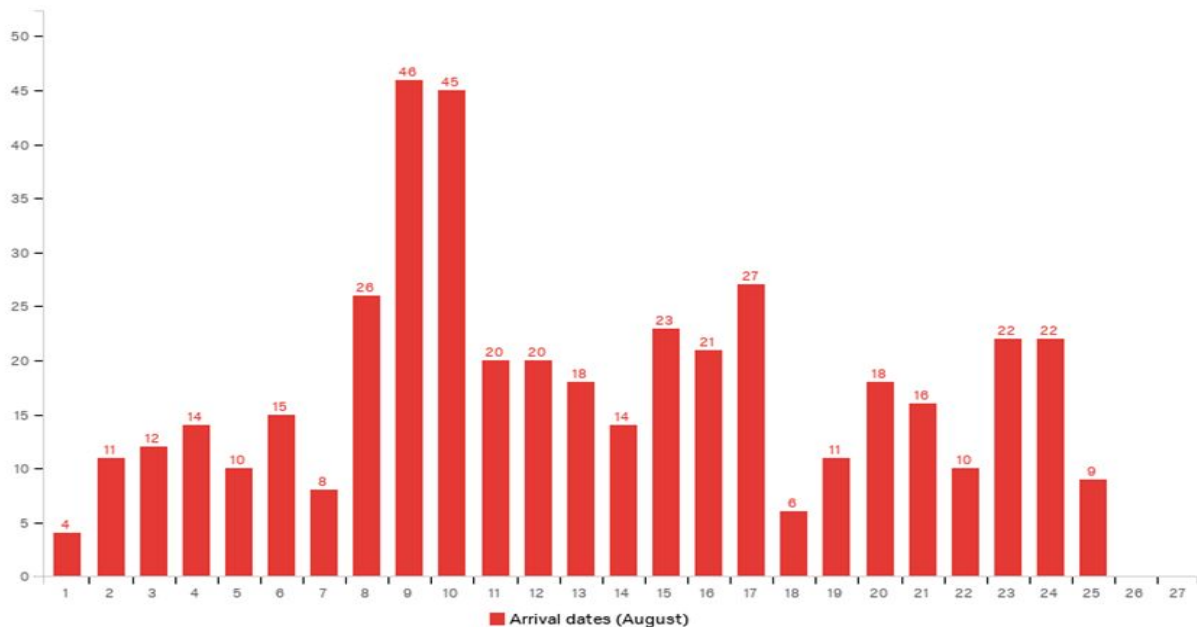
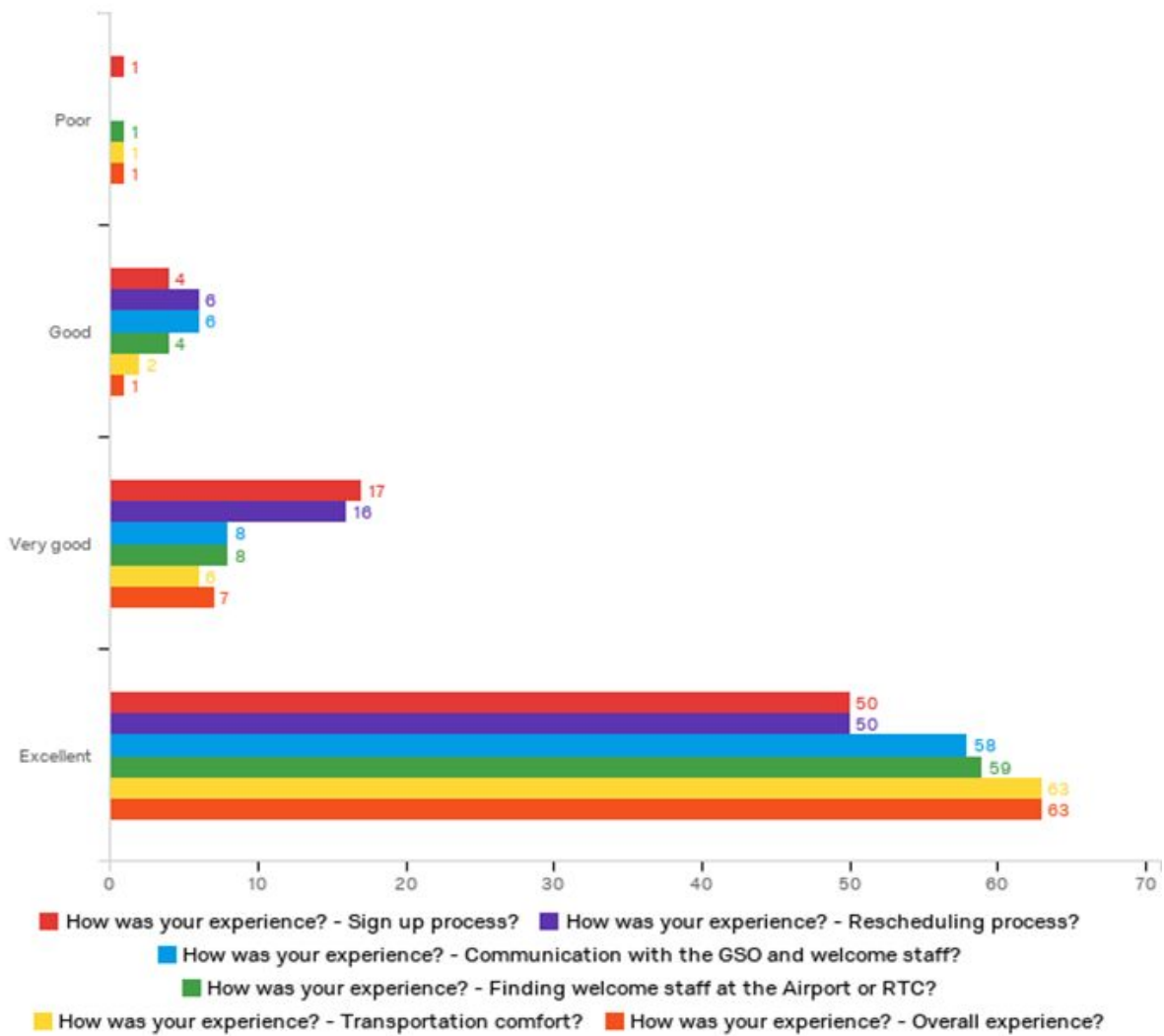


