



President's Report to the Senate  
Senate Meeting, March 29, 2017  
Rajesh Kumar, GSO President

### **Childcare Subsidy**

Provost Wheatly, Associate Provost (Graduate Studies) and Dean of Graduate School Vanable, and SVP and Chief HR Officer Andy Gordon have agreed to reinstate the childcare subsidy. The initial thought is that the funding will come from the Administrative Add-on budget line instead of fringe benefits. The details of the subsidy will be exactly as it was in the Spring 2015 pilot program. The Graduate School will facilitate the application, review, and award processes. The GSO's role will be limited to creating awareness and advertising availability of the subsidy program. It's a good step forward, however, we believe that the GSO must keep pushing for two things: a permanent solution (i.e., creating a childcare center that is accessible and affordable to the graduate student who are parents) and higher subsidy amount in the following year.

### **Fundraising for Off-Campus Security Camera Installation Project**

We are pleased to share that University Administration has agreed to provide \$30,000 to support the installation of additional security cameras in off-campus neighborhoods. Multiple SU offices contributed to the amount, including the Office of Government and Community Relations, the Department of Public Safety, the Office of Enrollment and Student Experience, the Graduate School, and the Chancellor's Office. The letter from the administration said that leadership at SUNY-ESF will respond to our request via a separate correspondence. The Chancellor and his Executive Team appreciated our proactive efforts on this important campus and community issue. The letter also stated that safety of our campus community is one of the University's highest priorities and that support to this initiative reflects this priority.

### **Health Insurance for Graduate Assistants**

The consultant firm is in process of benchmarking health insurance policies offered to graduate assistants at thirty-two peer institutions. They will submit their report to the Graduate Employee Benefits Working Group by end of April. The Working Group will reconvene to look at the report and make appropriate recommendations.

### **Career Services for Graduate Students**

The GSO Executive Board finalized the proposal to improve the support for career services for graduate students. We would like to thank Dan Olson-Bang for his invaluable contribution to the proposal. The proposal (if passed by the GSO Senate) will be submitted to the Syracuse University administration requesting action(s).

### **Tuition Increase**

The University decided to increase tuition by 3.9 percent for graduate students as well as undergraduate students. The GSO Executive Board raised several concerns over the increase. These concerns were conveyed to the University administration. Our institution is already considered among the costly ones, and increasing the fee will make it even costlier and may further reduce enrollment numbers, especially for international students. The main reason quoted by the administration was inflation. The University administration pressed the need of the increase and mentioned that it is inevitable.

### **Degree Completion for Students Affected by Latest U.S. Immigration Policies**

A proposal (see Annexure-I) for pathways to degree completion for students affected by U.S. immigration policies was presented at the University Senate. Several concerns were raised, including student's eligibility to avail the extended support, readmission, and refund of tuition. However, the intent of the proposal was appreciated in general by the University Senate and hence passed unanimously. In my understanding, the University Senate Academic Affairs Committee, which had been charged with drafting the proposal, will be receiving comments before the policy is finalized.

### **Policy Revision to Stop Stipend Cuts Based on Qualifying Exam Results**

Dean of Graduate School Peter Vanable met with the Chair of the concerned department. The Department Chair said that the Faculty Committee is reviewing the concerned policy and the qualification exam. The issue is little tricky as it pertains to both academic and administrative involvement. The University administration has consistently been reminded the sensitivity of the issue as six Ph.D. students remain affected for the following Fall semester. Dean Vanable is positive that the Department will find a solution and the decision to cut the stipend merely on the basis of qualifying exam will be reversed.

### **Chancellor's Opinion About the GSO Senate**

Chancellor Syverud thanks the GSO Senate for inviting him to the meeting and allowing him to stay and observe the proceeding of the entire meeting. He said he was overwhelmed with the professionalism, quality of the debate, and depth of discussion. He expressed his excitement by comparing the GSO Senate meeting proceedings to the U.S. Senate. During several meetings, including the latest Board of Trustees meeting, he acknowledged the GSO, its leadership, and its key initiatives to solve important campus community issues. The Chancellor's acknowledgement of the GSO on multiple occasions (his Winter Address, University Senate address, emails, and Trustee meetings) has certainly increased the visibility and credibility of the GSO across the campus. I believe that this increased visibility and credibility will have a long-term impact on building relationships as well as strengthen advocacy efforts at departmental levels.

### **Personal 'Thank You'**

We can never say thank you enough for the good work that our colleagues do. However, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our former leaders of the GSO and our Recognized Student Organizations, our senators, and our committee chairs and members, who worked so hard to develop this democratic culture on our campus. I want to thank the current GSO Senate members for carrying this strong democratic culture forward. With your strong support, active participation on

GSO committees, University-wide boards, councils, and search committees, and strong debate and discussions in our meetings, we won some battles and led foundations for winning the others during this year. Our collective effort has brought some changes that will impact our colleagues in years to come. My sincere thanks to the chairs of the committees, who worked extra hard to meet the deadlines of decision on the travel grant applications, bringing up the critical issues to the executive board, and providing useful data, feedback, and inputs for streamlined advocacy.

