



President's Report to the Senate
September 13, 2017 Regular Business Meeting
Jack Wilson, GSO President

Spring 2017 Survey

Last April, the GSO conducted a survey of all grads, encompassing a variety of topics. Twenty grads received a \$50 prize for their participation, by random drawing. The top-line results will be published this month on our website, and more detailed breakdowns of relevant data will be provided to each committee as they form.

Summer Housing for New Grads

One section of the Spring 2017 survey included questions about ease of finding housing and quality of housing their first year. The data showed that international grads generally have a harder time finding housing their first year than their peers (54%, vs 33% for domestic grads) and report having lower quality housing than non-international grads (33% vs 29%). See Appendix A.

Some of this is a result of the fact that personally inspecting an apartment is an important component of apartment hunting, and that this is more difficult for grads overseas (or even a long distance away) because of financial and legal difficulties involved in travel. I am currently in communication with the Chancellor, Dolan Evanovich, and the Graduate School about implementing a program allowing any graduate student in their first year the opportunity to stay on campus over the summer, before their first Fall semester. The hope is that this will give students travelling from other countries the opportunity to inspect the apartment they wish to live in and additionally provide extra time to transition to the many quirks of Syracuse and the USA.

The Welcome Shuttle Program

This August, the Welcome Shuttle received 609 unique requests through our Qualtrics system, with an estimated 95% of these requests resulting in a student being picked up at the Airport or Regional Transportation Hub. This is in addition to an additional hundred students shuttled in coordination with the Chinese Student's Scholar's Association (CSSA). About two-thirds of these students were grads. Additionally, the program hired a dozen drivers and five dispatchers from the graduate student body. Appendix B provides figures for load throughout the time served and top-line results for feedback from passengers.

Response to Changes in DACA

Last Spring, The Chancellor's Ad Hoc Committee on DACA / Undocumented Students made a number of recommendations to improve the experience of said students at this university. This included, effective immediately, the formation of a rapid response team to handle crises and the identification of a legal expert on the matter. The recommendations also included several "short-term" goals to

be enacted by the end of this academic year.

On Tuesday, September 5th, the White House decided to end the DACA program, effective six months from that date. In response, the Executive Board wrote to the Chancellor asking the permanent council be formed and meet by the end of this month.

F-Type Visa Petition

The National Association for Graduate and Professional Students has issued a petition asking Congress to allow International Students to revalidate their F-type visas in the United States. Currently, when a student returns to their home country their visa expires and cannot be revalidated until they are in their home country. Resolution 18.01 authorizes the President to sign the NAGPS petition on behalf of the Graduate Student Organization.

Expanding Career Services for Grads

Over the summer months, the University announced the Invest Syracuse program, which will spend \$100M towards a number of goals. Amongst them were improving career services for students. In a meeting with Dolan Evanovich, I stressed to him the importance of expanding Graduate Career Services, which only has one staff member currently, as well as its visibility, such that grads know to go to that office rather than the undergraduate-oriented career service programs provided by the Schools and Colleges.