Fig 2: Feedback from students



A report is currently under preparation and will be shared with all collaborating parties, as soon as possible. The GSO President would like to acknowledge and thank Nancy Cooper, Office Coordinator in Enrollment Management, and Gabby Chapman, Associate Dean of Graduate School, for their tremendous help and support in setting up and running the whole program. The GSO President would also like to thank Can Aslan, former GSO President and current VP of Internal Affairs, who provided a complete insight of the program in the beginning and shared last year's experience in detail that helped the GSO President understand and run the whole program efficiently. Lastly, the program would not have been such a success without the complete dedication and commitment of the graduate student drivers, so the GSO would like to thank them, in particular.

Feedbacks from students who availed the service are overwhelming, so far (see Fig 2). Most of them have praised our staff, mentioned the importance of this service and recommended that the service should continue every year. Some selected comments from incoming students who availed the service are given in Appendix 1.

Orientation of Incoming Graduate Students

The GSO reached out to each and every department for finding slots in their orientation schedule. More than seventeen presentations/talks of 5-15 minutes were delivered, including an

hours-long information session at the International Student Orientation / Ice Cream Social. Over 70% (1098 of 1577 total) of incoming graduate students were reached out in the marathon orientation effort by the GSO. More than 100 students expressed their interest in working with the GSO and serving as the graduate student representative in one or the other capacity.

During the GSO sessions at departmental orientations, packets of brochures (GSO, Career Services, Student Legal Services, Know the Code, Counselling Services, SU Abroad,) GSO Fall calendar, and the GSO Fall Picnic flier were distributed.

The GSO President would like to acknowledge Peta Long, GSO VP of External Affairs, for her outstanding work on planning, organizing, staffing, budgeting and execution of the tremendous outreach efforts.

The GSO Events and Fall Calendar

During the summer, the GSO hosted two major events: GSO Golf Day at Drumlins and Bowling Day at Revolution, Destiny Mall. The responses were overwhelming and the majority of participants requested the GSO organize these events again.

The annual GSO Fall Picnic was hosted at the Inn Complete on August 26, 2016, to give new and returning students a warm welcome. We extend our deepest gratitude to Chancellor Syverud, Provost Wheatley, VP and Dean (Division of Student Affairs) Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz for attending the picnic, interacting with, and welcoming the new and returning students. Attendance to the picnic was The picnic was attended by over 600 students, their family and friends. The calendar of the GSO's future events is given in Appendix 2.