My special thanks go to the Executive Board members:

Can Aslan, our beloved former GSO President, the founder of Engineering and Computer Science GSO, and current VP of Internal Affairs: I certainly can't thank you enough. From the day I started planning to take up the role, you have been a motivation and inspiration, and to date, I can't get over you. I still consider you my President. You kept me on my toes throughout my term. You are one of the most organized, dedicated, and passionate people I have ever worked with. You are a maniac! You don't just do things, you always set benchmarks for other people. Be it your push for free speech on campus, maintaining the accountability and transparency within and outside, negotiating the Student Legal Services (SLS) budget proposal, push for bringing a cultural change through technology including Orange Tracker, Collaboration Space for RSOs, GSO website development and redesign, redesign of the process of Travel Grant Program and other forms, and much more. Sheer passion!

Peta Long, our VP of External Affairs: To me you, redefined the role of an External VP in the GSO. Your service to the GSO is invaluable. Four years of complete commitment, dedication, and passion. I genuinely admire your energy, be it, printing brochures and Fall calendars, scheduling more than 19 orientation presentations and talks to reach out to almost every newly admitted graduate student, organizing a record number of events in a calendar year almost by yourself, chairing our NAGPS Committee, coordinating NAGPS travels and advocacy, bringing the NAGPS Conference to SU, serving on Internationalization and the Diversity and Inclusion Council. You must be a super human!

David Lemon, our Comptroller: Preciseness, accuracy, and assertiveness are synonymous to you. Many thanks to you and the Finance Committee for making the right decision at the right time to keep everything going smoothly. We certainly went through a big change (re: Fiscal Policy) this year, and I have to admit that you did a fantastic job in handling the turbulence. You always added a different angle on every discussion and debate we had. I am extremely fortunate to have you as our budget person and a colleague. Thank you!

Gaven Ehrlich, our Financial Secretary: Your specialization in social and psychological sciences, proofreading, quick turn around, and expert, completely unbiased opinion on critical and important issues were extremely helpful to make better decisions. Thank you so much for quickly editing my reports and suggesting better arguments. You are awesome! I will go on war with you.

Sakshi Sinha, our Recording Secretary: Timeliness, quick learner, responsible, always a text away (even at 1:00am) and very good at everything you do. You made my life easier on several occasions. Having almost no experience of the Senate and its proceeding, you transitioned into your role very quickly and exceeded all expectations. Thanks for the excellent minutes and their timely

distribution, keeping track of Travel Grant applications, and helping out the Grant Committee to keep everything on track. Fantastic!

## **Appendix-I**

### **Proposal for Pathways to Degree Completion for Students Affected by U.S. Immigration Policies**

All policies are subject to the limits imposed by accreditation and professional licensing requirements for the specific degree program in which the student is enrolled.

#### **For Current Undergraduate Students and Graduate Students Enrolled in Programs that Only Require Coursework for Degree Completion**

##### Interruption of Study during a Semester

For students in good standing - both academically and with respect to conduct - who are on a Syracuse University campus and are deported or refused re-entry to the United States on or after the first day of classes, maximum opportunity will be extended for the completion of courses for which they have already registered.

##### Policy recommendations for students in progress towards degree

For students in good standing – both academically and with respect to conduct – who are unable to continue study on a Syracuse University campus due to deportation or refusal of re-entry to the United States:

For students who have completed 75% or more of the credits and requirements for their degree, maximum opportunity will be extended to facilitate completion of the degree program with Syracuse University credits.

For students who have completed less than 75% of credits and requirements, but more than the minimum Syracuse University credits needed for a Syracuse University degree as determined by the student's home School or College, maximum opportunity will be extended to apply transfer credits from other accredited institutions or Syracuse University online courses for completion of the Syracuse University degree.

For students who have completed less than the minimum Syracuse University credits needed for a Syracuse University degree as determined by the student's home School or College, they will be placed on a leave of absence and considered for readmission upon request.

#### **For Current Graduate Students in Programs Requiring Thesis or Dissertation**

##### Interruption of Study during a Semester

For students in good standing - both academically and with respect to conduct - who are on a Syracuse University campus and are deported or refused re-entry to the United States after the first day of classes, maximum opportunity will be extended for the completion of courses for which they have already registered.

##### Policy recommendations for students in progress towards degree

For students in good standing – both academically and with respect to conduct – who are unable to continue study on a Syracuse University campus due to deportation or refusal of re-entry to the United States:

For students who have completed all course credits for their degree, a reasonable opportunity will be extended to facilitate completion of the degree program remotely. Where remote degree completion is not possible, permission may be granted for extension of the Graduate School's time limits on degree completion.

**Tuition and Financial Aid**

Matriculation in Syracuse University courses is subject to Tuition and Fee policies at the time of enrollment. Normal financial aid policies will apply.