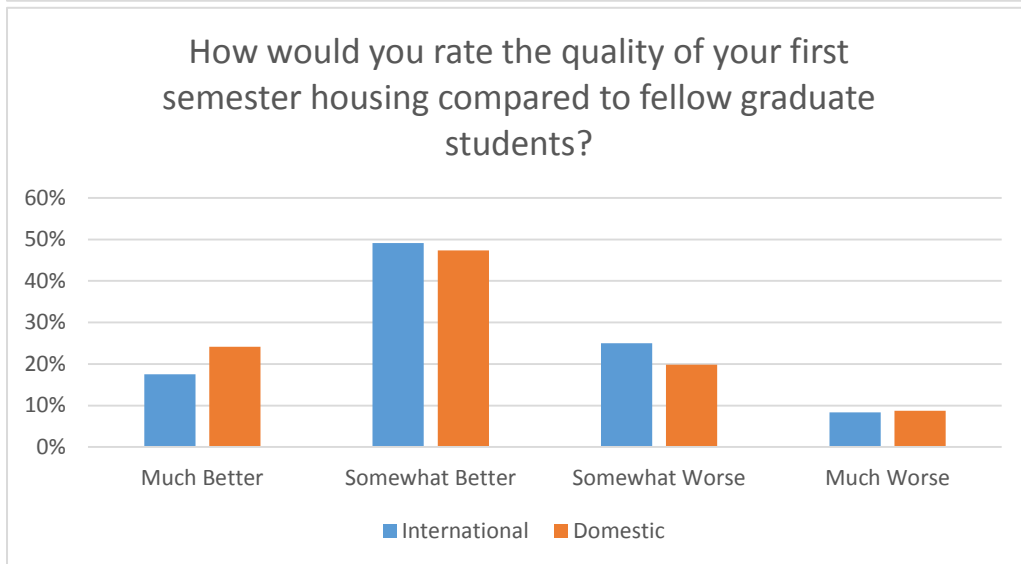
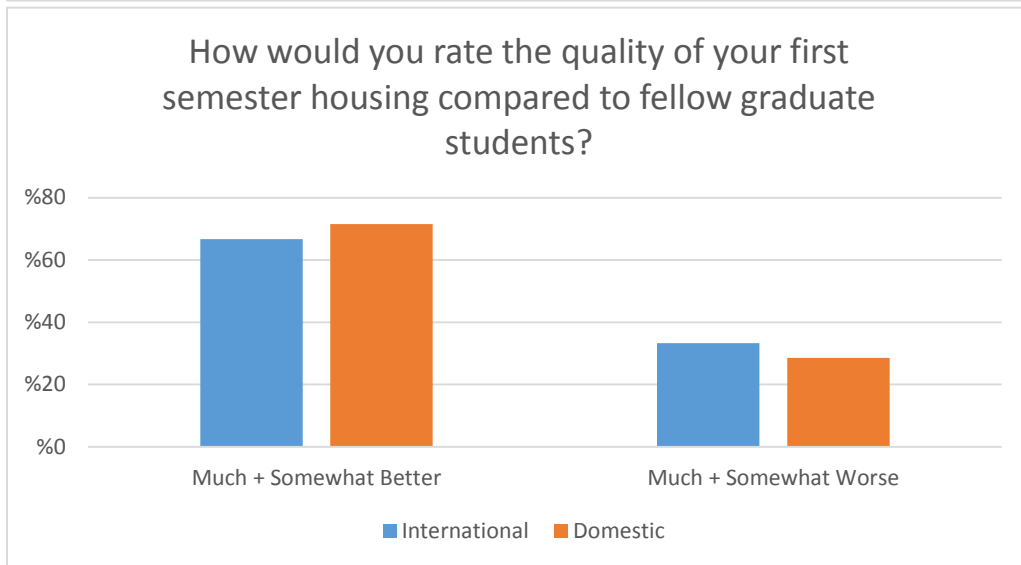
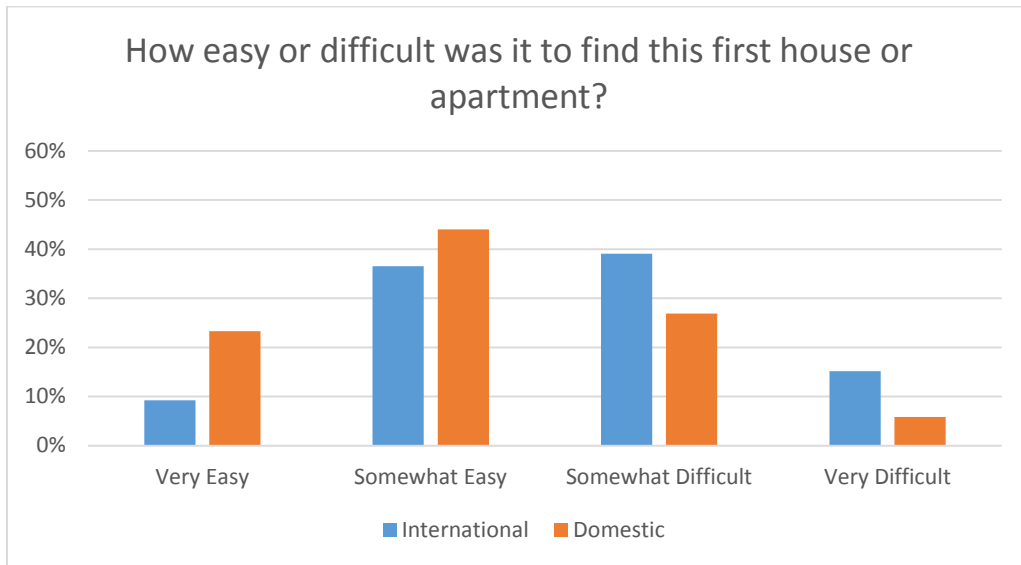
Stress Reduction and Prevention

Invest Syracuse also includes plans to generally improve the student experience, including additional resources for students to cope with stress. I have asked Dolan to, additionally, consider changes to the University that might prevent or reduce chronic and life stress. I have met with an expert in the University on the problem (Randall Jorgensen, PhD, Department of Psychology), who has made several concrete recommendations on means to inoculate students to stress and how best to determine what environmental factors should change. These recommendations will be sent on to the University.

Changes to the Constitution

Over the summer, the Executive Board identified a number of places the Constitution could be improved. Changes are presented in Resolution 18.03.

Appendix A



Appendix B

Q4 - How was your experience?

Fig 2: Feedback from students