The GSO Senate

The GSO Senate is made of an elected Executive Board, elected University and At-Large Senators, Senators representing academic programs, and seven committees. The Executive Board has six members: President, VP of Internal Affairs, VP of External Affairs, Comptroller, Finance Secretary, and Recording Secretary. The first four members of the executive board are elected during the last meeting of the GSO Senate and serve on the board from June 1st to May 30th. The remaining two executive board members, senators, and committee members are elected/appointed during the first GSO Senate Meeting (organizational) of the new academic year.

The first GSO Senate meeting is scheduled on September 7, 2016. In addition to the elections, the senate will discuss issues like graduate student employment and benefits including unionization, and career services for graduate students.

Appendix 1: Selected comments from students who availed the free welcome shuttle service

“Very helpful, as the place was very new and I did not know anyone in the place.”

“I really enjoyed the service. The staff waited 1.5 hours for me when my train was delayed and gave me a warm welcome. *It was quick and friendly.* The only improvement I would recommend is notifying the students by email that their application was considered and they are going to be or not going to be met. Since I did not get any respond I was not sure until the last minute whether somebody will meet me or not. Anyways I got a pleasant surprise.”

“Sara picked me up in the Greyhound Station. What a coincidence that she and I are in the same department. We talked a lot during the way to my apt. Finally, I gave them cookies I bought in Japan. *The Welcome shuttle is so excellent that I would like to be a member next year.*”

“very helpful! I feel welcomed! Thank you!”

“Excellent! I got to Syracuse on 9th Aug, a boy comes from Burma came to pick up my family. *He was really kind and helped us carry the luggage so.* I'm really appreciate about it and I want to make friends with him. He told me that he lives in Clarendon Heights, could you help me find him?”

“It was very convenient for new students. Thanks for such a comfortable experience.”

“Very helpful as we were late but still we were able to commute through shuttles”

“Impeccably flawless :)”

“They were very helpful and friendly. Made me forget the tiredness for a while, even helped me with the luggage. *My flight got cancelled so after the tiring day they had, they had the patience to wait at lam to drop me home, it was really appreciable.*”

“They were fantastic and full of energy even at late night. They helped everyone of us reach out apartments safely and also ensure that our luggages are in place. *Few of them helped us shift our luggages to our floors. Helped in collecting apartment keys on the route.* A big thanks to all of them. They gave us good information on the ride. Thanks to Sai who picked me up and my friends. Thanks to Rajesh GSO president for arranging the pick up. *Thanks all for making it a safe and warm welcome.*”

“Excellent service, nice people. The weather was terrible but I felt so welcome by the staff. I know not a lot of schools have such service so I really appreciate. Thank you.”

“The service was a life saver..towing such number of bags would've been hell without the gso shuttle service..maya..our representative was very helpful..kudos to her”

Appendix 2: GSO Fall 2016 Event Calendar

Event	Location	Date
Senate Meeting	Lyman 132	7-Sep
Advocacy Summit & LAD	Washington DC	Sep 10- 13
Grant Application Deadline	-	15-Sep
Grads Do! Outdoor Challenge	Challenge Course	16-Sep
Nerd Night! Board Game Saturday	Inn Complete	17-Sep
GSO Peace Summit	Hendricks	21-Sep
Fall Fest - Festival of Colors	-	23-Sep
Senate Meeting	Lyman 132	28-Sep
Oktoberfest	Inn Complete	30-Sep
TA Appreciation Day	-	5-Oct
Ultimate Trivia Night I	Inn Complete	6-Oct
Message Congress Day	-	12-Oct
Scavenger Hunt & Apple Fest	Inn Complete	14-Oct
Grant Application Deadline	-	15-Oct
Senate Meeting	Lyman 132	19-Oct
RA Appreciation Day	-	20-Oct
Halloween Party	Inn Complete	28-Oct
Halloween Family Event	Inn Complete	29-Oct
NAGPS Conference	Stony Brook University	Nov 3 - 6
Ultimate Trivia Night II	Inn Complete	10-Nov
Grant Application Deadline	-	15-Nov
Call Congress Day	-	16-Nov
Karaoke	Inn Complete	18-Nov
Senate Meeting	Lyman 132	30-Nov
Grad Appreciation Day	-	2-Dec
Winter Wine Tasting	Inn Complete	3-Dec